



County of Monterey

Board of Supervisors
Chambers
168 W. Alisal St., 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

Board Report

File #: 16-1130, Version: 1

- a. Receive a presentation of the final proposal from the Tatum's Garden Foundation for an Inclusive Playground at Toro Park.
- b. Provide direction on recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.
- c. Support the adoption of a Resolution authorizing the RMA Director/Interim Parks Director to initiate the development of an Inclusive Playground at Toro Park, including a Letter of Intent with Tatum's Garden Foundation, Inc., to raise funds for planning, design, development and long term maintenance of the project.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Parks Commission:

- a. Receive presentation of a final proposal from the Tatum's Garden Foundation (TGF) to develop an Inclusive Playground at Toro Park
- b. Provide direction on recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.
- c. Recommend the adoption of a Resolution authorizing the RMA Director/Interim Parks Director to initiate the development of an Inclusive Playground at Toro Park, including a Letter of Intent with Tatum's Garden Foundation, Inc., to raise funds for planning, design, development and long term maintenance.

SUMMARY:

At the February 4, 2016 Park Commission meeting, a proposal to develop an Inclusive Playground at Toro Park was presented by the Tatum's Garden Foundation (TGF) (**Attachment A -TGF Proposal**). The commission supported the proposal and established an Ad Hoc Working Group to assist in the effort (**Attachment B - Park Commission Minutes 2/4/16**). The Park Commission's Ad Hoc Working Group included members of the TGF Board of Directors, Park Commission, staff from Supervisors Potter's Office and Parks Department.

The Ad Hoc Working Group met several times to further consider the proposal, provide project input and identify possible location(s) for consideration. The TGF proposal is an offer to plan, design and develop an inclusive playground unique to Toro Park, at the Quail Meadow Picnic Area following the same process and approach that was done to develop Tatum's Garden at Sherwood Park in the City of Salinas. Additionally, TGF would:

- Be responsible for all costs, services and activities necessary to complete the project
- Have control over the community outreach and design process
- Retain and manage Leathers and Associates, a firm who specializes in community design and development of public playgrounds
- Coordinate the work with Leathers and Associates and other project sponsors and oversee the community volunteer development and implementation effort
- Ensure that the project complies with all applicable codes, ordinances, requirements and mandates, etc.

Once complete, the finished project would be gifted to the County. Costs for long-term maintenance have been discussed. TGF's proposal states that upkeep and maintenance of the playground would be the responsibility of the County (RMA/Parks) and TGF proposes to establish a maintenance fund that the County will be able to use to care for and maintain the Inclusive Playground areas.

DISCUSSION:

The commission supported the TGF proposal to develop an Inclusive Playground at Toro Park - in concept - and established an Ad Hoc Working Group to assist in the effort as well as identify a possible location. During the Ad Hoc Working Group meetings there were new ideas and suggestions proposed for consideration however, the TGF had already been through a similar effort with their playground in the City of Salinas and felt confident about their vision and process to design and develop an Inclusive Playground at Toro Park. The process and method is very specific and its success relies on the public outreach, design and implementation, all done with willing community volunteers. The TGF Board of Directors feels that any diversion from this process could significantly alter their ability to undertake the effort.

As your commission is aware, there have been other offers received from willing community groups to help improve or create new recreational opportunities at our parks. The Parks Department embraces these generous offers and in the recently completed Parks Department Strategic Plan one of the goals under financial stability is the collaboration with other non-profit organizations to increase the role of philanthropy in building and sustaining the County's park system. In an effort to help facilitate these offers, the Parks Department worked with your Commission to develop an (unofficial) Park Project Review Process to outline a procedure and process for reviewing and considering a proposed park improvement project (**Attachment C - (draft) Park Project Review Process**). The intent of the process is to better determine whether or not a proposed project is in compliance with existing requirements, agreements, County General Plan, Use Permit, Park Master Plan (if one exists for the park facility), and to preserve and enhance the park's special attributes and resources by ensuring the most appropriate development and use of the public land.

There is no Master Plan to help guide the planning, design and development of Toro Regional Park. Parks Department and other approving bodies are not able to rely on such a plan for current and future development. This creates a challenge to establish "findings" to help determine the appropriateness of a proposed project. The proposal to develop an Inclusive Playground was determined by the Ad Hoc group to meet the criteria in the Proposed Project Review Process (in terms of a proposed use that is appropriate for Toro Park) and that the project could proceed forward so that a design could be further developed and a location identified. Regarding the TGF proposal, a final design won't be completed and submitted until the end of the community outreach and design input process. If so directed, Parks staff will work closely with TGF and their consultant to ensure design of a facility that is appropriate for Toro Park.

