

Agenda Report

DATE: JUNE 6, 2022

TO: PARK, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE COMMISSION

FROM: PUBLIC WORKS - ADMINISTRATION
ARTS AND RECREATION – ADMINISTRATION
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - PLANNING

SUBJECT: YOUR PARKS, YOUR FUTURE: CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN OF FUTURE COMBINED FACILITY AT HEATHER FARM PARK

STATEMENT OF ISSUE: The Your Parks, Your Future project, with a focus on the future combined swim center and community center facility at Heather Farm Park, is one of the City Council’s 2021-2022 priorities. Staff will present an update on the Your Parks, Your Future project including a conceptual site plan of the combined facility at Heather Farm Park. Staff is seeking feedback from the Commission on the conceptual site plan before staff takes this to Council at a future date.

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Provide feedback on the Conceptual Site Plan presented for the future location of the combined swim center and community center facility at Heather Farm Park.

BACKGROUND:

In 2017, the City Council established four priorities one of which was addressing the City’s infrastructure needs. Through several meetings, Council determined that staff should focus on the following four facilities: Civic Park Community Center and Assembly Hall, Heather Farm Park Community Center, Clarke Pool, and Shadelands Art Center. As a result, the Your Parks, Your Future (YPYF) project was initiated in spring of 2018 to address these four facilities and was designed as a two phase project:

Phase 1: Arts + Recreation Programming and Future Facilities Plan—This phase focused on recommendations for future arts & recreation programming and the facility needs for Heather Farm Community Center, Clarke Swim Center, Civic Park Community Center and Shadelands Art Center.

Phase 2: Parks Master Planning for Heather Farm Park and Civic Park—Phase 2 involves creating a 10-15 year vision and design plans for Civic Park and Heather Farm Park.

Phase 1 Facilities and Programming

Phase 1 involved, and was informed by, one community workshop and online survey, eight pop up community events (i.e. First Wednesdays, Sunday Farmers Market, Family Art Day etc.), multiple tours of Walnut Creek and neighboring community facilities, six Advisory Committee meetings, three joint Commission meetings and seven City Council meetings. Phase 1 concluded in February 2020 with direction from the City Council on the future facilities, and is summarized in the following section.

Phase 1 Outcomes for Heather Farm Park

The primary Phase 1 project outcomes are based on Council actions from the December 10, 2019 and February 20, 2020 Council meetings, and below is a summary of the two key decisions relating to Heather Farm Park:

- **Prioritize and combine Heather Farm Park facilities:** Heather Farm Park Community Center and Clarke Swim Center will be the priorities in regards to facility planning and implementation. The community center and bathhouse will be combined into a single, new building.
- **Consider both lap pool size options:** While the Advisory Committee and Commissions supported a 50 meter lap pool, Council did not make a decision on lap pool size. Council directed staff to meet with the Walnut Creek Aquatic Foundation (WCAF) to determine a definitive amount of funds that can be raised for a 50 meter lap pool..

Phase 1 Implementation

On March 23, 2021, the Council set new priorities for calendar years 2021-2022 and continued to prioritize the Your Parks, Your Future initiative. Specifically, Council prioritized the implementation of Phase 1 YPYF planning outcomes for future facilities at Heather Farm Park, including locating and designing a combined aquatic and community center facility.

On July 20, 2021 Council approved the study area and the work plan for implementation of Phase 1. The status of each of the work plan items is identified below:

1. Study Area

The study area is shown in yellow in Attachment A. It was defined based on the assumptions and analysis performed during Phase 1, and includes the existing Swim Center, Community Center and adjacent areas. It excludes those areas identified in the project assumptions that should remain in place, such as the all abilities playground.

2. Walnut Creek Aquatics Foundation (WCAF) Coordination

In April 2022, the Council approved a memorandum of understanding with the Walnut Creek Aquatics Foundation, which includes an agreement by WCAF to contribute \$3 million toward the construction of an aquatic facility with a 50-meter lap pool.

3. Location of Future Facility

In Fall of 2021, stakeholders, PROS Commission and the City Council evaluated three location options for the future combined aquatics and Community Center. In December 2021, the Council selected the site of the existing community center for the future combined Heather Farm Park Facility.

4. Funding Strategy

On October 19, 2021, the City Manager presented three financing options - General Obligation Bond, Parcel Tax and Sales Tax - to City Council, as well as the respective key benefits and drawbacks of each financing option, and a timeline for the community survey. The City Council directed staff to focus the community survey on understanding the community's priorities and a potential sales tax measure. EMC Research (survey consultant) completed the community survey in January 2022. Results of the survey were presented to City Council on February 15, 2022.

