



MEMORANDUM

Public Works Department

DATE: March 28, 2018

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Anne Marie Starr, Senior Civil Engineer
Lisa Au, Principal Civil Engineer

SUBJECT: **Conceptual Plan for a Community Garden at Shoreline Boulevard and Latham Street, Project 17-44**

RECOMMENDATION

Review and comment on the Community Garden at Shoreline Boulevard and Latham Street Conceptual Plan and recommend approval of the Plan and an increase in the project budget to the City Council.

BACKGROUND

The Parks and Open Space Plan approved by City Council in 2014 included a Citywide priority to: “Acquire land for a garden space that is available to the public and consider various types of gardens (e.g., urban gardens, demonstration gardens, edible landscaping etc.).”

The City of Mountain View currently operates two community gardens: the Willowgate Community Garden located at the end of Andsbury Avenue and the Senior Garden located on Hetch Hetchy right-of-way at the corner of Escuela Avenue and Crisanto Avenue. Both community gardens provide individual gardening plots (current total = 162) to Mountain View residents. There are currently 129 residents on the waiting list. The typical wait time for a plot has been three to five years and with the additional high-density housing developments currently being built in the City, the demand for plots is expected to further increase.

In June 2015, the City Council approved the use of an approximately 35,000 square foot (0.8-acre) City-owned property on the southwest corner of Shoreline Boulevard and Latham Street as a new community garden and a new Capital Improvement Project was created to build the garden at this site.

ANALYSIS

The fundamental objective of the community garden project is to meet the City Council's priority to create more community garden space. This project will increase the number of community garden plots available to Mountain View residents by maximizing the number of gardening plots on the site while protecting existing Heritage trees. Another objective is to design a number of the garden plots to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

Conceptual Plan Development

Verde Designs (Verde) was chosen to design the new community garden, and part of their scope of work included facilitating several meetings to gather input from stakeholders before creating a final conceptual plan. In October 2017, a focus group meeting with current and wait-listed Mountain View community gardeners was held to gather input on what they would like to see in the new community garden. In December 2017, a community meeting was held where neighbors, gardeners, and the general public were invited to provide input on two draft conceptual plans.

The main input received at the meetings included:

- Use proposed garden plot size (6' x 18' – same as the Senior Garden).
- Prefer raised garden beds, but flushed garden beds are acceptable.
- Prefer one hose bib per plot, but one hose bib per every two plots is acceptable (Senior Garden has one bib per two plots).
- Provide a buffer zone between the garden plots and the perimeter fences (preferred by adjacent neighbors).
- Provide a fence surrounding the gardens to discourage nongardeners from entering the site (both existing community gardens are access-controlled).
- Provide a metal, ornamental perimeter fence to match the fence surrounding Eagle Park.
- Prefer decomposed granite walkways, but mulch walkways are acceptable (both existing community gardens have mulch walkways).

- Prefer that storage sheds with communal tools be incorporated into the garden design to help maintain a neater appearance.
- Provide a vehicular gate to allow for occasional deliveries of mulch and other materials.
- Provide site amenities such as bike racks, picnic tables, and an informational kiosk.
- Provide ADA parking.
- Consider implementation of a time limit on parking along this section of Shoreline Boulevard to ensure there is parking available for the gardeners.

Based on the public input received, Verde developed a conceptual plan (Attachment 1). The community garden conceptual plan includes:

- 78 raised garden plots (6' wide x 18' long).
- Six ADA raised garden plots (5' wide x 21.6' long).
- One hose bib for every two plots.
- A 6' wide buffer zone between the garden plots and the perimeter fences.
- Two pedestrian gates along Shoreline Boulevard and one vehicular gate near Latham Street.
- Site amenities such as picnic tables, bike racks, and an informational kiosk.
- 6' high metal, ornamental perimeter fence that matches the fence at Eagle Park.
- Fibar walkways for ADA access areas and mulch on all other walkways.
- Two ADA parking stalls along Shoreline Boulevard and implement a time limit for all other vehicles parked on Shoreline Boulevard along the community garden frontage.

Site Soil Investigation

An Environmental Site Assessment and Soil Quality Evaluation was prepared by Cornerstone Earth Group in anticipation of the site being used as a community garden. The site was likely used for agricultural purposes and more recently contained residential structures. Pesticides are commonly found on former agricultural and residential sites, and lead can occur naturally or from paint or other materials.

Twelve (12) surface soil samples were taken and tested for pesticides, lead, and arsenic. The results were compared with Federal (Environmental Protection Agency) and State (Department of Toxic Substance Control) agencies' standards to determine if there are any potential human health concerns associated with the results. Several pesticides were detected, but none exceeded their respective residential screening levels. The detected arsenic results appear typical of natural background concentrations.

The evaluation of the lead results revealed no significant risk to human health in a residential setting. However, considering that there are no published screening levels for a community garden use, Cornerstone Earth Group recommended using raised planter beds with clean imported soil, with planter depths based on the root depth of the plants to be cultivated. The recommended plan, therefore, includes 16" raised planter beds with a permeable root barrier beneath each bed.

FISCAL IMPACT

When the project was originally conceived during the planning phase, a much simpler design was envisioned (to be designed in-house) and a lower cost estimate was used for funding the project. Since the project began along with community outreach, more elements were considered that were not included in the original estimate.

Since the site is located along Shoreline Boulevard, more features will be provided to maintain the appearance of the garden, including a taller, ornamental fence to match the fencing at Eagle Park and storage sheds to store and organize communal tools. Other elements that have resulted in higher costs include: ADA parking, irrigation and water delivery to every other plot, higher garden beds, root barriers/bed liners, and additional imported soil to ensure soil quality.

Other cost increases from the original budget include a very low landscape architect designer budget; other consulting engineering costs, including soil sampling and design of the ADA parking; staff and administrative costs.

The current total estimated project cost of the proposed Plan (see Attachment 1) is \$1,070,000. The current project budget is \$520,000. Amending the project budget by adding \$550,000 would allow the project to proceed. There are sufficient funds in the Parkland Fund for this recommendation.

SCHEDULE

The following is the projected schedule and next steps for the project:

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| • Council Approves Conceptual Plan | May 2018 |
| • 95% Construction Document Submittal | July 2018 |
| • 100% Construction Document Submittal | September 2018 |
| • Council Approves Plans and Specifications | September 2018 |
| • Open Bids | October 2018 |
| • Begin Construction | January 2019 |
| • Complete Construction | June 2019 |

PUBLIC NOTICING

In addition to the standard agenda posting, the residents and property owners within 1,000' of the community garden site, current community gardeners, those currently on the wait list for the Willowgate and Senior Gardens, and interested other parties received notices. The notice was also posted at the Willowgate Garden, the Senior Garden, and the project site. The notice was shared on social media sites such as the City's Twitter and Facebook accounts as well as on *Nextdoor.com* and the City's website. The notice was also published in the *Mountain View Voice*.

AMS-LA/AF/2/CSD
224-03-28-18M-E-1

Attachment: 1. Community Garden Conceptual Plan

cc: CSD, PWD, APWD—Solomon, PCE—Au, SCE—Starr, RM—Marchant, RS—Chilkotowsky, POSM, F/c 17-44