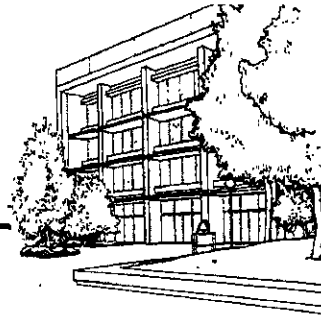


CITY OF FAIRFIELD

Incorporated December 12, 1903

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SPECIAL MEETING STUDY SESSION FAIRFIELD CITY COUNCIL/REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

I hereby call a special meeting study session of the Fairfield City Council/Redevelopment Agency for 7-10 p.m. Thursday, May 28, 1998, in the Senior Center Christiansen Room, 1200 Civic Center Drive, Fairfield, CA to:

1. Discuss parks and recreation facilities including sports park, skate park, and future of the Boys and Girls Club money.
2. Receive Blue Ribbon Committee report.
3. Receive public comments.

GEORGE PETTYGROVE, MAYOR

Dated: May 14, 1998

AGENDA REPORT FOR CITY COUNCIL

No. _____

DATE: May 28, 1998
TO: The Mayor and City Council
SUBJ: Study Session on Park and Recreation Facilities/Sports Park/Skate Park/Boys & Girls Club Funding (John M. De Lorenzo, 428-7470)

A) RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Purpose of The Study Session:

The purpose of the study session on May 28 is to provide the City Council with an overview of the park and recreation facility needs in Fairfield, and to provide a funding strategy for meeting those needs. During the course of the study session, updated information will be presented on the status of the Sports Park project, the Skate Park Master Plan and Feasibility Study, the Boys and Girls Club project, the Tri-Valley Little League Fields project, and on plans for the Dunnell-Burton property in Rolling Hills.

Policy direction is sought from the City Council on the following issues:

Park and Recreation Facilities

- Approve or revise the recommended funding priorities for park and recreation facilities over the next two years.
- Should the City be spending limited park and recreation funding on security lighting and sound walls, for projects such as the requested sound wall on Minnesota Street adjacent to the Linear Park? If yes, what is the priority of these issues relative to other park and recreation facility needs?

Linear Park

- Should the City continue its efforts to fully acquire and develop the Linear Park? If yes, what is the priority of this project relative to other park and recreation facility needs?
- How far should the Linear Park be extended - to the Vacaville City limit or to Highway 113 (Highway 113 requires further Right-Of-Way acquisition)?
- What level of development is desired (i.e., trail and sound walls only or fully landscaped development)?

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Sports Park

- Is the Council satisfied with the pay-as-you-go funding approach or does it wish to pursue other funding mechanisms to expedite the project, such as extending existing lease-revenue park bonds or pursuing a voter-approved tax increase?

Skate Park

- Does the Council wish to provide any guidance or direction to staff while the Skate Park Master Plan and Feasibility Study is in progress?

Boys and Girls Club

- What does the Council want to do with the funding set aside for the Boys and Girls Club? Options include giving the Club more time to raise matching funds, setting a deadline by which time the Club has to raise the matching funds or lose the City allocation, and reallocating the funds now to improve youth and teen services in Fairfield.

B) BACKGROUND:

At its January 1998 Strategic Planning Workshop, the City Council selected park and recreation facilities as a priority area for new emphasis during 1998 and 1999. The Council developed and approved an action plan during its Workshop that called for identifying and prioritizing park and recreation facility needs, and developing a funding plan for meeting those needs. Both existing facilities and new facilities were to be included, and increased investment/re-investment in these facilities was to begin taking place in 1998 and 1999.

C) EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:Park and Recreation Facilities

Staff has done an extensive analysis of existing park and recreation facilities. We have provided at Attachment 1 a comprehensive inventory and a recommended prioritization of improvements needed to these existing facilities. Attachment 2 provides a listing of new park and recreation facilities needed, and a single funding plan for all improvements needed, for both existing and new facilities. In response to the Council's new emphasis on park and recreation facilities over the next two years, we have provided at Attachment 3 our recom-

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mended funding priorities for park and recreation facilities during FY 1998-99 and FY 1999-2000.

As the funding plan indicates, we are forecasting that the City has the capacity to fund all of the improvements listed in the above-referenced Attachments over the next 30 years. This funding plan was recently presented to the Council as part of the City's Thirty Year Financial Forecast.

