



DRAFT

REPORT TO MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NO: _____

**Draft for Parks and Recreation Commission
Review on September 14, 2011**

Council Date: September 27, 2011

SUBJECT: Approval of Revisions to the Orchard Heritage Park Master Plan

REPORT IN BRIEF

On September 24, 2002, the City Council approved an Orchard Heritage Park Master Plan (RTC 02-369) to guide the future care, use and development of an area approximately 10 acres in size, located on the south end of the Community Center comprising the apricot orchard and the Sunnyvale Heritage Center (SHC), formerly known as the "Arboretum". This report seeks Council approval of a revised Master Plan to reflect existing conditions on site and proposed changes in the future use and development of the site. (Please see Attachment A: Orchard Heritage Park Master Plan – Annotated Site Plan.)

BACKGROUND

Orchard Heritage Park contains an apricot orchard of approximately 800 trees and an area called the Sunnyvale Heritage Center consisting of landscaped grounds and various structures including park maintenance and multi-purpose buildings.

There have been many additions to the facilities located on or near the site. In May, 2001, the Orchard Heritage Park Interpretive Exhibit was dedicated and gifted to the City from the Sunnyvale Historical Society and Museum Association (SHSMA), which organized donations for its design and construction. Previously in 1999, City Council approved a project for the construction of a barn to house equipment to be used by Charlie Olsen to maintain the orchard (RTC 99-237). Before construction began, Ms. Clara Bianchi of San Jose agreed to donate a barn used by her family in the orchard business since 1918, and it was relocated to Orchard Heritage Park in 2002. Also in 2002, the Council approved a Master Plan for Orchard Heritage Park, the first master plan for an individual park site in Sunnyvale. The revision of which is the subject of this report.

On June 21, 2004 the City Council approved a 50-year agreement between the City of Sunnyvale and Sunnyvale Historical Society and Museum Association (SHSMA) for the design, development, construction and lease of a Heritage Museum to be located within Orchard Heritage Park. The Heritage Museum was completed and dedicated to the City on September 27, 2008. Prior to the opening of the new Museum, the SHSMA continued to operate its museum programs off-site at the Murphy Park Building where, under agreement with the City, it continued to have use of a large storage area for their artifacts and

rotating exhibits. When the new museum opened in Orchard Heritage Park, the agreement allowed SHSMA to continue its use of the Murphy Park storage area for at least one year or until the City had a need for it.

EXISTING POLICY

Open Space and Recreation Sub-Element:

2.2.C. Regional Approach

The City embraces a regional approach to providing and preserving open space and providing open space and recreational services, facilities and amenities for the broader community. It is the City's policy, therefore, to:

- 2.2C.4 Provide, develop and maintain Special Use Parks and Facilities.
- 2.2C4.c. Provide for a balance between general recreation uses and special interest uses in parks and facilities
- 2.2C.4.e. Consider the designation, development and management of an Orchard Heritage Park at the Community Center site consistent with an overall plan and in cooperation with the Sunnyvale Historical Society.

Orchard Heritage Park Master Plan

Action Statements:

2. Maintain a working fruit orchard throughout the largest portion of Orchard Heritage Park for as long a time period as practical within the resources made available by the City. Provide public access to the greatest extent possible while meeting the goal of maintaining a working fruit orchard.
5. Assist the Sunnyvale Historical Society per written agreements, and to the greatest extent practical, in developing a Heritage Museum facility at Orchard Heritage Park consistent with City Council direction.

DISCUSSION

Exclusive use of multi-purpose building

The location of the Heritage Museum has proven to be less than ideal in terms of generating public awareness and use because the view is blocked from the surrounding parking lots by a dumpster enclosure and a maintenance building with associated storage. The relocation of those structures to elsewhere on the Community Center site, and the addition of landscape improvements in their place, would make the museum more visible and the Heritage Center more functional and attractive. (Please see Attachment A: Orchard Heritage Park Master Plan – Annotated Site Plan).

In August of 2010, the City notified the SHSMA of its desire to renovate the Murphy Park Building and the eventual need to take back the storage space. The SHSMA submitted an initial proposal to construct a storage building behind the museum and on the edge of the orchard that would meet their current and future storage needs but would also require the removal of several orchard trees and might have had an additional impact upon the maintenance of the orchard. Staff met with Charlie Olson the Orchardist and Laura Babcock of the SHSMA and concluded that alternative solutions should be sought. Upon further investigation, including more discussions with the stakeholders, staff proposed the SHSMA be given exclusive use of the Sunnyvale Heritage Center Multi-Purpose Building for storage and other purposes in support of the museum. In exchange the SHSMA would provide for improvements to the façade of the building so that its appearance would be similar to the museum building. Both Charlie Olson and the SHSMA agreed that this would be a viable way to meet the museum's storage needs without impacting the orchard. If approved, this will require an amendment to the agreement between the City and the SHSMA that would have to be approved by Council at a later date.

All current users of the multi-purpose building (city programs and community non-profit groups) would be relocated to other facilities on the community center campus or to a park building. The restrooms in the multi-purpose building have exterior access and could still be made available for use by the public.

Master plan changes to Orchard Heritage Park

The Heritage Museum is located in the Heritage Center and surrounded by the orchard, barn, multi-purpose building and park maintenance building. Public access is from the community center parking lot. The museum is minimally visible from the parking lot because the field of view is obscured by a dumpster enclosure, cinder block wall, metal shed and the park maintenance building. Many members of the public and even those who use the Community Center and its facilities are unaware of the museum due to its hidden location. Removing the metal shed and cinder block wall, relocating the dumpster enclosure and park maintenance building somewhere on the community center campus and adding landscape improvements would have multiple benefits. The museum would be more visible and accessible and the entire Heritage Center area would be more accessible, attractive and functional for the community. Attachment B shows a concept drawing for a new museum entry feature.

