



Kikuchi + Kankel Design Group

Landscape Architecture
Environmental Design
Site Planning

June 12, 2020

Barbara Dye, President
& members of the Granada Community Services District Board
504 Avenue Alhambra
El Granada, CA 94018

RE: Burnham Park Preliminary Landscape Plan

Dear President Dye and members of the Granada Community Services District:

It has been a pleasure working through the Preliminary Design Phase with the Parks Subcommittee, and we are pleased to present the attached Preliminary Landscape Plan for your review, input, and public comment.

During the early part of this year, our office, under the guidance of the GCSD Parks Subcommittee and influenced by feedback received during last October's community outreach workshop and direction provided by the full Board at last November's GCSD meeting, developed various schematic concepts for park development on the Burnham Strip. Over the course of the this phase, we honed the concepts towards a "preferred plan" that incorporated all features desired by the majority of the community and endorsed by the Board.

On March 12 our office and the Parks Subcommittee met with Planning Director Steve Monowitz at the San Mateo County office to present this preferred plan to ensure the proposal didn't conflict with the County's general plan, zoning, or any other future plans for the area. We also wanted to be sure that there was a mutual understanding of the "next steps" through the entitlement and permitting phases, as several agencies have jurisdiction across various parts of the site.

Steve Monowitz's input was substantial and supportive, and he helpfully outlined key areas where the goals of the County's Connect The Coastside plan overlapped with the circulation and access routes proposed in the park plan. Our team had a follow-up conference call with Joe LaClair and Katie Faulkner from Connect The Coastside in early April that provided further clarity on future pedestrian and bike lane improvements in the area.

Throughout our conversations, the County encouraged us to include stormwater treatment wherever possible, as water exiting the Strip leads directly to the ocean. In early May and June we and the Parks Subcommittee held two meetings with San Mateo Resource Conservation District staff to review refined concepts for managing the stormwater that falls on and runs through the site. Improvements to on-site treatment will have a direct effect on lowering the pollutants carried in the water that flows into the ocean.

The Preliminary Landscape Plan contained herein updates many of the concepts contained in previous plan iterations you've reviewed, but have been refined through the advice of our public and private agency partners and the feedback provided by the Board and community.

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Site Design – South

The overall site can be separated into three distinct zones. The southern third, which extends from Coronado Street to the existing gravel parking lot, is a densely vegetated area surrounding the Burnham Creek drainage. (Only a portion of this part of the site is shown on the plan.)

This area is largely untouched by the proposed site improvements, with the exception of a permeable trail that extends from the Coronado Street crosswalk up to Obispo Road, and along the Obispo Road shoulder until it meets the central portion of the site. A well-delineated trail will encourage beachgoers and park users to cross Highway 1 at the existing stoplight, rather than making the unsafe, informal crossings common now.



The entirety of this proposed trail is within San Mateo County’s right-of-way, but the county has expressed support for its installation, as they share the goal of improving safe crossings to the beach.

Site Design – Central

The center of the site is the most active part of the park. Just north of the Burnham Creek riparian zone, a large “Village Green” lawn, surrounded by a walking path, covers the entirety of the existing gravel parking lot. This large lawn flows north to meet a central gathering plaza located at the end of Avenue Portola. The central plaza is a multi-purpose space providing opportunities for small groups to meet, community events to be focused, and small performances to occur. A combination of built-in and moveable seating provides options for differently sized groups to feel comfortable.



The existing, deeply-incised central drainage channel that extends from Avenue Portola is relocated from its current location slightly to the north, its channel both widened and realigned to increase sinuosity, allowing for more stormwater percolation and filtration. The area surrounding this meandering drainage will be a much more robust and dynamic riparian zone, with opportunities for educational signage and viewing/seating areas.