If the Council chooses to move forward with a revenue measure in November 2022, the City Council must take official action via resolution to place the measure on the ballot. The deadline to place a measure on the ballot is August 12, 2022, which would necessitate City Council action at the July 19 or August 2 meeting at the latest.

5. Facility Conceptual Site Plan

Preliminary work is underway to prepare the conceptual site plan for the replacement of the existing Community Center and Clarke Swim Center into a combined facility. Staff sought input from key stakeholders in May and the conceptual site plan is the subject of this meeting. The "Discussion" section below provides an overview of the conceptual site plan for the combined community center, recreational pool, lap pool, and bathhouse, including adjacent outdoor spaces included within the study area. This plan is not an actual design for the new facility; that work would take place in 2023.

Phase 2 Master Planning

Phase 2, which focuses on master planning for the outdoor spaces at Heather Farm and Civic Park, will be reconsidered during a future budget cycle. The Phase 2 Scope of Work will need to be revised and refined based on needs at the time the project resumes.

DISCUSSION

Guiding Principles

A set of principles were developed to guide the development of the conceptual site plan, listed below. These were derived from input from: key stakeholder meetings, PROS, City Council and staff.

- Create flexible, multi-use indoor and outdoor spaces where users can choose to use the park in a variety of ways
- Prioritize the maintenance and support of existing programs, including possibility of future program expansions.

- Replace the community center and swim center with a combined facility that addresses current deficiencies
- Provide spaces to improve function of existing Recreation programs, including:
 - More desirable and flexible event spaces
 - Appropriately sized pool support spaces, such as locker rooms and deck spaces
- Preserve existing high quality of views:
 - Across pond (towards facility from park and Gardens)
 - Into park from street
 - From new facility (towards pond & Mt Diablo)
- Create adequate separation between noise-generating uses, and noise-sensitive uses within facility and throughout the park
- Consider passive and informal park users as well as program users.
- Improve or expand space for current unprogrammed park recreational uses, including:
 - Existing pedestrian walking path
 - Space for fishing
 - New "Community Living Room" space
 - Improve pond layout and function

Conceptual Site Plan

The conceptual site plan is included as Attachment B. It is a preliminary concept and the formal design may alter some of these concepts as the process continues in 2023 with detailed construction level designs. Key features of the plan include:

Building Features:

- Combined facility: 1 building + separate utility building
- Distinct entries for different program uses
- Central lobby and atrium function as community living room space
- Approximately 27,000 square feet of building space
- Single story building

Site Features:

- Expanded designated pickup/drop off zone
- Served by approximately 20 new parking spots in addition to existing parking lots adjacent the community center and all-abilities playground
- Continuous pathway around the pond
- New outdoor event/garden space and courtyards
- Refurbished pond edge (approx. 15-20% size reduction)
- 2 pools: 50m lap pool and Recreation pool

Figure 1: Conceptual Site Plan Assessment

Building Configuration	Pool & Deck Configuration	Overall site & park relationships	Access & circulation	Outdoor Gathering Spaces
Separate entries for Aquatic & Community Center/Event functions Direct indoor/outdoor connections for most occupied spaces Central "atrium" for programs, events & public use	Clear separation between lap pool and recreational pool 50m lap pool not immediately adjacent to locker rooms Recreational pool is visible from building entry, potential draw to facility Lap pool can open to park for large swim events	Building & terraces are a visible feature from across pond Privacy & acoustic separation between pool & park provided by building and landscape Pool visible from and adjacent to playground Views of garden & nature lake from building courtyard and terraces	Strong connection between pedestrian path and building courtyard Separate continuous pond perimeter walking path Improved designated pickup / dropoff zone Separate service entries for both Community Center & pools	Dedicated outdoor space for all 3 multipurpose spaces Central Courtyard Conversion of problematic pond corner to outdoor event space Expansive views of pond from event terraces

Stakeholder Feedback

The project team met with the following key stakeholders to review the Conceptual Site Plan:

- The Gardens at Heather Farm Park
- Mt Diablo Audubon Society
- Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce
- Walnut Creek Aquatic Foundation
- Walnut Creek Aquanuts, Masters, Aquabears and Swim Club
- Walnut Creek Soccer Club
- Lifetime Activities (Tennis)
- Equestrian Center

The following is a summary of the stakeholder input on the Conceptual Site Plan:

- General support for the configuration of the buildings on the site, and the site amenities including the outdoor event and gathering spaces and continuous walkway around the lake
- General support for the building relationship to park views and other park uses, including the location of the pools between the new building and N. San Carlos Dr.
- Concern about parking—should consider overall parking allocation and usage in HFP in relation to new facility
- Concern about traffic impact and vehicular circulation along N San Carlos and through entry/parking sequence—needs study
- Concern about pool deck size and configuration, especially in relation to potential large event capacity

DOCUMENTS ATTACHED:

- A. Study Area
- B. Conceptual Site Plan

COMMISSIONER ACTION NEEDED:

Provide feedback on the Conceptual Site Plan presented for the future location of the combined swim center and community center facility at Heather Farm Park.

