



DATE: April 3, 2023

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council through City Manager

FROM: Bjorn Gripenburg, MCRP – Project Manager, Public Works & Utilities
Drew Halter – Director of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT: Receive Presentation and Provide Input on Skatepark Community Outreach, Design Considerations, Site Analyses, and Recommended Location at Lucchesi Park; This Item is Not a “Project” Pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5)

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council receive a presentation and provide input on Skatepark community outreach, design considerations, site analyses, and the recommended location at Lucchesi Park.

BACKGROUND

The Petaluma Skatepark, located adjacent to the Petaluma Swim Center near East Washington and Johnson Streets, was constructed in 1997 and is one of the oldest active skateparks in California. The Skatepark is the only dedicated public facility in Petaluma designed exclusively for skateboarding and serves as a vital recreational facility that fosters active lifestyles, engages multi-generational park users, and creates opportunities to strengthen community through play. Like most skating facilities throughout the region, the Skatepark experienced a steep rise in usership during the COVID-19 pandemic, as outdoor facilities provided an important outlet for community members to gather and recreate. The rise in popularity of the sport, along with the addition of users who frequent the park with scooters and bikes, leads to instances of overcrowding during peak hours of use. The Skatepark consists of approximately 14,000 total square feet, with 12,000 square feet considered skateable surfaces.

As the sport of skating continues to evolve, the Skatepark lacks elements that would encourage participation and skills progression from a broader range of ages, ability levels, and user groups, as well as many park amenities that would enhance experiences, including shade, seating, drinking fountains, restrooms, universal signage, lighting, and more inclusive access.

This project was identified as a high priority for future investment after receiving community input during several public workshops and meetings, including the City Council Goals and Priorities Workshop and Sonoma County Measure M – Parks for All discussions at the Recreation, Music, and Parks Commission. The project received appropriations during the City Council discussion on community investments related to the American Rescue Plan Act funding. It was also included in the FY 2021-23 Council Goals and Priorities (#225) and adopted in the FY 22/23 Capital Improvement Budget (#C14402215).

On December 5, 2022, following a competitive selection process, City Council adopted Resolution No. 2022-187 N.C.S. authorizing the City Manager to Execute a Professional Services Agreement with Grindline Skateparks, Inc., a world-renowned skatepark design and construction company with a diverse portfolio of projects throughout the country. Grindline’s scope of work includes partnering with the City to facilitate a comprehensive community engagement effort to better understand where to concentrate future investments in skating facilities, as well as the development of a conceptual skatepark design. This project phase is funded in majority by funds appropriated through the Sonoma County Measure M – Parks for All initiative.

DISCUSSION

Community Workshop #1 & Online Survey (January 17, 2023): Skating Community Strongly Encourages Investment in Designing and Building a New Skatepark

During the first phase of community outreach, the project team’s primary focus was to engage the skating community on two early decision points that would shape the future of the project.

1. Should efforts to renovate, redesign, and rebuild the existing Petaluma Skatepark take priority, or
2. Should the City preserve the Petaluma Skatepark in its current design and dedicate resources towards adding a new skatepark in an alternate location (or multiple smaller skateparks)?

The City hosted an in-person community workshop attended by over 75 people and Grindline shared an online survey that received over 200 responses. Interestingly, 78 percent of workshop attendees and 77 percent of online survey respondents expressed their desire to preserve the Petaluma Skatepark in its current design and focus investments on building a new skatepark at an alternate location. While the features at the existing skatepark don’t provide opportunities for users to enjoy a wide variety of skills progression, strong sentiments were shared by a majority of respondents for preserving the original elements of the park as it represents an important part of the foundational history and evolution of the sport. To accommodate a variety of skating features and maximize opportunities for varying abilities to skate, a recommended footprint of 20,000 to 30,000 square feet was determined. To ensure a comprehensive design and to progress with construction, a majority of the stakeholder feedback suggested the City pursue a phased buildout approach, designing future phases while allowing the community to skate phase one.

