

To: Honorable Robert McBain, Mayor

Honorable Members of the City Council

From: 2019-2020 Capital Improvement Projects Review Committee

Conna McCarthy, Chair

Date: May 8, 2019

The Capital Improvement Projects Review Committee (CIP) met on February 20, 2019 to begin work on project recommendations to the City Council based on community requests for new capital projects for the 2019-20 budget cycle. The CIP Review Committee met for a total of 5 meetings and joined together for a site tour on May 4, 2019. The Committee reviewed several new proposals from the public in addition to review of long-term projects that have remained on the CIP List. The Committee solicited comments and proposals from the public and conducted an extensive outreach process inviting participation by individual stake holders, resident groups, Commissions and City staff. All meetings were noticed to the public.

Criteria for evaluating and recommending potential projects included the following factors: community-wide benefits, public safety, wide-ranging public support, enhancement of existing community assets, and, continued investment in ongoing projects for the long-term benefit of the City and its residents. Using established criteria, the CIP Review Committee reviewed larger ongoing multi-phased city projects, and, evaluated smaller, resident-nominated, and geographically diverse projects. In keeping with precedent, and continuing to encourage extensive public engagement, the process incorporated an on-line proposal form readily available on the City website. The Committee invited residents to present their ideas during open and noticed CIP meetings.

In sum, there were a total of 26 projects evaluated, including 9 new 2019-20 resident proposals, 11 pre-existing 2018-19 resident proposals, and 6 ongoing multi-phased city projects. Although each of the 26 proposals is fully discussed below, CIP Review Committee recommendations with respect to the 9 new 2019-20 resident proposals can be summarized as follows:

1. The following 3 proposals can move forward with City Council support:
  - Renovation of PMS Hard-courts
  - Installation of ALPRs at Piedmont Entrances
  - Installation of a drinking fountain (for humans and dogs) in Piedmont Park
2. The following 3 proposals are recommended as meritorious but requiring additional study from public safety and/or public works:
  - Two related Wildwood Gardens proposals
  - Development of a landscape triangle at Blair and Calvert Court
3. The following 3 proposals are determined to need direction from City Council:
  - Blair park
  - Two related Witter Field proposals

The CIP Review Committee appreciates assistance provided by City Staff. The meticulous background research and ongoing hands-on support from Parks and Projects Manager Nancy Kent, was an invaluable resource to the CIP review process. An in-depth overview of current and developing recreation needs by Recreation Director Sara Lillevand, an overview of public safety improvements from Police Chief Jeremy Bowers, as well as insights and observations by City Council Liaison to the CIP, Mayor Robert McBain, were particularly helpful to the CIP review process. Additional thanks go to City Administrator Paul Benoit and Director of Public Works Chester Nakahara for their ongoing leadership.

### **Ongoing Multi-Phased City Projects**

The CIP Review Committee has been updated regarding ongoing multi-phased citywide projects through access to staff information and presentations. As a result of their review of updated information, the 2019-20 CIP Review Committee recommends that ongoing multi-phased city projects, including the Aquatics Center, Coaches Field, the Linda Beach Master Plan, renovations of Veterans Hall and the Recreation Center, renovation of Recreation Department Tennis Courts and the introduction of Safety Cameras (as prescribed by Piedmont Police Chief Jeremy Bowers) are important civic capital improvements and strongly support the continued funding to study and move these projects forward. The CIP Review Committee acknowledges the importance of citywide projects to address issues of deferred maintenance and the need to upgrade existing facilities to serve residents now and into the future.

#### **1. Aquatics Center**

The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee acknowledges the long-term need for a replacement of the existing aging swimming pool. The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee recommends this project among the ongoing City projects that should move forward. The plan identified as the Master Plan Conceptual Design, which was recommended by the Recreation Commission and accepted by the City Council in November 2016, continues to be supported in concept.

#### **2. Coaches Field: Turf and Lights**

Coaches Field improvements have been a CIP project for several years. Piedmont City Council allocated funds in 2016-17 for a Master Plan. The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee continues to support City Council efforts to develop a Master Plan to determine the feasibility of accommodating an Under 14 (U-14) soccer field, installation of artificial turf, field lighting, improving ingress and egress onto Moraga Avenue, expanding parking, and the use and access to the adjacent skate park. Coaches Field provides revenue generation and has strong public support and public-private funding possibilities. The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee appreciates the commencement of open public meetings, initiated by Recreation Director Sara Lillevand, to gather input to improve this project.

