OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
65 Civic Avenue
Pittsburg, CA 94565

DATE:  05/14/2008

TO:  Mayor/Chair and Council/Agency Members

FROM:  Marc S. Grisham, City Manager/Executive Director

SUBJECT:  Adoption of Both an Agency and City Council Resolution Approving the City Park Master Plan and Adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation and Monitoring Plan

MEETING DATE:  5/19/2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Redevelopment Agency of the City of Pittsburg (the “Agency”) desires to rehabilitate the City Park, located south of North Parkside Drive, west of Railroad Avenue, north of Civic Avenue, and east of Davi Avenue (the “Park”). Three conceptual designs emerged from the meetings and workshops conducted throughout the planning process. The Agency and the City of Pittsburg (the “City”) selected Concept B as the preferred alternative for the City Park Master Plan (the “Plan”), attached as Exhibit A.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no direct fiscal impact for approving the Plan and adopting the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation and Monitoring Plan. Prior to the allocation of any additional funding for this project, staff will return to the Agency and City for authorization.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the Plan and adoption of the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation and Monitoring Plan.

BACKGROUND

On March 20, 2007, by Resolution 07-1185, the Agency authorized the funding of a consultant agreement between the City and Harris Design (the “Consultant”) and made certain findings required by California Redevelopment Law authorizing the funding.

Meetings and workshops conducted throughout the process include two user group meetings, two community workshops, one Recreation Commission meeting, one Agency
Subcommittee meeting, one Agency/City Council meeting, and one Community Advisory Commission meeting.

During each meeting and workshop, comments received by staff and the Consultant were taken into consideration. The most desirable and feasible suggestions were used to help shape the conceptual designs.

On April 7, 2008, by Minute Order, the Agency Board selected Concept B, as seen on the site plan attached as Exhibit B.

**SUBCOMMITTEE FINDINGS**

Not applicable.

**STAFF ANALYSIS**

The Plan creates a four-field wheel (“Wheel 1”) and a three-field wheel (Wheel 2”), as seen on the site plan. Wheel 1 consists of four larger fields that would accommodate older children to adult athletes. Wheel 1 amenities include all weather turf, field lights, batting cages, concessions, restrooms, picnic tables, grandstand and bleachers, children’s play structure, score booth, and storage. Youth soccer fields may be laid on top of the four outfields in Wheel 1, providing additional fields for soccer.

Wheel 2 consists of three smaller fields to accommodate younger athletes. Wheel 2 amenities include all weather turf, field lights, concessions, restrooms, picnic tables, bleachers, children’s play structure, score booth, and storage.

Appropriate lights and walkways will be installed to enable efficient and safe pedestrian circulation.

A perimeter fence, consistent with the newly constructed soccer field fence, is proposed for the Park. Wheels 1 and 2 may be operated independently of one another to reduce energy consumption and maintenance cost. There are two proposed entrances to the Park: 1) on the south side of Wheel 1 and 2) on the east side, between the soccer field and Wheel 2. There are four proposed access points for staff and emergency personnel located on all four sides of the Park: 1) North Parkside Drive, 2) Railroad Avenue, 3) Civic Avenue, and 4) Davi Avenue. The fields may be rented by individuals or organizations. The purpose of the fence is to maintain a quality facility, provide a safe environment, and to control access to prevent unauthorized use, damage, and vandalism in the Park, similar to the security operation of the City owned Small World Park.

To service the surrounding neighborhood, a neighborhood park accessible to the public is proposed. It will be located outside of the perimeter fence, southeast of Wheel 1 and northwest of Wheel 2. The neighborhood park’s location will enable police to patrol it more efficiently while minimizing the potential for children running into the street. The neighborhood park will include a children’s play structure, half court basketball, picnic tables, benches, space for volleyball, trees, and ornamental shrubs.

Currently, there are 223 parking spaces in and around the Park (148 on-site and 75 street parking spaces on Civic and Davi Avenues). The Plan provides a total of 430 parking spaces (355 spaces in a parking lot south of Wheel 1 and 75 street parking spaces on Civic and Davi Avenues). The parking lot will not be enclosed within the perimeter fence to
minimize traffic cueing. There is a right in/right out driveway near the parking lot’s southwest corner, a driveway near the southeast corner of the parking lot, and an exit only driveway between the Teen Center and Wheel 2.

The Pittsburg Recreation Department will be operating its Teen Center in a building east of the parking lot. The Teen Center, its basketball court, and outside play area will be enclosed by a perimeter fence, as it currently exists, to prevent unauthorized access and to keep the youth using the facility safe.

