Terrace View Park
Master Plan

October 27, 2009
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Executive Summary

Terrace View Park is a 1-acre neighborhood park located between Fairlawn Drive and Queens Road in the Berkeley Hills. The park is situated on a steep site, with many mature trees and developed with three terraced areas with various play structures in sand areas, a small lawn area and an asphalt paved area that includes basketball courts. Many of the park features are in poor condition, not useable or do not meet current codes and safety requirements.

The master plan was developed through a series of three community workshops. Participants discussed the various features of the plan, identified their priorities for improvements, potential phasing and construction costs. Presentation materials and workshop summaries were posted on the City website throughout the design process.

**Park Features:** The Master Plan recommends that each of the three terraces be focused on specific activities. Design guidelines that incorporated community input were developed for each of the features of the plan.

- **Upper Terrace:** The upper terrace will continue to be focused on children’s play. The existing old equipment will be replaced with new play equipment. The equipment should create separate play activities for pre-school (2-5 years old) and school age (6-12 years old) children.

- **Middle Terrace:** The middle terrace will continue to be focused on community activities and be adult oriented. A new structure (to replace the removed “deck”) is proposed to be built around an existing redwood tree and extended out to provide a visual connection with the lower terrace.

- **Lower Terrace:** The lower terrace will continue to be focused on active play. A mix of lawn and paved areas will accommodate a broader range of games. Additional planting is required for screening on both the north and south perimeters of this terrace.

The Master Plan addresses a variety of issues including access, planting, lighting and management. Several key issues were raised during the development of the plan:

- **Accessibility:** The 1991 American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that as each area of the park is improved, access for disabled persons is to be provided. The cost of the four ramps is approximately 55% of the estimated construction cost and covers approximately 12% of the park area.

- **Lighting:** Lighting of the park was perhaps the most controversial issue with the community. Some adjacent residents did not want any lights in the park. Others
recognized the need for safety and security given that the park hours are 6 am to 10 PM. The plan recommends including minimal lighting that illuminates the accessible pathway for safety.

**Park Management Issues:** Policy or park management issues raised during the development of the plan included noise, especially after park hours; fire hazards and the restriction of overnight parking.

**Implementation:** The renovation of the park would be phased due to the overall cost and complexity. The community placed the highest priority on development of the lower terrace, second priority was the upper terrace and final priority was the middle terrace. A conceptual grading plan was prepared in order to provide a relative cost estimate and better understand the impact of providing ADA access throughout the park.

The total cost for the park renovation is estimated at $1.972 million.

- Phase 1 $720,000
- Phase 2 $542,000
- Phase 3 $710,000

**Recommended Next Steps**

The Master Plan process brought out the difficulty of compliance with the American with Disabilities Act for hillside parks due to construction costs and the amount of space required. It is recommended that a policy discussion be opened with the disabled community for potential options for compliance.

The Plan also recommends that due to the level of Phase 1 construction costs an interim phase be looked at as a first step. This Phase 1A would include work to renovate the lower terrace with a basketball court and small lawn area. This work would also complete the demolition of the community deck and its foundations. The estimated construction cost is $165,000.
Project Background

Terrace View Park is a 1-acre neighborhood park located between Fairlawn Drive and Queens Road in the Berkeley Hills. The park is situated on a steep site, with many mature trees and developed with three terraced areas with various play structures in sand areas, a small lawn area and an asphalt paved area that includes basketball courts. Many of the park features are in poor condition, not usable or do not meet current codes and safety requirements.

Master Planning Process

The master plan was developed through a series of three community workshops. Prior to the first workshop the neighboring community had been actively involved with City Staff in the development of the project scope and selection of the consultant team. The community had communicated initial concerns and desires. The consultant team reviewed these background materials and developed preliminary alternatives to facilitate a discussion regarding the development of the master plan.

