



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 15-1194, **Version:** 1

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Recommendation to receive and file the Houghton Park Conceptual Plan and consider Categorical Exemption CE 15-155. (District 9)

As part of the Fiscal Year 2014 budget, the City Council appropriated \$3 million as the first phase of funding for a new community center at Houghton Park. The Houghton Park Community Center is an integral part of the community and a regional center providing a wide array of recreational services to area youth, teens, and seniors. In September 2014, the City of Long Beach (City) contracted with Studio Pali Fekete Architects (SPF), of Culver City, CA, for architectural and engineering services for the Houghton Park Community Center project. During the outreach process for the new community center, feedback included comments directed at aspects of the park other than the community center, illuminating the community's desire to plan for the park as a whole.

As a result of this feedback, in June 2015, the City kicked off a conceptual planning process for Houghton Park, an approximately 31-acre site located between Atlantic Avenue, East Harding Street, Myrtle Avenue, and Jordan High School. The purpose of this process was to create a comprehensive conceptual plan, inclusive of the entire Houghton Park site. This is seen as an important step in the visioning and design of a new community center in the park.

RJM Design Group (RJM) was retained to conduct two community workshops and develop a conceptual plan for Houghton Park. RJM, SPF, and staff from the Departments of Public Works, Development Services, and Parks, Recreation and Marine were involved throughout this effort to ensure consistency in the planning process.

Following an evaluation of existing site conditions at Houghton Park, the first of two community workshops was conducted to receive community input on the conceptual plan.

Over 30 participants attended the first community workshop, held on June 27, 2015, at the Houghton Park Community Center. The four-hour interactive workshop included the following:

- Presentation of background and site information;
- A site awareness walking tour that included an opportunity for participants to record their site observations at each tour stop in workbook format;
- Individual and group discussions of tour findings, such as issues and opportunities, safety, security, parking, and activation; and
- A group design charrette to graphically express ideas on site maps.

Individual participant feedback was then presented to the larger group and a group design charrette commenced to graphically express consensus for elements of the proposed conceptual plan.

The information received at the first workshop was then evaluated and summarized in written and graphic format. The resulting draft conceptual plan was presented at the second community workshop, held on August 29, 2015, at the Houghton Park Community Center. Many of the attendees from the first workshop participated in the second workshop.

Following this summary, the participants were led through a consensus planning process that included a composite bubble diagram and a graphic conceptual plan. Participants were able to confirm that the project team had accurately reflected the information provided at the first workshop. The general consensus from the participants was that the draft conceptual plan reflected the desires of the community expressed throughout the process. The entire process is summarized in the Community Workshop Presentation (Attachment A).

Extensive community outreach was performed for both community workshops, including mailing flyers to over 1,800 households surrounding Houghton Park, providing flyers at City facilities, disseminating information via social media and online, announcing the events at the Parks and Recreation Commission meetings, and through neighborhood groups sharing information about the workshops.

Following the two community workshops, the draft conceptual plan was presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) at a study session on September 17, 2015. The study session information is summarized in the Conceptual Plan Presentation (Attachment B). On October 15, 2015, the Commission voted unanimously to forward the conceptual plan to the City Council.

The conceptual plan is the first step of a larger planning and implementation process at Houghton Park. Future rehabilitation projects will be implemented as funding is identified. When a project or projects from the conceptual plan are funded, any necessary environmental review will occur at that time.

This matter was reviewed by Assistant City Attorney Mike Mais on November 3, 2015, and by Assistant Finance Director Lea Eriksen on October 29, 2015.

## SUSTAINABILITY

While approval of the Houghton Park Conceptual Plan has no immediate sustainability impact, employing the conceptual plan to guide future development at the park will promote synergies between individual projects that comprise the phased implementation of the conceptual plan and ensure sustainable elements are incorporated into each element wherever possible.

Individual projects developed in the implementation of the conceptual plan will support the City's existing efforts to provide healthy recreation opportunities at the park, connect to local and regional bike paths, and conserve water by reducing turf and replacing with native and drought-tolerant landscape. In addition, the future development of the Houghton Park Community Center is planned to be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold, exceeding the City's Green Building Policy.

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this project has been determined to be categorically exempt (Attachment C).

City Council action is requested on November 17, 2015, in order to allow immediate continuation of the Houghton Park Community Center design process.

No fiscal impact would result from approval of the Houghton Park Conceptual Plan. Of the \$3 million appropriated, costs for the conceptual plan, architectural design, and engineering are estimated at \$1.5 million. The balance is available for construction of the community center or other projects on site, as identified in the conceptual plan. Full funding for park amenities outlined in the conceptual plan and construction of the community center has yet to be identified, and it is anticipated that projects will be phased and implemented as funding becomes available. There is no impact to jobs associated with the recommended action. However, future projects will result in an unknown number of design, construction, and landscaping jobs.

Approve recommendation.

STEPHEN SCOTT  
INTERIM DIRECTOR OF PARKS, RECREATION & MARINE

APPROVED:

PATRICK H. WEST  
CITY MANAGER