



## Legislation Details (With Text)

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**Title:** CONTINUED 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;

**Sponsors:** Planning and Development Department

**Indexes:**

**Code sections:**

**Attachments:** 1. Exhibit A - Parks Master Plan, 2. Exhibit B - Plan Amendment A-17-016, 3. Exhibit C - Public Notice, 4. Exhibit D - Public Comment matrix, 5. Exhibit E - EA A-17-016, 6. Exhibit F - Planning Commission Resolution, 7. Exhibit G - City Council Resolution, 8. Exhibit H - FINAL PMP PPT, 9. Exhibit I- FMC Findings PMP, 10. Supplement - Public Comment from Cultiva La Salud.pdf, 11. Supplement - Letter from Lisa Flores.pdf

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
1/25/2018	1	City Council	adopted	Pass

## REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

**January 25, 2018**

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**THROUGH:** DANIEL ZACK, AICP, Assistant Director  
Development and Resource Management Department

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## SUBJECT

CONTINUED 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;

## RECOMMENDATION

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. ADOPT 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, as described in Exhibit B;

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Parks Master Plan (PMP) assesses the city-wide parks and open space system and provides strategies and recommendations to fund, maintain, improve, expand, secure, connect, partner, advocate and celebrate Fresno's parks. The PMP includes recommendations for improvements on existing parks. Although the PMP includes strategies to expand the park system, no specific new park sites are proposed as a part of this plan. The PMP would apply to the area within the Fresno Sphere of Influence. Adoption of the PMP would require amendments to the text of section 5.1 of Chapter 5 of the General Plan, the Parks, Open Space and Schools Element, and POSS-1-a, Parkland Standard. The amendments reference the new PMP and make a minor change to the type of land counted toward Regional Parks.

## BACKGROUND

On December 18, 2014, the City Council adopted the Fresno General Plan. Policy POSS-1-b of the Parks, Open Space and Schools element called for a PMP update. Specifically, the policy directed an assessment of the existing parks and parkland, an action plan defining priorities for recreational facilities, and identification of opportunities for strategic partnerships and comprehensive financing.

On May 19, 2016, the City Council approved a consultant contract with Wallace, Roberts and Todd to update the PMP. Work has been underway on the plan since July of 2016. On December 1, 2016, the City Council initiated the PMP by means of the Parks Vision Plan. On April 27, 2017, the City Council amended the contract with Wallace, Roberts and Todd to augment the scope of the Parks Master Plan to include Urban Greening planning grant goals. The City Council has held workshops on the PMP planning process on February 9, 2017 and October 12, 2017.

## ANALYSIS

The PMP articulates a vision for improving Fresno's park and open space system based on robust community engagement and thorough analysis.

The planning process began with a detailed needs assessment conducted by consultants, City staff, residents and stakeholders to evaluate both Fresno's individual parks and the system as a whole. From the analysis and needs assessment process, several findings emerged that characterize the challenges and opportunities for Fresno's park system:

- **Maintenance:** To address existing park system daily maintenance and repair operations, an increased annual funding of nearly \$5 million is needed, with an extra \$10,000-\$15,000 for each additional acre added to the park system (this number does not include any capital improvement or lifecycle costs).
- **Deferred investment** of approximately \$112 million is needed to adequately fund critical lifecycle replacement costs.
- **Park Acreage:** Park land needs to increase by 1,113 acres to meet the General Plan overall level of service goals for Fresno's current population, and by 1,769 acres to meet recreation needs of Fresno's population at the General Plan horizon year of 2035.
- **Poor Condition Parks:** Fresno's parks and open space system is dominated by parks in poor condition that suffer from a lack of investment needed to adequately maintain the City's parks and open spaces, as well as public safety concerns over inappropriate activities
- **Park Desert:** Significant areas of the city have limited or no parks, deeming them deficient or "park deserts," especially notable in portions of Council Districts 1, 5 and 7
- **Limited Park Land in Urban Areas:** There is insufficient park land to meet the needs of a growing Fresno, and a critical need for park development in higher density urbanized areas that have extremely limited land available for new park development
- **Parks are Highly Valued:** The community values its parks and recreational programs, especially for youth and seniors
- **Limited Resources:** PARCS staff operate with limited available resources

The PMP examines the General Plan park acreage goals, population growth, and demographic information as part of a comprehensive level of service evaluation. Mapping and site analysis of existing parks and their service areas within the PMP demonstrate how each neighborhood is currently served or not served by parks and recreation amenities. The plan also outlines park classifications and provides design guidelines for different park types within the park system.