Linear Park

The City's long-term funding plan shows \$8.5 million available for Linear Park acquisition and development over the next 30 years. The projected cost of extending Linear Park acquisition and development all the way to Highway 113 is a whopping \$32.2 million. This envisions a level of development similar to the bike trail out to Solano Community College for the stretch from Peabody to Highway 113. Fully landscaping the Park right-of-way would significantly increase this cost. Cost estimates for developing the other portions of the Linear Park are based on fully landscaped development.

This is the primary area in the park and recreation facility plan where there is a significant funding shortfall. During the Community Services Department's recent vision process, City residents ranked development of the Linear Park as a high priority. We have been proceeding along these lines and Public Works has acquired right-of-way beyond Peabody Road .

However, given the significant costs associated with developing the Linear Park, we would like the Council to reaffirm its position on how far the Linear Park should be extended, and to what level it should be developed. For example, the bikeway out to Solano Community College was far less costly to build than the landscaped area of Linear Park through the middle of town. Also, what should be the role of Solano County or the City of Vacaville if the park/bikeway is extended to Highway 113.

Sports Park

On the Sports Park project, unless the Council is willing to expedite funding by pursuing a voter-approved tax increase or by extending existing lease-revenue bonds, funding for this project will be on a pay-as-you-go basis. This will delay development until adequate funding is accrued from normal park and recreation funding sources, in competition with other worthy projects. Funding and volunteer support from the community will be sought on this project. The

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Community Services Department has a successful track record of involving the community in projects such as these.

Skate Park

On the Skate Park project, the Community Services Department and Fairfield Youth Commission are in the process of conducting a Master Plan and Feasibility Study. Adult and youth members from the community are participating as part of a Task Force. A recommendation to the Youth Commission, Community Services Commission, and City Council on this issue is planned for late Fall of 1998.

There would be some City funding available if the City Council determined we should move forward on this project. However, funding and volunteer support from the community would be necessary to construct this facility. We believe it is especially important to involve youth in the planning and construction of this facility.

Boys and Girls Club

Staff recently checked with the Club President on the status of the Boys and Girls Club. The Club is doing a minimal amount of fundraising, with two small events planned in the next several months. The President reports the Club has \$8,000 in the bank, and she hopes to raise up to \$3,000 more in the two upcoming events. She indicated the Club may try to hire a professional fundraiser in the near future.

The Club has seven active Board members. The Club has no site nor is it doing any programming. The President indicated the Club is planning to pursue a possible partnership with St. Stephen's Church for a temporary building on Church property.

The City has been holding matching funds for a Boys and Girls Club facility for several years. If the Council decides to release the \$481,000 currently being held in reserve, we recommend this funding be designated for improving youth and teen facilities in Fairfield under the direction of the Community Services Department. Rather than going out and leasing or purchasing an expensive building to serve as a teen center, we recommend that the funding be used to retrofit the Community Center for increased teen activities. We would add programming every other Friday night throughout the year, that would include a

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semi-structured teen drop-in center one Friday per month, and a teen dance club operation the second Friday of the month.

This approach would protect the City from making a major capital investment at the front end for an expensive teen center facility. If the teen center concept proved to be unsuccessful, we would not be saddled with a lease or debt service. The improvements made would still benefit the Community Center and the programs held there throughout the year. If the teen center concept is successful, the program and facilities provided could be expanded over time. Nominal fees would be charged to help recover operating expenses. However, we project the teen center programs would require at least a \$5,000 annual operating subsidy, and perhaps more. If the Boys and Girls Club funding is reallocated, we would also recommend the purchase and placement of a modular building adjacent to a school site to enhance our youth programs throughout the year.

Tri-Valley Little League Fields

The Tri-Valley Little League Fields project has been held up by the ongoing negotiations between the Seeno Construction Company and the City over issues in Cordelia. The fields were supposed to be built at the Seeno-owned site projected to become Cordelia Community Park. As a result of the delay, we have begun looking for alternative sites for the fields.

