MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 14, 2018
FROM: Henry Perezalonso, Recreation, Arts & Community Services Director
RE: Skate Park Feasibility Study, CIP B-616

BACKGROUND

At its January 2017 study session the Parks and Leisure Services Commission reviewed and discussed the Parks and Facilities Capital Improvement Projects to identify and prioritize projects to recommend to the Town Council for consideration.

The projects discussed and recommended had also been identified through the update process of the Danville Parks and Recreation & Arts Strategic Plan. One such project was a skate park, which was identified as an outdoor recreation facility to augment and diversify the existing inventory for Danville’s park system. It was determined to be a high priority for the Parks and Leisure Services Commission and was recommended to move forward to the Town Council for inclusion in the upcoming Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for fiscal year 2017/18. In June 2017, the Town Council appropriated $20,000 in the 2017/18 Operating Budget and CIP for a Skate Park Feasibility Study. No additional funds have been appropriated for this project.

The Town sought professional design expertise and consultation services to conduct this skate park feasibility study, a strategic plan for the future development of a skate park and to develop studies on the best siting of a skate park. The consulting firm Spohn Ranch (Consultant) was selected to prepare this study.

The feasibility study was to incorporate input from meetings with staff, a site tour and community outreach. The study was also to include information about the evolution and benefits of skate parks, design and operation guidelines, public input, site analysis, preliminary schematic designs and construction cost estimates.

At its December 13, 2017 meeting the Commission reviewed the site analysis portion of the study which included the review of at Diablo Vista, Sycamore Valley and Osage Station Park. The site analysis looked at a number of potential site locations within each of the three parks reviewed and a score was attached to the locations

ATTACHMENT C
based on selection criteria. The criteria included visibility, accessibility, design canvas, ease of development, amenities & infrastructure and impact on surrounding environment.

Based on the analysis the Commission was asked to make a recommendation for a preferred site location to allow for the continuation of the Skate Park Feasibility Study. The Commission recommended Sycamore Valley Park as the preferred site. Other considerations addressed to completed the study was to maximized the space available, design for multi-sport, all skill levels and terrain types as well as include seating, shade, lighting and fences if needed.

DISCUSSION

The Consultant has completed its feasibility study for a potential skate park in Danville. The attached report (Exhibit 1) includes their summary of findings including the initial site evaluation process, planning assumptions, community input and concerns the impact of a skate park may have, cost projections and a conceptual design.

Site Analysis

The goal was to evaluate areas within the community for best placement of a skate park and further assess potential benefits and impacts. The site analysis was deliberately conducted through a data driven process that scores sites based on a wide range of variables. Dozens of topics, qualifiers and sub qualifiers, based on hundreds of installations and 25 years of building skate parks was implemented.

Schematic Design

In an effort to provide community input into the conceptual design of a potential skate park a design workshop was held by the Consultant on December 20, 2018. Over 80 participants provided information as to what they would like to see be a part of a skate park. There was also a survey conducted and design focus group who met to provide additional feedback to the Consultant.

These meetings and survey served as opportunities for the Consultant to meet the community, evaluate the makeup and skill levels and start a dialogue. As the Consultant met with the users and heard their stories and ideas it led to the discovery of the experience level and diversity of the users in Danville, which is higher than average.

Due to this level of experience, the request for more advanced terrain was higher than average. At the same time there was a number of attendees either users

ATTACHMENT C
themselves or parents representing other users concerned that the park should provide for as many users as possible at all different skill levels. In an effort to maximize the space the current conceptual design (Exhibit 2), is approximately 25,000 square feet and attempts to accomplish all design goals.

Cost Projections

Working with existing data and assumptions the Consultant created a generic budget range as they are working without a geotechnical report or survey of the space. Therefore, the conceptual design work is based on general assumptions on a geotech report.

