



City of Culver City

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Staff Report

File #: 20-130, **Version:** 1

Item #:

Update on the Jackson's Avenue Gate at the Ballona Creek Path

Meeting Date: August 15, 2019

Contact Person/Dept: Heba El-Guindy/PW

Phone Number: 310-253-5628

Fiscal Impact: Yes ☐ No ☒

General Fund: Yes ☐ No ☒

Public Hearing: ☐ **Action Item:** ☒ **Attachments:** ☒

Commission Action Required: Yes ☐ No ☒ **Date:**

Public Notification: (E-Mail) Meetings and Agendas - City Council ();

Department Approval: Charles D. Herbertson - 8/12/2019

RECOMMENDATION

Provide the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) with an update on the project and community feedback.

BACKGROUND

The Jackson Gate Project is one of many starting points for the discussion around realizing a goal from the 2016-2020 Council Strategic Plan, *Enhance the Restoration and Utilization of Ballona Creek*. The objectives outlined include: a) Make Ballona Creek more walkable, bikeable, and connected to the City; and, b) Make Ballona Creek a Recreational Attraction. Ballona Creek's rich history and the changing landscape of Culver City give the City an opportunity to make Ballona Creek a unique and desirable water and recreational amenity.

Part of the Strategic Plan Goal is to "work with adjacent property owners to create agreements to improve Ballona Creek's entry access points and other right-of-way improvements", which includes discussions of opening up access points and increasing connectivity to transit. Another component is to "identify and determine the feasibility of potential Ballona Creek recreational improvements", "include Ballona Creek recreational improvements in the Culver City Recreational Master Plan and prepare cost estimates" and "implement the plan, including the Capital Improvement Project (CIP)

budget”. All these initiatives have started to take shape under the Ballona Creek Revitalization Project.

In 2017, two members of the City Council and the Public Works Director met with Council Member Mike Bonin from Council District 11 to discuss opening-up a gate along Ballona Creek that would service the Sunkist Park neighborhood. This potential gate opening is under the jurisdiction of the City of Los Angeles. In exchange, Council Member Bonin challenged Culver City to also consider opening-up other access points to Ballona Creek in its residential areas..

In April 2018, staff met and discussed a community outreach plan to start a discussion about the possibility of using the Jackson’s Gate as a Ballona Creek access point. Public Works staff led an AARP grant application to fund the community outreach and possible design plans. This discussion also included the community concerns that emerged during the 2004 Ballona Creek and Trail Focused Special Study.

At this point, the CivicSpark Fellows had already begun work on the Ballona Creek Revitalization Project, led by the Community Development Department. The Jackson Gate Project would be one of the many project ideas that emerged out of the Ballona Creek Task Force Meetings.

At the June 19, 2018 Traffic & Parking Subcommittee meeting, staff discussed the AARP small scale grant application. At the August 14, 2018 Traffic & Parking Subcommittee meeting, staff shared that the grant application was not awarded and that the City would amend a contract with Alta to conduct outreach and prepare conceptual designs.

On May 18, 2019, Public Works staff and CivicSpark Fellows held a community meeting at Carlson Park. City and Fellows staff spoke with neighbors and the community about the proposed idea and fielded questions and concerns. At the same time, an online survey was made available and advertised through postcards, social media, and on the City’s website to capture community input about the possibility of opening up the Jackson Gate. The survey closed at the end of June 2019 and staff completed its review of the data.

In June 2019 community members submitted a petition signed by 262 area residents voicing their opinion against the opening of the Jackson’s gate. They later updated the petition to include additional signatures for a total of 320 area residents and submitted it in July 2019.

This report is to update BPAC on the results of the online survey, the petition submitted by the area residents and associated list of concerns, and the draft design plan prepared by the consultant for future reference and consideration by Council.

DISCUSSION

On-Line Survey:

The City’s Public Works Department conducted an online community survey that was made available and advertised through postcards, social media, and on the City’s website to capture community input about the Jackson’s Gate Project. The survey closed at the end of June 2019 and staff completed its review of the data.

The survey contained six questions to capture the extent of community use of the La Ballona Creek

path, potential use of the Jackson's gate if opened, residences proximity to the gate of the respondents, and additional feedback. As can be concluded from the survey results included under Attachment 1, about 380 area residents responded to the survey. Approximately 66% of the respondents live more than three blocks away from the gate, and about 55% of the respondents indicated that they would use the gate a few times a month or a few times a year. Majority of the area residents associate usage of the Ballona Creek path as a form of exercising and having fun. Only 199 area residents provided additional comments, with 111 (56%) in favor of opening the gate.

Petition by Area Residents:

Community members voiced their objection to the opening of the Jackson's gate by submitting a petition signed by 320 area residents. The reported concerns are regarding personal and traffic safety, traffic congestion, crime and gang activities, graffiti, and presence of coyotes. The signed petition, a map identifying the residences of respondents, and the stated list of concerns are enclosed under Attachment 2.

Concept Design Plan:

Should City Council wish to pursue the opening of the Jackson's gate in the future, the enclosed design plan (Attachment 3) will be used for reference. The plan mainly proposes a vehicular gate to be closed at all times except when needed by maintenance vehicles. The plan also proposes a 5-foot pedestrian gate to be closed at night and early morning to address safety concerns. In addition to improvements to signage and pavement markings, the plan proposes the installation of mirrors to improve visibility by path and road users in order to avoid traffic conflicts and enhance safety.

Project Schedule:

With regards to the project timeline, staff anticipates going before the City Council by the end of this year to provide an update on the community's input and seek Council direction.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

There is currently no financial impact. Should the City Council consider in the future and recommend in favor of opening the Jackson's Gate, staff will estimate the cost of the modifications to the gate and the identified traffic control devices.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Results of the On-line Survey Conducted by the City
2. Reported Concerns & Associated Petition by Area Residents
3. Concept Design Plan Prepared by the Project Consultant

MOTION

This report is for updating BPAC on the project, and no motion is necessary.

