

**CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH  
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION  
REQUEST FOR ACTION**

**MEETING DATE:** November 19, 2014

**SUBMITTED TO:** COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION

**SUBMITTED BY:** Janeen Laudenback, Community Services Director

**PREPARED BY:** David C. Dominguez, Facilities, Development and Concessions Manager

**SUBJECT:** LeBard Park – Conceptual Master Plan

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**Statement of Issue:** The Huntington Beach City School District (HBCSD) is proposing to sell the LeBard School site for residential development on a portion of the school property. The City has indicated its interest in purchasing the remaining portions of the school to become part of LeBard Park. Commission is being asked to approve a conceptual park master plan which will add 6.3 acres of the LeBard School site to the existing LeBard Park.

**Funding Source:** N/A

**Recommended Action(s):**

**Approve the LeBard Park Conceptual Master Plan as presented and make a recommendation for approval to the City Council.**

**Analysis:** LeBard School is located at 20451 Cramer Lane, northeast of Indianapolis Avenue and Brookhurst Street. The former school site has been closed since 1980 and in 2008, the District declared the property as surplus. Shortly after becoming a closed school site, LeBard School has served as the District's headquarters and for many years, the turf areas of the school have been used as a "home field" complex for Seaview Little League. (SVLL) SVLL maintains six baseball fields on the District property and utilizes a portion of the hardscape areas for parking. The District is currently working on a plan to utilize the existing footprint of the building footprint and blacktop area for a residential development. The intent is to create the residential development on the portion of the school property while leaving the baseball fields and open turf areas in place.

The City received official notification from the District on March 10, 2008 and on April 7, 2008 the City Council approved Resolution 2008-22 (Attachment 1) which resolved that public land in the vicinity of the school site was inadequate to meet existing and future needs of the community for recreational purposes and authorized the City Manager to begin negotiations with the District for purchase of the site. Through negotiations, the

District and City have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining a project that includes the development of 15 single family homes and an option for the City to purchase 6.6 acres under the terms of the Naylor act. (Attachment 2) The 6.6 acres will include the area of the baseball fields and open turf areas at the west end of the property. As specified in the MOU, should the project receive entitlement approval, the City will purchase the property at a value of \$480,000 per acre, or a total of \$3,168,000 per the appraised value as adjusted by the Naylor Act.

### **LeBard Park – Existing Conditions**

LeBard Park is located immediately adjacent to LeBard School. The park area is five (5) acres in total with 3 acres being developed and two acres undeveloped. The undeveloped area is located on land owned by Southern California Edison and licensed by the City for park purposes. Currently, the amenities include open turf, shade trees, two lighted tennis courts, a tot lot and a 38 space parking lot. The park also includes an approximate 1,000 SF building utilized by SVLL and the community. The park functions as a typical neighborhood park and at 5-acres (2 undeveloped), it is within the normal acreage ranges for a neighborhood park.

### **Proposed Modifications and Acquisition**

The District has hired the firm of TRG Land to prepare a development plan for re-use of the LeBard School property. TRG has developed a conceptual plan that would keep the baseball fields, backstops and dugouts in their current locations. Modifications to the ball fields will be limited to relocating the Major field bull pen and bleacher relocations at the Minor B and C fields. (Attachment 3) The plan also calls for the construction of a new snack bar/restroom building to be located on current school district property. As part of the plan, modifications to the existing park will be needed in order to provide additional parking and pathways to link the park property with the baseball fields and other open space areas that will become part of LeBard Park (Attachment 4). Specifics on the changes are provided below:

### **Parking**

As part of the plan, the existing parking lot in the park would be extended approximately 135 feet to the east to provide an additional 34 spaces. The additional parking will help offset the loss of parking SVLL currently has on the school property. In looking at options to address the parking needs, utilizing portions of turf areas of the school and the existing park – including developed areas and the SCE property were considered.

Accommodating parking in the developed portion of the park was not considered as a favorable option since it would impact existing amenities and reduce the amount of available open space. Parking on the SCE property also presented issues since SCE will only allow temporary parking with significant clearances around the transmission towers. Furthermore, SCE will not commit its property to be utilized for parking as a condition of a development project. Locating parking on the turf areas of the school would require the existing baseball fields to be reconfigured or, one or two of the existing fields being moved to another location. Reconfiguring the fields to provide parking would move the ball fields

closer to existing residences to the west of the property and create a very compacted site. The open space to the west would also be impacted.

Given the current site layout and conditions, staff feels that extending the existing parking lot to the east is the best option at this time. The additional spaces in the lot along with on street parking spaces fronting the park on west side of Craimer Lane, and the park side of Warwick and Cynthia Drives will result in a total of 122 spaces. The proposed project at LeBard is similar to the recent development of the former Wardlow School site. An 80 space parking lot was constructed in addition to 29 on street parking spaces for a total of 109 spaces to serve the park and six baseball fields utilized by Huntington Valley Little League.

### **Water Quality Requirements**

As with all new development projects, the park improvements and residential development must comply with water quality standards and regulations. Developments are required to minimize water run-off from irrigation and other site conditions. Three low-flow basins and two turf bio-swales are included as part of the project. The basins and bio-swales will function to address water quality and also provide open space areas for the park. Water retention basins and bio-swales have been utilized in previous park projects. As an example, Gibbs Park and Bauer Park include large turf areas that provide much of the open space at the park but, also serve to retain water for a short period of time during certain storm events. Wardlow Park also includes a small retention basin that serves the park and a portion of the adjacent residential project. Bio-swales are also used frequently to address surface run-off. As depicted on the plan, both the low flow basins and bio-swale areas can be landscaped to provide aesthetic and usable open space areas. The final dimensions of the plan will be determined once all water quality analysis of the existing site and proposed development is complete. At this point in time, the locations and layout of the proposed water treatment areas do not significantly impact the existing uses of the park.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Staff supports the need to retain the area for SVLL given its long history on the site and the number of youth the program serves. Staff is also in support of the proposed modifications to the existing park – since it will keep the existing amenities in place. Staff is therefore recommending that the Community Services Commission approve the plan and make recommendation to City Council to do the same. The proposed project, including the residential development is currently going through the entitlement process. The proposed modifications to the existing park and school property will be subject to the conditions and code requirements as identified by Planning Commission and City Council actions. Should significant changes occur as part of that process, staff will bring the plan back to the Commission for additional review.

**Environmental Status:** The project is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City is currently analyzing the project's environmental impacts pursuant to the CEQA guidelines. Prior to City Council action on the project, the City must comply with CEQA requirements.

**Attachment(s):**

1.		Resolution No. 2008-22
2.		Memorandum of Understanding By and Between the City of Huntington Beach and the Huntington Beach City School District Regarding the LeBard School Site
3.		Bleacher and Bull Pen Relocation
4.		Conceptual Master Plan

RCA Author: **D. Dominguez**