

EUGENE CITY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY



Work Session: Re-designation of Striker Field Park

Meeting Date: September 25, 2013
Department: Public Works
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Agenda Item Number: B
Staff Contact: Neil Björklund
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ISSUE STATEMENT

This is a work session to discuss a proposal to re-designate Striker Field Park from a community park with lighted sports fields to a “passive park” without sports fields or lighting.

BACKGROUND

Representatives from the Northeast Neighbors Association have contacted staff and members of the council regarding their desire for re-designation of Striker Field Park, from its current status as a Community Park with lighted sports fields, to a Neighborhood or “passive park” without sports fields or field lighting. In support of their proposal, the group has cited changing demographics in the neighborhood, increasing development density, and a perception that current parks do not provide adequate neighborhood park services in the neighborhood. Neighborhood residents have also expressed opposition to locating lighted sports fields directly across the street from residences on Grand Cayman Drive.

The Striker Field site was acquired by the City in 1983 from the Cone family, which sold about six acres to the City and donated an additional five acres. In 1996, a land exchange of about two acres was made to acquire the present site of Crescent Park, leaving the current 8.6 acre Striker Field site. The park has been planned as the site of a sports field complex to be developed in conjunction with the adjacent District 4J future school site, since the original purchase in 1983. Striker Field is within the designated service area for Crescent Park, which is defined as the area within a half-mile walking distance from the park. Crescent Park is approximately a quarter-mile from Striker Field by foot.

District 4J staff recently communicated to City staff that the district sees future development of a school on their adjacent 31.5-acre site as “a very, very strong possibility.” The primary drivers for this are the potential enrollment growth in the Sheldon High School area as the area continues to develop, combined with the lack of an alternative future school site, and perhaps the need to eventually replace the existing school facility at Meadowlark School, next to Sheldon High School. The district does not know when a future school may be developed at the site. Preliminary design work indicates that placing the school close to Grand Cayman Drive, where Striker Field is located, and having the sports fields to the west of the school building would be a more effective layout,

than having the fields to the east of the school building. Re-designating and developing Striker Field as a neighborhood park would significantly limit the options for where the school building and fields would be located. Also, co-development of athletic fields in conjunction with school development creates some clear economic advantages and operational efficiencies for the school district, as well as for the community.

The provision of sports fields, and sports complexes, is both a community-wide concern, as well as a concern within each area of the city. A decision on whether Striker Field should be designated for future sports fields or not, should be accompanied by analysis of the need for sports fields and sport complexes, both in the northeast portion of the city, as well as across the city as a whole. Therefore, such a decision should not look only at the Striker Field site, and it should not be based solely upon the preferences of one neighborhood. Such a community-wide assessment would be most efficient if conducted within the work program of a comprehensive look at parks and recreation services across the community. Such a community-wide effort is expected to commence following completion of the Envision Eugene project, so that park service needs in newly identified residential areas can be addressed.

RELATED CITY POLICIES

The PROS Project and Priority Plan (2006) contained adopted policy regarding future park development. The Project and Priority Plan provides the following direction for development of Striker Field:

Develop Striker Fields as community park within sports complex model, with significant athletic fields, lighting. (Priority 3- "projects that should be completed in the next 15 years to protect existing assets and to implement high priority programs and services.")

The PROS Comprehensive Plan (2005) also designates Striker Field as a community park, however, the City Council's adoption of the PROS Comprehensive Plan was remanded by the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals, and it does not currently have policy status.

COUNCIL OPTIONS

The council has the following options:

1. Direct staff to bring back to the council a plan for initiating re-designation of Striker Field as a neighborhood park.
2. Direct staff to address the re-designation of Striker Field as part of future revisions to and re-adoption of the PROS Comprehensive Plan, following completion of the Envision Eugene implementation measures.
3. Other, as directed by the council.
4. Take no action.

CITY MANAGER’S RECOMMENDATION

The City Manager recommends Option 2, directing staff to address the re-designation of Striker Field as part of future revisions to, and re-adoption of, the PROS Comprehensive Plan, following completion of the Envision Eugene implementation measures.

SUGGESTED MOTION

Move to direct staff to address the re-designation of Striker Field as part of future revisions to and re-adoption of the PROS Comprehensive Plan following completion of the Envision Eugene implementation measures.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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