#### **3. Linda Beach Master Plan**

The Linda Beach Master Plan (LBMP), a CIP Project initiated in 2017, continues to receive enthusiastic support from the 2019-20 CIP Review Committee. Under the leadership of Recreation Director Sara Lillevand, beginning in 2018 and continuing over the course of many months, the LBMP was publically vetted through a well-organized, robust community outreach program. Specifically, the community design process guided by Groundworks Office, landscape architects, sought to incorporate the Piedmont Recreation Department's needs and vision for potential uses of Linda Beach Park, sensitized to the

impacts new amenities might have on the adjacent neighborhood, resulting in a Master Plan that creates a sense of community while meeting the high aesthetic standards Piedmonters expect. The public /private fund raising process has begun for this project with strong support from Piedmont Beautification Foundation. The final and fully vetted version of the LBMP, presented to the 2019-20 CIP Review Committee by Recreation Director Sara Lillevand on March 5, 2019, was enthusiastically received by 2019-20 CIP Review Committee Members.

#### 4. Veterans Hall and Recreation Center

In 2017, the City approved a contract with Siegel and Strain to develop a master plan for the Recreation Center and Veterans Hall with the specific goal to create a logical, cost-effective and flexible plan to meet the present and future space needs of the Piedmont Recreation Department within the context of the two existing buildings and their sites. Staff reviewed the ongoing issues dealing with the Veterans Building including some inherent design issues that limit its use for a variety of civic needs. The existing floor plan is a constraint on use for the unmet needs for civic, recreation and pre-school programs. The building, which is shared with the Police Department, is believed to be structurally sound, but the internal space could be made more adaptable so that multiple activities could be conducted concurrently. The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee supports further study of the Veterans Building.

The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee supports continued exploration, as outlined in the 2018-19 CIP recommendations, of ongoing issues regarding the suitability of the existing Recreation Center building, built as a house, to be the principal recreation building for Piedmont. The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee agrees any significant changes should be considered in conjunction with the adjacent Aquatic Center renovations.

#### 5. Renovation of Recreation Center Tennis Courts

The City's four tennis court facilities are resurfaced on a rotational schedule. The Recreation Center Courts are next in line for rehabilitation. These heavily used courts serve both recreational players and also serve as headquarters for the PHS Boys & Girls teams, the Piedmont Ladies Tennis Club and year round Piedmont Recreation Department clinics and camps. Investing in the opportunity to create a public-private partnership, the Piedmont Recreation Facilities Organization (PRFO) is leading fundraising efforts to support naming these tennis courts in honor of Coach Corey Reich. The City is also exploring establishing a designated maintenance fund for these courts. The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee wholeheartedly supports the proposed renovations to the Recreation Center Tennis Courts.

#### 6. Public Safety Cameras

On March 19, 2019 the CIP Review Committee received a presentation and subsequent staff report dated March 28, 2019, whereby Piedmont Police Chief Jeremy Bowers introduced the benefits resulting from a Public Safety Camera System pilot program. Following the pilot program, police department staff was able to assess the benefits of public safety cameras as investigatory tools, as well as the ability to integrate additional technology. Because the pilot program appears as a necessary and beneficial supplement to the existing ALPR infrastructure, the 2019-20 CIP Review Committee recommends approval and support for this program.

## **Resident Proposals**

### **1. Wildwood Gardens One Way Signage**

Two related proposals were initiated by Wildwood Gardens (WWG) resident Sherry Marcus. The first proposal requests the lower circle of WWG be designated one way in a counter clockwise direction and the northern section of the upper WWG circle be designated one way in a westbound direction. A door-to-door survey led by Ms. Marcus among immediate WWG neighbors reflects support for One Way Signage. The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee supports a public safety led investigation of the improvements proposed. A safety study is needed to assess potential safety improvements triggered by changes to street traffic patterns and resulting safety concerns for neighborhood residents.

