

Agenda Item: ID#17-1631 (2:00 P.M.)

Date: 12/14/17

FRESNO CITY COUNCIL



Supplemental Information Packet

Agenda Related Item(s) – ID#17-1631 (2:00 P.M.)

Contents of Supplement: Public Comment from Cultiva La Salud **Item(s)**

HEARING to consider Plan Amendment Application No. A-17-016, and related environmental finding filed by the Development and Resource Management Department Director pertaining to the Parks Master Plan as follows:

1. **ADOPT** Environmental Assessment No. A-17-016 a Mitigated Negative Declaration dated November 14, 2017;
2. **RESOLUTION** – Adopting the Parks Master Plan and Approving Plan Amendment Application No. A-17-016, amending the narrative of section 5.1 and the language of policy POSS-1-a, of the Fresno General Plan, Parkland Standard, to reflect the Parks Master Plan;

Supplemental Information:

Any agenda related public documents received and distributed to a majority of the City Council after the Agenda Packet is printed are included in Supplemental Packets. Supplemental Packets are produced as needed. The Supplemental Packet is available for public inspection in the City Clerk's Office, 2600 Fresno Street, during normal business hours (main location pursuant to the Brown Act, G.C. 54957.5(2). In addition, Supplemental Packets are available for public review at the City Council meeting in the City Council Chambers, 2600 Fresno Street. Supplemental Packets are also available on-line on the City Clerk's website.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):

The meeting room is accessible to the physically disabled, and the services of a translator can be made available. Requests for additional accommodations for the disabled, sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices, or translators should be made one week prior to the meeting. Please call City Clerk's Office at 621-7650. Please keep the doorways, aisles and wheelchair seating areas open and accessible. If you need assistance with seating because of a disability, please see Security.



Fresno City Council
Attn: Yvonne Spence
City Clerk, City of Fresno
2600 Fresno Street, Room 2133
Fresno, CA 93721

RE: Written Public Comment - City of Fresno Parks Master Plan (Item #ID17:1631)

Dear Ms. Spence:

On behalf of Cultiva La Salud, I applaud the City of Fresno for their efforts to develop a comprehensive Parks Master Plan and for their investment in areas of need, such as the renovation of the community center at Holmes Park and the establishment of joint use sites, which is making a huge impact in the community it serves.

Cultiva La Salud is a community based organization that works to advance policies that promote healthy eating and active living. Chronic disease prevention is at the core of our mission and through our Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) project, we've focus on policies that promote physical activity in ways that are focused and sensitive to the Latino community. Cultiva works to advance these efforts in low-income and disadvantaged communities, such as Southeast Fresno.


Cultiva La Salud has been actively engaging residents in Southeast Fresno to participate in community workshops for the Parks Master Plan and share their feedback on the priorities they would like to see. An additional partner has been ChangeLab Solutions, who worked collaboratively with Cultiva to recently conduct an analysis of the City of Fresno Parks Master Plan to identify strengths and areas of improvement to achieve greater equity in neighborhoods such as Southeast Fresno, which for years have been left behind. Attached is the analysis and recommendations that they provided. Cultiva is supportive of the recommendations and is sharing them with the Fresno City Council to be entered as "written public comment" at the December 14, 2017 City Council Meeting and to be considered for the final Parks Master Plan for Fresno. We believe the attached recommendations will help identify strengths that can be applied to the Plan to ensure that it can be implemented in an equitable way and so that investments are prioritized in areas of need.

We regret not being available in person for tomorrow's City Council Meeting – all of our staff are out of town at a strategic planning meeting. However, Cultiva appreciates the opportunity

to provide public comment, which demonstrates that parks are a city priority and that Fresno is committed to improving park access and quality.