At the first workshop, held on December 17, 2008 the consultant team presented an overview of existing conditions and a proposed program of improvements. The team described the different approaches offered by the three master plan alternatives. Participants were then divided into small groups to discuss the alternatives. Each group used these plans as a starting point to recommend a preferred approach to improving the park. Each small group presented their ideas to the entire workshop. The consultant team identified areas of consensus and differences that served as the foundation for a preferred alternative plan. (See Appendix 1 for summary of comments). The presentation materials and summary of the community input were posted on the City website with a two week additional comment period.

Following the first workshop the consultant team reviewed with City Staff the ideas, preferences and comments from the workshop and those that were received by e-mail and telephone. Using this input the team developed a preliminary draft master plan.

The second workshop, held on January 28, 2009 utilized a similar format to the first workshop with presentation, small group discussion and reporting back to the entire workshop. The consultant team provided an overview of the first workshop and areas of group consensus and differences. Next they presented the preliminary draft master plan and potential phasing constraints. Participants were then divided into small groups to
discuss the plan, identify their priorities for improvements and potential phasing. Each small group presented their ideas to the entire workshop. (See Appendix 2 for summary of comments). The presentation materials and summary of the community input were posted on the City website with a two and one-half week additional comment period.

The third workshop held on March 18, 2009 provided a final opportunity for the community to work on refinement of the Draft Master Plan. The consultant team provided an overview of the first two workshops and areas of group consensus and differences. Then they presented the draft master plan, potential phasing and construction costs. The group offered final refinements to the plan and the phasing recommendations. Participants also continued their discussion regarding park operation hours and the potential for light and noise levels that are objectionable to the neighbors. The presentation materials and summary of the community input were posted on the City website with a two week additional comment period.

The Draft Master Plan was presented to the Park and Recreation Commission on May 11, 2009. Park Commissioners expressed concerned regarding the cost and space required for ramps to make the park accessible. Discussion included alternative approaches to renovation, such as phasing, or repair of existing park components. Concern was also expressed regarding the momentum of inflation of construction cost and the neighborhood expectation for park renovations. Residents feel the park is an important part of the community. On October 26, 2009, the Park and Recreation Commission approved the Master Plan.
**Existing Conditions**

The City of Berkeley acquired seven parcels of land for the park in 1950-1951 in the area known as Terrace View. The park was dedicated on October 30, 1951. In 1956, the City purchased an additional parcel of land to expand the playground. The Friends of Terrace View Park used a City mini-grant to add a play structure to the upper terrace in 1995.

The steep sloping park is divided into three terraces. The upper terrace consists of a play area with tot swings, a tot oriented play structure installed in 1995 with slide and climbing activities, concrete tunnel, concrete enclosed sand area and benches. The area is surfaced in sand and surrounded by a 4-foot chain link fence.

The middle terrace includes a small lawn, bar-b-que grills, picnic tables, as well as a swing set and horizontal chinning bars in a sand surfaced area. The middle terrace is used for movie nights, pumpkin carving and other neighborhood events. A wooden deck that extended over the lower terrace was removed in late 2008 due to its unsafe condition. Adjacent to the lawn area is a ground-level concrete slide that starts from the park entrance at Fairlawn Drive and ends in a sand area on the middle terrace. At the south end of the middle terrace is a drinking fountain and stepped path that leads to the lower terrace.

The lower terrace is paved with asphalt and includes two basketball courts with backstops. The asphalt has heaved and cracked in many locations. The western edge of the area is enclosed with a 10 foot tall chainlink fence to stop errant balls.

A steep asphalt road provides authorized vehicle access through the park and serves as the main pedestrian entry. This road exceeds
accessibility standards of 1:12 (vertical:horizontal) or 8.33% slopes. The park also includes three sets of stairs built into the steep slopes that link Fairlawn to each of the terraces. None of these steps meet current Codes for handrails, riser or tread configurations.

The park has several features to protect during future renovations. Mature evergreen trees establish the natural feeling of the park and include redwood, giant redwood and Douglas fir. The majority of the large trees are in good health. Some of the smaller ornamental trees on the slope below Fairlawn Drive are in poor condition and should be replaced over time. Underground utilities, such as water, irrigation lines and the sanitary sewer and storm drain lines are located throughout the park and will need to be protected during any major renovation work.

