



DATE: October 16, 2023

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

FROM: Bjorn Gripenburg, MCRP, Project Manager
Jessica Medina, Communications Coordinator
Drew Halter, Director of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT: Resolution Approving the Concept Plan for a Skatepark at Lucchesi Park and Authorizing the City Manager to Amend the City's Professional Service Agreement with Grindline Skateparks, Inc. for Plans, Specifications, and Estimates of the Skatepark at Lucchesi Park

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council adopt a Resolution approving the concept plan for a skatepark at Lucchesi Park and authorizing the City Manager to amend the City's Professional Service Agreement with Grindline Skateparks, Inc. for plans, specifications, and estimates of the skatepark 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 many skating facilities throughout the region, the Skatepark experienced a steep rise in users during the COVID-19 pandemic, as outdoor facilities provided an essential opportunity for community members to gather and recreate. The increase in popularity of the sport, along with the addition of users who frequent the park with scooters and BMX bicycles, resulted in instances of overcrowding during peak hours of use. The Skatepark consists of approximately 14,000 square feet, 12,000 of which are considered skateable features within the existing footprint.

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 enhance experiences, including shade, seating, drinking

fountains, restrooms, universal signage, lighting, and more inclusive access.

On December 5, 2022, following a competitive selection process, the City Council adopted a Resolution 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 public skatepark projects around the world. Grindline's scope of work included collaborating with City staff to facilitate a comprehensive community engagement effort to understand better where to concentrate future investments in skating facilities and develop a conceptual design for a new skatepark.

Throughout 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 Petaluma Skatepark take priority, or
2. Should the City preserve the existing Petaluma Skatepark in its current design and dedicate future resources towards designing a new skatepark in an alternate location (or consider installing multiple more minor skatepark elements).

The City hosted an in-person community workshop on January 17, 2023, attended by over 75 people, and Grindline shared an online survey that received over 200 responses. Seventy-eight percent of workshop attendees and 77 percent of online survey respondents expressed their desire to preserve design elements of the existing Petaluma Skatepark and instead focus investments on building a new skatepark at an alternate location. With public funding limitations, many suggested the City pursue a phased buildout that would allow the community to skate each phase as they are completed, then build future phases as additional funding becomes available.

Staff identified four City parks that could potentially accommodate a new skatepark, given design criteria based on community input and industry best practices. These parks included Kenilworth, Leghorns, Lucchesi, and Wiseman Park. Grindline prepared an analysis and feasibility report identifying the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) for each site, focusing on 1) available footprint, 2) access to existing amenities (lighting/restrooms/shade/utilities), 3) sightlines, 4) proximity to schools, shopping, etc. and 5) transportation/accessibility.

The City held a second community workshop on February 21, 2023, attended by over 50 community members, focused on receiving feedback on the SWOT analyses. After hearing about and having an opportunity to ask questions about each site, attendees were asked to rank the parks in order of preference and then vote on their choice between the top two rated parks. Sixty-five percent of those in attendance voted for Lucchesi Park as their preferred location, compared to 27 percent for Kenilworth. Lucchesi Park emerged as the preferred location due primarily to its sizeable available footprint, proximity to other activity-generating uses within and near the park (including nearby schools and shopping), existing lighting and nighttime uses, existing public restrooms, and accessibility via transit and the Lynch Creek Trail.

Staff then presented updates to and sought feedback from the Recreation, Music, and Parks Commission on March 15, 2023, followed by a presentation to the City Council on April 3, 2023. During these meetings, following a review of the site analyses for the four parks, staff recommended that a preferred site within Lucchesi Park be supported as the future site of Petaluma’s second Skatepark. Commissioners and Councilmembers unanimously voted in favor of the staff’s recommendation that Lucchesi Park be the preferred location. Notably, the City Council also voiced support for a more extensive first-phase funding strategy than was initially proposed and allocating additional funding for a partial phase-two buildout.

The City’s adopted fiscal year 2023-24 budget reflects this extensive first phase, with \$1,528,000 in available funds to support design and construction activities. The projected fiscal year 2024-25 budget estimates an additional \$1,175,000 for the second phase, with a \$275,000 shortfall currently anticipated, which staff will continue to work with the stakeholders to secure.

DISCUSSION

Following the presentation to the City Council on April 3, staff authorized Grindline to begin developing a conceptual design for a 23,000 square-foot skatepark at Lucchesi Park, located in an unprogrammed area bounded by the baseball field, multi-use soccer and lacrosse field, public restroom, and the tennis/pickleball courts.



