



Honorable Mayor and Members of the Hermosa Beach City Council

**REVIEW AND ADOPT THE CITY OF HERMOSA BEACH PARKS MASTER PLAN AND
FIND THE SAME EXEMPT FROM THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
ACT (CEQA)**

(Community Resources Director Lisa Nichols)

Recommended Action:

Staff recommends City Council:

1. Approve and adopt the 2024 Parks Master Plan; and
2. Provide feedback on the priorities supported by the Community Resources and Public Works Commissions.
3. Direct staff to advance the goals outlined in the 2024 Parks Master Plan as future funding and staff resources allow.

Executive Summary:

At its November 29, 2022 meeting, City Council awarded a contract to RJM Design Group, Inc. (RJM) to develop a new Parks Master Plan for the City of Hermosa Beach. Following a robust community engagement process, and in close coordination with staff from the Community Resources and Public Works Departments, RJM completed the 2024 Parks Master Plan.

The 2024 Parks Master Plan is intended to serve as a near- and long-range planning tool that encapsulates a community's vision for its City's parks and recreation facilities, services, and programs for the next 30 years. The plan will help inform the City's future budget priorities and dedication of staffing resources and was developed in alignment with the City's General Plan.

Background:

It is common for municipalities to have parks master plans, which serve as one of the foundations for community planning and development. A 2014 roundtable sponsored by the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) and the American Planning Association (APA) recognized the role of parks in community and economic development stating that "preparing parks and recreation master plans can provide a foundation for economic development, building healthy communities, and providing a unique sense of place."

The City's most recent Park Master Plan was adopted in 1990 (**Attachment 1**). The plan provided guidance to the City for the orderly development of parks, recreation facilities, services, and programs through 2010. The plan outlined several recommendations, many of which have been met since its adoption, including the creation of a seasonal recreation brochure, an upgraded Community Center, the addition of the Skate Park, and more park land with the addition of South Park and expansion of Edith Rodaway Friendship Park. Since 2010, the City's recreation services, programs, and indoor and outdoor recreation facilities have evolved, including the addition of several new services, programs, and facilities. The community needed a new parks master plan that reflects its evolving needs of for the next 30 years.

The City allocated funding within Capital Improvement Project (CIP) 538 Citywide Parks Master Plan for a project manager to oversee the development of a new Parks Master Plan and to assist with the additional workload to the Community Resources Department to oversee the development of a new Parks Master Plan. At its July 12, 2022 meeting, Council awarded a contract to Catalyst Consulting to provide project management services. John Jones, the Principal Owner of Catalyst Consulting, serves as the project manager. Mr. Jones joined the effort as the project manager with four decades of experience in municipal parks and recreation.

Additionally, funds were allocated within CIP 538 Citywide Parks Master Plan for a firm to prepare and develop a new Parks Master Plan. At its November 29, 2022 meeting, Council awarded a contract to RJM for the development of the new Parks Master Plan. RJM was established in 1987 and evolved into a multi-disciplinary landscape architectural, planning, and design firm serving the needs of cities, public agencies, and organizations throughout California.

The City designated a team to work alongside RJM and the project manager on the development of the Parks Master Plan, consisting of staff representatives from the City Manager's Office, Community Development, Community Resources, Police, and Public Works Departments, and plan to form a Parks Master Plan Subcommittee consisting of four Commissioners, two from the Parks, Recreation, and Community Resources Advisory Commission (Parks Commission) and two from the Public Works Commission.

At its March 7, 2023 meeting, the Parks Commission selected Commissioners Ellman and Moroney to serve on the Parks Master Plan Subcommittee. At its March 15, 2023 meeting, the Public Works Commission selected Commissioners Grethen and Hayes to serve on the Parks Master Plan Subcommittee.

On October 29, 2024, a joint study session of the Parks and Public Works Commissions was held to present the final draft of the 2024 Parks Master Plan. The study session format provided an opportunity for the Commissions to provide input on the plan to be

shared with Council at the time it considers approval and adoption of the 2024 Parks Master Plan.