The Tony Hawk Foundation Skate park data gives a cost base line starting at $45 a square foot. In California, with prevailing wage requirements, a park of this aesthetic and design caliber and some site and soil unknowns, we believe this park will run in a range of $55 to $65 a square foot. With lighting pathways and other amenities being above that. If budget or size limitations are identified, the Consultant have stated that scaling back of the design can be achieved.

Representatives of Spohn Ranch will present their findings to the Parks and Leisure Services Commission for its review and comment.

RECOMMENDATION

The Commission is asked to review the attached material and make a recommendation to move forward to the Town Council for consideration for inclusion in the upcoming Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for fiscal year 2017/18.

Attachments: Skate Park Feasibility Study (Exhibits 1)
             Skate Park Conceptual Design (Exhibit 2)
Danville Skatepark

The following is a recap of our process to date. A summary of our initial site evaluation process prior to direction by the commission to move forward on schematic design work, planning assumptions, and input based on social media, a secondary design meeting and community concerns the impact of a skatepark may have, are included. In addition, we would like to revisit the reasons and goals for building a skatepark.

Benefits of a Skatepark in Danville

- Provide a safe, designated space for skateboarding and other roller sports
- Relieve local businesses and other public institutions whose properties become de facto skate spots
- Encourage physical & social development among users, focusing on kids who are not drawn to organized sports
- A well designed skate facilities reduces the chance of injury and subsequent claims
- Eliminates negative interactions between police departments and young people engaging in recreational activities in the wrong locations

Skateboarding is a popular and legitimate recreational pastime. Skateparks give a growing number of today's young people a place to participate and challenge themselves. When skateparks are not provided for young enthusiasts, it does not stop them from skating, but instead creates a situation where they are skating on private or public property not sanctioned for such use. An approved space within the community

EXHIBIT 1
designed and built for skateboarding will create a safe place for young people to engage in their physical activity of choice. Without a designated space, kids skating on public property can injure themselves or others, sometimes severely, at a ratio of 10:1 versus in a skatepark. There is a higher risk for injury claims in organized sports like soccer than in a skatepark and even young people injured on playground equipment exceed that of skatepark claims. A skatepark will reduce injury and potential lawsuits against the city because it is designed by an experienced professional to create a space specifically for skateboarding and also adhering to all relevant safety standards and guidelines.

The fear people have that skateparks attract a bad element is completely unfounded. Communities find that the addition of a skatepark reduces police calls and incidents involving youth and skateboarding. Additionally, studies have shown that skateparks reduce crime by both activating high-risk areas and pushing out negative elements or by simply providing places for kids. Data collected in Long Beach, CA shows a significant reduction, 20-60%, in parks that are staffed or programmed are even higher. Data collected in the city of Fontana showed that adding a skatepark to their community caused a reduction of incidents of 80% in the initial year after construction followed by a 60% decrease in the next year and 40% the year after that and then staying flat for the years following. In this community skatepark management is an essential program for the communities well being.

Additionally, with the recent change in California’s skatepark liability legislation, communities are given a tremendous opportunity to include more users than ever before. Specifically, this means all the users free to allow the use of all non-motorized roller sports, specifically naming skateboarding, bmx riding, in-line skating, scooters and wheelchairs. This new legislation signals a coming trend of multi-sport facilities that is originating here in the state of California. Kids of all roller persuasions are afforded the chance to interact with each other, creating unique opportunities of understanding and collaboration among a diverse range of peers. As a net result, the very nature of
skateparks promotes great physical and social development centers. When done correctly, the vast majority of communities are surprised how fast these installations yield a positive impact on their communities and in the lives of their young people.