Figure 1: New Skatepark Location at Lucchesi Park

Grindline’s design philosophy emphasizes 1) natural flow between features and throughout the park, 2) a “ladder of progression” that accommodates all skill levels, 3) integration with the surrounding parkland, and 4) the incorporation of contextual features (such as art and symbology) that pay homage to local culture and history.

Grindline’s initial design criteria for the site, which was informed by feedback from staff, stakeholders, the community, the Recreation, Music, and Parks Commission, and the City Council, included the following:

1. Create a skatepark that is inclusive and fun for people of all ages and ability levels, whether on skateboards, scooters, rollerblades, or bikes.
2. Preserve as many mature trees as possible.
3. Plan for lighting, shade, and seating.
4. Provide convenient travel paths to and from the skatepark, including nearby amenities like restrooms.
5. Provide a natural buffer between the skatepark and adjacent uses, such as the baseball field and tennis courts.

Additionally, Grindline was able to draw upon hundreds of comments and survey responses submitted by community members between January – March regarding design goals and skating elements, including over 200 online survey responses, 75 in-person survey responses (many of which had drawings of skating features), and dozens of comments made at the first two community workshops.

On May 23, the project team held a community workshop and published an online feedback form where Grindline introduced its first concept plan and sought feedback on the footprint, layout, and skating elements.



Figure 2: First Concept Plan for Lucchesi Skatepark (May 2023)

Grindline received detailed feedback focused primarily on skating elements, then returned with a revised concept plan at a community workshop on July 12. An online feedback form was also available until early August.



Figure 3: Second Concept Plan for Lucchesi Skatepark (July 2023)

Significantly fewer changes were requested to the second concept plan, except for some discussion about the bowl type, shown in the top left corner of **Figure 3**. Following the workshop, Grindline published an online survey seeking preferences among several bowl options; 42 percent voted for the Napoli Oval, with the next most popular option receiving just 11 percent. The concept plan was then updated to incorporate the Napoli Oval, shown in the top left corner of **Figure 4**. **Attachment 1** includes several graphics showing the concept plan in more detail.



Figure 4: Recommended Concept Plan for Lucchesi Skatepark (September 2023)

On September 20, 2023, the project team returned to the Recreation, Music, and Parks Commission, by motion, unanimously adopted the Lucchesi Skatepark Concept Plan and submitted a recommendation to the City Council for approval.

As the project continues into the detailed design phase, the concept plan would be further enhanced with more significant consideration given to 1) amenities, such as shade, lighting, seating, and water fountains, 2) landscaping, 3) public art, 4) grading and stormwater, and 5) connectivity and access.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

A robust community engagement schedule has been critical to the evolution of this project and resulted in a significant amount of input that ultimately helped determine the proposed skatepark location and design. Community engagement activities designed to raise awareness of the project and promote engagement began in January of 2023. Activities included:

- Four in-person community workshops seeking feedback on specific topics, such as the site analyses or conceptual plans (January 17, February 21, May 23, and July 12, 2023).
- Two presentations to the Recreation, Music, and Parks Commission at the regular meetings (March 15 and September 20, 2023).
- Two presentations to the City Council at its regular meetings (December, April 3, and October 16, 2023).
- Several online surveys seeking feedback on specific topics.

The engagement opportunities listed above were promoted in several ways, including through:

- A project webpage with in-depth project information and a form for community members to subscribe to project updates.
- Regular project update emails to those who subscribed to them via the project webpage.
- The City’s and Grindline’s social media channels.
- The City’s Community Update email.
- Emails and social media toolkits provided to key stakeholders (“skateholders”) who helped raise awareness throughout the skating community.

The Recreation, Music, and Parks Commission and City Council meetings are publicly noticed meetings.

COUNCIL GOAL ALIGNMENT

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

As this project advances into the design phase, Grindline will evaluate construction materials' lifecycle costs and durability using low-carbon concrete with lower embodied carbon emissions. Efforts will also be made to reduce or eliminate stormwater runoff and recharge groundwater.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This action does not constitute a “project” as defined by Section 15378 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), as it will not result in a direct physical change in the environment or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change to the environment. The City will review the project and its potential impacts in accordance with CEQA requirements prior to seeking City Council approval for the construction phase.

FINANCIAL IMPACTS

There are sufficient funds available in the project's adopted budget of \$1,528,000 for FY 23/24 to complete the design phase. Funding sources include Sonoma County Measure M – Parks for All, the American Rescue Plan Act, Parkland Impact Fees, and the General Fund.

ALTERNATIVES

The City Council may direct the project team to revise the concept plan to modify the proposed skatepark's location, footprint, and/or design.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution with Exhibit A (Professional Services Agreement)
2. Recommended Concept Plan for Lucchesi Skatepark