



CITY OF MARTINEZ

PARKS, RECREATION, MARINA & CULTURAL
COMMISSION

DATE: August 16, 2011
TO: Parks, Recreation, Marina & Cultural Commission
FROM: Mitch Austin, Contract Community Services Manager
SUBJECT: Parks Master Plan Amendment

RECOMMENDATION

- Approve recommendation to incorporate Zocchi buildings into the Park System Master Plan designating them as recreational facilities.
- Review and discuss next steps in updating the Parks System Master Plan for the next five years, 2013 – 2018.
- Consider forming ad hoc subcommittee to develop plan update approach and strategy.

BACKGROUND

At the April 2011 PRMCC meeting there was discussion of adding the Zocchi facility and other facilities to the Park System Master Plan which is a five year plan to assess and address park and recreation facility needs in Martinez. While emphasis was placed mostly on park and open space inventory and needs, there was attention given to the need for specialized amenities and facilities. In the Survey Conclusions & Bond Measure portion of the document shown in **Attachment A**, the section includes “Proposed Park Additions, Amenities, Facilities and Design Elements beginning on page 104. This section discusses the need for amenities and facilities such as a Dog Park, Community Garden, BMX Park. On page 206 of this section subsection g. discusses the expansion of Waterfront Park and in particular incorporating the Zocchi property to meet recreational needs. Additionally on page 207 under subsection j. regarding Sports/Recreation Centers discusses the potential of the Waterfront to accommodate sports in a regional type recreational center. These references coupled with recent development of the Zocchi facilities as sports center designed to serve the region make addition of these facilities a good fit for the plan. If the Zocchi buildings are incorporated into the Park System Master Plan there are several benefits to adding these facilities to the plan.

- Re-enforces and strengthens committing the buildings to recreation uses now and into the future

- Makes the facilities a stronger candidate for public funding aimed at parks and recreation services and facilities
- Allows use of developer fees to be considered for use to improve the buildings so they are safe and accessible to the public
- Includes the assessment of how well these facilities are helping meet public recreational needs within the community.

The Zocchi building along with several other facilities such as the Historic Train Station and Amphitheater are prime candidates for addition as well. Staff recommends reviewing their inclusion with the next five year update. However, because the Zocchi buildings are moving into critical negotiations for development of an agreement for construction and use of the facilities, adding this facility now will assist Staff in crafting a solid long term agreement with the developers who are converting the use of the facilities in the sports centers.

The Park System Master Plan while with this addition is current through 2012, it is time to begin plans to revise the five year plan looking forward to plan the unmet park and recreation needs of the community as well as anticipating future needs. This plan provides a solid base from which to work and continue review of the findings and expansion into other recreation related facilities i.e. Amphitheater, Fishing Pier, Historic Train Station. Staff recommends convening an ad hoc committee to meet a couple times to develop a strategy for updating the plan for the Commission's consideration.

f. Survey Conclusions & Bond Measure

The survey provided the following general conclusions:

- Martinez voters are generally happy living in Martinez.
- Voters currently utilize the resources Martinez has to offer, but feel that capital improvements to current resources would increase their pride in the city and improve their quality of life.
- The projects that garner the most support are paving and road improvements, renovating and expanding the library, and making improvements to the marina and city park facilities.
- The proposed bond measure tested in the poll gained a two-thirds majority by only the slimmest of margins, and the simulation of a campaign environment was able to reduce support to below the two-thirds needed to pass.
- If improvements to the extremely popular library could be included in the bond measure, it would almost assuredly increase the measure's chance of passage.
- A bond measure for no more than \$30 per \$100,000 of assessed value per year with the right set of projects, public accountability measures, unified support from the council, and a strong campaign would have a good chance of passage in the November 2004 general election.

In July 2004, the City Council adopted a Resolution of Necessity and Ordinance calling for an election in November 2004. The \$30 million dollar bond measure was titled Measure "O", the *Martinez Library, Park, and Neighborhood Improvement Act* that asked voters in the November 2004 general election:

"In order to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Martinez by renovating the public library, making land and waterside improvements to the marina, upgrading city park facilities and fields, renovating Rankin Pool, and repaving city road surfaces, shall the City of Martinez issue \$30 million of bonds at tax-exempt rates, with spending subject to review by an independent citizens oversight committee, biannual audits, and no money for city administrator's salaries?"