Parking is provided on Queens Street.

A steep asphalt service access runs through the park.
Terrace View Park
Berkeley, California
MASTER PLAN
Master Plan

Park Zones and Amenities

The Master Plan recommends that the park continues to be divided into three terraces and that each of the terraces be focused on specific activities.

Upper Terrace

The upper terrace will continue to be focused on children’s play. The existing old equipment will be replaced with new play equipment. The equipment should create separate play activities for pre-school (2-5 years old) and school age (6-12 years old) children. The final selection of the play experiences/equipment will be determined prior to implementation.

Design guidelines include:

- Maintain a natural feeling to the play area. Select play equipment in wood or metal and not plastic. Provide poured-in-place safety surfacing for child safety, longevity and ease of maintenance. (Engineered wood fibers, while desirable from aesthetic considerations, raised concerns over small children ingesting them and the need for on-going replenishment to maintain required depths and distribution). Choose colors that blend with the natural environment.

- Provide separate groupings of activities for each age group including a range of active play such as sliding, climbing, rocking/balancing, spinning, as well as social and inclusive play for all ages.
• Provide a small sand play area

• Include swings that accommodate the range of ages and abilities (2 – 12 years of age).

• Locate benches to make it easy to supervise the play area.

• Include game/ picnic tables that are scaled to kids.

• Consider a kiosk at the entrance of the play area that can be used to announce community events and park rules.

• Add fencing around the play area to exclude dogs and allow for controlled supervision.

• Create views into the lower terrace from the west edge of the terraces below.

**Middle Terrace**

The middle terrace will continue to be focused on community activities and be adult oriented. A new structure (to replace the removed “deck”) is proposed to built around an existing redwood tree and extended out to provide a visual connection with the lower terrace.

Design guidelines include:

• Maintain a lawn with a retaining wall along the east side that can also serve as informal seating.

• Provide a swing set to accommodate a range of ages, (6 years – adult).

• Relocate the drinking fountain to a more central location.
• Create a paved path along the west edge of the terrace to connect to ramps and stairs at the north and south. Maintain views into the lower terrace.

• Allow for flexibility in the master plan to either extend the size of the community “deck” or create a planting area between the Middle and Lower Terraces that could be considered for use as a community garden. This is the sunniest portion of the park. Note: Interested neighbors will need to participate in the City’s formal community garden program to facilitate the development of this area if a community garden is desired.

**Lower Terrace**

The lower terrace will continue to be focused on active play. A mix of lawn and paved areas will accommodate a broader range of games. Additional planting is required for screening on both the north and south perimeters of this terrace.

Design guidelines include:

• Provide a lawn in southern portion of the terrace.

• Provide full basketball court with new backboards. Select backboards and paved surfacing to reduce noise from play. The court may be less than regulation in size.

• Provide a ball wall. Do not use a “rebounder” type net; but select wall materials/design for noise attenuation.

• Consider striping for other games such as four-square or hopscotch.

• Locate benches and seatwall outside of area of play but nearby for viewing.

• Locate games/ picnic tables and seats at the perimeter of the area.

• Replace the fencing on the west side of the terrace to contain errant balls. Fencing should be located behind a seatwall.
Accessibility

The 1991 American with Disabilities Act requires that as each area of the park is improved, access for disabled persons is to be provided. This requires the introduction of van parking areas at both Queens Road and Fairlawn Drive, as well as a series of ramps that provide access throughout the park. The timing of the construction of these ramps will be negotiated as each phase is implemented dependant upon the availability of similar play features and experiences that are accessible nearby and the overall cost of renovation. Compliance with the 1991 Act is not clear-cut as law suits continue to redefine the law.