**Site Analysis**

- **Diablo Vista**
- **Osage Park**
- **Sycamore Valley Park**
  - **Pond Area**
  - **Open Grass Area**

Our goal is to evaluate areas within the community for best placement of a skatepark and further assess potential benefits and impacts. Choosing a site is a decision made deliberately through our data driven process that scores sites based on a wide range of variables. Dozens of topics, qualifiers and sub qualifiers, based on hundreds of installations and 25 years of building skateparks have been implemented. Each possible Danville location was scored based on staff input, community concern and data collected from our public workshop and when visiting and researching each site. Part of our initial process is to use mapping software and to consider the community school system as an overlay for facility distribution. Our assumption is that schools are distributed to provide the best access for neighborhoods. Looking at the Danville school system, it appears there is good distribution within the community so we included that in our decision making process. The mapping software allows us to calculate average drive and ride times using middle and high schools as starting points. There is an additional logic to the fact that some of the heaviest traffic to and from skateparks is after school so that route of travel is necessary to consider. There were three possible park locations and multiple sub-locations within each park to consider. Those parks being Diablo Vista, Sycamore Valley Park and Osage Park.
DIABLO VISTA

As a location as a whole, Diablo Vista scored poorly and fell out of contention for consideration. Several factors caused this elimination such as, it is the most remote location to the majority of the population, the available space is not of adequate size and could encroach on existing use areas. Our site selection process also proved this location could have a greater impact on adjoining homes.

OSAGE PARK

Many potential park users, parents and members of the community at large voiced their opinion in support of Osage as the location of choice for the skatepark. After studying and scoring the park, certain detractors became apparent and lowered the final scoring. By geographic orientation, Osage appears to be the closest and most accessible to the town center. But when drive and ride times are averaged from various neighborhoods and schools, the aggregate times are very similar between Osage Park and Sycamore Park. Ultimately, based on our study, the impact of traffic and parking could affect Osage more significantly than at Sycamore, giving Osage low scores in these areas. The primary location in Osage was located in close proximity to other activity areas and had the potential to disrupt other programmed uses. We believe it is important to create a specific space that minimizes the opportunity for conflict during everyday activities.

One consideration when reviewing Osage Park and the city as a whole was how The Iron Horse Trail could provide benefit for potential park user to commute to a skatepark. When looking at the trail it is evident that riders could commute to the park in a safe manner with relatively minimal impact by traffic. The benefits of safety and travel time were weighted into scoring Osage. During evaluation, it was recognized that the benefits are only afforded for non-motorized transportation, which represents a certain segment
of potential users, which could drop dramatically during night hours and times of inclement weather. We recognize that many skaters are driven or car pool to these parks and ultimately the trail did not weigh heavily enough to become a deciding factor.

Another large obstacle to Osage Park is the neighborhoods concerns about light usage. While Osage is a very active park it was made clear that activities after dusk would not be welcomed. Many adult, working skateboarders rely on evening hours during the weekday to find time to participate. For them, lighting is essential. Without community support for evening activities or approval for the necessary infrastructure, Osage becomes a less desirable site for the skatepark.

SYCAMORE VALLEY PARK

Sycamore Valley Park scored the highest in our evaluation process. It is distinguishable because it is a beautiful green space with well-appointed facilities that provide both active and passive use areas. This includes soccer, baseball, bocce ball, a playground and a pond and fountain. Any skate installation would need to integrate seamlessly into this space and meet the facilities standard of excellence. It is important to consider the aesthetics of the space and its users functional and spiritual connections and any impact created by additional use. This might even be more essential when considering a skatepark.

The existing athletic areas within the park include the use of lights and do not have the same hourly restrictions as Osage; therefore it is presumed that the addition of lights for the skatepark would be warranted. During the process two locations within the park rose to highest level of consideration, with the large open grass area ranking highest and the pond and fountain area a very close second. Both areas represent tremendous opportunities. The decision we now face is what space exactly within Sycamore Park is ideal for a skatepark.
**Pond Location:** The park commission suggested there were some extraneous circumstances to be considered. Specifically, the pond and fountain require a maintenance cost and restrictions with a perceived increase on the horizon due to aging infrastructure. Additionally, drought conditions have caused many California communities to reconsider the wisdom of water features in general and are converting ponds, fountains and pools to other uses. If the pond were replaced with a skatepark there are many positives and opportunities. In some ways, the pond simulates the shape and feel of a skatepark itself. The position within the park as a whole creates a unique space, putting the skaters into a lesser-used quadrant of the park with potentially the least impact on other park users.