In this regard, the Community Services Department has obtained verbal approval from the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District to allow Tri-Valley Little League to construct its fields at the Falls School site. The League has determined it can fit two regulation-sized Little Leagues Fields there. The League likes the weather conditions at Falls, but still prefers the community park site. They are willing to wait a couple of more months for the City and Seeno to resolve their issues. If not resolved by that time, the League would like to pursue construction of the fields at Falls. A final agreement with the School District will be necessary if moving ahead with the Falls site, particularly in regard to recent reports that the School District is considering selling Falls.

Dunnell-Burton Property

The City recently obtained title to the 6.2 acre Dunnell-Burton property in Rolling Hills. This site is targeted for a future neighborhood park. The site has many unique features, including serving as a habitat for a large group of peacocks.

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The site is also heavily wooded, and has two structures that can be rehabilitated and used for a variety of purposes. A third structure will be razed.

The City has posted no trespassing signs at the site due to a number of safety hazards. The City is now in the process of removing the safety hazards from the site and securing the structures. A meeting was held recently with the Rolling Hills Neighborhood Network to discuss plans for the site. In the Fall of 1998, we will begin developing a Master Plan for the site. The neighborhood has formed a park planning committee that we will work with just as we did in developing Rolling Hills Neighborhood Park.

One of the key issues in the park planning process will be what to do with the peacocks. The neighborhood seems to be divided on the issue. Some residents are passionate for keeping the peacocks, while others are just as passionate for not keeping the peacocks. In the meantime, the peacocks are being fed and looked out for.

It should be noted that in the scheme of overall park and recreation facility priorities, the development of this site is not among the highest priorities from the staff's perspective. The peacock issue will be dealt with in the Master Plan process, but development of the park is not scheduled to begin in the short-term.

D) DISCUSSION:

Park and Recreation Facilities

High quality, well-maintained park and recreation facilities are essential to providing a high quality of life in a community. They are essential determinants in the attractiveness of a community to prospective residents and businesses.

They are often the catalyst for tourism and attracting out-of-towners who bolster the local economy. Good examples of this are the City's two golf courses, and sports tournaments that are held here, and which virtually sell-out every hotel room in town. In these ways, parks and recreation facilities play a critical role in determining a community's economic well-being. It has been proven that investing in quality parks, recreation facilities and open space in residential areas leads to an increase in neighborhood property values.

Quality park and recreation facilities, and the positive leisure-time activities they support, are the foundations of community pride. They provide essential benefits to the residents of any community, such as:

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- Leisure opportunities for youth provide positive lifestyle choices and alternatives to self-destructive and anti-social behavior.
- Meaningful leisure services reduce the high cost of vandalism and criminal activity.
- Meaningful leisure activity is an essential source of self-esteem and positive self-image.
- Regular physical activity is one of the very best methods of health insurance for individuals.
- Relaxation, rest and revitalization through the provision of park and recreation facilities and services are essential to stress management in today's busy and demanding world.
- Community recreation promotes ethnic and cultural harmony.
- Recreating together builds strong families, the foundation of a stronger society.
- Park and recreation facilities and services motivate business relocation and expansion in our community.
- Parks, recreation facilities and open space contribute to the environmental health of our communities.

As part of our funding strategy, we will appeal to the community to get involved with donations, volunteer labor, and in-kind support. We will leverage existing resources by continuing to form partnerships. The Community Services Department has a successful track record in these areas over the last five years, and these efforts will continue.

We'd like to note that in Attachment 1, the types of projects we plan to undertake in the category of Facility Maintenance and Rehabilitation include:

- Replacing barbecue grills, benches, picnic tables, trash containers, and barbecue pits in City parks.

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- Improvements, maintenance and upgrades to City buildings such as the Community Center, Senior Center and Fairfield Center For The Creative Arts.
- Resurfacing basketball and tennis courts in City parks.

Sports Park

The need for a Sports Park in Fairfield was identified over a decade ago. We have a critical shortage of sports facilities and we are not meeting the needs of our community in this area. Many youth sports teams can not even find a suitable location to practice, as every field and blade of grass is often overrun by teams and youngsters. We are also falling further and further behind our neighboring cities which are constructing new sports facilities to meet their community needs and to attract lucrative sports tournaments that significantly infuse the local economy with out-of-town dollars.

The City Council had a study session on the Sports Park issue in November 1996. The Council asked staff to provide follow-up information to questions and issues raised at the study session. The notes of the items and issues discussed at the November 1996 Council study session, and the follow-up information requested by Council, are provided at Attachment 4. This includes funding alternatives for developing a scaled-down first phase of the Sports Park.