Past Commission and Council Actions

Meeting Date	Description
July 12, 2022	Council approved an award of contract for project management services for the development of a new Parks Master Plan to Catalyst Consulting
November 29, 2022	Council approved an award of contract for the development of a new Parks Master Plan to RJM Design Group, Inc.
March 7, 2023	The Parks Commission selected Commissioners Ellman and Moroney to serve on the Parks Master Plan Subcommittee
March 15, 2023	The Public Works Commission selected Commissioners Grethen and Hayes to serve on the Parks Master Plan Subcommittee
October 29, 2024	The final draft of the 2024 Parks Master Plan was presented to the Parks and Public Works Commissions at a joint study session

Discussion:

Development of the 2024 Parks Master Plan

Development of the 2024 Parks Master Plan began in January 2023 and included the following:

- An inventory of existing parks and recreation facilities, services, and programs.
- A review of current parks and recreation facilities' conditions and policies.
- Extensive community engagement to learn the community's desires for parks, open spaces, and recreation.
 - Community engagement tools included:
 - presentations at public meetings including the Parks Commission, Public Works Commission, and City Council on the project and information on how the community can engage in the project;
 - stakeholder interviews with the Parks Commission, Public Works Commissioners Grethen and Hayes (Parks Master Plan Subcommittee members), and City Councilmembers;
 - pop-ups at City special events;
 - surveys;
 - three community workshops;
 - the creation of a project website with an opportunity to submit feedback through a 'Community Voice' section;
 - social media outreach; and
 - e-mail blasts.

- A staffing assessment of the Community Resources and Public Works Departments.
- Development of key strategies with specific recommendations and potential funding sources for the future of the City’s parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services.

Attachment 2 is an overview of action taken through the development of the 2024 Parks Master Plan since January 2023.

Attachment 3 is the 2024 Parks Master Plan. **Attachment 4** is the 2024 Parks Master Plan Appendix. The appendix includes supplementary information to the plan.

Attachment 5 consists of RJM’s presentation slides on the 2024 Parks Master Plan.

2024 Parks Master Plan Key Strategies and Goals

The 2024 Parks Master Plan (**Attachment 3**) consists of key strategies formed from common themes that emerged in the community engagement process. Specific goals were developed for each key strategy after review of the community engagement results, completion of the inventory and assessment of the City’s current parks and recreation facilities and services, and study of existing City policies and plans. The key strategies and goals are outlined on Pages 60–78 and possible external funding sources for these key strategies and goals are outlined on Pages 79–80.

As stated on Page 79, Park and Facility Funding Recommendations, “it will be challenging to find the capital required to renovate or enhance parks and facilities as well as maintain existing parks and infrastructure. Another vexing task will be sustaining the affordability of recreation fee supported programs to meet needs and demands for residents”. The importance of developing new revenue sources to support the implementation of this plan cannot be overstated.

Page 81 provides a table of programmed CIPs as of Fiscal Year 2024–25 indicating which key strategy each programmed CIP would identify under.

Additionally, Page 82 provides a table of deferred and unfunded future capital projects, indicating which key strategy each CIP would identify under, should the project receive funding and be prioritized in a future fiscal year against other City priorities.

2024 Parks Master Plan Maintenance and Staffing Recommendations

A staffing assessment of the Community Resources and Public Works Departments informed the maintenance and staffing recommendations provided on Pages 85–86. All Community Resources Department recreation services and programs require the support of the Public Works Department. Additionally, all parks, open spaces, and recreation

facilities are maintained by Public Works Department staff or through contracted services, which the Public Works Department oversees.

The 2024 Parks Master Plan identified recommendations to address staffing shortages in the Community Resources Department, to effectively deliver existing programs and services, or to address existing challenges, such as enforcement at the beach, parks, and recreation facilities. Two of the staffing recommendations were addressed in the FY 2024–25 budget cycle with the approval and successful recruitment of a Lead Special Events and Filming Coordinator and Special Events and Filming Coordinator. The plan also identified that the Public Works Department operations and maintenance team remains stretched, limiting the ability to meet the current and future needs of the parks and facilities given the high level of deferred maintenance.