We calculated that about 20,000 square feet would be an appropriate size to support the users of Danville. We also recognize that designing to the maximum space allowed would be smart and help to accommodate the attention a facility of this caliber could generate. After further planning and evaluation, the ability to get 20,000 square feet and include both bowl and street style components without overly disrupting the surrounding park site prove to be more difficult than anticipated. The parks topography and other impacting elements like oak trees, donated elements by benefactors, an existing ADA pathway system and storm water collection and control areas created complications. The impact not only limited the square footage area but also created shapes not conducive to the style of design we were targeting. While this space would be great for a more advanced and transitional type park, the ability to have a balanced design is impacted. This limits the creation of a street park or street plaza type park when public use input shows that 60-70% of park users consider street to be their primary style of skating. It is not our intent to take the pond area out of consideration, as it does have redeeming qualities, but perhaps the square footage goals would need to be scaled back. If that becomes the directive, the pond location could still provide a substantial skate area.
**Open Grass Area:** The process truly led us to the large open grass area as being the primary location. One of the questions we ask ourselves is “Would this space create the best possible skatepark?” and we believe the answer is “Yes”. When scoring the locations this area rose to the top, above the pond area, offering a large space with a lesser impact for development.

It is the largest location and allowed us enough area to create a skatepark of the right size and balance and, more specifically, to create a wider variety of use zones within the park itself. One thing we heard from the different advanced users was the desire to have a separation of high skilled use zones from those for more novice and beginner users. That can only be accomplished by having the size to create these specific areas and/or by creating separation through landscaping and other types of buffers.

Not only does this location afford us that ability, it also gives us a high opportunity from a design and visual impact perspective. Modern skateparks have become very sculpturally and architecturally interesting. This location provides a variable in elevation and topography, which allows for great design opportunities. The use of shapes, colors and materials can create a striking landscape. The position of this area puts it in a line of site from several angles throughout the park as well as from the adjacent roadway. That also gives us the opportunity to create iconic elements and design motifs that should engage and celebrate the skatepark and the larger facility itself.

This location is easily accessible for users and it is centrally located from both parking areas. This position also allows us to create a specific space for users to go and there is a separation from other areas. It puts it in a location where it will have minimal impact on other park activities while enhancing the surroundings. Ideally, a skatepark is placed in a highly visible location to aid in patrol and observation. This area is prominently located so it is easily patrolled and observed for off-hour activities. We are confident that of the locations looked at, the highest-ranking choices are the right
choices, both based on community impact and creating a park of the caliber that would represent Danville properly.

Public Use Input

*Input from public meeting and initial design charrette*

These meetings are always tremendous opportunities to meet the community, evaluate their makeup and skill levels and start a dialogue to assist us in design development. Our Danville meeting was very well attended. There were even one or more seriously aspiring skatepark designers and the excitement level was high. As we met with the users and heard their stories and ideas it led us to discover the experience level and diversity of the users in Danville is higher than average. Due to this, the request for more advanced terrain is higher than average. At the same time there was a number of attendees either users themselves or parents representing other users concerned that the park provide for as many users as possible at all different skill levels. These voiced concerns that the design would be such that it compartmentalized the users by skill level and/or by sport, primarily meaning there were areas for more novice skaters to practice and participate. This is a smart decision and helps to minimize collisions and subsequent injuries. In order to do that, a project requires enough square footage and an appropriate budget. Even though we are talking about separating spaces, creating connectivity between all the zones also helps create the highest individual user experience. We could create connectivity while still creating buffers. When occupancy allows a skater to ride and transition through the entire space this can be the ultimate experience.

