



City of Alameda

Staff Report

File Number:2021-717

Recreation and Park Commission

Agenda Date: 3/11/2021

File Type: Regular Agenda Item

Agenda Number: 6-A

Report on Jean Sweeney Open Space Park

To: Honorable Chair and Members of the Recreation and Park Commission

From: Amy Wooldridge, Recreation and Parks Director

Re: Report on Jean Sweeney Open Space Park

BACKGROUND

Jean Sweeney Open Space Park (Sweeney Park) is a 25-acre community park located in the central west area of the community. The park site is the former Alameda Beltline Railroad property that was secured by the City, with significant advocacy by long-time resident Jean Sweeney.

In December 2018, Sweeney Park opened to the public with the completion of the Cross Alameda Trail section through the park and the eastern phase of the park. Two phases in the center and to the west remain undeveloped until funding is secured.

DISCUSSION

Sweeney Park is a gem of Alameda, located near public transit with a wide variety of existing and planned amenities for our community. There are two more phases still to build and the City is continuing to seek grant funding to do just that. The City is applying for a very competitive grant from the State Parks & Water Bond to fund construction of the most western side of Sweeney Park, referred to as the Urban Agriculture phase. This is a great opportunity to update the design and the City implemented multiple ways for the community to provide input on this design update. Over 1,000 residents completed an online survey, 28 people attended an online Zoom community input meeting on February 25, 2021, a survey was conducted with Alameda Food Bank clients and City staff met with the Sweeney Park Community Garden Steering Committee. All of this information was combined into the Urban Agriculture phase design. The grant application is to update the detailed park design as well as construction of this phase. There are also revised boundaries of city controlled areas and this affected the previous design developed through a master plan process in 2014 and was adjusted in the new layout presented to the community.

Exhibit 1 is the draft layout of the Urban Agriculture phase that was utilized for the community input opportunities and will be updated to incorporate feedback received. The Urban Agriculture phase includes the community garden with an outdoor classroom, compost bins and fruit trees, a second playground,

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demonstration gardens to model drought tolerant landscapes, a tool and seed lending library in collaboration with the Alameda Free Library, an outdoor classroom, urban orchard and forager's lane which both provide fruit for the public to pick, a second parking lot, restroom and small picnic areas. The community garden is planned to serve Alameda residents, as well as address food insecurity in the community, through collaborations with the Alameda Food Bank, local faith organizations, and Alameda Backyard Growers. A portion of the garden plots will be provided at no cost to Alameda Food Bank constituents, with gardening workshops and guidance provided by Alameda Backyard Growers as needed. Extra food grown at the garden will be donated to the Food Bank for distribution. Larger plots will be available to faith organizations who grow food to distribute to those in need. Staff also met with the Confederated villages of Lisjan Ohlone and the nonprofit Sogorea Te' Land Trust is interested in collaborating for a section of the garden to grow food for Tribe members who need it as well as a possible medicinal garden. The entry of the park will include a Sustainable Garden & Outdoor Education in collaboration with the Community Action for a Sustainable Alameda (CASA) and the Confederated Villages of Lisjan Ohlone may also consult on planting and maintaining a sustainable garden with California natives and permaculture hubs with extensive educational opportunities and places for youth and adults to play in the dirt and explore among the flowers and bees.

Additionally, Recreation and Parks staff and Transportation staff collaborated and submitted a grant to the Alameda County Transportation Commission to fund construction of four of the north/south connection points into Sweeney Park. The two north points will connect through the Marina Village Business Park and to Challenger Drive to the shopping mall and to Triumph Drive to the San Francisco Bay Trail. The two south points will connect at 8th Street and Wood Street so neighbors and all residents can more easily bike, walk and roll into the park and through to public transit and other points of interest. There is an extensive amount of grading and work required for these connection points. The grant requested \$292,000 with an additional \$158,000 in local City match funding from Measure B/BB transportation funds for a total of \$450,000.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact from receiving this report.

RECOMMENDATION

To comment and provide feedback on the Jean Sweeney Open Space Park report.

Respectfully submitted,
Amy Wooldridge, Recreation and Parks Director

Exhibits:

1. Urban Agriculture Phase Layout