



Community & Economic Development Department
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Planning Division

CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD MEETING DATE: MAY 15, 2024
AGENDA ITEM NO.:3

PROPOSED PROJECT

Case Numbers	Not Applicable		
Request	To provide input on the preparation of the Fairmount Park Master Plan		
Applicant	Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department		
Project Location	2601 Fairmount Boulevard, generally situated south of State Route 60, west of Market Street, north of Houghton Avenue and Locust Street, and east of the Santa Ana River.		
APN	207-060-005; 207-070-003; 207-070-004; 207-070-008; 207-070-005; 207-070-006; 207-070-007; 207-090-011; 207-110-002; 207-110-010		
Ward	1		
Neighborhood	Downtown		
Historic District	Not Applicable		
Historic Designation	City Landmark #69		
Staff Planner	Not Applicable		

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that the Cultural Heritage Board provide input on the preparation of the Fairmount Park Master Plan.

BACKGROUND

Fairmount Park

The history of Fairmount Park is quite extensive. Fairmount Park is approximately 280 acres in size, situated near the Santa Ana River, south of State Route 60, and west of Market Street. Fairmount

Park is the largest park in Riverside. First dedicated in 1898, it is also the second oldest park in the City.

The area that would eventually become Fairmount Park was the original site of a Cahuilla Village, one of three Native American rancherías just outside of the Mile Square that were abandoned by the late 1800s. In 1883, at the suggestion of Charles M. (C.M.) Loring, Samuel Cary (S.C.) Evans Sr. donated land to the City with what would ultimately become the original park acreage. On October 6, 1897, 35 acres of land was dedicated as Fairmount Park and on April 9, 1898, the park officially opened.

Over the course of time additional land was donated to expand the park. While working on the development of the 1915-16 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego (today Balboa Park), the Olmsted Brothers, sons of the nationally recognized landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, were commissioned by Mayor S.C. Evans Jr., the City Council, and the Parks Board to develop a plan for Fairmount Park. The plan was to include but not limited to modification to the existing lake, new roadways, trees, and a swimming pool. The Olmsted plan was submitted to the city on June 1911. The entirety of the Olmsted plan was not completed at that time but was reintroduced in 1923 with the expansion of Lake Evans.

Fairmount Park was designated as City Landmark #69 on December 18, 1985. The information summarized above is only a small excerpt of Fairmount Parks history. The full history is included in the attached designation staff report, 2002 Cultural Resources Report, and Fairmount Park: Riverside Treasure by Patricia Stewart (2005). The Landmark Resolution specifies that the designation includes all publicly visible elements of the park, including, but not limited to, the configuration of the lakeshores, the Fairmount Park Bandshell, the Fairmount Park Golf Course, the grounds of the Riverside Lawn Bowling Club, the Fairmount Park Rose Garden, the Food Machinery Corporation "Water Buffalo", Union Pacific Engine No. 6051, and the three Mission Revival restroom buildings.

Fairmount Park Master Plan

The Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department (PRCSD) is planning to issue an RFP for preparation of the Fairmount Park Master Plan. The goal of the project is to chart a path to enhance the park to increase activity while preserving the historic integrity of the park. The final product will be a cultural landscape masterplan and report that will follow historic research standards. The Master plan will include a conceptual plan of the entire 280 acres and a focused plan of the park historic core.

The RFP will be publicly available on Planet Bids. The ideal consultant, or team, will consist of landscape architects who are familiar with the Riverside community and Olmsted historic designs.

The selected consultant will:

- Evaluate the existing conditions including a detailed site survey.
- Consider current deferred maintenance efforts.
- Evaluate the original 1911 Olmsted Brothers Plan.
- Evaluate past studies and evaluations of the park.
- Conduct an analysis of the changes that have occurred over time.
- Convene a stakeholder group comprised of approximately a dozen interested community members well versed in the history of the park.
- Conduct a community input process including surveys of park patrons.
- Acknowledge the hydrologic function of the park.

- Consider current amenities including, but not limited to the lakes, rose garden, band shell, armory, golf course, boat house, Issak Walton building, tennis courts, lawn bowling center, playgrounds, and open spaces.
- Evaluate vacant land and underutilized land within the park.
- Consider potential uses and renovation of auxiliary buildings throughout the park.
- Propose synergies with adjacent uses and properties including the church property on the southwest side of the park.
- Articulate and recommend improved circulation of the park for motor vehicles (including parking), pedestrian, bicycle, and skateboard.
- Based on input from the stakeholders and community, prepare several opportunities for the enhancement of the park.
- Prepare a final master plan of the park based on stakeholder and community input.
- Complete cost estimates for all the individual opportunities.

It is estimated that this effort will take one year and cost approximately \$150,000 and is funded through the PRCSD general fund budget. CEQA, NEPA, and agency permits will not be completed as part of this effort. Once the Fairmount Park Master Plan is completed, the City will be in a stronger position to apply for grant funding to make future improvements to the park. It is the goal of PRCSD to list this resource on the National Register at a later time.

STRATEGIC PLAN

This item contributes to the Envision Riverside 2025 City Council Strategic Priority 2, Arts, Culture and Recreation, specifically Goal 1.3 (Improve parks, recreational amenities, open space, and trail development, and fulfill critical lifecycle and facility maintenance needs); and Priority 2, Community Well Being, specifically Goal 2.3 Strengthen neighborhood identities and improve community health and the physical environment through amenities and programs that foster an increased sense of community and enhanced feelings of pride and belonging citywide.

This item aligns with the cross-cutting threads as follows:

1. Community Trust – Community and park stakeholders will be engaged during the process of planning the future of Fairmount Park. The Fairmount Park Master Plan will be a direct response to the needs, problems, and opportunities discovered during the planning process.
2. Equity – The Fairmount Park Master Plan will evaluate existing conditions at the park to recommend any changes needed to provide equitable access to arts, culture, and recreational offerings, to ensure every member of the community has equal access to fully benefit from Fairmount Park.
3. Fiscal Responsibility – Once the Fairmount Park Master Plan is completed, the City will be in a stronger position to apply for grant funding to make recommended improvements to the park, minimizing the need for City General Funds for future improvements.
4. Innovation – The Fairmount Park Master Plan will provide recommendations for how the park can adapt to better meet the changing needs of the community while honoring the historic significance of the park.
5. Sustainability & Resiliency – The recommendations presented in the Fairmount Park Master Plan will balance improvements to meet the current needs of the community with the need to honor the historic significance of the park along with stewardship of the lake system and open spaces which hosts an abundance of wildlife. This work will be done without compromising the anticipated needs of the future.

EXHIBITS LIST

1. Aerial/Location Map

2. City Landmark #69 Resolution
3. Cultural Heritage Board Staff Report 12-18-1985
4. 2002 Cultural Resource Report
5. Fairmount-1895-1911-Park Surveys, Preliminary Plan and Planting Plan with Plant list
6. Fairmount Park Improvement Plan_Apr2024
7. Fairmount Park: Riverside Treasure
8. Fairmount Park Improvements Update February 2008
9. Fairmount Park Task Force Recommendations for Market Street Frontage 2007

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Approved by: Maribeth Tinio, City Planner