We also did outreach for design input that includes local inspiration to create iconic elements and a general design motif. This question was asked numerous times and the answers were similar. Danville is defined by the beauty of its location. The natural landscaping of the hills, mountains, birds and other wildlife can be used as inspiration in the theme of the design. The wisdom of Danville is to create and build a beautiful
community that's as much an extension of the surrounding space. A big focus should be on landscaping that is an extension of the beauty of the natural space. Our goal is to consider site lines into the space from various locations and create a visually appealing space.

Secondary Online Design Charrette

In January we had a secondary online design session with many dedicated and passionate attendees of the initial meeting. Some comments were to have an entirely integrated skate space meaning you could freely travel within the area and have as many lines of travel to do so. It is our goal to accomplish this to the largest degree possible while at the same time weighing the balance between a single users ability to travel the entire park with the creation of different use zones for different skill levels and sports. Additional input was in fact information that was already apparent to us- that most of the parks within the region are dated and include difficult design obstacles. To the best of our ability, we extracted the positives about neighboring parks and use this information as an opportunity to inform our process.

Collected Data

The following results are from potential design surveys done at the meetings and through social media by potential park users:

1. USER DATA (71 Responses)
   a. SKATEBOARDER 37 52.11%
   b. BMX BIKE 7 9.86%
   c. SCOOTER 27 38.03%

2. HOW OLD ARE YOU? (70 Responses)
   a. 5 - 10 5 7.14%
   b. 10 - 15 28 40.00%
c. 15 - 20  18  25.71%
d. 20 - 30  5  7.14%
e. 30 - 40  2  2.86%
f. 40 +  12  17.14%

3. HOW DO PRIMARILY CONSIDER YOURSELF (73 Responses)
a. ADVANCED  37  50.68%
b. INTERMEDIATE  25  34.25%
c. BEGINNER  11  15.07%

4. HOW OFTEN TO USE SKATEPARK (73 Responses)
a. EVERYDAY  31  42.47%
b. FEW TIMES A WEEK  30  41.10%
c. FEW TIMES A MONTH  12  16.44%
d. FEW TIMES A YEAR  0  0.00%

Additional Design Goals

Based on the prominent location of the skate area, the high aesthetic level of the park itself and the high user expectations the skatepark design for the town of Danville needs to be at an equally high standard of creativity and functionality. The general consensus is to not enclose the skatepark with a traditional fence the space. This is a concept we believe in as well. Skateparks should be an extension of an existing space and not a controlled area unto itself. Of course, when building advanced terrain like deep concrete bowls it is always important to minimize unforeseen injuries resulting from falls or other unexpected contact. As an example, someone walking through the park after hours or a less experienced park user should be restricted from accessing high risk areas.
Community Concerns

- Pathways
- Parking
- Lighting

The addition of a skatepark to an existing park or recreation facility always needs to be done in a smart and calculated manner to avoid disruption. That being said, adding this park creates opportunities for conflict, however, there are methods and techniques to address these issues and minimize impact. Skateparks should be an enhancement of a community space, not an intrusion. This priority assists in choosing the best location in Danville.

The Sycamore Valley Park location, brought several items of potential concern to light, some voiced by the community. It is our goal to create something that mitigates any potential issues and ultimately makes the addition of a skatepark a community asset.

Pathways

There have been some concerns voiced about how users will access the skate area and that is not without merit. It is highly likely that when young people are entering the park they will be riding a board or bike. However, this only applies to users driving to and parking to use the facility. All riders self-propelling themselves can access this location from the street side, minimizing any conflict. Those entering from the parking lots can be influenced by some pathway enhancements or alterations to minimize its attractiveness with methods like bollards, textured surface and/or mounded roller detractions. Another solution could be to create an additional path from the parking area routing around the tot lot area and bocce ball courts. While it won’t eliminate all potential traffic, it will reduce it significantly.
Parking Impact

While this location is a fair distance from the provided parking, it is also equidistant from both church and school side lots. With the park being centrally located both parking lots are desirable to users. This will be a benefit when the use agreement with the neighboring church comes into effect. If there is an activity or function that closes the church lot, it is a natural transition to park in the other lot. There is also an area of curbside parking along Holbrook Drive we believe will become a more primary parking location, especially if a secondary access path is created to facilitate access. This could lessen impact on the parking lots and access paths.

