



AGENDA REPORT

BEACHES, PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
Meeting Date: November 12, 2019

Agenda Item 5.A.
Approvals: _____
Dept. Head DR
Manager SD
Admin. Asst. MJ

Department: Utilities
Prepared By: Niki Beach, Water Conservation Analyst *MB*

Subject: **WYLAND/MWDOC WATER-WISE POCKET PARK AWARD AND POTENTIAL LOCATIONS.**

Fiscal Impact: None.

Summary: Staff recommends that the Beaches, Parks, and Recreation Commission provide comments on three potential water-wise pocket park locations and a recommendation to City Council regarding the Commission's preferred location(s).

Background: During the 2019 Wyland Foundation (Wyland) National Mayor's Challenge for Water Conservation, an environmental education campaign held every April, the City collected the most pledges by percent of residents in all of Orange County, winning the Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC)'s Pocket Park Breakaway Competition. The primary objective for the Pocket Park, once designed and installed, is to provide a highly visible public model for water-wise landscaping, smart irrigation, and solid waste reduction and recycling. The park will have unique design elements and smart technology that demonstrate how water-wise landscapes can be beautiful and functional, while also saving water. The Pocket Park program is only in its third year, so there is flexibility in park siting and design; however, funding will be limited to 1,000 square feet of park area.

Some of the project costs will be donated and provided by the following sponsors: Saddleback College Horticulture and Design Program (Saddleback), The Toro Company, and Native West Landscaping. While there will be no transfer of funds to the City for this project, MWDOC has budgeted an additional \$10,000 to cover other project costs, such as signage, walkway materials, and technological features. Additional funding may also be available through regional water use efficiency grants. MWDOC anticipates a project timeline of one to two years to complete the project, depending on the amount of public, City staff, Beaches, Parks and Recreation Commission, and City Council involvement and feedback.

Discussion: Recently, Engineering and Utilities staff met with key project sponsors – MWDOC, Wyland, and Saddleback– to review the three potential pocket park locations that have been suggested by City Council and/or staff members, and to discuss their advantages and disadvantages. Following is a list of the group's findings, with location maps of each site attached to this report.

Site 1 (Linda Lane Park): Within the triangular portion of the park, west of Via Mecha and north of Linda Lane cul-de-sac (see attachment).

Advantages

- Existing water connection and irrigation tie-in
- Currently under design for conversion to recycled water, which may amplify conservation and educational opportunities
- Within a well-established park site with existing dedicated parking
- Located central to many city neighborhoods
- Good sun exposure and drainage
- Existing topographical variation for interest and for potential stormwater capture
- Soil appears to be in good overall health
- Contiguous to the beach, coastal trail, and children's play area, with opportunities to provide educational experiences to all of these recreational sectors
- Safe location for all ages, away from most residential traffic
- Ocean view and quiet location with no risk of adjacent residential view obstruction
- Two existing native shade trees

Disadvantages

- Relatively small opportunity for aesthetic improvement and impact – park is already beautiful and well-frequented
- Pay parking may be a minor deterrent to park use by residents of all socioeconomic statuses
- ADA access may be required to renovate this section of the park
- Slope can increase costs of project installation
- Existing trees show signs of fungal infection by shothole borer and may need replacement
- California Coastal Commission permit may be required

Site 2 (Avenida Calafia/South Ola Vista): Within an existing turfgrass-covered traffic island situated in the middle of the intersection of Avenida Calafia, South Ola Vista, and Avenida Montalvo (see attachment).

Advantages

- Existing water connection and irrigation tie-in
- Good drainage/gentle slope – potential for some stormwater capture
- Adjacent to San Clemente State Park
- Quaint location with ocean view
- Existing street parking and partial sidewalk along park
- Existing shade tree in good health

Disadvantages

- Existing infrastructure: reflective road signs may restrict park designs along north perimeter, and overhead power lines may require easement
- Overhead power lines will limit the height of potential vegetation or trees

- Existing soil may need to be treated for plants other than existing turf to thrive
- Adjacent homeowner views are a constraint in park design, limiting the addition of shade trees and any tall structures
- Potentially unsafe location for park patrons – surrounded on all sides by residential street traffic

Site 3 (Avenida Pico/Southbound Interstate 5 Onramp): Privately owned and currently vacant parcel between the United States Post Office on Avenida Pico and the SB I-5 onramp (see attachment).

Advantages

- Existing water connection
- Located at a gateway to the City of San Clemente; visible from the freeway
- Adjacent to a major walking route to the high school for increased exposure
- Lots of space and room to add a parking lot
- No significant existing vegetation to remove
- Potential for mural/artwork on adjacent cinderblock wall with approval from USPS
- Elimination of existing empty land that could result in unpleasant problems (such as illegal dumping, etc.)

Disadvantages

- Site is not currently owned or maintained by the City; land purchase, lease, or easement would be an additional cost and may delay the project
- Parking lot would also need to be developed at an additional cost to the City
- Compacted, barren soil needs significant amendment to support healthy plants
- Potentially contaminated soil may need remediation; grading may trigger costly Water Quality Management Plan requirements
- Location is noisy with limited views – not conducive to passive enjoyment of the site
- Adjacent arterial roadway and freeway onramp pose safety concerns for park patrons
- Pico Corridor may introduce transients to this site and discourage use by the majority of City residents
- Adjacent wall may attract graffiti artists

Recommended

Action: STAFF RECOMMENDS THAT the Beaches, Parks and Recreation Commission provide comment on the three proposed water-wise pocket park locations and a recommendation to City Council regarding the Commission's preferred location(s).

Attachments: Location Maps, Proposed 1,000 SqFt Pocket Park Sites 1-3.

Notification: None.



POTENTIAL 1,000 SQFT
POCKET PARK LOCATION
TOTAL AREA: 6,000SQFT

VIA MECHA

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LOCATION MAP
PROPOSED 1,000
SQFT POCKET PARK
SITE 1



POTENTIAL 1,000 SQFT
POCKET PARK LOCATION
TOTAL AREA: 2,800SQFT

AVENIDA MONTALVO

SOUTH OLA VISTA

AVENIDA CALAFIA

NOT TO SCALE



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LOCATION MAP
PROPOSED 1,000
SQFT POCKET PARK
SITE 2



POTENTIAL 1,000 SQFT
POCKET PARK LOCATION
TOTAL AREA: 20,000SQFT

NOT TO SCALE

AERIAL PHOTO PRIOR TO
I-5/AVENIDA PICO
IMPROVEMENT PROJECT



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LOCATION MAP
PROPOSED 1,000
SQFT POCKET PARK
SITE 3