

DATE ISSUED: February 9, 2006

ATTENTION: Centre City Advisory Committee
Meeting of February 15, 2006

SUBJECT: 14th Street & Island Avenue Park (on 14th Street between J Street and Island Avenue) – Concept Design Approval – East Village Redevelopment District of the Expansion Sub Area of the Centre City Redevelopment Project Area

REFERENCE: Attachment A: Initial Concept Plan
Attachment B: Revised Concept Plan

STAFF CONTACT: Nicole Haines, Associate Project Manager

SUMMARY

Staff Recommendation - That the Centre City Advisory Committee recommend Concept Design Approval for the park at 14th Street (between J Street and Island Avenue).

That the Centre City Advisory Committee (CCAC) nominate a representative to participate in the Artist Selection Panel for the integration of public art into the park.

Committee Recommendation – On February 8, 2006, the Real Estate (Planning and Projects) Committee unanimously approved the Revised Concept Plan.

Other Recommendations - None

Fiscal Impact - Funds are available from the proceeds of the sale of the 30,000SF parcel that the Agency sold to the Developer. A total of \$5,045,000 is available for the design and development of the park, and other Agency obligations outlined in the Owner Participation Agreement (“OPA”). Cost estimates for the park construction will be undertaken at key stages throughout the project, including the Schematic Design.

BACKGROUND

This proposed project advances the Visions and Goals of the Centre City Community Plan, the Objectives of the Centre City Redevelopment Project, and the actions of the East Village Focus Plan by:

- providing open space for existing and future downtown residents;
- creating parks to provide catalysts for new development;
- developing a comprehensive open space system that provides a diverse range of outdoor opportunities for residents, workers, and visitors;
- providing public open space within walking distance of all residents and employees;
- making new public parks and plazas harmonious, inspirational, and sources of community pride and character through community participating and design excellence;
- enhancing downtown through distinctive streetscapes;
- ensuring development along streets offers a rich visual experience, is engaging to pedestrians, and contributes to street life, vitality and safety;
- facilitating the development of mixed use neighborhoods, with open spaces, services, and retail within convenient walking distance of residents, to maximize opportunities for walking;
- continuing efforts to create meaningful, memorable, and delightful public spaces in downtown integrated with public art;
- working toward a wide range of public art in all downtown districts and neighborhoods that celebrates diversity in history, culture, climate, environment and people; and
- providing parks and community facilities to complement the development of residential neighborhoods.

DISCUSSION

General Description

The proposed park is located on 14th Street, between J Street and Island Avenue, in the East Village neighborhood. The park will occupy the western half of the “super block”, and will be approximately 57,000 SF in size. It will adjoin the proposed Pinnacle development, which will occupy the remaining part of the block. The park will serve the rapidly growing population of the adjacent residential area, providing useable outdoor space for a variety of activities and users of all ages.

The proposed park is rectangular in shape, and the topography slopes down from the site's highpoint on the corner of 14th and J Streets. The site is constrained by a fault line of the Rose Fault, and a storm drain no-build easement, which bisect the park.

The park will contain features such as sidewalks, walking paths, play areas including a tot lot, open lawn and areas for nature based play, bench seats, lighting, litter receptacles, drinking fountains, gardens and trellis' for shade. Public rest rooms will be provided as part of the corner commercial development.

In 2004 the City Council adopted the Public Art Master Plan for the City of San Diego to strengthen San Diego's commitment to sustaining a vibrant cultural life. The Commission for Arts and Culture ("Commission") is the primary managing body to advise, propose and progress public art within the City of San Diego. Corporation staff are recommending a collaboration with the Commission to integrate public art into the design of the proposed park at 14th Street (between J Street and Island Avenue) in East Village. A key idea emanating from the community workshops for the park design, was to have artists work with the park design team to incorporate public art into the park.

Design Process

Following approval of the concept design ("Attachment A") in October 2005, the Corporation and the "Design Team" (led by Spurlock Poirier, Landscape Architects) began the community outreach process to confirm and progress the design for the park.

Two community workshops have been held, the first on November 19, 2005, and the last on January 7, 2006. The park design was well received and fully supported at the community workshops. The plan presented for approval today ("Attachment B") is the plan presented and supported at the final community workshop. The community comments received at that meeting, in addition to any comments from the Committee and CCAC, will be incorporated into the schematic design. Feedback from the community workshops includes the recommendation to incorporate:

- public art;
- an area for older children to play;
- additional benches, particularly to provide seating in shaded areas of the park;
- adequate and appropriate lighting for the park and its activities;
- facilities and/or amenities for dog walkers; and
- plants indigenous to southern California.

At the CCAC Pre-Design meeting on January 24, 2006, the design was well received. Feedback from the CCAC Pre-Design meeting included:

- Provide adequate drinking fountains
- Rolling topography should be more useable than the mounds in Children's Park
- Further explore ways to integrate or connect the landscape of the park and the private development.

