



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmembers Rocha and Campos

SUBJECT: MEASURE P SOFTBALL COMPLEX

DATE: October 31, 2013

Approved

Don Rocha *GR*

Date

10/31/13

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council defer making a final decision on the site for a bond funded softball complex and provide the following direction to staff:

1. As the County begins its master planning process for the Fairgrounds, work with County staff to determine whether locating a softball complex at the Fairgrounds is feasible, and if so, what the timeline and parameters would be for both parties to make a decision on entering into a partnership to develop such a complex.
2. At the same time, explore options for obtaining more land at the Arcadia site such that it could accommodate four adult size lighted softball fields (minimum 300 ft. outfield, as specified on page 5 of the staff report)
3. Report back to the City Council in 120 days on progress made at both the Fairgrounds and Arcadia. This check-in would also serve as an opportunity for the Council to provide further direction as to which site to pursue.

ALTERNATIVE RECOMMENDATION

If the City Council cannot come to agreement around pursuing a true tournament complex (with at minimum four fields) then we recommend that the Council direct staff to undertake a new site-selection process for the purpose of identifying sites for individual fields equitably distributed throughout the city and return to Council with a proposal.

ANALYSIS

The staff, elected officials and community members who originally championed the parks bond in 2000 weren't thinking of their own small self-interest, but of a big vision for the future of San Jose, and in so doing have left us all a wonderful legacy. After thirteen years, we now have before us the last project in that bond—a softball complex. Our test

is whether we can finish the bond with the same level of vision and commitment with which it was begun.

The vision for a softball complex has long been of one that can accommodate tournament play. A tournament complex would be a unique recreational amenity of citywide benefit—people would travel from all parts of the city, not to mention the region, to play at such a facility. The challenge is that it would require at minimum four, but ideally six to eight fields. A site that can accommodate that many fields is hard to come by, but with the recent letter from two elected officials at the County (see attached) expressing strong interest in pursuing a facility at the Fairgrounds, we have our best chance yet of achieving a truly excellent tournament complex. We know from our experience with MLK Library that working collaboratively with other agencies can have outstanding benefits for the public. While many questions remain about a partnership with the County, there's clearly interest on their side to pursue one. Allowing 120 days to see what comes of this overture, as we recommend, is an extremely reasonable approach.

We recognize that some of our colleagues hold different views. In a memo dated October 30, Councilmember Herrera and two cosigners recommend going ahead with a three field facility at the Arcadia site. They do not acknowledge the letter from County officials, but do discuss the need to locate more fields in East San Jose, as well as list a number of sports leagues in and around the Evergreen area who support three fields at Arcadia.

Our primary concern is that a three field facility would not be able to accommodate tournaments, and thus would likely end up being more of a neighborhood rather than citywide amenity. Councilmember Herrera seems to acknowledge this fact by asserting how important it is to build fields that serve her part of the city. As councilmembers who represent both East and West Side districts, we fully appreciate the need for recreational amenities on the East Side, but also recognize that this project is funded by citywide bond money, supplied by taxpayers in all parts of our city. It isn't a prize to be bestowed on one neighborhood instead of another, but a trust to be carried out, thoughtfully and equitably, for the benefit of all. One reason we like the Fairgrounds site is that it's centrally located and thus easily accessible from many parts of the City. Access from the East Side, in particular, is very good given that it's east of Monterey Road.

That said, we aren't opposed to locating a facility at the Arcadia site provided it has enough fields to be a citywide draw. In their recommendation, Councilmember Herrera and her cosigners suggest the possibility of locating four fields at the Arcadia site. In the spirit of compromise, we included direction in our recommendation for staff to explore locating more adult size fields at Arcadia over the next 120 days (a 300 ft. outfield should be the minimum size, as staff points out on page 5 of their report.) We hope that the Council can come to agreement that this is a fair approach for everyone.

If we cannot come to agreement, we recommend that we default to our alternative recommendation, which directs staff to identify sites for individual fields equitably spread throughout the city. Though not worthy of the original vision of the bond—and certainly not our preferred approach—it at least keeps faith with our residents that we are looking out for the interests of the entire city. We hope it won't come to that: after thirteen years, 120 days is not long to wait in hopes of a truly excellent facility.

DAVE CORTESE

COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT THREE

COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER, EAST WING
70 WEST HEDDING STREET 10TH FLOOR
SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA 95110
TEL: (408) 299-5030 • FAX: (408) 298-6637
dave.cortese@bos.sccgov.org • www.supervisorcortese.org



October 25, 2013

Mayor Chuck Reed
City of San Jose
200 E. Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Dear Mayor Reed and City Council,

We are writing to you as a member of the Chair of the Finance and Government Operations Committee which has oversight for the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds and its Master Plan and as the Supervisor representing the district in which it resides. As you are aware, this site has been identified as one of the finalists for the new softball complex to be built by the City of San Jose using Measure P funds. We are very pleased that there is an opportunity for a potential joint City-County venture for the mutual benefit of our residents. The Fairgrounds site is well-suited to provide recreational and open space, including a softball complex; here are some of the advantages that we see to a partnership between our two agencies at the Fairgrounds:

- **Room for expansion:** This land is currently underutilized so there is sufficient space for four or more softball fields as well as parking. There is sufficient room at the facility to hold everyday games as well as large-scale tournaments or clinics. Given the nature of adult and youth softball, such flexibility is imperative.
- **Regional recognition:** This location is well-known throughout the Bay Area due to its promotion through other events and activities that take place at the facility. There is a synergy in promotion between events at the facility and the softball complex which will increase visibility for all activities that take place at the Fairgrounds.
- **Established business infrastructure:** There are hotels, restaurants, and shopping all within a reasonable distance from the fields to accommodate players, their families, and spectators. This business infrastructure is unmatched by any other suggested location.

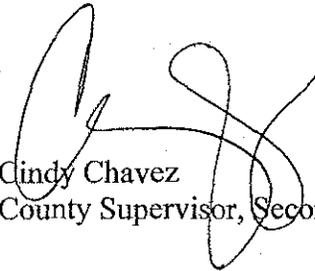
- **Most Accessible:** The Fairgrounds is centrally located with accessibility from the major highways making it easy for visitors to find. It is also accessible by public transit.
- **Fewest Neighborhood Impacts:** Because it is right off the highway, homeowners and local residents will be less disturbed by the automobile and pedestrian traffic driving up and down the roads. Since parking is available on-site, neighborhood residents will not be disturbed by additional cars parked on their city streets. Depending on its location within the fairgrounds, lights over the field would be less disruptive to neighbors.

In light of these advantages, we believe the City and County should pursue further discussion of a potential partnership to develop a complex at the Fairgrounds. By bringing our resources together, we have a chance to build a truly excellent facility that would benefit our residents for many years to come. We realize that there are still some unanswered questions regarding this potential partnership, but we are committed to considering them in the early stages of our Fairgrounds Master Planning process. On the County's end, the next step will be a discussion at the November 5th County Board of Supervisor's meeting about the status of the Fairgrounds master plan. We are requesting that the City of San Jose postpone making a decision about the location of the softball complex in order for city staff to work with the county to further develop parameters around which a final decision can be made.

Sincerely,



Dave Cortese,
County Supervisor, Third District



Cindy Chavez
County Supervisor, Second District