



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Albert Balagso

**SUBJECT:** ALMA COMMUNITY CENTER  
SITE RENOVATION  
MASTER PLAN

**DATE:** 07-30-07

Approved

Date

8/3/07

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** 7

**SNI AREA:** Washington

## RECOMMENDATION

Approval of the master plan for Alma Community Center Site Renovation.

## OUTCOME

Approval of the Alma Community Center Site Renovation Master Plan will enable staff to design and renovate the site.

## BACKGROUND

The Alma Community Center (Center) is located at the southeasterly corner of Pomona and West Alma Avenues within Council District 7, bordering Council District 3. The site falls within the boundary of the Washington Strong Neighborhoods Initiative planning area.

The Center site is an approximately 1.3-acre property, which includes a small vacant land parcel recently purchased by the City to expand the existing center site. The bulk of the site was initially developed in the early 1980s as two separate community center buildings; one serving youth and the other serving seniors.

The current site configuration includes 29 parking spaces (three handicap spaces), a passenger loading zone, a fenced play yard associated with the youth center, a play structure, dumpster enclosure, handball courts, mechanical-equipment enclosure, walks, and landscaping.

The Alma Youth Center is approximately 2,800 square feet in size and was retrofitted in the late 1990s to better serve Washington area youth. Recreational amenities available to neighborhood

youth include weight-lifting equipment, pool tables, air hockey, and game tables. Outdoor recreation is provided in a multipurpose sports area.

The Alma Senior Center is approximately 3,572 square feet in size and offers activities for senior citizens including daily lunches, exercise and dance classes, Loteria (Spanish bingo), arts and crafts, and blood-pressure checks. Programming includes special events organized for seniors.

Both buildings are in fair condition overall, but showing signs of wear. The existing play equipment is in good condition and serves residents in the neighborhood. Other outdoor amenities are in fair to poor condition. The handball courts have continually attracted negative activities such as gang activity, loitering, and alcohol use (a liquor store is located adjacent to the Pomona Avenue entrance to the site). Basic physical repair and improvements to the site have been envisioned by the community as first steps in upgrading facilities.

The Washington Neighborhood Revitalization Plan (NRP) noted a number of infrastructure improvements that could provide short-term improvements to conditions in the neighborhood. Improving facilities and programs at the Alma Community Center is number three on the top ten list of most desired neighborhood improvements overall.

## **ANALYSIS**

The Alma Community Center Site Renovation Master Plan (“Project”) was undertaken to address many of the recommendations of the NRP and was prepared with input by the community, seniors, and the Washington Area Neighborhood Action Committee. The resulting Project renovates deteriorated site features and relocates park elements to improve visibility, eliminates undesirable facilities (handball courts) that facilitate nuisance activity, and improves use relationships between site facilities. The renovated site design improves vehicular access and adds pedestrian access to the site.

An existing billboard located on the vacant parcel is not proposed for removal as part of the master plan. The billboard is to be removed as part of a separate real estate negotiation process currently underway that will require environmental approval under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under a separate action.

The Project includes resurfacing the existing parking area, reconfiguring the plaza with small ornamental trees, relocating the dumpster enclosure and play structure, and removing the existing handball courts.

The attached Master Plan shows 29 parking spaces, including five (5) handicap spaces. The parking lot is reconfigured to provide an enhanced driving environment with 26-foot-wide drive aisles, 10-foot-wide parking spaces and an increased number of handicap parking spaces.

The existing easternmost driveway entrance from Alma is eliminated and replaced by a new driveway entrance that aligns with Mastic Street. The increased distance between the drive aisles enhances site access for vehicles.

A new pedestrian walkway from Alma provides access for bus riders, walkers, and cyclists. In addition, the alley walkway at the rear of the site is reconfigured to provide clear visibility through the site at that location.

An overhead canopy, which is not enclosed, will connect the two community buildings to provide visual unity and a covered waiting area for passengers for van pick-up. A small plaza with trees and seating is reconstructed in the front of the buildings at the same general location of the existing plaza, with small ornamental trees.

The dumpster and play structure are relocated, and the handball courts are eliminated. A protected area for basketball practice is created in front of the Youth Center.

The Master Plan is proposed for implementation in four phases and Phase I of the Master Plan can be implemented before billboard removal is complete, if necessary. Phase I consists of reconfiguring the parking lot and drop-off plaza and includes all landscaping, lighting, irrigation, stormwater management and other features related to that work.

Staff presented the proposed Alma Community Center Site Renovation Master Plan to the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) on October 18, 2006, and comments were incorporated. The Project was then recommended for approval by the PRC on November 1, 2006.

### **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

Approval of the Alma Community Center Site Renovation Master Plan will enable staff to design and implement the phased master plan construction. The project cost estimate for Phase I is \$780,000. There is currently \$780,000 in project funding available for implementation of Phase I from the following sources: San José Redevelopment Agency (\$194,057), Community Development Block Grant (\$285,943), and a State of California Proposition 40 Grant (\$300,000). For each phase of implementation using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, environmental clearance under the National Environmental Protection Act is required. If the Master Plan is not approved, staff will address Council comments and directives and report back to Council as soon as possible in order to meet the CDBG construction deadline of June 30, 2008.

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST**



**Criterion 1:** Requires Council action on the use of public funds equal to \$1 million or greater.

**(Required: Website Posting)**

- Criterion 2:** Adoption of a new or revised policy that may have implications for public health, safety, quality of life, or financial/economic vitality of the City. **(Required: E-mail and Website Posting)**
- ✓ **Criterion 3:** Consideration of proposed changes to service delivery, programs, staffing that may have impacts to community services and have been identified by staff, Council or a Community group that requires special outreach. **(Required: E-mail, Website Posting, Community Meetings, Notice in appropriate newspapers)**

Once the two adjacent properties were acquired in 2006, a community meeting was held on October 2, 2006, to discuss possible improvements to the site. A follow-up meeting to the Washington SNI Neighborhood Advisory Council was also conducted on October 12, 2006.

This follows the standard community outreach process for capital projects, including master plan development. This memorandum will also be posted on the City's Internet website for the August 21, 2007 Council meeting.

**COORDINATION**

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, the City Manager's Budget Office, the San José Redevelopment Agency, the Departments of Housing, Transportation, Public Works, Planning, Building and Code Enforcement, and San José Police.

**CEQA**

CEQA: Exempt, PP07-049.



ALBERT BALAGSO  
Director of Parks, Recreation  
and Neighborhood Services

Attachment

For questions, please contact Evelyn Velez-Rosario, Parks Manager, at (408) 793-5552.