The Plan requires the removal of trees for the relocation and construction of the amenities. However, the Plan also requires tree replacement with more appropriate species in appropriate locations. Urban Forestry Inventory and Assessment (the “Arborist Report”) by Davey Resources Group, evaluated 599 trees at the Park. According to the Arborist Report, 47% of the trees in the Park are eucalyptus. The Arborist Report recommends that no tree species should exceed 20-30% of the total population in order to provide diversity in the landscape and to protect the property from devastation that can be caused by a single pathogen that is species specific. The conditions of the trees are as follows: 173 or 29% are good, 376 or 63% are fair, 49 or 8% are poor, and 1 or <1% is dead/declining. Good condition is defined as having no major structural problems, no significant mechanical damage, may have only minor aesthetic insect disease or structural problems, yet in good health. Fair condition may exhibit minor structural problems and/or mechanical damage, significant damage from non-fatal or disfiguring disease, may have been topped but show reasonable vitality and show no obvious signs of decay. Poor condition appears unhealthy and may have structural defects such as codominant stems, severe bark or trunk and/or limb decay, may also have severe mechanical damage, crown dieback, or poor vigor threatening its ability to thrive, and may respond to appropriate maintenance procedures, although these procedures may be cost prohibitive to undertake. Dead refers to dead/declining trees. 380 trees are recommended for large tree pruning, 79 for small tree pruning, 102 for training pruning, 18 for priority pruning, and 20 for removal. Public works estimates the cost of pruning 125 trees every three years is between $100,000-$200,000. Until the Plan is finalized, it is unclear which trees will be removed. Therefore, additional tree evaluation will be required for those trees targeted for preservation to ensure health conditions and its ability to thrive within the Plan.

A Biological Resources Assessment (the “Biological Study”) was completed by NOMAD to evaluate the occurrence potential of special-status plant and wildlife species within the Park. NOMAD concluded that the proposed Plan will not result in impacts to critical habitat and that there are no sensitive natural communities observed within the Park. NOMAD states the following: 1) a wetland delineation is not warranted or recommended, 2) no further botanical surveys are warranted or recommended, 3) impacts to white-tailed kites, migratory birds, and monarch butterflies may be avoided or minimized by implementing the recommended mitigation measures explained in Section 5.2 of the Biological Study, as evaluated in the Initial Study and included in the Mitigation and Monitoring Plan.

An illumination summary (the “Photometric Study”) was prepared by MUSCO, showing locations of the proposed field lighting. However, the study does not take into consideration the placement of trees along Davi Avenue that would reduce the impact of the field lights.

A more detailed evaluation of the trees, the biological resources, and the lights are available in the Mitigated Negative Declaration, Initial Study, and Mitigation and Monitoring Plan attached as Exhibits C, D, and E.
While no specific vendor or turf material has been selected, the Plan proposes artificial turf on all fields. Recent media coverage raised concerns with regard to lead levels in artificial turf. In a press release dated April 14, 2008, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) states that it tested twelve fields and two fields contained traces of lead. Elevated levels of lead were seen only in fibers made of nylon. NJDHSS further states that it is not known whether lead from turf can be absorbed by the body as easily as lead from paint or contaminated soil and NJDHSS’ assessment is that there is a very low risk for exposure. Additional tests are pending.

Staff contacted Sprinturf, the vendor of the turf for the new soccer field at the Park. In a letter dated April 21, 2008, Sprinturf states that the Sprinturf field is made of polyethylene fiber, environmentally safe and heavy metal free. Sprinturf also provided Nexcel’s Material Safety Data Sheet, the supplier of the material used and two media releases from the Synthetic Turf Council (STC). NJDHSS’ press release, Sprinturf’s letter, Nexcel’s Material Data Sheet, and STC’s media releases are attached as Exhibit F.

The City’s Recreation Department provided a table of soccer and baseball/softball field users attached as Exhibit G. Approximately 5,200 soccer players exist among the combined leagues. The largest league consists of 2,800-3,000 players and 20% of the players reside in Pittsburg. The next two largest soccer leagues consist of 800 and 700 players of which 70% and 80% of the players reside in Pittsburg. There are seven other soccer leagues of approximately 720 players of which 60-100% of its players reside in Pittsburg.

The City’s Recreation Department reports that the Park’s baseball fields are used regularly by Pittsburg High School, Pittsburg National Little League, and Pittsburg PONY League and over 90% its players reside in Pittsburg.

The baseball fields are also used by the City’s Leisure Services Adult Softball Leagues, St. Peter Martyr School, various tournament teams, and various organizations that sponsor 2-day tournaments. While many of these players reside in Pittsburg, some also come from all over northern California. The demand on the Park continues to increase as the community grows.

A Notice of Intent to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration was filed on April 29, 2008 with the County Clerk and made available to the public and other regional and local agencies for comments for a minimum of 20 days pursuant to the State of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines. Staff conducted an Initial Study, which included analysis conducted by outside consultants containing the Arborist Report, Biological Study, and Photometric Study.

Potentially significant impacts related to aesthetics, biological resources, air quality, hazards and hazardous materials, recreation, and transportation and traffic were identified as a result of the implementation of the Plan. In order to reduce potential impacts to a less significant level, the City and Agency is requested to adopt the attached Mitigation Monitoring Plan as part of the Mitigated Negative Declaration.

The Plan’s implementation will be completed as a phased project due to the estimated cost identified in the City Park Master Plan. Staff will work with the Consultant to better define the estimated costs, identify potential funding sources, and develop an implementation plan. Request for authorization for allocation of funding for the implementation of the approved Plan will be made at a later time.
ATTACHMENTS:    Resolution-Agency
Resolution-City
Exhibit A – City Park Master Plan
Exhibit B – City Park Master Plan Site Plan
Exhibit C – Mitigated Negative Declaration
Exhibit D – Initial Study (includes arborist report, biological study, and photometric study)
Exhibit E – Mitigation Monitoring Plan
Exhibit F – Turf Documents (safety information)
Exhibit G – Recreation Department Table of Field Users
Exhibit H – Notice of Intent

Report Prepared By: Maria M. Aliotti, Project Manager