




Council agenda report

Meeting Date	10/2/01
Item Number	PH2

CITY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

FROM:

 Paul LeSage, Parks and Recreation Director

SUBJECT:

MITCHELL PARK MASTER PLAN

CAO RECOMMENDATIONS

Adopt a resolution accepting the recommendations of the

- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Cultural Heritage Committee
- Architectural Review Commission

And approve the Mitchell Park Master Plan.

DISCUSSION

Background

In 1994, the City Council approved an ambitious plan to upgrade playgrounds in seven parks. This included: Johnson, Laguna Lake, Meadow, Santa Rosa, Sinsheimer, Throop, and Mitchell Parks. The project, expected to take several years, was financed through a State Park Bond Act, and the Parkland Development Fund. Because the Mitchell Park playground was actually in the best condition of any of the parks at that time, it was scheduled last.

When the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) considered the Mitchell Park playground improvements in 1995, it was with the knowledge that it could be several years before the renovations were completed. In fact, it was only recently, that the project was authorized by the City Council. [Note: prior to that approval, the PRC revisited and confirmed their approval of the playground improvements]

At the time the PRC reviewed the playground improvements, they expressed an interest in looking at a Master Plan for the entire park. Since the playground is such a significant feature of the park, the PRC wanted an opportunity to see how it would fit into the overall layout of the park. With that in mind a master plan study was commissioned. That plan, which was approved by the PRC in August of 1995, was not forwarded to the City Council for review. The feeling at that time was that it would be many years until the plan could be funded, and the plan should be revisited at a time when it was likely to be implemented.

History of the Mitchell Park Site

Mitchell Park is located in the Old Town Historic District and includes the city block bounded by Santa Rosa, Buchon, Osos, and Pismo Streets. The Senior Center located in the park is a former kindergarten school building and is listed on the City's Master List of Historic Resources.

The site was originally part of the Dallidet Adobe vineyards. Local resident Frank Mitchell donated the property to the San Luis Coastal Unified School District in 1917. The site also served as a community park and included a ball field and gazebo.

In 1941, the City leased the site from the District. In 1947, the City and District agreed to an extensive renovation of the park. This project, which was completed in 1953, is the current configuration of the park.

Elements of the Master Plan

The Mitchell Park Master Plan was developed as a collaborative effort of the Parks and Recreation Commission and neighborhood residents with the assistance of a landscape architect. The plan places an emphasis on Mitchell Park being a neighborhood park. Removal of the sidewalks that bisect the park open the site up for informal recreation and free play.

Removal of the sidewalks might make it more difficult to cross the site, but the feeling is that the park should be used, not traversed. The meandering sidewalks were placed in the plan to provide a separation between lawn and landscaping. Landscaping on the perimeter of the site will be kept intentionally low to allow for full visibility of the park from the street. A pavilion, similar to the one that existed in the park for over thirty years is planned near the existing "redwood forest". The pavilion can be used for activities such as concerts on summer evenings. The flagpole, currently located in the center of the park would be relocated to the corner of Pismo and Osos Streets and would be the focal point of a small plaza bordered by benches in a covered seating area. Many people eat lunch in the park. The small plaza was included for this activity. The long awaited playground renovation, as noted on the plan, is scheduled to begin soon. No changes are proposed for the exterior of the senior center building, or the memorial corner.

The plan does not show any addition of off street parking to the Mitchell Park site. That feature has been reviewed and rejected by the Parks and Recreation Commission and the City Council on several occasions. The area behind the senior building retains the existing patio area that includes a group barbeque pit and picnic tables. The plan calls for some type of a neighborhood garden. This was a specific request from neighborhood residents, and has been honored in the plan.

In summary, this design makes Mitchell Park a greater amenity for the residents of Old Town while retaining some of its community uses, including being a popular lunchtime location. A pavilion maintains a link to the historic past of Mitchell Park, while providing a feature that could benefit the entire community.

CONCURRENCES

The Parks and Recreation Commission initially approved this item on Aug 2, 1995. That decision was unanimously reconfirmed on February 7, 2001.

