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ALTO**

Parks and Recreation Commission Staff Report

From: Steve Castile, Assistant Director Community Services; Sarah Robustelli

Meeting Date: March 25, 2025
Report #: 2503-4395

TITLE

Eleanor Pardee Park Restroom Survey Results and Next Steps

BACKGROUND

RECOMMENDATION

Discuss the Eleanor Pardee Park Restroom Survey Results and Next Steps.

Eleanor Pardee Park is a 9.6-acre neighborhood park, making it the second-largest neighborhood park in Palo Alto (Bol Park is the largest). Approximately half of the park is developed with expansive turf, playgrounds, and picnic areas, while the other half remains undeveloped and is home to community gardens.

The Park Restroom Installation (PG-19000) is a recurring Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project based on the Palo Alto Parks, Trails, Natural Open Space, and Recreation Master Plan, which was adopted by City Council in September 2017.

Master Plan Policy 2.E states that the City will actively pursue adding restrooms in parks that:

- Are approximately two acres or larger
- Feature amenities that encourage visitors to stay
- Have a high level of use
- Lack nearby restroom facilities

Additionally, Policy 2.E.2 identifies potential restroom locations, including:

- Bol Park
- Bowden Park
- Eleanor Pardee Park
- Johnson Park
- Ramos Park
- Robles Park
- Terman Park

In recent years, restrooms have been added at Ramos, Robles, and Rinconada Parks. The

Cubberley restrooms are currently under construction and are expected to open in the coming weeks, weather permitting. This fiscal year, a restroom near the Magical Bridge Playground at Mitchell Park is funded for design and construction.

Due to staff capacity constraints and a recent resignation in Public Works Engineering, the timeline for beginning this project is still being determined.

Years ago, a restroom installation at Eleanor Pardee Park was considered, but the project faced significant neighborhood opposition. More recently, there has been increasing community interest in revisiting this discussion. During budget discussions last year City Council directed staff to engage with the community to explore the addition of a new public restroom at Eleanor Pardee Park.

The purpose of the survey is to inform decision-making and ensure we prioritize accessibility, usability, and visitor experience.

ANALYSIS

The survey results indicate strong overall support for the installation of a restroom at Pardee Park, found in attachment A. Of the 1,171 respondents, 82% expressed support for the project, while 18% were opposed. A significant majority (75%) of residents living within walking distance of the park support the addition of a restroom, while 17% of this group oppose it, see attachment B. Notably, non-residents who participated in the survey universally supported the project, with no recorded opposition.

The highest level of support comes from residents who live near the park, demonstrating those who engaged in the survey a clear local demand for improved restroom facilities. Among supporters within walking distance, nearly half (48%) strongly agreed that the restroom is necessary. Opposition to the project is concentrated within a smaller subset (18%) of respondents, mainly nearby residents, though only 13% strongly opposed the project. Minimal opposition was observed among those who supported the restroom, indicating a strong consensus among advocates.

To proceed with the installation, a Park Improvement Ordinance is required. This ordinance will be reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Commission, which will provide a recommendation before the item is forwarded to the City Council for adoption. The commission's review process will allow for additional public input and further refinement of the project scope.

Should community interest remain strong, the City's capital improvement process would incorporate further public engagement to finalize the design and location of the restroom facility. Staff recommends including funding for the project in the FY 2026 budget cycle. This timeline allows for adequate planning, community feedback, and coordination with relevant stakeholders.

Proposed Timeline:

- June 2025 – Budget Adoption with proposed funding for Eleanor Pardee Park Restroom
- FY 2026 – Restroom Funded

- TBD – Community Meetings, Park Improvement Ordinance to PRC, City Council for approval, Design, and Installation

Given the findings, staff will advance the project through the required approval processes while continuing to engage residents to address any concerns and ensure a successful implementation.

FISCAL/RESOURCE IMPACT

The survey was presented at the January 28, 2025, Parks and Recreation Commission during the Departmental Report. The City's communications team also completed a news story that links to existing pages on the city's website, share via OpenGov Open Town Hall email list, posted on social media including Nextdoor, include the a in the City Managers Comments, blog post, Uplift Local, sent to the Council to share with their networks, and was sent to the Palo Alto Neighbor outreach. Additionally, three signs were placed at the park in various locations.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Survey Results

Attachment B: Survey Statistic Assessment

Attachment C: Survey Response Counts by Question