It was estimated the improvements would cost: \$2 million library renovation, \$15 million marina waterside and land side improvements, \$7.5 million upgrade of parks playgrounds, restrooms, and amenities and sports ball field renovation/expansion, \$2 million Rankin Pool renovation and \$3 million renovating/paving streets. Actual amounts would be allocated and approved through the regular capital improvement program budget process. An independent citizen oversight committee appointed by City council would check audited statements of expenditures to verify expenditures were made on the intended projects.

4. Proposed Park Additions, Amenities; Facilities & Design Elements

There are several proposed park amenities, facilities and design elements that were considered during the Park System Master Plan development process.

a. Community Garden Expansion

The Community Garden in Hidden Valley Park has enjoyed success since its establishment. The garden requires little cost or maintenance by the city and is highly used. The Community Garden is currently filled to capacity.

b. Park Amenity Themes

The recognition of particular park attributes and community values can be demonstrated through the use of "park themes" when choosing and replacing amenities. For example, at Susana Street Park, a craftsman or Victorian theme would enhance the neighborhood with its quaint vintage homes and large stately trees. Light fixtures, benches and other amenities can continue the historic feel of this park.

Another example is Rankin Park and its natural areas. As a trail head with large picnic facilities, the restrooms, play equipment pathways and design could use boulders, river rock and other natural materials rather than asphalt, metal and plastic.

c. Dog Park

Generally, a "dog park" is a closed area for dog owners to run and play with their pets off leash. It would include features such as: off street parking, walkway to entrance, signage with use rules, double access gates and fencing, separate play areas for large and small breeds, bench for seating, watering station, litter pick up station, trash cans, and basic landscaping/irrigation, including shade trees.

In July 2004, the Park and Recreation Commission decided to include a dog park in the Master Plan. Particular attention should be paid to working with potential users and residents to address site concerns; address liability concerns; mitigate impacts to current park/trail users; lower cost of construction; choose a design that minimizes maintenance costs; provides sufficient off-street parking; reduces noise and smell; establishes user guidelines; and provides for ease of policing/monitoring compliance.

No funding has been identified to pay for design, construction, or future maintenance. Therefore, alternative means of supporting the project such as a user group to assist with operation and maintenance must be considered. Another potential source of funding is through the Park's Memorial Gift and Donation Program, where, fencing, trees, irrigation,

base material and other expense items would be covered by financial donations.

d. BMX Track

The City was approached in August of 2003 by the proponents of a BMX track. A BMX Committee was appointed by the Mayor to explore the feasibility of constructing a BMX track in Martinez. The committee met to discuss the feasibility of various sites.

The following criteria provides a basis for evaluating potential.

- **Size:** 1½ acre minimum (65,000 sq. ft.);
- **Ownership:** preferably City
- **Compatibility:** Fit with existing park uses and neighbors
- **Accessibility:** Safe access for youth and central location
- **Restrooms:** Permanent or space for portable restroom
- **Plumbing for Water:** Drinking fountains and spigot for watering track
- **Off street parking:** Sufficient to unload bikes and accommodate 15-20 vehicles

- **Traffic:** Area streets large enough to accommodate increase
- **Buffer Zones:** Areas to mitigate impacts of dust, noise, view
- **Shaded viewing area:** Trees near track
- **Picnic facilities:** BMX events tend to be all day and family oriented
- **Supervision:** Visibility and ability for police supervision
- **Insurance issues:** Ability to incorporate signs, perimeter fencing; buffer zones; national bicycle league track guidelines, etc.

The following considerations should be incorporated into final BMX Track Design: a) Track design should follow established National Bicycle League or American Bicycle Association guidelines for construction, mogul height, width, length. b) Fencing should be in place to separate spectators from track participants, and perimeter fencing should be able to close the track as needed. Fencing should set back from the racing portion of the track via a buffer zone. Short fencing should be padded at potential collision spots. c) Signs should reflect Government Code 831.7 as well as standard safety equipment required, hours of operation, spectator control, directional use of track, restrictions on motorized equipment. Signage should be large, easy to read and posted in multiple locations. d) Maintenance should be regularly scheduled.

e. Ball Field and Soccer Field Renovation & Expansion

The need for additional sports fields is widely recognized. Over 1500 youth participate in soccer leagues in Martinez through Pleasant Hill-Martinez Youth Soccer Organization. City-run, summer youth soccer camps are consistently full. New opportunities to reallocate limited level park spaces are being explored.