If the revised master plan is approved, staff would submit a capital project sheet for the improvements. Then Council would review it along with all other Park Dedication Fund projects and determine if and when it should be funded

and completed. During the design phase of the project the public would be able to provide input and Council would approve the conceptual design. The attached Sunnyvale Heritage Center Graphic concept (Attachment B) is only meant to provide an example of what the area might look like if the structures are removed and landscape improvements are made. Developing an actual design, including relocation of the dumpster and park maintenance building, will require the assistance of a landscape architect, the cost of which would be included in a capital project for future consideration.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no expected net fiscal impact to the General Fund. Any revenue lost to the General Fund as the result of granting exclusive use of the multi-purpose building to the SHSMA is expected to be recouped by renting other facilities to those groups currently using that building.

If park maintenance and related structures are to be relocated and landscape improvements are made to the Heritage Center portion of Orchard Heritage Park, it will require an appropriation from the Park Dedication Fund into a new project, as no funding currently exists for this purpose. If the proposed master plan is approved, staff will submit a capital project for review during the next projects budget cycle to be considered in the context of all requests for Park Dedication funds.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made through posting of the Parks and Recreation Commission's agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board, on the City's Web site, and the availability of the agenda and report in the Office of the City Clerk, Sunnyvale Public Library, Senior Center, Community Center, and Department of Community Services Administration.

Notice of Commission and Council meetings regarding this report was also distributed to the "Friends of Parks and Recreation" mailing list (a list of organizations and individuals who have expressed an interest in parks and recreation issues).

Three public meetings for the project were conducted by Parks Division staff on Thursday, July 28, 2011, from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and on Saturday, July 30, 2011 from 11 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Notification of the meetings was provided through posting of informational fliers around Orchard Heritage Park and the Community Center Campus, mail delivery to neighbors that live within 1,000 feet of the development, and all neighborhood associations within the City. Those that attended any of the meetings and provided contact information received additional notification of scheduled Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council meetings on this subject.

A total of 35 people attended and provided input, asked questions about the project and shared concerns regarding neighborhood issues. The majority of those providing comments approved of providing the SHSMA with the exclusive use of the multi-purpose building and not removing any orchard trees. They also approved relocating the park maintenance building and related structures so that landscape improvements could be made thereby making the Heritage Center more accessible, attractive and usable. (Attachment C: Summary of Public Meeting Notes).

ALTERNATIVES

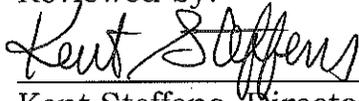
1. Approve the proposed Master Plan of Orchard Heritage Park as depicted by Attachment A.
2. Do not approve the proposed Master Plan of Orchard Heritage Park.
3. Provide other direction to staff as Council deems appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends Alternative No. 1: Council approve the proposed revised Master Plan of Orchard Heritage Park as depicted by Attachment A.

Approving the exclusive use of the multi-purpose building by the SHSMA is in accordance with the Orchard Heritage Park Master Plan as it enables the Heritage Museum to operate effectively and preserves the orchard trees. Approving the relocation of the park maintenance building and other structures and providing landscape improvements in their place will significantly improve the visibility and appearance of the existing Sunnyvale Heritage Park Museum.

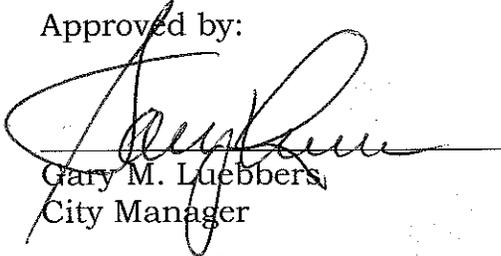
Reviewed by:



Kent Steffens, Director of Public Works

Prepared by: Scott Morton, Parks/Golf Superintendent; and
Michael Abney, Administrative Analyst

Approved by:



Gary M. Luebbers,
City Manager

Attachments

- A. Sunnyvale Orchard Heritage Park Master Plan and Proposed Master Plan.
- B. Sunnyvale Heritage Center Graphic Concept
- C. Summary of Public Meeting Notes

Orchard Heritage Park Master Plan – Annotated Site Plan





ATTACHMENT C

Summary of Public Input for Orchard Heritage Park Master Plan

The following is a summary of resident input from a questionnaire that was given to attendees at three public meetings held during July 2011 and from subsequent written correspondence. These meetings were announced via a mailing that was sent to all residents within a one thousand foot radius of the Park, contact with local neighborhood associations and stakeholders and by flyers posted on the site. This is not a verbatim accounting of all statements provided at all meetings; rather, it is a summary and similar comments are only listed once. Resident input is as follows:

Provide SHSMA with exclusive use of multi-purpose building

- Support for providing storage space for the SHSMA.
- Support for not impacting the orchard.

Proposed master plan changes

- Concern that future improvements to the Heritage Center will bring loud parties to the area.
- Support for making the Museum more visible from the parking lot and adding landscape improvements. These improvements will make the Heritage Center, Community Center and neighborhood more attractive.
- Support for making more of the Orchard Heritage Park and Heritage Center accessible to the public.
- Concern about future placement of Parks maintenance shed and the effect on the neighborhood and/or orchard. The location of the shed and other structures should be determined before approving the change to the master plan and should not cause removal of any trees.

Other

- Concern that the Heritage Center is not currently open enough hours for public use.