It should be noted that staff has identified several private firms the City could contract with to operate phase one of the Sports Park with no City subsidy required. Several members of the local business community have also pledged support for this project when the City makes funding available.

Skate Park

The Community Service Commission and Youth Commission recently held a study session on this issue following numerous requests for a Skate Park facility from the community's youth. The Youth Commission followed this up with a public hearing. This led to the creation of a Skate Park task force to study the feasibility of building a Skate Park in Fairfield and to develop a Master Plan.

The Master Plan and Feasibility Study includes assessing risk and liability, determining preferred facility design, determining preferred location, determining estimated cost, determining funding options, and determining best operating

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procedures. Task force members are visiting Skate Park facilities in other jurisdictions and discussing design, construction and operation of those facilities with architects, staff and volunteers who were involved. A great deal of information was recently gathered about Skate Parks at the recent California Park and Recreation Society Annual Conference.

The City of Vacaville is also considering the construction of a Skate Park. If both cities decide to build facilities, we believe there is an opportunity to achieve economies of scale, by perhaps hiring the same architect to design both facilities at the same time. We have approached Vacaville about this concept. If both cities move forward, we would also strive to optimize different design features in each facility, so that the two facilities provide unique experiences for the skaters of both communities.

As mentioned above, we anticipate the Task Force will be making a recommendation on the Master Plan and Feasibility Study of this facility in the late Fall of 1998. The Community Services Foundation has pledged its support to help develop this facility.

Boys and Girls Club

The Community Services Department has greatly increased teen program offerings over the past five years, with successful programs such as "The Place To Be After 3", Late Night Fairfield, Hang'n Teens, Teen Lock-Ins, Middle School Sports, Teen Dances, Teen Bus Trips, and Challenge Days. We have also created The Ground Floor Board of Directors to give teens an opportunity to help the Department plan activities for teens. We were successful in getting the Daily Republic to create a special teen page in the newspaper - Fresh Print - to give teens a voice in the community. Finally, the Department was successful in gaining Council approval for the formation of the Fairfield Youth Commission.

Necessary modifications to the Community Center to implement the teen center concept we are recommending would include:

- Creation of a snack bar area
- Installation of industrial strength, stain-resistant carpet in the common areas
- Purchase of additional disco lights and video projection system for dances
- Creation of storage space for teen center equipment

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- Purchase of pool tables, video games, vending machines, benches, chairs, etc.
- Installation of a sound system
- Improved outside lighting
- Construction of a small outdoor basketball court

The Community Center has already been accepted as a positive location for activities by the teens of the community. The Community Service Department has successfully operated lock-ins, dances, and other special events for teens there. The teen drop-in center and dance club would be a natural extension of teen activities at this location.

These activities would be conducted by the Community Services Department. However, we would invite the Boys and Girls Club to collaborate with us in developing and providing the new programming mix. A prerequisite, however, would be that the Boys and Girls Club contribute their fair share to the operational costs of the programs. In this way, Boys and Girls Club activities could be provided to the youth of our community in collaboration with this City program. This might be just the jump-start the Boys and Girls Club needs.

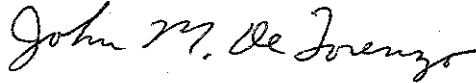
E) CONCLUSION

We appreciate the opportunity to present this comprehensive assessment and plan for park and recreation facilities in Fairfield. After a relatively long period of having inadequate resources, it is exciting to realize there is now funding available to begin addressing the community's needs in this important area. We appreciate the Council's decision to make park and recreation facilities an area of emphasis over the next several years.

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Prepared by:



John M. De Lorenzo, Director
Community Services Department

Approved:



Kevin O'Rourke, City Manager

Coordinated with: Public Works Department
Finance Department

Attachments:

1. Inventory and recommended prioritization of improvements needed to existing park and recreation facilities.
2. Inventory of new park and recreation facilities needed, and funding plan for all improvements needed, for both existing and new facilities.
3. Recommended park and recreation facility funding priorities for FY 1998-99 and FY 1999-2000.
4. Notes of November 1996 Council Study Session on Sports Park and Follow-Up Information Requested.