Further to the north, a thirty-three stall lot provides on-site parking, with another ± 30 formal street parking stalls included along Obispo Road. All parking areas are designed to be permeable, a best practice encouraged by the San Mateo County Green Infrastructure Design Guide, though road surfaces and drive aisles will likely be a more durable surface. Surrounding this parking lot and the related improvements to Obispo Road are several curbside biotreatment planters. These planters are designed to be the first opportunity for native shrubs and grasses to filter and treat runoff before water enters the expanded on-site drainage channels.

To the west of the parking lot is another new riparian zone. The northern ditch is moved from its existing deeply-incised, narrow east-west channel to become a broad, meandering drainage that increases stormwater filtration and groundwater recharge before entering the ocean. Like with the newly enhanced central drainage, the area surrounding this new channel will be a robust mix of native riparian vegetation. The pathway that separates the two new drainages is a boardwalk to allow for comfortable passage during extreme wet weather, and to allow park users to safely view the dynamic environment of a healthy riparian zone.

Adjacent to parking lot is a restroom facility, with optional exterior showers for beachgoers. Significant plating areas will occur on the east and north sides of this building in order to reduce visibility of the building from off-site. Nearby is the “skate and scoot” area, with the relocated skate ramp and a new ribbon track for younger skaters.

To the north of the parking lot the wide perimeter pathways intersect, and this crossroads is the nexus of the most active spaces in the park. A basketball half-court, group and family picnic areas, separate play structure areas for tots and bigger kids, and a large play lawn all extend from the crossing pathways. The play structures are designed to be “Nature Play” areas, with wood timbers, boulders, and natural materials rather than brightly colored plastic and metal parts.



Site Design – North

The northern part of the park is a serene, pastoral expanse of gently rolling, mounded landforms covered with a mix of native grasses and shrubs, with scattered pockets of more detailed plantings. Weaving through the mounds are a mix of wide “primary” mixed-use pathways 8-10’ wide and narrower, secondary pathways 4-5’ in width, in order to accommodate a broad mix of park users: walkers, joggers, and bikers; solo visitors and larger groups; families, friends, and strangers.



In various places along the pathways, exercise stations are located to provide outdoor fitness opportunities. At least eight of these stations could be placed in the northern part of the site, with opportunity for expansion around the Village Green to the south. These fitness stations should reflect the same use of natural materials as the kids' play structures.

Tucked into private nooks carved out of the mounds are picnic areas designed to accommodate small groups. These private picnic areas are relatively sheltered from wind due to low gabion walls that retain the adjacent landforms, and have been sited to avoid direct lines of site from one another, yet maintaining views to the ocean. A public bocce court is also central in this area, with adjacent space available for horseshoes or croquet.

At the northeastern corner of the park, a small single-use restroom facility is bunkered into the adjacent mound to reduce visibility. A satellite restroom facility in this location is far more convenient for families with small children, or those in the midst of an exercise circuit, than the larger facility by the parking lot in the center of the park.

Next Steps

If the Board approves this Preliminary Landscape Plan, the next step is to incorporate any feedback received into a final Master Plan for review and approval prior to developing a complete submittal to the County for a Coastal Development Permit, Use Permit and general review for conformance to County codes and land use requirements. During the County's review process a CEQA Initial Study will be performed to review the potential environmental (biological, cultural, etc.), noise, and traffic impacts from the project.

At the time of our meeting with County planning staff in mid-March, Steve Monowitz suggested that it was possible for their review process to take as little as six months from the time of submittal, though all agreed that was a rather optimistic projection. The adjustments proposed to the existing drainage channels will likely require further hydrological study to ensure that adequate capacity is maintained, but the goal of improved water quality resulting from the modifications was lauded by our partners at the Resources Conservation

District. Their team has been tremendously helpful in identifying potential environmental “red flags”, and we’re fortunate to have their advice.

We look forward to the opportunity to provide further insight on the development of the park concepts and upcoming regulatory process at the public meeting on June 18.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom Conroy', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Tom Conroy
Associate