

City Council Workshop

Agenda Summary

April 12, 2022

Key Staff Contact: Kelly Snook, Interim Culture Parks and Recreation Department Director, (970)350-9425

Title:

Bittersweet Park Turf Strategy

Summary:

In 2018 the existing irrigation system (circa mid 1970s) at Bittersweet Park was scheduled to be replaced. In conjunction with the Water and Sewer Department, the Parks Department evaluated options for water use reductions. In 2019 Matrix Design was hired to lead a community engagement process, offering water conservation and targeted site improvements. Three community meetings and online outreach were held involving participants from neighborhood and representatives of the Veteran's and Fallen Officer's Memorials. Multiple options were presented and voted on by residents participating. The final preferred option was a landscape conversion of 21 acres to native plants and pathway improvements. In 2020 construction started and was completed, and the first growing season commenced.

Throughout the first growing season, complications with both the contractor and the weather created issues with maintenance that resulted in weed growth and a less than desirable aesthetic. As a result, concerns were expressed from the community.

At the January 11, 2022 Council worksession options were presented for remediation of all or portions of the site. Following discussion, Council requested that the Culture, Parks and Recreation Department, in partnership with the Communications and Engagement Department, solicit additional input from residents to help develop a cost-effective alternative that achieved an alternative landscape between the Option 2 and Option 3 scenarios presented by staff.

A series of outreach activities were conducted including two pop up events at the park and an online and in-person survey. The engagement efforts resulted in 1,358 submissions with over 4,000 write in comments, as well as 270 social media comments, and over 20 email correspondences. Almost 67% of the input supported the existing predominately natural landscape. Additionally, 56% requested improvements to the maintenance and a return of bluegrass to the monument areas and high visibility areas (intersection of W 16th Street and 35th Avenue). Other areas of comment included concern for financial responsibility, improved maintenance, and the addition of dog stations.

Accordingly, staff has developed a solution that includes replanting of bluegrass around and between the memorials as well as near the intersection of 16th Street and 35th Avenue. The suggested change provides a landscape treatment between Option 2 and Option 3 as presented at the January 11, 2022 Workshop and selected by the City Council. This design aligns with the existing irrigation system eliminating any realignment to the system and thereby limiting renovation costs.

The replacement of the native grasses with bluegrass seed of approximately 5.6 acres at \$60,000/acre will cost approximately \$336,000.00. Annual increased maintenance costs will be approximately \$8,100.00/yr.

Attachments:

Powerpoint: Bittersweet Park Turf Strategy