The Cultural Heritage Committee reviewed and approved the Master Plan on June 25, 2001, with the following conditions:

1. Photo documentation of the present-day park shall be provided to the Community Development Department prior to the implementation of park improvements.
2. A historic plaque or interpretive display shall be provided as part of the planned improvements, to the approval of the Cultural Heritage Committee and the Architectural Review Commission. The Master Plan shall be amended with a note to reflect this requirement.

The Architectural Review Commission approved the Master Plan on August 20, 2001, concurring with the conditions approved by the Cultural Heritage Committee and adding the following condition:

Park improvements shall include historic site lighting fixtures and architectural detail to reflect the architecture of the historic kindergarten building [the Senior Center], to the approval of the Cultural Heritage Committee and the Architectural review Commission.

While no formal action was taken, the PRC was briefed on the actions of the Cultural Heritage Committee and the Architectural Review Committee at the September 5, 2001 meeting. The commission members did not express any objections to the actions.

FISCAL IMPACTS

Approval of this plan does not authorize the funding of the improvements. Any funding for improvement projects will come to the City Council through the normal City budget process. Any expenditure to implement the Master Plan will likely have to come from the General Fund.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution approving the Master Plan
2. The Mitchell Park Master Plan
3. Minutes from PRC and CHC; summary of ARC meeting

RESOLUTION NO. (2001 Series)

**A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
APPROVING THE MITCHELL PARK MASTER PLAN**

WHEREAS, Master Plan for the renovation and improvement of Mitchell Park was developed by the Parks and Recreation Commission with input of Old Town neighborhood residents; and

WHEREAS, that Master Plan was subsequently approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission on August 2, 1995 and confirmed on February 7, 2001; and

WHEREAS, the Master Plan was approved with conditions that have been incorporated into the plan by the cultural Heritage Committee on June 25, 2001; and

WHEREAS, the Master Plan was approved with conditions that have been incorporated into the plan by the Architectural Review Commission on August 20, 2001.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Council of the City of San Luis Obispo accepts the recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Cultural Heritage Committee, and the Architectural Review commission and approves the Mitchell Park Master Plan.

Upon motion of _____, seconded by _____,
and on the following roll call vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:


the foregoing resolution was adopted this _____ day of _____, 2001.

Mayor Allen Settle

ATTEST:

Lee Price, City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



Jeffrey G. Jorgensen, City Attorney

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES**

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2, 1995
City/County Library, Conference Room
Corner of Osos & Palm Streets

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Macedo called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Jack Davidson, Jerry Emery, Joe Kourakis, Gregory Macedo, Wendy Pyper, Ron Regan, and Sally Stoner

STAFF: Rich Colombo, Pam Dayton, Linda Fitzgerald, Laurie Hanson, and Paul LeSage

GUESTS: Dan Babcock and Ruben Plummer

CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of June 7, 1995, were approved as amended: Item #9 -- the spelling of the word dying was corrected.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: None.

ITEM #1: VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

Director LeSage introduced and did a presentation for the June volunteer of the month, and Chair Macedo presented the award to Dan Babcock.

Director LeSage introduced and did a presentation for the July volunteer of the month, and Chair Macedo presented the award to Ruben Plummer.

ITEM #2: REVIEW MITCHELL PARK CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN

Steve Caminiti and Debbie Black presented "Phase 3" of a 4-phase process -- with "Phase 4" being presented at the next meeting for final approval. This plan was the result of the feedback they had received from the prior Parks & Recreation Commission meeting. They discussed the changes they had made on the plans and asked the Commission and Staff for comments or additional recommendations/changes.

After commissioners and staff asked questions and made recommendations, Mr. Caminiti reviewed back all items discussed for clarification to enable him to prepare the "final" plan. Overall, everyone was pleased with the master plan.

ITEM #3: STAFF REPORT -- PAM DAYTON

Pam distributed to Commissioners, and gave a brief "highlight" of, her staff report.

ITEM #4: JULY PARK TOUR -- FOLLOW UP COMMENTS

Great BBQ! Renovations are looking good. It was felt this was one of the better tours attended.