



# *CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT*

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MEETING DATE: FEBRUARY 17, 2009

ITEM NUMBER:

**SUBJECT: BRENTWOOD PARK MASTER PLAN**

**DATE: FEBRUARY 5, 2009**

**FROM: PUBLIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT/ENGINEERING DIVISION**

**PRESENTATION BY: PETER NAGHAVI, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES**

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: ERNESTO MUÑOZ, CITY ENGINEER, (714) 754-5335**

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## **RECOMMENDATION:**

1. Approve the proposed Master Plan for Brentwood Park.
2. Approve amendments to the Open Space Master Plan of Parks and Recreation (MPPR) acknowledging the expanded park boundary and incorporating the approved master plan.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The City of Costa Mesa Open Space Master Plan of Parks and Recreation (MPPR) identifies Brentwood Park as a 1.45-acre neighborhood park with a target service area of approximately ½-mile radius. However, when the MPPR was developed, it did not include the parcel at 261 Monte Vista Avenue which the City purchased in March of 2007. The park is centrally located within a single-family neighborhood between Brentwood Street and Monte Vista Avenue (Attachment 1). Current amenities at Brentwood Park include benches, picnic tables, rural walking trails, a sand volleyball court, entry sign and dedication plaque, and playground equipment. On-street parking is permitted on both Brentwood Street and Monte Vista Avenue.

On March 16, 2007, the City purchased the property adjacent to Brentwood Park at 261 Monte Vista Avenue, for the purpose of expanding the park. This property was the site of a K-8 private school (Park School) that served over one hundred students per year and operated through 2006. The facility included an on-site 12 space parking lot, an office building, 12 classrooms, six restrooms, and a pool. Upon inspection of the newly acquired property staff identified a number of costly repairs, which were needed in order to bring the site and its facilities to current code. The City Council determined it would be more cost effective to demolish the facilities than to restore them to reuse. The demolition work was completed in July 2008, and staff has since installed temporary above ground irrigation and applied seed for erosion control within the recently purchased land. The acquired property, combined with the existing Brentwood Park site, provides a total of 2.64 acres of park space.

With the addition of the newly acquired property, the available area for Brentwood Park nearly doubled, causing the need for the development of a Master Plan for Brentwood Park. The City has worked with the community to develop the proposed Master Plan concepts that identify preferred current and future uses for Brentwood Park. The Master Plan will be used as a planning tool to guide the orderly implementation of future improvements to the park as funding becomes available.

On July 1, 2008, the City Council awarded a contract to David Volz Design, a professional landscape architecture firm, for the Master Planning of Brentwood Park and 261 Monte Vista Avenue.

As part of developing the proposed Master Plan, staff conducted extensive community outreach efforts to encourage participation. This outreach consisted of the formation of a Task Force, three community meetings, and the creation of a parks project update website. Households within a 500-foot radius of the site, totaling over 183 addresses, were notified of each community meeting. In addition, an email-based "interest list" was created that included over 80 residents. Attendance at each community meeting was consistently over 50 residents demonstrating strong interest in this project.

On August 7, 2008 the City held the first community meeting to gather input regarding the Master Plan. On October 2, 2008, the City held the second community meeting to present two draft conceptual designs for Brentwood Park that were created to reflect the input gathered at the first community meeting. These plans were later revised to reflect community feedback and a new design. The Preliminary Master Plan was presented to the community at the third community meeting on November 17, 2008. Additional overlay options that featured sports court elements such as a half basketball court and/or tennis court were also presented, and are included in this report for consideration by Council.

On January 28, 2009, the Parks and Recreation Commission considered the alternatives described below and voted to recommend the approval of the Base Design, revised to add one more picnic shelter, as the Master Plan for Brentwood Park (Attachment 2).

### **ANALYSIS:**

The development and approval of a Master Plan for Brentwood Park is recommended for the orderly implementation of facilities and amenities as funding becomes available. With the exception of low level security lights, there is no lighting proposed for any of the elements shown in the conceptual plans, as the park will continue to close at dusk. Also, based on the previous uses at 261 Monte Vista Avenue, the implementation of the elements being considered is not expected to increase the typical impacts such as parking, noise, light, and community use to the neighborhood.

The Parks and Recreation Commission received extensive written and oral comments from the public advocating support and/or objections to each one of the proposed alternatives adding or deleting certain elements to the Base Design. However, the Base Design was acceptable to all who participated. The following is a brief description of the Base Design and each of the alternatives being considered.

### **Base Design**

The Landscape Architect and staff have carefully considered all the suggestions, recommendations, and general input from area neighbors and Task Force Members. Based on this extensive input, the "Base Design" was prepared (Attachment 3). The Base Design represents the minimum number of elements and amenities that the groups would like to see in this park on the final Master Plan. Overall, the residents expressed their desire to maintain some open space and a "neighborhood feel" to the expanded Brentwood Park. The Base Design expresses this intent by providing the amenities identified below:

- Coastal theme
- Improved and expanded walkways through nature areas
- Picnic and gathering areas for families or small groups
- Covered picnic shelter
- Enhanced playground with swings, imaginative play, and a grass play area
- Rubber play surface with theme related patterns

- Sand play area
- Raised deck with over head structure
- Mild rolling contours for open areas
- Benches
- Security lighting
- Maintenance & patrol route
- Walking path and fitness loop (quarter mile) with fitness stations (six total)
- Preservation of large existing trees
- Natural drainage path
- Bike rack
- Water fountains

Diverse opinions were shared at each community meeting regarding additional amenities that would facilitate recreational opportunities for older children, ages 10 and above, and adults. These possible amenities included the addition of a basketball half-court and a tennis court. The following alternatives describe these additional elements.