Community Workshop #2 (February 21, 2023): Lucchesi Park Site Supported as Preferred Site for New Skatepark

Staff identified four City parks that could potentially accommodate a new skatepark: Kenilworth, Leghorn's, Lucchesi, and Wiseman Parks. Following site tours, Grindline prepared the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analyses for each site, focusing on: (1) available footprint, (2) existing amenities (lighting and restrooms), (3) sightlines, (4) proximity to schools, shopping, etc., and (5) transportation/accessibility.

The City held another community workshop, attended by over 50 people, that focused on the SWOT analyses. After presenting the SWOT analyses, participants had the opportunity to ask questions and then were asked to rank the parks in order of preference. Following the initial ranking, they were asked to vote on their preference between the top two ranked parks. The attendees voted for Lucchesi Park as their preferred location with a 65 percent majority response, compared to 27 percent for Kenilworth.

Recreation, Music, and Parks Commission (March 15, 2023): Commissioners Voice Unanimous Support for Project and Preference for Lucchesi Park

Staff presented a project update, with a focus on summarizing feedback from the community workshops and results of the SWOT analyses for Kenilworth, Leghorn's, Lucchesi, and Wiseman Parks. Commissioners unanimously voiced their support for the overall project prioritizing a new skatepark as well as support of the skating community's preference for the new site to be a phased buildout at Lucchesi Park. Several Commissioners encouraged a buildout that limited phasing in order to maintain momentum for a completed project.

Next Steps

Once a site is determined, Grindline will prepare and seek feedback on site-specific conceptual designs for public review and feedback at two additional community workshops in Summer 2023. Meanwhile, City staff will continue to work with stakeholders from the skatepark community to evaluate and prioritize site improvements to the existing Petaluma Skatepark as funding becomes available.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The City held community workshops on January 17 and February 21, 2023, and presented to the Recreation, Music, and Parks Commission at its regular meeting on March 15, 2023. All meetings were noticed through social media, the City's Community Update email newsletter, on the project webpage, and in emails to people who have subscribed to project updates. Additionally, Grindline has leveraged its reach in the skating community by sharing community workshop and survey details via its social media channels. The Recreation, Music, and Parks Commission and City Council meetings are publicly-noticed meetings in compliance with the California Brown Act.

COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

This project meets the following Council Workplan Items:

- #93 - Create and promote multi-cultural and multi-generational recreation and wellness programs that support community connection, physical well-being, and opportunities for play. Focus on public health in planning processes—including air quality, walkability, childcare incorporated into larger developments, including revisiting zoning around sensitive receptors (e.g., schools, health care facilities).
- #98 - Create more diverse recreational, social, and cultural opportunities for youth.
- #116 - Maximize use of current parks and recreation infrastructure, and other City-owned facilities and properties for the hosting of recreational, sports, cultural, and entertainment events that attract visitors to Petaluma.
- #225 - Execute contract for skatepark community outreach and complete re-design.

CLIMATE ACTION/SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

The project meets the following Climate Action Framework goals:

- Maximize opportunities for all residents to live in clean and healthy environments that protect against the impacts of climate change and environmental pollutants, including equitable access to parks and open space.

The project will employ a climate mitigation, sequestration, and resilience lens, looking for opportunities to:

- Ensure the skatepark’s resilience against climate change-related impacts, such as extreme heat and precipitation. The recommended site at Lucchesi Park would incorporate the existing tree canopy to provide natural shade and carbon sequestration while also potentially reducing construction costs.
- Consider accessibility by transit, walking, bicycling, skating, etc. (and thus, minimizing greenhouse gas emissions from transportation) as part of the site analyses.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

The Skatepark Design and Site Analysis project is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to Article 5, Section 15060(c), of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (“CEQA Guidelines”), because the project will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment and therefore is not a “project” as defined in Section 15378. Further CEQA analysis will be conducted following site and design selection and preceding construction.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

While the SWOT analyses considered existing amenities (such as lighting and restrooms) at each park that could potentially lower the construction costs associated with a new skatepark, no cost estimates have been prepared given the preliminary nature of the work completed thus far.

A significant portion of the project's current \$463,000 budget (approved in the FY22-23 Operating and Capital Improvement Budget) will be needed for project development costs, including community engagement, planning, design, etc., meaning additional funding will be needed to support all construction phases.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Skatepark Presentation to Council (will be published on 3/30/2023)