



City of Morgan Hill

Legislation Text

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CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT MEETING DATE: MARCH 2, 2016

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APPROVED BY: City Manager

BIKEWAYS, TRAILS, PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. Receive report on the Bikeways, Trails, Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update; and
2. Provide staff with any additional direction or input, if desired.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES, GOALS & STRATEGIES:

Ongoing Priorities

Supporting youth
Protecting the environment
Enhancing public safety

2016 Focus Areas

Planning Our Community
Participating in Regional Initiatives

REPORT NARRATIVE:

The Bikeways, Trails, Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update (Master Plan) process began in the Spring of 2015. The Master Plan will weave together three separate plans to create a current, comprehensive and community-driven tool for the City to use to prioritize improvements and investments. The Master Plan will also help support goals and programs to improve our city's health, environment, connectivity and recreation options.

The purpose of this update is to provide a brief check-in with the Council in regards to the plan. It is also intended to provide the Council with an outline of the remaining process for updating the plan. The Council may use this opportunity, if desired, to provide alternative direction to City staff and the consultants, MIG, Inc., in the process moving forward.

OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY INPUT

During the first several months of the project, staff and the MIG conducted extensive community outreach to identify how residents are using the current system as well as to identify assets, challenges and opportunities for the updated Master Plan. Outreach efforts included:

- Six “intercept surveys” in which staff and consultants set up an interactive exercise in public places in order to gather input from people who might otherwise not attend an outreach event. These events were held at the CRC, in public parks and during meetings and events at the CCC. A total of about 150 community members provided input during these events. Attachment 2 provides photos showing what the intercept survey process looked like.
- An online map-based survey completed by 400 community members. This survey provided detailed data about how residents use and travel to parks, trails and other recreational facilities. The data collected through the survey tool, Mapita, was linked to the project map, allowing the team to generate several maps illustrating parks and trails usage based on public input. Attachment 3 provides a visual representation of the most frequently used parks and Attachment 4 provides a graphic of the areas where trails are most frequently accessed.
- Three meetings of the Stakeholder Advisory Group, which is comprised of representatives from community-based organizations and interest groups including the Chamber of Commerce, the Historical Society, and sports clubs, among others, as well as three members of the Parks and Recreation Commission. This group will meet throughout the project to advise the project team and provide feedback on draft priorities, projects and the draft plan. This group also helps promote community workshops and opportunities for online engagement.
- A community workshop attended by approximately 30 community members, during which participants completed a visual preference survey to inform design and programming direction for the Master Plan.
- Two meetings with the Parks and Recreation Commission to gather input on priorities and goals for the Master Plan and present and discuss findings from community outreach.
- Establishing a project website (www.mhparksplan.com) and using the City’s communication tools -including email lists, social media and the city website ---to promote the project and encourage community participation.

KEY FINDINGS AND THEMES

Based on the outreach efforts described above, review of previous surveys and outreach efforts, prior plans, and in-depth conversations with inter-departmental staff and the stakeholder advisory group members, the following key themes related to parks, trails, bikeways, and recreation have emerged:

- Creating and strengthening safe walking and biking connections throughout the city and to nearby regional destinations is a high community priority (Attachment 5 provides a generalized overview of the desired connections);
- The nearby County parks play an important role in residents’ recreation, particularly for outdoor exercise and recreation, although County parks do not provide children-oriented play experiences;
- Community members would like to see more trails and paths for running and walking distances within the city and through city parks;
- Residents would like to bike to downtown destinations as well as shopping centers;
- Community members have provided feedback on a range of design approaches for bicycle facilities and are most supportive of off-street multiuse paths;
- The larger community parks, including Paradise and Community Park, are the most frequently visited and the most well-liked of the city’s public parks;
- There is a need for a greater diversity of play experiences in the City’s parks, including

different types of play structures and opportunities for adventure play, nature play and other un-structured, creative activities;

- Most residential neighborhoods are within walking distance (1/2 mile) to a City park, but some gaps exist, particularly in the north end of the City;
- The Coyote Creek trailhead, Live Oak High School, the Silveira open space and Community Park/CRC are desired destinations for pedestrian paths and bikeways;
- Highway 101 is a major east-west barrier for pedestrians and bicyclists; there is strong support for an additional crossing or improvements to facilitate safe walking and biking;
- There is a need for additional programming and recreational opportunities for teens and young adults, particularly those who do not have access to a car and/or live some distance from the CRC;
- Residents support more restrooms in parks as well as amenities such as water bottle filling stations and shaded seating areas that enhance comfort and support long stays;
- There community groups that desire specific new facilities to be added to the City's system of parks and recreation facilities, including a historic park and sand volleyball courts;
- Improved signage and wayfinding to parks and other destinations such as Villa Mira Monte and downtown, is needed for residents as well as visitors, including cyclists from San Jose and wine tourists;
- Community members are enthusiastic about the downtown pop-up parks and are seeking more spaces for informal socializing and play downtown;
- There is an interest in expanding recreation programming, such as yoga or Zumba classes, beyond the CRC to parks.

ANALYSIS AND NEXT STEPS

In parallel with the outreach described above, the project team has conducted extensive analysis of the existing parks, recreation, trails and bikeways system and developed a series of work products based on their evaluation. These include analyses of the city's programming, revenue stream and funding, demographic projections and policy environment. The project team has also updated the City's park and facility inventory including a current list of private homeowner association (HOA) parks.

Building from this analysis and community engagement, the project team is developing an online survey that will be used to solicit more detailed input on the ideas and opportunities identified to date. MIG will work with a subcommittee of the PRC to develop and refine this survey. The survey will be used to help address identified policy questions and collect insight on community priorities. It is anticipated that this survey will be online by mid-March.

Using the survey results and other data collected the next meetings of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee and PRC will focus on policy direction that will guide the Master Plan's policy, design and project recommendations. Following these meetings and the analysis of the survey, the project team will begin drafting the Master Plan which will include: a conceptual plan for each City park, future park space and recreation facility needs, future bikeways and trail routes, and additional planning data. The Draft Plan will then be reviewed and revised based on consultations with the PRC subcommittee and Planning Commission followed by study sessions with the PRC and the Council. The overall process for the Master Plan is outlined in Attachment 1.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Involve

The entire process of updating the plan relies heavily on community engagement as described in the narrative of this report.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS:

The City Council could provide additional direction to staff on desired changes to the process for updating the Master Plan. The Council may want to be involved more heavily earlier in the process and additional meetings could be added.

PRIOR CITY COUNCIL AND COMMISSION ACTIONS:

The Council authorized the City to enter into an agreement with MIG, Inc. for the Master Plan updates on April 1, 2015.

FISCAL AND RESOURCE IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact for receiving this report.

CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act):

Not a Project

Receiving this update is not a project, as defined in Section 15378 of the State CEQA Guidelines. The entire plan will be conceptual in design and the preparation of CEQA documents for projects identified in the plan will be prepared individually at the time of project design and construction.

LINKS/ATTACHMENTS:

- 1) Process timeline
- 2) Intercept photos
- 3) Frequently used parks
- 4) Trail use patterns
- 5) Desired bikeway and trail connections