Please feel free to contact Brandie Banks-Bey, the program manager of the REACH grant at Brandie@CultivaLaSalud.org or 559.498.0870 ext. 102

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Genoveva Islas', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Genoveva Islas, MPH
Program Director

Cc: Councilmember Esmeralda Soria
Councilmember Steve Brandau
Councilmember Oliver L. Baines III
Councilmember Paul Caprioglio

Councilmember Luis Chavez
Councilmember Garry Bredefeld
Councilmember Clint Olivier

Analysis and Recommendations – ChangeLab Solutions

Submitted to Fresno City Council: December 13, 2017

Community Input

Extensive community outreach is a key component of any well-developed parks plan, since this process helps ensure the plan accurately reflects the community's goals and priorities. The Fresno Parks Master Plan, for the most part, reflects the community priorities of Southeast Fresno, and there are areas where the plan could better reflect the community input. In particular, the plan did not say whether its various community outreach activities in fact reached a group of people that as a whole reflects the diversity of Fresno.

This section calls out parts of the plan related to Community Input, parts that could be changed to better reflect the input of Southeast Fresno residents, and suggestions for the city to act on this plan in a way that prioritizes what's important to Southeast Fresno.

Parts of the Plan Related to Community Input

- The plan says it “articulates a vision for improving Fresno’s park and open space system based on robust community engagement” (pg. 2), and the Needs Assessment (Section 6) describes community engagement as a clear priority and “foundational to planning a park system” (pg. 163).
- The plan lists the various ways community input was gathered, including stakeholder meetings and public workshops in each council district (pg. 4), mobile multi-lingual workshops on nights and weekends at Fresno parks and schools, community-wide meetings soliciting feedback on current park system issues, and detailed online public surveys with key, engaged residents, community and institutional leaders, City Council members, and community advocates interested in parks, recreation, public health, and Fresno’s civic identity (pgs. 19, 164-165).
- The description of parks in Southeast Fresno matches community input. It acknowledges that the Central Southeast part of the city lacks parks, recreation centers, and pools and water features, especially given the area’s population density (pgs. 3, 174). It identifies Southeast Fresno as a place with the greatest need for new parks (pg. 178), with facilities that do not meet standards (pgs. 184-185).
- The plan’s ranking of community funding priorities matches Southeast Fresno’s. Maintenance for existing parks is the top priority, more important than park renovations or the creation of new parks (pgs. 6, 166). This is also reflected in recommendation highlights 2, 3 and 5 for the strategy Secure the Parks (see pg. 6-7), and in the Goal 1: Fund Recommendation 1.1 and 1.2 (pg. 262).
- The plan recommends expanding the implementation of joint-use agreements with schools and basins (pgs. 5, 186, 207-208). Southeast Fresno has a track record of success with this strategy, particularly since it’s an area where there is limited land for new parks (pgs. 61-64, 207-208). The high priority of joint-use agreements and partnerships as a strategy is further reflected in

recommendation highlights 9, 10 and 11 for the strategy Secure the Parks (pg. 7), as well as in school and basin partnership recommendations for Goal 7: Partner (pg. 271).

- Two of the three priority parks--Mosqueda and Pilibos--are identified as potential "flagship" / priority parks for District 5 (pg. 191). In addition, four other SE parks are flagged as potential "flagship" / priority parks for Districts 5 or 7.
- Mosqueda Park and Holmes Park are identified as parks to be improved in Council District Workshops, receiving four votes across two districts (pg. 167). Other SE parks Romain, Einstein and Radio also received votes in Council District Workshops, with Romain and Einstein tied for the most votes in the Stakeholder Workshop (pg. 168).
- All of the priority parks and other SE parks are considered in need of some critical improvements (pgs. 241-245) deemed "necessary for a functional park system" (pg. 199). Note, however, that this is a popular designation; nearly 80 percent of Fresno parks (62 of 79) are included in this projects list (pg. 241-245). Other SE parks Al Radka, Einstein, Radio and Romain are identified for extra services or capital improvements when additional funding is available. No priority parks and no other SE parks were considered for "visionary" park improvements.

