
Citizens' Advisory Committee

Memo-23-08
Meeting 23-02
March 27, 2023

To: Citizens' Advisory Committee
From: Megan Dreger, Grants Program Manager
Subject: Consider 20% Funding Application: City of San José – Elia Park

REVENUE/COST

The City of San José currently has \$1,344,230 in 20% Program funds available. The City of San José has requested that \$1,000,000 be applied toward their Elia Park Project.

BACKGROUND

The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (Authority), through its 5 Year Plan (adopted in 1996), established the 20% Funding Program; a grant program funded by District 1 Assessment funds, managed, and overseen by the Authority and benefitting the cities and county within the Authority's jurisdiction (Campbell, Milpitas, Morgan Hill, San José, and Santa Clara County). The primary objective of the Program is for participating jurisdictions to acquire and develop open space lands within their own jurisdictions (See the 20% Funding Program Policy & Procedure document (Exhibit A).

DISCUSSION

On February 9, 2023, the Open Space Authority Staff received a 20% Funding Program Application from the City of San José (City) requesting \$1,000,000 to be used for the City to construct Elia Park. This is a new park to be constructed in the Alma neighborhood at 100 W. Alma Avenue.

Elia Park will be a children's park and public green space located directly adjacent to the City's Alma Community Center located at 136 W. Alma Ave, San José, CA 95110. The City has produced a Draft Alma Neighborhood Park Master Plan Document for the site now known as Elia Park (Exhibit B). Figures from this report include an Aerial Site Map (Exhibit C) and a Site Plan (Exhibit D).

The City's 20% Fund Application (Exhibit E) described the project:

The Alma Neighborhood Park is a children's park and public green space at the southwest corner of West Alma Ave and Sanborn Ave. The site is anchored by a large paved and soft-surfaced area that contains play features and multiple seating options ranging from seatwalls to picnic tables. A mature and large tree will be imported to serve as a memorial to the land donors and, along with a bright steel trellis. Signage will celebrate the donors by connecting them to popular features: "Rocco's Playground" and "Luisa's Garden". The central hub of the park is surrounded by green space on all sides, including a 'community wall' that will provide a potential space for

color and neighborhood character. Sight lines are kept clear by maintaining a topographically level site and ensuring that all plantings and seatwalls are low. A fence with three entrance gates surrounds the entire perimeter, and a sculptural element that identifies Alma Neighborhood Park to all those walking or driving by as a community landmark.

The land was donated to the City of San José and currently contains several buildings, including one residential tenant and three commercial tenants. These have been converted to month-to-month leases in anticipation of demolishing the structures (See Council Memo, Exhibit G) in order to construct a neighborhood park.

On January 31, 2023, the San José City Council passed a resolution approving the application for grant funds under the 20% Funding Program (See Exhibit F). The City has additional funding to complete the project with \$5,172,000 in the 2023-2027 Adopted Capital Improvement Program. This funding, combined with the \$1,000,000 from the Authority's 20% Funding would fund the entire project through construction.

In addition, if the 20% Funding Program application is approved, the City will grant a conservation easement for the Property in the Authority's favor.

Authority staff reviewed the 20% Funding Program application and related material. Staff finds the Project to be consistent with the Authority's 20% Funding Program. As outlined in the Policy & Procedure document, the Project will provide the following open space benefits:

- i) enhance a property's open space benefits defined as improvement or rehabilitation of degraded ecosystems;
- ii) enhance public awareness and appreciation of open space, such as construction of trails, overlooks, observation blinds, benches, and interpretive signs; and/or,
- iii) convert "abandoned lands," as utility rights-of-way, surplus school sites, quarries, etc., into lands with open space benefits.

Approval of the City of San José's 20% Program application for the Elia Park Project would appropriate \$1,000,000 from the 20% Program, leaving a remaining balance of \$344,230 in the City's 20% Program fund.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff is requesting that the Citizens' Advisory Committee consider this grant application and vote on whether to recommend the application to the Board of Directors for approval.

*Attachment(s): Exhibit A -- 20% Funding Program Policy & Procedure
Exhibit B -- Draft Alma Neighborhood Park Master Plan Document
Exhibit C -- Aerial Site Map
Exhibit D -- Site Plan
Exhibit E -- 20% Funding Program Application – Elia Park
Exhibit F -- City of San José Resolution No. RES2023-18
Exhibit G -- City of San José Council Memorandum re: Alma Sanborn Donations*