The PMP includes urban greening strategies for the city overall, and at a Council District level. In addition to expanding green space, urban greening strategies provide a number of environmental and community benefits: improving air and water quality and reducing heat island effects. More importantly, parks, and various supportive programs, help to provide opportunities to members of the community, in particular area youth.

The PMP provides a study of the financial health of the park system, including benchmarking Fresno's expenditures with comparable cities. From this analysis the PMP sets out a series of strategies for to help prioritize the parks and open space needs and provides targeted three-tier

capital improvement expenditure plan.

In order to ensure consistency between the proposed PMP and the Fresno General Plan, Plan Amendment application A-17-016 (Exhibit B) proposes changes to the narrative of section 5.1 and policy POSS-1-a of the Fresno General Plan to reflect the updated park classifications contemplated by the PMP. Staff finds this amendment to be consistent with the General Plan. See Exhibit I for the findings.

## **Outreach**

The PMP had robust community engagement. The City formed a stakeholder group with representatives from key community constituencies to provide direction for the plan and feedback throughout the planning process. Stakeholders included representatives from local community groups, health organizations, environmental organizations and other local, regional and state government organizations. There were two rounds of stakeholder advisory meetings, one in September 2016 to help shape the vision for the plan and another in March 2017 to set park planning priorities.

The City also held a series of public workshops on the PMP. During the fall of 2016 there were 13 mobile workshops at parks and school events throughout Fresno, with a total attendance of just under 600 people. During these workshops participants were asked to fill out a user survey on park facilities and programs. The survey was available in three languages and was also online. The fall survey had 800 respondents. There was a community workshop in October of 2016. This feedback was incorporated into the vision document that was completed in December of 2016. In the spring of 2017 there were seven workshops, one in each council district, with a total attendance of over 160 people. During these workshops the public completed exercises prioritizing funding strategies and prioritizing parks to be improved and locations where new parks are needed citywide and within specific districts. The district workshops also had a supplemental online survey that was available in English and Spanish for residents who were unable to attend a district meeting. 50 people responded to the online survey. There was also a second community workshop in October of 2017.

## **Public Notice and Comment**

In addition to all of the outreach noted above, a Public Draft of the PMP (Exhibit A) was made available for 21-day public comment beginning October 12, 2017.

Notice was provided by the following methods pursuant to Fresno Municipal Code (FMC) Sections 15-5007-C and D:

1. A legal notice was published in the Fresno Bee on November 14, 2017 and in Vida en el Valle on November 29, 2017.
2. The notice and environmental assessment were posted with the City Clerk on November 14, 2017.
3. The draft PMP was posted on the City's website on the Development and Resource Management page at: [www.fresno.gov/parksplan](http://www.fresno.gov/parksplan). The draft PMP and environmental assessment were also made available at public libraries throughout Fresno.

A copy of the public notice is available in Exhibit C. During the public comment period, 10 people submitted comments on the Parks Master Plan, resulting in 46 public comments. The comments

mainly focused on the following areas:

- ADA accessibility of the document
- Design guidelines for neighborhood parks
- Design guidelines for ponding basin parks
- Eaton Plaza
- Editing suggestions
- Joint-use agreements with school sites
- Parks funding sources with new development
- Potential development of a special parks district
- Potential projects to add to the Capital Expenditure Plan
- Roeding Park
- The San Joaquin River Parkway
- Strategies for new park acreage within developed areas of Fresno

Exhibit D contains a comment matrix and staff's responses to the comments. Some of the comments resulted in revisions to the final draft of the Parks Master Plan.

## **Citizen Committees**

The PMP is a strategic document that will guide the development of Fresno's parks and open space system. Although the plan identifies the need for more parks in Fresno, no land use changes are proposed and no new parks are sited in this plan. Because property development is not a part of this plan amendment application, project review committees are not required to review and provide recommendations, however per Fresno municipal code 15-4906-C, committees may make recommendations to the Planning Commission and Council on any matters relating to planning and zoning, including the adoption of guidelines to implement the goals and policies of adopted City plans. The following bodies reviewed and made recommendations on this plan:

District 5: Met on November 13, 2017 and voted unanimously to recommend approval with the further recommendation that at least three amenities be provided with pocket parks rather than the proposed one amenity.