Regarding the location of the proposed project, the Ad Hoc group has considered two areas within Toro Park: 1). The front area of the park near the Oak Grove Picnic Area, and 2). The Quail Meadows Picnic Area.

The following provides an analysis of the two possible locations:

1. Front Area (Oak Grove Picnic Area)
 - Available Space: There is an estimated 35,000 square feet of available area tucked in and around existing mature trees, with no known underground utilities other than those that are a part of the restroom, and nearby subsurface storm drains.
 - Site Design: This site is located near the main entrance in the front (day use) area of the park and would

be highly visible; however, it is in an area that is off to the side from the central, open turf area that is considered a distinguishing visual feature of the park. The proposed playground would need to be developed with the surrounding park features and character of Toro Park in mind.

- Issues/Potential Impacts: Environmental (trees, water), drainage, parking and visual impacts.
 - Possible Mitigations: The project would require development outside of drip lines and root zones. If tree(s) require removal, mitigate by replanting as per the Heritage Tree Ordinance. Include a drainage plan, bioswale and wherever possible use pervious surface material. There is ample parking in the immediate area and available space to offset any lost parking. Add additional, native vegetative screening from Scenic Hwy 68 to mitigate potential visual impacts.
2. Quail Meadows Picnic Area (back of park).
- Available Space: There is an estimated 25,000 sq. ft. of space in the general area where the existing playground is located (1 of 3 playground structures similar in type and design that would be replaced). The space is somewhat constrained and narrowed due to the area being defined by the adjacent road, restroom building, and group BBQ. There are utilities in the turf area (new water main/BFP, utilities at the restroom, and subsurface drain line). The retention of the group BBQ is important as the area is made available to the public as a rental. Staff would recommend upgrading the BBQ area to be consistent with and integrate into the TGF project.
 - Site Design: The site is located at the end of the central, open turf area that is considered a distinguishing visual feature of the park and at a transitional area between active (day use) and passive (natural, open space). As with the front area of the park, the proposed playground would need to be developed with the existing, surrounding park features in mind.
 - Issues/Potential Impacts: Environmental (adjacent seasonal creek, water), drainage, traffic, parking, visual.
 - Possible Mitigations: The (new) project would need to be set back from the above ground seasonal drainage channel near the group BBQ. Include a drainage plan, and wherever possible use pervious surface material. There is ample parking in the adjacent lot to accommodate a similar sized playground structure as the existing one, yet limited, available space to expand or offset any lost parking. There is a potential to increase the need for additional handicapped parking spaces due to an expansion of the playground and increase of users, especially those requiring assistance. There is a potential to increase traffic due to an expansion. The area is considered a transitional space between active (day use) and passive (natural, open space). Increase in noise is not considered an impact.

The TGF Board of Directors has clarified that their final proposal specifically identifies the Quail Meadows Picnic Area as the preferred location for the larger sized community designed and built Inclusive Playground. Their proposal also considers the potential for development of a smaller, new playground in the front area of the park near the Oak Grove Picnic Area (in addition to their preferred site at Quail Meadows Picnic Area). As a second phase to their project, the existing path would be renovated and improved as an accessible path of travel to connect these two playground areas once they are complete.

The TGF is also requesting that an agreement between the County and TGF be adopted (Letter of Intent), which would consent to the proposed use of a portion of Toro Park to build a privately-funded Inclusive Playground. The TGF Board of Directors has requested this so that they can begin their fund raising activities.

As stated in the (draft) Proposed Park Project Review Process, the Parks Commission is responsible for acting in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors in promoting, aiding, encouraging and conducting a public parks program, including the development of recreational and park facilities. With that, your Commission is

being asked to take action and forward a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to either recommend moving forward with the TGF project as proposed or an alternative option to the Board of Supervisors, provide input and direction on their proposed process and approach, as well as recommend the adoption of a Resolution authorizing the RMA Director/Interim Parks Director to sign a Letter of Intent with Tatum's Garden Foundation, Inc., for the purpose of raising funds for public outreach, planning, design, development and long term maintenance of an Inclusive Playground at Toro Park.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

County Counsel will work with TGF and Parks staff to draft the Letter of Intent.

FINANCING:

The construction cost and seed money to establish a fund to care for the long term maintenance of the inclusive play structure will be funded by the TGF and their private sector supporters.

Because there is no long term warranty or contractual agreements (project is a community design/build project), there could be a potential impact to the General Fund for any unforeseen building or structural issues, vandalism and future maintenance.

Prepared by: John Akeman, Parks Planning Manager

Approved by: Carl P. Holm, AICP, RMA Director/Interim Parks Director

Attachments:

Attachment A - TGF Proposal

Attachment B - Parks Commission Minutes, 2/4/16

Attachment C - (Draft) Proposed Park Project Review Process