Lighting

Lighting is an important factor in providing access for the largest number of users. The addition of lighting extends the hours of operation, which helps minimize overpopulation and congestion during peak use times. It is important to note that a skatepark does not require field sport lighting, just pathway lighting which has minimal effect on surrounding neighborhoods. Lighting is important for safety as well as maximum use.

Cost Projection

Working with our existing data and assumptions we were able to create a generic budget range. Currently we are working without a geotechnical report or survey of the space. Therefore, our conceptual design work is based on general assumptions on a geotech report. We are also working without a soils report, however it has been relayed to us that this park may include clay heavy soils, which can require additional engineering and construction techniques when building a skatepark. The Tony Hawk Foundation Skatepark data gives a cost base line starting at $45 a square foot. In California, with prevailing wage requirements, a park of this aesthetic and design caliber and some site and soil unknowns, we believe this park will run in a range of $55 to $65 a square foot. With lighting pathways and other amenities being above that.
Primary Location - Open grass area

The current design, as shown in the primary space, is approximately 25,000 square feet. We did not work with a predetermined number in mind; this was the result of trying to accomplish all design goals. If budget or size limitations If we needed to scale back If need be, scaling back can be done. If the design is implemented, the projected cost at $60 a square foot is approximately $1.5mil. We believe this would be the perfect size and location for the facility but the reality of fiscal budgeting and expenditures could require scaling back.

Secondary Location - Pond Area

The current design, as shown in the secondary space, is approximately 15,000 square feet. There are some unforeseen costs with the reclamation of the fountain area and as to what degree removal or remediation would be necessary in that space. It is quite possible that a lot of the pond infrastructure could stay in place but there is a fair “t.b.d.” factor that needs to be weighed into consideration. The projected cost at $60 a square foot is approximately $900,000.

Operational Guidelines

Another area of importance to perspective park owners is cost of ownership and/or other aspects of keeping or maintaining a skatepark. Well-built concrete skateparks are very durable and last 20 plus years with little to zero maintenance. More often than not maintenance comes in the form of landscaping or trash collection. In some communities, graffiti removal can be a maintenance line item, however we have found with well appointed and architecturally satisfying parks, there is far less vandalism. The users themselves will take pride of ownership and dissuade any negative activities.

Conclusion
The community at large has embraced the creation of the Danville Skatepark. We believe our data driven process has led us to the right location. We have moved forward on two tracks and are considering two spaces simultaneously. We think that either spot could yield a beautiful high quality facility. The larger space of the two has allowed us to realize what could be considered an aspirational goal for the project. Further realization may require scaling back both in size and/or budget, however we believe this a good benchmark to work from. This design includes elements that should appeal to users of all skill levels and sport persuasions and also general park users in the multiple locations we pay tribute to Mt. Diablo and capturing the beauty and essence of the larger environment.

Designs represented should be considered conceptual only. Any final design would include more details and features than currently shown. If the pond area proves more desirable, regardless of achievable square footage, we believe a smaller version of what is shown that makes use of the space and adjoining elements could also achieve something high end and equally creative and beautiful. We believe the large open grass area in Sycamore Valley Park meets all criteria making it the best location, however, any design work can be manipulated to best fit any final location of choice. Construction of a skatepark in the town of Danville is both highly needed and absolutely feasible.

Based on the excitement and skill level of the community's users, we believe this park will be very well used and become an asset for the Danville community. We too are excited for the opportunity a skatepark creates in Danville and our here to support the projects fruition by whatever means possible.