### **2. Wildwood Gardens Safety Egress**

A second proposal initiated by Wildwood Gardens (WWG) resident Sherry Marcus seeks development of an emergency egress route along a strip of land connecting WWG to Oak Rd. Concerns about WWG residents becoming landlocked in the event of an emergency prompt this proposal. A door-to-door survey reflects support from immediate WWG neighbors. After thoughtful review the 2019-20 CIP Review Committee recommends that further investigation into land ownership and property boundaries be investigated to determine, what, if any, changes to existing land use is permissible and, if permissible, whether or not changes are mandated. Therefore, the 2019-20 CIP Review Committee supports a public safety led investigation of the changes proposed.

### **3. Renovation of PMS Hard-courts**

Resident Tom Reicher proposes renovation of the three Middle School hard-courts in accordance with the recommendations of the Recreation Commission Sub-committee on Tennis and Pickleball. The Sub-committee on Tennis and Pickleball recommendations were presented to, and adopted in their entirety by City Council on March 4, 2019 and include, in pertinent part:

“City Council is urged to explore (with the School District) the creation of a pickleball facility using the courts at the rear of the Middle School. The courts in current condition are considered to be an underutilized resource. Recommendation is that courts be re-surfaced with tennis quality surface and lined and painted, for use by school and public. The courts could be lined to allow for multiple uses, e.g. badminton or basketball, in addition to pickleball. The courts would be closed to the public during all school hours. City financial support should be explored for initial expense and ongoing maintenance, in exchange for availability to the public during regulated non-school hours.”

The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee was briefed on the extensive and exhaustive research which preceded City Council’s adoption of Subcommittee recommendations, including:

“The Subcommittee met on numerous occasions over a period of 7-8 months, and undertook the following activities, among others, in order to complete its investigation and arrive at its recommendations:

- a. Gathered historic data on tennis court usage, and distribution of usage across days of the week, times of the day, and different age groups;
- b. Met with and spoke to individuals significantly involved in tennis programming including Cora Wood (reservations), Jim Landes (teaching, clinics, coaching) and leaders of tennis groups;
- c. Sought information from outside contractors of tennis programming and teaching, and obtained a detailed proposal from one contractor;
- d. Received comments and feedback from pickleball enthusiasts at meetings of the Subcommittee, and received written suggestions, data, proposals and requests of many pickleball players;
- e. Prepared and ran a widely-circulated tennis and pickleball survey in conjunction with the Recreation Department, in electronic and hard copy, seeking responses to particular questions and general comment and feedback on court usage, management of facilities and programming, and met to review tabulated and charted results of approximately 100 respondents to the survey;
- f. Held separate scheduled meetings with the tennis community and pickleball community to obtain comment, feedback and proposals related to court usage, management of facilities and programming;
- g. Agendized updates of the Subcommittee at Commission hearings, and took public comment during those hearings;
- h. Announced a tentative set of recommendations of the Subcommittee as an agendized item in the December 2018 hearing of the Commission, and took public comment on those tentative recommendations; Met further in light of public comment on the tentative recommendations, and decided upon a final set of recommendations presented here.”

The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee toured the proposed site on May 4, 2019. Recreation Director Sara Lillvand was present to provide updated information. Because the renovation of PMS hard-courts is a project fully vetted by a designated subcommittee of the Recreation Commission and, because subcommittee recommendations were then reviewed and approved by the full Recreation Commission, advanced to the City Council and reviewed and accepted by City Council, the additional review and resulting recommendation of this project by the 2019-20 CIP Review Committee is open and straightforward.

#### 4. Dog Fountain at Piedmont Park

Resident Nancy DeRoche proposes a drinking fountain to serve both humans and dogs at the lower end of Piedmont Park’s off-leash area. The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee recommends moving forward with a drinking fountain at the lower end of Piedmont Park. Because the City has successfully placed an attractive and functional fountain at the upper end of Dracaena Park, the 2019-20 CIP Review Committee suggests a similar fountain be used as a model for development of a fountain at Piedmont Park and recommends the project to Public Works to investigate a water source and implementation.