The community workshop participants expressed strong concern regarding the amount of space these ramps require, as well as concern for the aesthetics, potential trash, vagrant and security issues. They understood that the ramps were required. The following guidelines reflect their preferences:

- When possible use natural or natural looking materials; for example stone or wood pattern concrete.
- Take advantage of ramp landings that provide natural overlooks. Make them an aesthetically inspiring feature, such as a ship’s prow, climbing wall, etc.
- Consider providing planters at the base of larger ramp walls so vines can be planted to soften these walls.
- Minimize open areas below ramps, where possible, that can trap trash or serve as hiding places.
- Allow the accessible ramps to serve as the primary circulation through the park.

A conceptual grading plan was developed to show preliminary ramps and grading required for access through the park. If fully implemented, the ramps would total approximately 4,730 square feet which would cover 12% of the roughly 40,200 square foot park. Reduction of the number of ramps is more fully explored on page 17. City staff will work with the ADA compliance officer to develop an agreement and final recommendation. An effort was made to reduce the impact to the existing trees. Three trees are required to be removed for the construction of the ramps. However, prior to final design of the ramps all adjacent trees should have an arboricultural evaluation for further recommendations, such as pruning or crown thinning, to reduce the impact of construction.

Maintenance and Emergency Access

Vehicle access is to be provided through the park. Where turf occurs within the emergency access route for fire trucks or ambulances, use reinforced grass paving system, such as Grasspave2 manufactured by Invisible Structures Inc., to provide an appropriate surface.
Plantings

The natural character of the park was highly valued by the community. However, some members felt the park was too shaded. It was recommended that in the future when the evergreen trees decline and are removed that they should be replaced with deciduous trees with more open canopies to allow for more sunlight into the park.

Screening at the edges adjacent to residences was also important to the community. The steep terrain surrounding the park places a premium upon usable space. However planting buffers of shrubs and small scale trees should be located on the north and south edges of the park. These plantings will provide some privacy to the houses immediately adjacent to the park. Consider neighbor preferences for visibility and security.

Lighting

Lighting of the park was perhaps the most controversial issue with the community. Some adjacent residents did not want any lights in the park. Others recognized the need for safety and security given that the park hours are 6 am to 10 PM. There was discussion regarding shortening the park hours to dawn to dusk to eliminate the need for lighting. However, a majority of the community supported maintaining the park hours and providing minimal lighting that illuminates the accessible pathway for safety. These low level lights should be shaded downward, with wall lights or bollards preferred. The lights should not illuminate any of the play areas or the basketball court.

Park Management Issues

The community also raised several policy or park management issues.

• Noise was a big concern for some adjacent residents. The use of the basketball court in the late hours was especially a concern. There was a desire to restrict the placement of lights so that no activities would occur on the basketball court or play area after hours. There was also concern over the patrol and enforcement of after hours illegal use of the courts. Most of the participants felt that this could be monitored by the community.

• Wildland fire hazard was also a concern as the Berkeley hills are designated a high fire hazard area. The lower limbs of trees should be trimmed up and fuel ladders removed from under the mature trees. New plant species should be selected with firewise characteristics that are easy to maintain with low fuel loads. Do not use plants with high volatile oils or fuel loads such as eucalyptus, pine or juniper. Barbecue areas should be placed in lawn or non-flammable materials and surrounding trees be pruned back to prevent ignitions. Disposal of hot charcoal briquettes should also be provided for.

• Concerns were expressed regarding restriction of overnight parking. Consider posting a sign of no overnight parking in the small lot on Queens Road.
Implementation

Phasing

The renovation of the park will likely be phased due to the overall costs and complexity of construction. The community discussed priorities and recommended three phases. However, should funding for a specific area become available that areas could be developed out of sequence, provided ADA access requirements can also be fulfilled.

