



## STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** FEBRUARY 9, 2021

**TO:** MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
PARK AND ACTIVITIES COMMISSION  
PLANNING COMMISSION

**FROM:** ALEXA DAVIS, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER  
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**SUBJECT:** FINAL CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FOR GEORGE F CANYON NATURE CENTER

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### OVERVIEW

A final conceptual design of a new George F Canyon Nature Center is presented to the City Council, Park and Activities and Planning Commissions for review and input.

### BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

In November 2018, the City Council approved an initial agreement with Roesling, Nakamura and Terada Architects and Spurlock Landscape Architects for a Nature Center Replacement Study to be completed in Fiscal Year 2018-19. The process included a community meeting in February 2019 and a presentation to the Park and Activities Commission which provided an opportunity for additional public input in March 2019. The City Council provided a preliminary review at the City Council Policy Development Session in March 2019.

Ultimately, a first draft was presented to the City Council in June 2019 which proposed two independent buildings (Nature Center and Community Room), an outdoor classroom and view deck for a total of over 5,500 square feet and a cost of \$2.7 million. Interested in reducing the overall cost and scope of the project, the City Council appointed a subcommittee of Councilmembers Zerunyan and Zuckerman to work with staff and the architect to develop an alternative option. The Agreement with the architecture firm was amended and approved by the City Council in December 2019, which provided additional ability to revise the design concept to meet the goals of the City Council. Over the past several months, City staff and the City Council subcommittee have met with the architect to consider revisions. Additionally, the City had a site survey and preliminary soils report prepared to assist the architect in preparing a revised design.

A final draft of the design concept was presented to the Park and Activities Commission for review at its October 19, 2020 meeting. In an effort to provide additional outreach to the community, the Park and Activities Commission recommended that the City hold a joint meeting of the City Council, Park and Activities and Planning Commissions with opportunity for additional public comment. This recommendation was then reviewed and approved by the City Council at its October 27, 2020 meeting. The City Council directed staff to schedule a community meeting to include City Commissions in early 2021.

The final conceptual design, estimated at \$1.7 million, remains consistent with input received over the last two years by the public, adjacent neighborhood, Park and Activities Commission and City Council Subcommittee. The updated design has a reduced footprint with a one-story single building, now 3,355 square feet, and an estimated reduction of \$1 million from the initial design cost. The proposed design concept maintains the same architectural and landscape/parking features as presented in the initial version. The revised design also shares the same goals as the previous version: a welcoming gateway to the City, considerate of the surrounding neighborhoods, and emphasis on the canyon, trails and native habitat.

Concerns addressed by the public and the Palos Verdes Land Conservancy as it relates to traffic and flow, parking, bus access, noise concerns and visibility of the corner are all considered in this updated design:

#### Traffic Impacts

The parking lot access point from Hitching Post Drive will have removable bollards or a security gate to reduce traffic in the residential neighborhood as well as concerns with cut-through traffic to Palos Verdes Drive East.

The eastbound traffic on Palos Verdes Drive North will be minimally impacted as a new bus stop/drop-off curbside pull-out is proposed which provides through-traffic to continue flow on the adjacent lane.

#### Parking

About 19-20 parking spaces are proposed onsite, consistent with the current spacing that allows for up to 20 vehicles. There are 8-10 additional spaces that exist on Palos Verdes Drive East adjacent to the Canyon. There may be opportunities for installing additional spaces with the consideration for expanding the southern portion of Palos Verdes Drive East adjacent to the Nature Center. This concept would be studied as part of a future Palos Verdes Drive East street resurfacing project expected within the next few years.

#### Bus Access

Nature Center participant bus drop-off is infrequent under the Center's regular operation and is coordinated with school field trips. Generally, buses drop off students and do not remain parked while students complete their visit. The proposed curbside pull-out provides an opportunity for buses to drop off students without the need to travel on Palos Verdes Drive East, which has posed concerns

under the current operation. Students then will have a safe walkway through the parking lot to enter the Nature Center and Canyon site.

### Noise Mitigation

There is no expected increase in noise for the adjacent neighborhood; however, the design considers extended canyon landscape buffering the building from the Hitching Post neighborhood as well as placing the outdoor classroom on the opposite side of the building next to Palos Verdes Drive East. To reduce traffic noise for the outdoor classroom, there is a storage area as well as a screen wall which will consider noise mitigation efforts within a final design.

### Visibility of Corner

As a focal point at a very high-trafficked intersection of the City, the aesthetics of the corner have been an important element of the design process. The design was developed to be an inviting space as well an attractive feature at a prominent intersection. With an ultimate goal of being a welcoming gateway into the City and to George F Canyon, the design incorporates three-rail white fencing, enhanced plantings, stormwater basins with decorative boulders to be determined within the final specifications and plans.

Rick Espana of Roesling, Nakamura and Terada Architects will be present at the community meeting to provide an overview of the proposed final conceptual design and answer questions about the design. Adrienne Mohan of the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy will be present as well to provide a brief overview about the programs and services offered through the George F Canyon Nature Center.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

For the draft and design to date, the City has expended and budgeted a total of \$46,600 for the architect (conceptual design) and engineering costs (site survey and preliminary soils report) from Park Facilities Fees, previously known as Quimby funds. To date, the City has identified \$355,904 in Proposition 68 grant funds and approximately \$127,000 in Measure A funds. City staff is continuing to research funding opportunities, which include other available grants and partner agencies, to help fund construction of the project. At this time, no additional City funds have been allocated for this project. The use of General Funds are not expected to support this project.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

The agenda and staff report for this item were posted and noticed as required. There was additional outreach to the public via City news e-blast, street banners, direct e-mail messaging to past public participants and through the City's social media channels beginning two weeks prior to the date of this meeting.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the City Council, Park and Activities Commission and the Planning Commission review the conceptual design, receive public comment and provide input. Comments will be incorporated into a final draft presented to the Park and Activities Commission for future recommendation and approval by the City Council.

### Attachments

*A- Conceptual Design Proposal Presentation*