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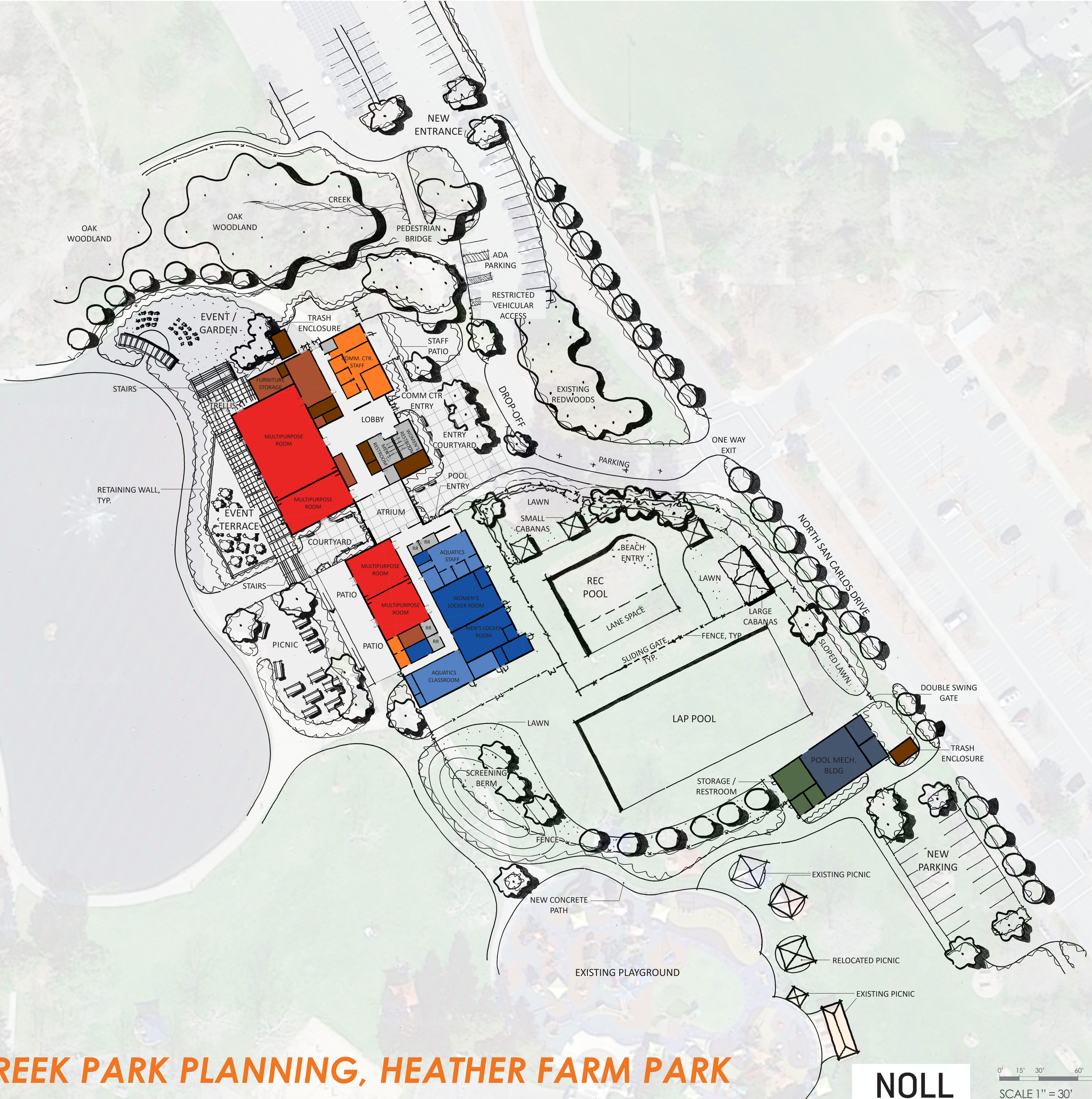


STUDY AREA FOR PHASE 1 IMPLEMENTATION

Walnut Creek, CA.



NOT TO SCALE
JULY 1, 2021



WALNUT CREEK PARK PLANNING, HEATHER FARM PARK

PHASE 1 IMPLEMENTATION

NOLL & TAM
ARCHITECTS

0' 15' 30' 60' 90'
SCALE 1" = 30'

APRIL 5, 2022

rrm design group