May 09, 2017

Board of Supervisors
3501 Civic Center Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903

SUBJECT: REQUEST TO ADOPT A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE PARADISE BEACH PARK MASTER PLAN AND TO APPROVE THE PARADISE BEACH PARK MASTER PLAN

Dear Supervisors,

RECOMMENDATION:

1. Approve a resolution adopting a Mitigated Negative Declaration of Environmental Impact for the Paradise Beach Park Master Plan
2. Authorize President to execute the Negative Declaration.
3. Approve the Paradise Beach Park Master Plan.

SUMMARY:

In June 2014, your Board identified the need to engage in a master planning process to examine community needs in relation to Paradise Beach Park. A contract with design consultants SWA Group for the master plan was approved at that time.

As part of the master plan development process, the consultant team conducted two community meetings, four focus group sessions, and distributed surveys to a number of local organizations and institutions. Feedback from all of these outreach efforts, along with designer and county staff input, helped to create the attached draft master plan for the 19-acre park. Proposed features include:

- Improved accessibility with a new network of accessible paths for access between all areas of the park.
- Hierarchy of spaces for various outdoor activities—three main gathering locations with additional picnic areas and seating pods scattered throughout the park.
- New sense of arrival including welcoming arrival plaza, pedestrian entry, signage, and sculptural elements.
- Enhanced native habitats with the addition of proposed native gardens.
- Restoration and enhancement of existing infrastructure including the pier and seawall.
- Increased educational/interpretive opportunities with a nature-focused and cultural itinerary.
• Focus on increasing weekday use through the creation of integrated nature-themed play elements.
• Improved park facilities for large gatherings—new pavilions and shade structures will provide more opportunities for gatherings.
• Improvements and expansion of the waterfront opportunities including concession and kayak rental, a large boardwalk, and pier improvements.

On February 13, 2017, Marin County Parks released a draft mitigated negative declaration and initial study for the master plan. After a 30-day comment period, the department received three comment letters.

The department received one letter from the National Marine Fisheries Service. The letter expressed concern over an increase in overwater structure as a result of the kayak launch proposed in the master plan. The letter provided suggestions for the detailed design of the kayak launch that will reduce shading of the water column. In addition, the comment letter encouraged the use of softer solutions to shoreline stabilization than those proposed in the master plan. These comments are noted. Upon implementation of the master plan features, all local, state and federal environmental regulations will be followed. The National Marine Fisheries Service letter is attached for your reference (Attachment A).

Two comment letters were received from County of Marin residents. One comment expressed concern over potential impacts to traffic and safety as a result of implementation of the master plan. It stated that the impacts would occur due to the stated goal of the master plan to attract more users. As noted in the Initial Study, the stated goal of the plan is to increase use of the park during off-peak hours. No additional parking will be provided, therefore implementation of the master plan would have less than significant impacts on traffic and safety. A second comment expressed concern about the potential for significant aesthetic and visual impacts, including the introduction of a more urban or structural experience. This concern relates to a concept for one component of the master plan which is described as the "central gathering place and main picnic area". As noted in the Initial Study, the proposed site design intends to highlight the natural and man-made features of the Park by integrating sweeping views of the Bay, accentuating visual corridors, and opening views at key points. Furthermore, all future development resulting from the Master Plan would be guided by applicable County regulations and requirements, as well as be subject to further CEQA analysis of project-specific impacts. Additional comments were received that did not raise any new concerns for significant environmental impacts. The two letters are attached for your reference as Attachments B-1 and B-2.

The initial study identified several mitigation measures specifically related to biologic, cultural, and geologic resources that would reduce the project's potential environmental impacts to a level that is less than significant. These include:
• Providing surveys and monitoring of potential rare plants.
• Performing work at certain times to avoid adverse effects within critical habitat and to special status species.
• Providing surveys, timed construction, special methods and monitoring for birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).
• Performing a bat roost assessment and monitoring.
• Coordinating authorization with permitting agencies for any work within the 100-foot shoreline band jurisdiction.
• Excluding prehistoric archaeological site from future development.
• Providing qualified archaeological or cultural monitor for work occurring within buffer zones.
• Conduct geotechnical survey for future design work.

By adopting the mitigated negative declaration, your board will be incorporating these mitigation measures into the proposed master plan.

Upon approval of this item by your board, the draft master plan will become the final master plan. Construction of the projects identified in the master plan has a preliminary estimate totaling approximately $20,000,000, which is not funded at this time. However, this long-term planning document will establish the framework for future decisions. Complete documentation is available for review in the Clerk of the Board office.

FISCAL/STAFFING IMPACT:
Approval of the recommended actions has no fiscal impact.

REVIEWED BY:

[ ] Department of Finance [x] N/A
[ ] County Counsel [x] N/A
[ ] Human Resources [x] N/A

Senior Landscape Architect Tara McIntire is the principal author of this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Chamberlain
Assistant Director

CC: TM/kbl

Attachments: National Marine Fisheries Service comment letter
Public comment letters (2)