Parts of the Plan that Could Better Reflect Community Input

- The priority parks in Southeast Fresno are considered fair parks, which may be misleading (pg. 92-96). The park condition rating system emphasizes "mechanical and equipment issues or defects" (88), even though community input has made it clear that maintenance issues are the greatest challenge and impact perceptions of overall park safety. As such, the Plan should incorporate maintenance such as trash and litter pick-up, lighting, bathroom cleanliness, and graffiti abatement, into the park condition rating. (Search Appendix B for park names to see the assessment for a specific park.)
- Given community support for expanding use of joint use agreements, there should be a section within Section 6.6 (pg. 186) dedicated to exploring the potential of expanding partnership and joint use agreements. This would put it on equal footing as the park renovation strategy (pg. 187) and flagship parks strategy (pg. 190), neither which are strategies prioritized by Southeast Fresno. Data from the Needs Gradient Map Exercise: Expanding School & Basin Partnerships (pgs. 180-183), as well as language from 7.2 Strategies for Increasing Park Land / Joint-Use School Sites (pgs. 207-208) could be used to further strengthen the case for this strategy.
- Joint use agreements capitalize on existing infrastructure and partnerships to substantially increase the number of designated Blue Space sites in areas like Southeast Fresno. The strategy to concentrate resources in fewer, higher-quality aquatic facilities should not impede any efforts to increase residents' access to the aquatic facilities through these types of partnerships. This distinction should be reflected in the list of strategic approaches on page 7.
- The strategies for urban greening and building new parks in existing neighborhoods should be explicitly secondary to the community's top priority of park maintenance of existing facilities. This distinction should be reflected in the list of strategic approaches on page 7.

Future Opportunities for Community Input

The following recommendations identify steps the city could take to ensure Community Input when implementing the Fresno Parks Master Plan. Key recommendations for the city from the plan itself come from Goal 8: Advocate (pg. 273) and Goal 9: Celebrate (pg. 274). For example:

- Encourage local community advocates and organizations working in the areas of public health, wellness, education, recreation, arts, community development, and environmental issues to support and advocate for Fresno parks (Goal 8.4).
- Form a City Council appointed Parks Commission to guide the ongoing development and operations of Fresno's park and open space system (Goal 8.2).
- Establish a "Friends of Fresno Parks" made up of foundations, organizations, and individuals who support park funding and actively advocate for their successful operation (Goal 8.3).
- Develop ethnically and economically-diverse park stewards (Goal 8.5), which is especially important given the demographics of the city's multicultural population and projected population growth.
- Continue to encourage and include community participation in park and open space planning and design process (Goal 8.6).
- Support current and future place-making efforts to strengthen individual park identity (Goal 9.1).
- Streamline process for individuals, neighborhoods, community groups, and local businesses to hold events at park facilities (Goal 9.2).
- Identify opportunities to integrate *local* art into parks and open spaces, especially in strategic locations to promote *cultural* pride and *local* ownership, and discourage vandalism (Goal 9.7) (italicized words added by ChangeLab Solutions)

Additional steps the city could take to reinforce Community Input are to:

- Adopt inclusive public outreach and engagement standards. Some resources recommended by Prevention Institute in *Healthy Development without Displacement* include: the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board Community Engagement Policy, Seattle Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide, and Portland Public Involvement Principles.
- Compare the demographic breakdown of people who participated in community input processes for the plan with the demographics of city as a whole. It is important for the city to seek out different, often unheard voices, to identify those groups whose input was not included, and to go to extra lengths to establish ongoing dialogue with communities often left out of the process.
- Incentivize ongoing engagement and advocacy around parks, rather than only "encourage." This may include making micro-grants to community-based organizations to organize clean-up efforts and increase a sense of community ownership of parks, for example.

- Expand or create community engagement mechanisms that allow for more open-ended input and dialogue; the user survey in particular was seen as a very constrained format with built-in assumptions.

Equitable Investment

Many U.S. cities see equitable investment as one way to address a history of residential segregation that has separated residents by race and income over generations. Cities recognize the importance of investing more in some neighborhoods or populations groups than others, because these places and communities have further to go to attain the same benefit from parks, in part due to long-standing discriminatory policies and practices.