Airport Land Use Commission: Scheduled on December 4, 2016.

## **Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission held a public hearing at its regularly scheduled meeting on December 6, 2017, to consider the PMP and plan amendment along with relevant environmental findings. The Planning Commission resolution (Exhibit F) is attached for more information.

## **Relationship to Other Plans**

Fresno General Plan: General Plan Policy POSS-1-b Parks Implementation Planning calls for an update of the PMP. Plan Amendment Application No. A-17-016 proposes text amendments to the text of Chapter 5 of the Fresno General Plan, the Parks, Open Space and Schools Element, as well as policy POSS-1-a Parkland Standard, to reflect the Parks Master Plan. See Exhibit B for more details.

Parks Master Plan (1989): The proposed PMP would replace the 1989 Parks Master Plan.

Active Transportation Plan: The Active Transportation Plan analyzes conditions for walking and biking in Fresno and proposes biking and pedestrian networks. PMP further integrates active transportation with the parks open space system.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

An environmental assessment initial study was prepared for this project in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Exhibit E). This process included the distribution of requests for comment from other responsible or affected agencies and interested organizations.

Preparation of the environmental assessment necessitated a thorough review of the proposed project and relevant environmental issues and considered previously prepared environmental and technical studies pertinent to the Planning Area, including the Fresno General Plan Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR SCH No. 2012111015). These environmental and technical studies have examined the potential impact of park improvements on hazardous materials sites, existing drainage patterns and water quality standards, noise standards, recreation facilities, and traffic patterns. The Parks Master Plan is a strategic document that provides guidelines that direct the future maintenance and development of park facilities and program in Fresno. Individual project details including precise project locations, project timing, material types, equipment used and construction drawings are not currently available. When specific individual projects are implemented, the City will conduct site-specific CEQA analysis as necessary. Implementation under the Parks Master Plan is required to comply with the goals and policies of the General Plan, Development Code and other regulatory documents.

The proposed plan amendment has been determined to not be fully within the scope of MEIR SCH No. 2012111015 as provided by the CEQA, as codified in the Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21157.1(d) and the CEQA Guidelines Section 15177(c). It has been further determined that all applicable mitigation measures of MEIR SCH No. 2012111015 have been applied to the project, together with project specific mitigation measures necessary to assure that the project will not cause significant adverse cumulative impacts, growth inducing impacts and irreversible significant effects beyond those identified by SCH No. 2012111015 as provided by CEQA Section 15178(a). In addition, pursuant to Public Resources Code, Section 21157.6(b)(1), staff has determined that no substantial changes have occurred with respect to the circumstances under which the MEIR was certified and that no new information, which was not known and could not have been known at the time that the MEIR was certified as complete, has become available. Therefore, it has been determined based upon the evidence in the record that the project will not have a significant impact on the environment and that the filing of a mitigated negative declaration is appropriate in accordance with the provisions of CEQA Section 21157.5(a)(2) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15178(b)(1) and (2).

Based upon the attached environmental assessment and the list of identified mitigation measures, staff has determined that there is no evidence in the record that the project may have a significant effect on the environment and has prepared a mitigated negative declaration for this project. A public notice of the attached mitigated negative declaration finding for Environmental Assessment Application No. A-17-016 was published on November 14, 2017 with no comments or appeals specifically related to the environmental document received to date.

Project specific mitigation measures include the incorporation of hazards and hazardous materials mitigation measures

## **LOCAL PREFERENCE**

N/A - No purchasing

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The PMP was prepared by a consultant team led by Wallace, Roberts and Todd, LLC, with assistance from city staff. The initial contract amount, approved in May of 2016, was \$436,701 of General Fund monies. The contract was later amended in April of 2017 to incorporate an urban greening component with a State of California Bond Act Funds grant (Proposition 84) in the amount of \$250,000.

Adoption of the PMP would have no direct fiscal impact on the City's General Fund. However, the plan does make recommendations regarding the fiscal resources needed to maintain existing parks and develop new ones.

### **Attachments:**

- Exhibit A: Parks Master Plan
- Exhibit B: Plan Amendment Application No. A-17-016
- Exhibit C: Public Notice
- Exhibit D: Public Comment matrix
- Exhibit E: Environmental Assessment No. A-17-016
- Exhibit F: Planning Commission Resolution
- Exhibit G: City Council Resolution
- Exhibit H: PowerPoint Presentation
- Exhibit I: FMC Findings PMP