At the CCDC Real Estate (Planning and Projects) Committee, the members supported the concept design, but wanted to make sure that the design enables the café to provide adequate 'eyes on the park'. The Committee also made some suggested regarding the use of materials. All of the above comments will be considered in the design revisions leading to the Schematic Design Plans.

Public Art Integration

Direction from the community meetings indicated a preference for a collaboration of more than one artist to work on the project. Other factors the community wishes to be considered in any artwork include the consideration of artworks that:

- interpret the natural and/or cultural environment;
- are intergenerational;
- respect the past, but provide something for the present and future; and
- extend or link to the East Village Urban Art Trail.

The Artist Selection process will be facilitated by non-voting Commission staff. Artists will be identified for an Open Call for groups of artists. The Open Call will be for a group of artists, so that the desire for a collaboration of artists is achieved, and that the chosen group / artists have experience working as part of a team.

The Artist Selection Panel will be composed of, but not limited to:

- Two visual art professionals;
- Design Team Representative;
- CCDC Representative; and
- one community member.

The voting members may be joined by a number of non-voting members, including but not limited to:

- City / Corporation staff, and
- other technical advisors

The development of the artwork(s) will also involve the community, primarily through a series of public meetings. The meeting will include:

- Meeting 1 – The artists will meet with the community to gather input for the artwork(s),
- Meeting 2 – The artists will return to the community with the Schematic Design for feedback, and
- Meeting 3 – The artists will return to the community for presentation of the final artwork proposal(s).

The Public Art Integration process will run concurrent with the design for the park, so every opportunity can be taken to fully integrate the artwork(s) into the park.

Recap of the Owner Participation Agreement as it relates to the Development of the Park

The objective of the OPA (approved in October 2005), is to provide a neighborhood public park and a private development implementing the “neighborhood center” concept in a location proposed for such uses by the proposed Community Plan. Key terms that relate to the development of the park include:

- The Developer will construct a commercial structure, joint use public restrooms and patio at the corner of 14th and Island. The commercial structure, including its patio, is required to be a food and beverage-related retail use. The joint-use public restrooms must be open to the general public daily at least from 6 A.M. to 9 P.M.

- The approximately 57,000 SF Park Easement will be designed and constructed as a public park at Agency expense. The Park Easement must be open to the public during the same hours required by the City's downtown park curfew ordinance (the current ordinance provides for parks to be open to the public daily from 6 A.M. to midnight).
- If, within 36 months of the Agency's execution of the OPA, the Developer has met the permitting and financing requirements for, and commences construction on, the parking structure beneath a portion of the Park Easement, the Developer would also construct the park improvements on the Park Easement and the Agency would reimburse the Developer for the Developer's actual, reasonable third-party costs for the construction of the park improvements (not any portion of the costs attributable to the Developer's design and construction of the parking structure). If the Developer does not proceed as described within 36 months, there will be no garage within the Park Easement and the Agency would construct the park improvements. Park-related costs include the curbs, gutters, sidewalks and street trees immediately adjacent to the Park Easement.
- The Developer is required to construct and complete the commercial structure, the joint-use public restrooms and patio at the corner of 14th and Island on a schedule coordinated with the completion of the park improvements.
- The maintenance, repair and replacement of the park improvements will be provided in perpetuity by the Developer or the Developer's successors in interest.
- The Landscape Concept Plan for Park Improvements dated May 18, 2005 was approved by the Agency on October 11, 2005 and served as the basis for the community workshops. The comments from the community, CCAC and Committee will be incorporated into the Schematic Drawings. The Schematic Drawings will be submitted to the Board and Agency for approval and authorization to proceed with more detailed drawings and specifications for the park improvements.

The Development Team is outlined in the following table:

ROLE / FIRM	CONTACT	OWNED BY
Developer / Construction Manager Pinnacle International Development, Inc.	Michael DeCotiis	Michael DeCotiis (President) (Privately Owned)
General Contractor Pinnacle International Development, Inc.	Apriano Meola	Michael DeCotiis (President) (Privately Owned)
Architect Perkins and Company	John Perkins	John Perkins, John I. Perkins III (Privately Owned)
Landscape Architect Spurlock Poirier	Marty Poirier	Andy Spurlock Marty Poirier (Privately Owned)

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

This report requests that CCAC approve the Concept Plan for the park. Staff will then proceed with developing the Schematic Drawings (including changes to reflect the comments received from the community, CCAC and CCDC Real Estate Committee).

This report also requests that CCAC nominate a representative to participate in the selection of an artist(s) for the integration of public art.

The proposed park will implement a number of recommendations from the Community Plan and East Village Focus Plan, and will provide valuable public open space for a growing neighborhood. The creation of a neighborhood park will provide a variety of recreational amenities, and will raise the quality of life for all downtown residents and visitors.