City of Greenbelt
Department of Planning and Community Development
15 Crescent Road, Suite 200, Greenbelt, Maryland 20770
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Memorandum

TO: Michael McLaughlin, City Manager MPM

FROM: Jessica Bellah, Community Planner

DATE: September 22, 2015

RE: Greenbelt Station South Core City Park Design

Background

The development agreement between the city and Woodlawn Development Group outlines the following provisions for recreational amenities in the Greenbelt Station South Core Development:

1) 2.27 acres of land dedicated to recreational and public use.
2) $1.445 million for construction of on-site recreational amenities including nature trails, playgrounds, sitting areas, and public park facilities.
3) In addition, $1 million for public recreational facilities for future use on site or in Greenbelt West.
4) The developer is to execute the work as approved by the city pursuant to items shown in the detailed site plan and estimated scope of work for recreational facilities.

During early planning stages, 2.27 acres of land were set aside to be dedicated as a city owned and operated neighborhood park. The park is funded from the $1.445 million invested in on-site amenities. A concept park design plan and base cost estimate was developed during the conceptual site planning process. Subsequent detailed site plan approvals reserved the park area for a future detailed design process separate from County review.

Park Design

Approximately one hundred and thirty (130) homes have been sold in Greenbelt Station South Core. At total build out Phase 1a and 1b (also known as Phase 2) of the development will consist of 342 units. In designing the city park area, the staff's goals were threefold:

1) Produce a flexible design that can respond to community input and needs after full build out.
2) Develop a multifunctional space to accommodate formal and informal as well as passive and active uses.
3) Efficiently allocate development agreement funds.

Woodlawn Development Group worked with staff to transform the base concept plan into a detailed design plan. Staff members from Greenbelt Public Works Department, Recreation and Parks Department, and Planning and Community Development Department collaborated to provide comments and guidance in developing the park design.

One of several community recreational amenities, the park is designed to serve the Greenbelt Station South Core neighborhood as a local gathering area. The park feature a large open active area, a smaller plaza with three tiered amphitheater, a shade and trellis structure, lighting with built in outlets, a drinking fountain, ample seating, and trash receptacles with nearby dog cleanup stations. The park does not have specific parking spaces associated with it beyond the 75 guest on-street parking provided within Phase 1 of the development and the additional 85 parking spaces provided on Greenbelt Station Parkway.

Public Comment

The detailed design plan was reviewed by the Advisory Planning Board (APB) at their August 19, 2015 meeting and by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) at its September 16, 2015 meeting. A Council worksession was held on August 19, 2015 to brief the Council on the park design and receive public comment. In addition, the park design was posted on the city web page and, at the request of Greenbelt Station residents, on the neighborhood social page nextdoor.com.

APB provided the following feedback:

- Unanimous support for the proposed design presented. Particularly appreciative of the shaded sidewalk areas and incorporated bike amenities.
- A minority opinion of the Board expressed the desire to reserve a portion of the park for a dog park facility. The Board did not agree on whether this amenity would be desirable within the main park area but requested that construction of a dog park facility be considered in the future.

PRAB provided the following feedback:

- Unanimous support for the proposed design presented.
- Expressed concern that additional play areas would be needed to address any future population of children. Appreciated that the design of the park highlighted areas where playgrounds could be constructed to meet future needs and were satisfied that space and funding was available in the future for this purpose.
- A minority opinion of the Board felt that the design should consider construction of permanent public restroom facilities.

Staff received the following public comments via email and from the web:

- From Scot Sheck; September 21, 2015
  I live in greenbelt station and look forward to the new park. Although I like the design for the large open flat grassy area, what are your thoughts about having some of the sides be a raised hill like in the photos? Perhaps on the corners of the park? The park below is from NV's beach development called bayforest near Bethany beach. It's totally flat out there but they incorporated nice rolling hilled neighborhood parks.

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- From thurstonl80; September 17, 2015
  I'm a resident of Greenbelt Station and I have to say, I'm even more happy that my wife and I decided to make Greenbelt Station our home. I think this park is going to make our neighborhood even more attractive then it already is (which I think is hard to do). I can't wait until construction starts.

- From Amare Worku; August 24, 2015
  Thank you for August 19th brief regarding the Greenbelt Station Park. I asked my kids, 16 and 15, if they have any input about the future park. Here is the list of my household wishes:

  1) Tennis court(s) or
  2) Multipurpose court (a court that can be used for Basketball, Tennis and other activates). and
  3) Some form of fountain.

- From Zhenping Li; August 20, 2015
  Thanks. Overall, this is a good design. There were some concerns on the parking; it could be mitigated in terms how the future events at the park are organized. The only thing I would suggest is to add a bulletin board in the pavilion area so that the event poster (or similar) could be posted there.

- Sasan Najmi; August 20, 2015
  Agreed (community bulletin board would be nice)! It's really a beautiful design; very excited to have a place to walk, relax, and gather. Thanks very much Jessica!

- Sharon Papciak; August 20, 2015
  Thanks, Jessica! It does look like a fabulous plan. I ditto Zhenping's comment about parking...as it is now, anyone wanting to hold even a small personal party would be hard-pressed to assure their visitors that they would be able to park 'close to the house', as street parking is almost maxed out just with the normal residents. I realize that the proposed parking areas are meant for visitors to an event, but it would be nice to have enough parking so that a resident having visitors can assure them that there is parking somewhere within walking distance. Sharon

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Recommendation

Staff recommends the following changes to the park design:

A) Staff recommends the incorporation of a few select large boulders in the smaller green area of the plaza to serve as additional natural play structures as well as alternative adult seating. Placement and selection of boulders to be determined at the time of construction. (see figure 1)

Figure 1 Natural Playscape
Source http://www.cornishlandscapinggranite.co.uk/#

B) Incorporation of a community bulletin board in combination or separate from a city informational kiosk. Staff recommends incorporation of a receptacle for drop off of the News Review.

C) Realignment of the hose bib to better service watering of the active play area.

Staff recommends the approval of the new park design with the following conditions:

1) The park design shall reflect recommended changes as approved by Council and Woodlawn Development Inc. work with staff to provide updated engineered plans to reflect approved changes.

2) Woodlawn Development Inc. work with staff to incorporate within and update engineered plans for miscellaneous details as determined by staff including but not limited to:

   - Concrete used in the central plaza shall be clearly distinguished from typically lightly brushed concrete used on sidewalks by utilizing a courser brush pattern or equivalent decorative finish
   - Dog clean-up stations will be placed near trash receptacles and not have a separate trash can attachment
   - Provide detailed specifications for the raised crosswalk on Stream Bank Lane
   - Incorporation of bollard lighting along the main sidewalk from Stream Bank Lane to the Stream Valley Trail entrance.