Current Action on the 2024 Parks Master Plan

Where possible with current staffing and funding levels, staff has actively worked on advancing various goals outlined in the Master Plan throughout the planning process, for which many of these tasks are ongoing and require coordination across City departments. Several goals do not pertain to City infrastructure; instead, they focus on enforcement, programming, and partnerships to enhance services and improve access to recreation facilities.

The Adopted Budget and Capital Improvement Program for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024–25 (**Attachment 6**) reflect a “back to basics strategy” regarding City infrastructure, including parks and recreation facilities, with a focus on prioritizing deferred maintenance and safety projects. Several programmed CIPs are aligned with key strategies outlined in the Parks Master Plan. Page 81 provides a table of programmed CIPs as of Fiscal Year 2024–25 indicating which key strategy each programmed CIP would identify under.

With the currently programmed CIPs, staff workload will remain extremely heavy for the next two to three fiscal years with little capacity to take on new projects. Therefore, the advancement of goals pertaining to City infrastructure outlined in the 2024 Parks Master Plan, which are not already addressed through currently programmed CIPs, would require Council to consider whether to defund and delay other CIPs until a future fiscal year. Additionally, project capital and future maintenance costs, impact on staff resources, and available funding would have to be weighed carefully against other City priorities, plans, and community requests.

The Community Resources Department and Parks Commission are responsible for the following Council-directed policy projects, which predate the master planning process but align with plan goals:

- Updating the Clark Building use policy and fee structure for the renovated facility;
- The creation of a volleyball court use policy;
- The creation of a municipal lease policy;

- The creation of a municipal lease policy would meet Goal 1.3: Embrace and support long cherished sport activities through Lawn Bowling Clubhouse improvements outlined in the 2024 Parks Master Plan as the specific recommendation under this goal is to “formalize an agreement with the local Hermosa Beach Lawn Bowling Club...” which the creation of a municipal lease policy would lead to.

The completion of these projects requires a significant level of support from the Public Works Department. Therefore, the advancement of goals outlined in the 2024 Parks Master Plan would also require Council to consider the potential impact on the timeline to complete these existing policy projects.

Future Action on the 2024 Parks Master Plan

At the October 29, 2024 joint study session of the Parks and Public Works Commissions, a majority of the Commissioners demonstrated support for the following goals outlined in the 2024 Parks Master Plan to advance as funding and staff resources allow or following a reprioritization of current CIPs and Council-directed projects:

- Goal 1.2: Improve community gathering and athletic events through Clark Field Improvements (Page 52).
 - During public comment at the October 29, 2024 joint study session, Hermosa Beach Little League (HBLL) shared a proposal for various Clark Field improvements and the desire to fund such improvements. The Commissioners were in favor of determining the feasibility of advancing HBLL’s proposal.
- Goal 3.1: Foster partnerships in support of developing programming to support aquatic activities (Page 71).
 - The Commissioners were in favor of staff fostering partnerships and/or a joint-use agreement to increase resident access to a nearby agency’s swimming pool and aquatic programming.
- Goal 3.2: Explore current recreation spaces and feasibility to provide dog-friendly amenities, while considering the associated increases in operations and maintenance costs and neighborhood impacts (Page 72).
 - The Commissioners were in favor of creating a subcommittee or a joint subcommittee to assist staff in determining the feasibility of creating dog-friendly programs and/or events, or the creation of a dog-run facility, or dog-friendly area at an existing park.

Environmental Review:

The approval of the Parks master plan is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15262 (Feasibility and Planning Studies) which state that a project involving only feasibility or planning studies for possible future actions which the City has not approved, adopted or funded does not require the preparation of an EIR or Negative Declaration but does

require consideration of environmental factors. The City Council has considered the potential environmental effect and has determined that the Parks Master Plan will not have a significant effect on the environment as any specific project or activity approved related to the City parks consistent with the Parks Master Plan in the future will undergo its own independent environmental review under CEQA and thus approval of the Parks Master Plan meets the requirements of CEQA Guidelines section 15262. Approval of the Parks Master Plan will not result in a significant effect on the environment and is statutorily exempt from CEQA under CEQA Guidelines section 15262.