While the plan makes an effort to balance targeted investment in those areas with fewer and lower-quality parks, the plan does not do so in a strong enough manner. The Plan could solidify and make explicit the city's position on equity, especially since this emerged as a vision theme. Community groups will need to hold the city accountable for implementing the plan in a manner that intentionally mitigates and resolves the shortcomings of Fresno's park system.

This section calls out parts of the plan related to Equitable Investment, parts that could be changed to better reflect equitable investment, and suggestions for the city to fund what's important to your community.

Parts of the Plan Related to Equitable Investment

- The plan acknowledges that the Central Southeast part of the city lacks parks, recreation centers, and pools and water features, especially given the area's population density (pgs. 3, 174). It identifies Southeast Fresno as a place with the greatest need for new parks (pg. 178), with facilities that do not meet standards (pgs. 184-185).
- The plan's ranking of community funding priorities matches Southeast Fresno's. Maintenance for existing parks is the top priority, more important than park renovations or the creation of new parks (pgs. 6, 166). This is also reflected in recommendation highlights 2, 3 and 5 for the strategy Secure the Parks (see pg. 6-7), and in the Goal 1: Fund Recommendation 1.1 and 1.2 (pg. 262).

Parts of the Plan that Could Better Reflect Equitable Investment

- The plan should prioritize parks *maintenance* rather than renovations in areas such as Southeast Fresno with less park acreage and many parks in poor condition. This shift in emphasis should be reflected in Section 6.6 so it calls for targeting poor condition parks for enhanced routine maintenance (pg. 187).
- Park maintenance is a recommended strategy that solves several parks systems problems. Maintaining three priority parks--Pilibos, Mosqueda and Holmes--would allow the city to meet the high demand for physical activities in Southeast Fresno. The facilities at these three parks align with high neighborhood interest in soccer, basketball, baseball, and volleyball (pg. 50-51). In addition, the plan recommends a "focus on low-cost services with exceptional customer service" (pg. 44, 46); making sure there are goal posts and nets, clean fields and courts at these

three parks, for example, would be a relatively small investment to make these parks usable in a part of the city projected to grow and attract even more people (pg. 32). This could also increase people's sense of safety in parks, since it aligns with the recommendations for Goal 5: Secure (pg. 268).

- In order for quality parks to be found throughout the city, the plan should designate flagship parks in each district, *in conjunction* with greater resources, prioritization and attention to areas such as Southeast Fresno. These areas have historically not seen as much investment in parks and other infrastructure; closing the gap between North and South Fresno in any significant way requires naming these areas and a commitment to fund them adequately so residents enjoy the same benefits from parks as people in other parts of the city. It is important the city not inadvertently create a token high-quality park that ignores the broader neighborhood context. This change should be reflected in the Recommendation Highlights (see pg. 7), and a nuanced, more detailed discussion of equity should be included in Section 6.6 under Flagship / Priority Parks by City Council Districts (see pg. 190).

Future Opportunities for Equitable Investment

- In the implementation plan, the city should commit additional funding toward the Weekend Community Open Space Program and SPARK After School Program, and adapt additional storm water detention basins for public recreation, as suggested in 3.2 Joint-Use: Schools (pgs. 61-64). The implementation plan should specify Southeast Fresno as a beneficiary due to priority neighborhood status.
- In general, the plan should include a more explicit conversation on equity and justify the need for equitable investment. This should be built into prioritization criteria and factored into decisions.
- Enhance communities' power in the decision-making process, such as through participatory budgeting for example.

Government Transparency

Government should work for the benefit of people and communicate clearly to a variety of audiences how decisions are made, money is spent, and how a parks master plans will benefit them. In general, local government is not known for presenting information in a way that resonates with residents and often obscures what is most important instead. Unfortunately, this plan does not buck the trend.

The plan is long, 290 pages, and that's excluding Appendix B. The language is extremely technical, emphasizes quantitative over qualitative data, and could easily be simplified for a general audience. Residents who are unfamiliar with planning documents would struggle to understand this plan, not to mention people who don't read English well, or who read other languages, for example. The process and criteria is not clear either, whether for choosing goals based on the vision themes, or for recommending parks for updates. If "this plan belongs to all Fresno Community Members" (pg. 29), some version of the plan should be an approachable and user-friendly tool for all residents, not just city departments or planners.