#### 5. Blair Park Improvements

The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee received and reviewed a proposal submitted by resident, Marj Blackwell requesting construction of a wood rail fence along the entire length of the area of Blair Park, as well as a redesign of existing adjacent pull in/pull-out parking spaces. Ms. Blackwell provided testimony to the committee and suggested private funds are available to offset costs of the proposed project. After thoughtful review, committee members agree, proposed changes to Blair Park, whether

major or minor, require well planned, extensive, and organized public input. Blair Park is considered a bucolic, pastoral setting. The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee Members consider proposals for changes to Blair Park to be premature. Until the City Council determines a vision for Blair Park, any proposed changes must be deferred until there is opportunity for a larger, more engaging conversation with all stakeholders. Nevertheless, with specific regard to existing pull in/pull-out parking spaces, the 2019-20 CIP Review Committee recommends this portion of the proposal to the Public Works and the City Engineer for further study.

#### 6. Repair/Refurbish Witter Field Improvements and 7. Repair Drainage at Witter Field

The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee received and reviewed two separate but related proposals from residents Claudia Harrison and Rick Raushenbush, as well as in person testimony from Rick Raushenbush, requesting the City undertake needed repairs to Witter Field. The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee members recognize that care and management of Witter Field is within the authority of the Piedmont Unified School District and therefore beyond the directive of the CIP Review Committee. As a result, CIP Review Committee members consider proposals regarding Witter Field beyond their purview and, therefore, encourage conversations about repairs to Witter Field among members of Piedmont's two governing boards, namely, the Piedmont City Council and the Piedmont School Board.

#### 8. Landscape Triangle at Blair and Calvert Court

Calvert Court resident Jukka Valkonnen proposes landscape improvements to an existing painted triangle at the top of Calvert Court at Blair Ave. CIP Review Committee members received public testimony during a regularly scheduled and noticed CIP meeting. In addition, on May 4, 2019, CIP members toured the proposed site where they engaged many neighbors. Parks and Projects Manager Nancy Kent, was on-site ready to lead, gather and request further information. Here at this intersection, like other locations in the City, the street striping of the triangle is worn and difficult to read causing safety issues. The Committee commented they believe improved pavement striping is needed throughout the City and support a City wide striping evaluation and implementation of a striping plan. There are positive indications that neighbors will invest financially and creatively in the development of this proposed project. A survey documenting neighborhood support would be helpful to move this project forward. Nevertheless, while CIP members agree the proposal is in keeping with the City's desire to develop landscape triangles throughout the City and acknowledges that the City has been hugely successful in developing triangles where there has been wide spread public support, CIP recommends a traffic study and utility study is required before progressing with this proposal.

#### 9. ALPRs at Piedmont Entrances

Resident Steve Brenner proposes Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs) on major entrances to Piedmont that are not currently monitored. The proposed entrances include, but are not limited to: Trestle Glen Road at Park Boulevard, as well as Trestle Glen Road at Valant Place. The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee received resident testimony describing criminal activity in the area. The CIP Review Committee was also briefed by Police Chief Jeremy Bowers regarding the safety benefits experienced through the current use and effectiveness of Automatic License Plate Readers (ALPRs) placed at strategic points of entry into Piedmont. Based on the success of existing ALPRs, and due to potential safety threats in the area of upper Trestle Glen and surrounding streets with entryways to Piedmont, this request for additional ALPRs is enthusiastically recommended to the City Council for action.

## Recommendations regarding Pre-Existing CIP Proposals

The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee recommends that the following resident proposals receive **strong support**:

1. Additional Traffic Signage for Lower Grand
2. Landscape Triangle for Lower Grand
3. Improve intersection at 4Ws
4. Improve Paths at Crocker Park
5. ALRP at Piedmont Entries (discussed more thoroughly above)

The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee recommends that the following resident proposals are **dropped** from CIP review due a lack of ongoing interest:

6. Bench at Oakland and Latham
7. Enhance Planting Island at Bellevue and Mountain
8. New Lanterns/Repairs to Columns St James & LaSalle/St James & Park
9. Street light at Bonita and Vista at Havens School

The 2019-20 CIP Review Committee recommends that the following resident proposal is **deferred** until review from Public Works:

10. Light up Crosswalk at Grand at Cambridge