### **Alternative 1:**

#### **Add a Tennis Court and Half Court Basketball to the Base Design (Attachment 4)**

This alternative may be accommodated within the available space to encourage active community use. The proposed space for the tennis court may be considered as a multi-use pad that may also be used for community gatherings and children's plays. However, the proposed tennis court and half basketball court, when combined, consumes approximately 1/8<sup>th</sup> of the total area of the park, and increases the density and intensity of use for the park.

### **Alternative 2:**

#### **Add a Tennis Court to the Base Design (Attachment 5)**

Adding a tennis court element to the Base Design, while utilizing a significant portion of the available land, will be used by a limited number of people at any given time. However, when used as a pad for other activities, it provides a flexible platform for a variety of recreational programs. It should be noted that a tennis court is a high-maintenance facility that requires daily set up and take down in addition to more frequent surface renovation work than a regular concrete pad.

### **Alternative 3:**

#### **Add a Half Court Basketball to the Base Design (Attachment 6)**

The addition of a half court basketball to the Base Design can be accommodated with only a minor change to the base layout due to its small footprint. The suggested location for this element, as shown in Attachment 6, is ideal because it keeps it away from adjacent properties, but close enough to the street for effective management and enforcement. A half court basketball provides for a well-balanced layout that offers amenities for every age group.

### **Other Amenities**

### Restroom Facility

A restroom facility was requested by only a few residents. This request was made as children using the facility may have a greater need for a nearby restroom. However, due to the proposed designation of the park to remain as a neighborhood park that services an area within a ½-mile from the park, and the significant additional maintenance and security enforcement efforts required for this type of facility, a vast majority of the individuals in attendance at the various public workshops, as well as the Task Force, support a Master Plan without a restroom facility. Should a restroom facility be considered for addition to the Master Plan, the existing sewer lateral from the previous facility restrooms that drains towards Monte Vista Avenue may be utilized for this purpose.

### On-site Parking

It was the general consensus from all participating parties, including the Task Force, that on-site parking was not needed. This consensus is supported by staff as the park will generally be used by nearby residents within reasonable walking distance.

### Sand Volleyball Court

The overall community input indicated that the new Master Plan should not include the existing sand volleyball court, currently located at the Brentwood Street side of the park, as it is hardly ever utilized. The proposed layouts reflect this intent.

### Playground

A majority of residents in attendance at the Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting of January 28, 2009, expressed concern regarding the proposed location of the playground on the Base Plan due to possible safety issues for children playing close to the street. Accordingly, the residents requested to move the proposed playground to the center of the park to provide a buffer from either Brentwood Street or Monte Vista Avenue. The Parks and Recreation Commission Members agreed with the residents suggestion, and requested staff to consider this relocation if the Costa Mesa Police Department, and Public Services staff find this feasible. Based on careful evaluation the Police Department has determined that, due to the location, configuration, size, and topography of the park, as well as experience with this park and similar parks, the ideal location for the playground, from a children's safety point of view, is at the original location on the south side as opposed to the middle of the park. Staff from the Police Department state that the proposed original location allows for better visibility by the neighbors across the street, as well as the officers patrolling the area. Locations that are more visible to public view and easily accessible are less likely to experience individuals or groups engaging in criminal or nuisance type of behavior. The originally proposed location also offers a 36-foot buffer to the street as well as a four-foot high fence separating the playground from the street (Attachment 7).

Additionally, the original location takes advantage of existing natural elements such as the existing 48 inch diameter Eucalyptus tree that provides the foundation for improvements that tie into the proposed "coastal" theme; and it provides for a configuration that uses the available space efficiently. Locating the playground closer to the street also facilitates easier access for its maintenance by reducing the distance that the equipment travels into the park.

### **OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:**

1. The City Council may approve a new plan that adds, removes, and/or changes the locations of elements from the plan that the Parks and Recreation Commission recommended.
2. The City Council may recommend to maintain the existing Brentwood Park as is and to landscape the newly-acquired property at 261 Monte Vista Avenue to maximize open space.

**ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:**

The project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 15332 for In-Fill Development Projects.

**FISCAL REVIEW:**

Funding in the amount of \$460,000 for the master planning and design of the project was approved with the adoption of the 2007-2008 Capital Improvement Program budget. \$283,000 remains unencumbered for the design of the project. Funding for construction will be requested in future fiscal years.

**LEGAL REVIEW:**

A legal review is not required for this item.

**CONCLUSION:**

It is recommended that the City Council approve a Master Plan for the site and to revise the MPPR accordingly. The City of Costa Mesa is a mature City nearing build out capacity and the opportunities to expand and/or create new park space are rare. The purchase of the parcel at 261 Monte Vista Avenue adjacent to Brentwood Park is ideal for the development of a new and improved neighborhood park to meet the needs of the community and to set the standard for future park development.

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ATTACHMENTS:

1. [Aerial Map](#)
2. [Action Minutes of the January 28, 2009 Parks and Recreation Commission Agenda Report](#)
3. [Base Plan](#)
4. [Alternative 1 – Basketball ½ Court and Tennis](#)
5. [Alternative 2 – Tennis](#)
6. [Alternative 3 – Basketball ½ Court](#)
7. [Landscape Buffer Section](#)

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