This section calls out parts of the plan related to Government Transparency, parts that could be changed to better reflect government transparency, and suggestions for the city to communicate more effectively to your community.

Parts of the Plan Related to Government Transparency

- Throughout the plan, it seems like maps are based on districts or development areas. These boundaries do not necessarily match how people's understanding of their neighborhoods. For example, the Southeast Fresno neighborhood is classified as parts of Downtown and existing neighborhoods South of Shaw.
- The consultant team and City of Fresno developed a three-tier prioritization strategy to guide capital improvements, which is described below and in section 7.1 (pg. 198). Chapter 8 provides details on the recommended capital improvement expenditure plan, indicating parks and specific improvements for each tier.

Parts of the Plan that Could Better Reflect Government Transparency

- Include a section on Next Steps, similar to section in Fresno Parks Vision 2050, on process, what comes next, and how community will be engaged.
- Be selective about which maps are included in the Fresno Parks Master Plan and make sure the most important information is apparent, or to briefly interpret the map for the reader. Most of the maps in this plan are difficult to interpret with color shading that's hard to distinguish or color coding that goes against map conventions. For example, most people expect parks to be green, except in this plan sometimes parks are blue.
- The plan's authors might describe how they weighted community input relative to indices and scores, since there is a clear emphasis quantitative data. If this information is in the plan, we could not find it.
- The plan's authors could divide long lists and tables into several meaningful categories. Information should be presented in a useful way that helps decision-makers weigh options and fully understand the equity implications and trade-offs.
- The list of Tier 1 parks improvement projects should be further prioritized using clear, agreed-upon criteria that include equity considerations. With nearly 80 percent of Fresno parks in need of critical improvements, it is not clear whether any of the priority parks or other SE parks will actually be repaired, or how this decision will be made.
- It should be made clear whether Mosqueda Park is a Tier 2 site, i.e., prioritized for "enhancements to existing facilities." Table 6.4 on pg. 191, Mosqueda is starred as "also a priority for Tier 2 renovations." But in Table 8.2 on pg. 246, Mosqueda is missing from the list of Tier 2 services or capital improvements.
- Include a timeline for implementation of the three-tier prioritization strategy in Chapter 8.

Future Opportunities for Government Transparency

- In partnership with the stakeholders organizations in the Acknowledgements (pg. i), develop a dissemination plan for sharing the contents of the Fresno Parks Master Plan. The message, plan contents, and medium should be tailored for various audiences in a way that builds trust and encourages ongoing engagement.
- Create facilitated opportunities for people expected to share the Fresno Parks Master Plan to ask questions about the process and the results that are most relevant to their audiences. Demonstrate you value and appreciate people giving the government access to their social and professional networks. Do your utmost to Support them in spreading the word.
- Create district and neighborhood-level versions of the Plan's maps, including the Needs Gradient Map on pages 178-179, so that residents can better understand how their neighborhood is doing and provide more specific feedback to the city as it begins to implement the Plan.
- Create another stand-alone version of the Executive Summaries that is no more than five pages long and clearly presents the recommendations and/or how the plan will affect specific neighborhood or communities. To this end, the Executive Summaries ideally should:
 - Include local neighborhood maps! Instead of all the detailed, low-res city-wide maps, have a couple of just Southeast Fresno with the assessment results, so people can affirm or correct the findings.
 - Include positive local images and/or inspiring quotes from the planning process by people they identify with.
 - Be available in languages that are commonly spoken by residents, such as Spanish and Hmong, and designed for wide circulation among residents.

Sustainable Effort

The creation of a Parks Master Plan is an exercise in anticipating the park needs of a future Fresno and the people who will live there. Plans in general have a long-term impact, and this one will shape the park system for at least the next 10 years. In that sense, the plan represents a long-term commitment to improving Fresno parks. What is missing is a plan to follow through on that commitment specifically in Southeast Fresno.