The Hidden Valley Park parcel has potentially adequate space to accommodate a level sports field within the park turf area with considerable grading. The adjacent parcel currently has two skinned infield baseball/softball fields and is used during alternating seasons for soccer. The City permits the field for use under agreement with the MDUSD. Re-grading (level) the adjacent portion of the city owned parcel to the west could provide sufficient space (150' x 300' = 45,000 sq ft) for an additional soccer field, however care would have to be taken to not compromise the aesthetic character of the current open grass area and stunning viewpoints of Mount Diablo.

f. Alhambra Creekside Linear Park

Improvements to the Alhambra Creek area downtown could provide additional creek side pedestrian or linear parks that could enhance the creek's natural environment and offer additional flood control. This park could enhance downtown commercial establishments and provide a buffer for nearby residential areas.

g. Waterfront Park Expansion

Population increases and proposed plans for increased density downtown will put increased demands on this popular community park. A possible area of expansion is the adjacent area now occupied by warehouses. Other possibilities should be studied.

h. Martinez Reservoir

Located south on Pacheco Blvd. and east of Howe Road. The Martinez reservoir could be used as a recreation site. The previous Park System Master Plan 1992-1997 suggested this site for future study. Use there could be connected to the Contra Costa canal trail.

i. Old Martinez Train Depot

The City has received a \$1.2 million Federal grant for renovation of this site. The grant requires that the site be renovated to a point some where in the site's history. Potential uses are shared. The Recreation Department and Martinez Historical Society would be desirable.

j. Sports/Recreational/Entertainment Center

The waterfront area has the potential for a facility of this type. Based on the Chelsea pier model, Martinez could identify itself as a regional recreation center.

k. Trail System Links and Expansion

Martinez is fortunate to be surrounded by extensive trail systems owned by various public and private agencies.

The East Bay Regional Park District's (EBRPD) nearby park areas contain numerous trails. Among these are: The Carquinez Shoreline Regional Park, the Waterbird Way Regional Preserve (dedicated in 2002), the wildlife preserve adjacent to Waterfront Park, and Briones Regional Park. As part of the John Muir National Historic Site, Mt. Wanda also contains a popular trail. In addition, EBRPD manages the Contra Costa Canal Trail.

The 400-mile around-the-bay Bay Area Ridge Trail, which in turn is part of the California Riding and Hiking Trail, is joined by city trails at Rankin Park.

The Bay Trail, not complete at this time, will encircle the San Francisco Bay at the shoreline level. A new trail alignment is proposed for Waterfront Park that will complete the Martinez Shoreline segment of this trail, traveling from Waterbird Way Regional Park to other shoreline alignments.

For more information, see the "Major Trails" section of this plan.

5. Community Involvement

The Park and Recreation Commission recognizes that community participation in the park system is invaluable. We invite residents with ideas and energy to help our park system be the best it can be.

Adopt-a-Park: Would include but not limited to community members. Citizens could help organize an "Adopt-a-Park" program and participate in city-managed park clean-ups. In addition, residents can help keep parks clean and safe by being aware of inappropriate behavior and alerting city police when needed.

Memorial Gift and Donation Program: The City of Martinez adopted a *Memorial Gift and Donation Policy* (Resolution # 104-03) in order to provide guidelines to prospective donors and city staff. The City of Martinez welcomes public participation in the funding of specific benches, trees, gardens, picnic tables, tile or brick pathways, and other park and recreation amenities to preserve the memory of Martinez residents and acknowledge the contributions of community members.

While there is strong community interest in memorials, there are also limited public spaces and funds. Therefore, the Park and Recreation Commission will assist staff in identifying appropriate public spaces to both honor the integrity of memorialized individuals and respect the aesthetics and intended public use of particular Parks, Recreation and Community facilities and amenities. Residents can arrange for a memorial bench, tree, table or other park amenity by requesting an application form from the City of Martinez Recreation Services Division.

A non-profit organization, capable of ongoing fund raising and grant writing such as a "Martinez Friends of Recreation" foundation could be established to set up trust funds to provide capital funding and operational support to city efforts.