General Plan Consistency:

This report and associated recommendations have been evaluated for their consistency with the City's General Plan. Relevant Policies are listed below:

Governance Element

Goal 2. The community is active and engaged in decision-making processes.

Policies:

- **2.6 Responsive to community needs.** Continue to be responsive to community inquiries, providing public information and recording feedback from community interactions.
- **2.7 Major planning efforts.** Require major planning efforts, policies, or projects to include a public engagement effort.
- **2.9 Evaluation and feedback.** Periodically solicit service evaluations from the community and utilize feedback to improve and develop the City's policies, ordinances, programs, and funding priorities.

Goal 5. Small beach town character is reflected throughout Hermosa Beach.

Policy:

- **5.7 Visitor and resident balance.** Recognize the desire and need to balance visitor-serving and local-serving uses as a key to preserving character and the economic vitality of the community.

Goal 8. A performance based-management and benchmarking program.

Policy:

- **8.3 Consistency among plans.** Require other City plans and implementation mechanisms to demonstrate their consistency with this Plan.

Parks and Open Space Element

Goal 1. First class, well maintained, and safe recreational facilities, parks and open spaces.

Policies:

- **1.1 Facility upgrades.** Improve and update park and open space facilities on a regular basis.
- **1.5 Evaluate community needs.** Conduct a periodic review of community park needs and interests to inform maintenance and investment priorities.

Goal 2. Abundant parks, open space, and recreational facilities to serve the community.

Policy:

- **2.1 Diverse programs and facilities.** Offer diverse recreational programs and facilities to meet the needs of all residents.

Goal 3. Community parks and facilities encourage social activity and interaction.

Policies:

- **3.3 Commercial use of facilities.** Regulate and enforce commercial use of City parks and open spaces to ensure activities do not impact general use and enjoyment.
- **3.4 Balance space needs.** Balance the space needs and demand on public resources of formal and informal events.
- **3.5 Health and physical activity.** Increase the availability of space and variety of activities that promote community health and physical activity such as community gardens, fitness stations/ equipment, and fields/courts.
- **3.6 Availability of City facilities.** Consider the demand and availability of City facilities for general community use in the long-term lease and/or rental of City facilities.

Goal 7. The beach offers high quality recreational opportunities and amenities desired by the community.

Policies:

- **7.5 Designated recreational uses.** Continually evaluate and explore devoting certain portions of the beach to different preferred recreational uses while providing access for all users and meeting the recreation needs of visitors and residents.
- **7.7 Recreational Equipment.** Periodically evaluate and, as necessary, update the recreational equipment on the beach to endeavor to meet the needs of visitors and residents of all ages and abilities.

Fiscal Impact:

While there is no direct fiscal impact related to the recommended action to review and provide feedback regarding the final draft of the 2024 Parks Master Plan, the full cost of the capital improvement projects in the plan is roughly estimated at \$27 million to \$74 million. The cost of each individual project, goal, or strategy would be calculated according to prioritization, scope, and implementation timeline to ensure the most accurate estimate.

The estimate does not include costs related to proposed new personnel or time required of existing staff to advance the recommended policies, practices, and programs.

Attachments:

1. 1990 Parks Master Plan
2. 2024 Parks Master Plan Action Report
3. 2024 Final Draft Parks Master Plan
4. 2024 Parks Master Plan Appendix
5. RJM Design Group, Inc. 2024 Parks Master Plan Presentation
6. Adopted Budget and Capital Improvement Program for Fiscal Year 2024–25

Respectfully Submitted by: Lisa Nichols, Community Resources Director

Concur: Joe SanClemente, Public Works Director

Legal Review: Patrick Donegan, City Attorney

Reviewed by: Angela Crespi, Deputy City Manager

Approved: Suja Lowenthal, City Manager