This plan presents so many good ideas for improving parks, without a process or criteria for deciding which should be immediate priorities, which may be initiated in a year or two, and which are unlikely to happen given available funds. Though there is mention of work plans and standards, there is minimal discussion on monitoring, metrics and accountability. In this sense there is no commitment to specific action by any agencies that are named and identified as responsible for particular outcomes within a set timeframe.

This section calls out parts of the plan related to Sustainable Effort, and focuses on funding, staffing and Chapter 9: Goals & Recommendations (pg. 259-274). It also includes parts that could be changed to better reflect sustainable effort, and suggestions for the city to commit long-term to improving Southeast Fresno over time.

Parts of the Plan Related to Sustainable Effort

- The plan repeats in several places that the community prioritizes maintenance of existing parks over renovations or creating new parks, but the plan lacks a list of Fresno parks recommended for enhanced or improved routine maintenance. Page 4 presents a list of parks that the authors recommend for improvement and another list for redevelopment; there is no corresponding list of parks recommended for improved routine maintenance.
 - None of the three priority parks are on either list.
 - All the other SE parks except Sunnyside are on the list of parks recommended for “strategic enhancements”
- The Fresno Parks Master Plan only names three agencies as responsible for implementing the plan--PARCS, DARM, and PW (pg. 27-28). In reality, implementing the plan will require the coordinated effort of many other agencies, departments, and non-governmental groups, and buy-in from various Fresno communities.
- The plan recommends the addition of 13 full-time maintenance workers within the next three years and for the PARCS Department to adapt maintenance standards and best practices established by the National Parks and Recreation Association (pg. 125)
- Goal 8: Advocate.
 - Recommendation 8.1. Inspire investment in Fresno parks--in terms of social, cultural and philanthropic capital--through meaningful and sustainable community engagement, advocacy, and partnerships that support park access and equity
 - Recommendation 8.2. Form a City Council appointed Parks Commission to guide the ongoing development and operations of Fresno’s park and open space system

Parts of the Plan that Could Better Reflect Sustainable Effort

- The plan should include a list of parks recommended for enhanced ongoing maintenance, in addition to the lists of parks for renovation and redevelopment. Ideally, this list would include some of Southeast Fresno’s priority parks--Pilibos Park, Mosqueda Park and/or Holmes Park.
- The plan should suggest how parks might be assessed for one of the three maintenance levels in Table 4.8 (pg. 126), with equity as a heavily-weighted criterion. Ideally, some of Southeast Fresno’s priority parks would be designated for Level 1 maintenance frequency, since this is clearly important to the community.
- Redraw Park Maintenance Zones so Southeast Fresno in one or no more than two zones. Based on the low-resolution Map A.2 in Appendix A (pg. 285), it appears that Southeast Fresno will be where three zones intersect. The plan suggests dedicated work crews and a consolidated parks maintenance agency, but unless recommended Park Maintenance Zones are redrawn, Southeast Fresno will not benefit from these and other changes designed to improve maintenance.
- Add a Next Steps section, similar to the one in Fresno Parks Vision 2050. This makes clear how the Fresno Parks Master Plan is part of a larger process, describes what will happen next, and demonstrates an intention to act on each of your four priorities.

- Add or edit recommendations under all the goals in Chapter 9 (pg. 259-274) to address equity, especially Goal 1 (Fund) and Goal 2 (Maintain)
- Revise Goal 3.7 so it's clear that any facilities that do not meet community needs may need to be improved based on residents' input, rather than converted out of hand (pg. 265). It may also be helpful to clarify how various communities' priorities will be identified in an ongoing way as the Parks Master Plan is implemented.
- Align the Parks Master Plan goals with the vision themes of access, equity, health, safety, design for beauty, innovation.

Future Opportunities for Sustainable Effort

- Develop an Action or Implementation Plan, based on the Fresno Parks Master Plan. This plan should include a prioritization process for strategies, improvements and locations; timeline; SMART objectives; and specific steps and roles for various departments and agencies. It should describe in detail how the Fresno Parks Master Plan will lead to real effects in Southeast Fresno.