The following graphic depicts the community’s preferred sequence of implementation:

The final components that are included in a construction phase will respond to funding sources with the following community guidelines:

The community placed the highest priority on development of the lower terrace due to the poor condition of the asphalt. Development of this terrace will require access improvements including the parking area on Queens Road with a van accessible space and the ramp from the parking up to the lower terrace. This phase should also address the area of the demolition of the former community deck concrete foundations and retaining walls.
The second priority was placed on the upper terrace to enrich the play experiences for all ages children. Development of this terrace will require implementation of an accessible ramp and van parking on Fairlawn Drive.

Third priority was placed on the middle terrace to replace the community gathering area. Included in the implementation of this phase are the final two ramps that connect to the upper and lower terraces.

**Conceptual Grading**

A conceptual grading plan was prepared to better understand the potential accessible ramp configurations and their impact on the site topography and existing trees. This plan shows where removal of earth (cut) or bringing in addition fill material are required.

The conceptual grading plan shows that the addition of fill allows many of the ramps to be built at or near grade. The placement of this fill will require geotechnical engineering. Each of the ramps A-D has been designed to conform to ADA with the maximum allowable slope of 8.33% and landings at changes of direction or at a maximum of 30 inches of rise. The service access road between Queen’s Road and the lower terrace is regraded to 25%. The service access between the lower and middle terrace is regraded to 16%. The access to Fairlawn remains unchanged.
Costs

A preliminary opinion of probable construction costs was prepared for the implementation of the park in the priority of the phasing identified with the community. In summary the estimated construction costs are as follows:

Phase 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demolition</td>
<td>$95,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asphalt paving @ basketball-court and parking</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stamped concrete paving</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramp A (including grading &amp; lighting)</td>
<td>$375,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenities – benches, basketball backstop, ball wall, fencing</td>
<td>$55,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting and Irrigation</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Phase 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>$720,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Phase 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demolition</td>
<td>$35,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paving (access road + entry)</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play equipment, play surface and fencing</td>
<td>$182,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramp D (including grading &amp; lighting)</td>
<td>$260,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenities – benches, tables + chairs, trash receptacles</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting and Irrigation</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Phase 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>$542,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demolition</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paving (access road + walkways)</td>
<td>$95,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overlook Terrace</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramp B (including grading &amp; lighting)</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ramp C (including grading &amp; lighting)</td>
<td>$190,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amenities – benches, swings</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planting and Irrigation</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Phase 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>$710,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Terrace View Park Renovation** $1,972,000
Recommended Next Steps

Policy Discussion of ADA Compliance in Hillside Parks

The master planning process brought out the difficulty of compliance with the American with Disabilities Act for hillside parks. The estimated construction cost of three phases of the project is approximately $2 million. Approximately 55% of this cost is related to the ramps required for disabled access through the steep terrain. The consultant team felt that this level of expense was not fundable and that alternative compliance should be explored. Potential options that could be negotiated with the ADA compliance representatives include:

- Removal of either Ramp A or Ramp D. This option would still provide access to all improved features within the park. However the costs are still proportionately extremely expensive.

- Removal of all ramps and instead provide for access by special vehicle that can access the park, possibly along the lines of a dial-a-ride service. This option could be enhanced by further re-grading of the existing service road from Queen’s Road to reduce the grade to 16% from the existing 25%.

- Renovation of portions of the parks in a way that would not trigger ADA improvements. This is recommended as a potential for the first phase where the basketball court would be repaved, turf installed, and some minimal cost improvements to make the former deck area safe. The total improvement would be limited to less than $125,000 per the City’s ADA coordinator.

- Development of a comprehensive policy for ADA improvements within the city parks located in the hill where either due to terrain or geology (rocks) the cost of full access presents an inequitable burden. This policy should be developed in conjunction with the disabled community. Improvements in “hill parks” could be tied to enhanced ADA improvements in alternative parks where the construction conditions would result in a more effective use of available funds and better serve the disabled community. Key to this discussion will be several concepts including
  - Program access to the whole range of city services and program, versus access to a single site.
  - Undue financial burden based on all resources available for use in a program (20% is threshold often used in private renovation beyond which is a financial burden).
  - Alternatives to structural changes to achieve program accessibility as a specific park, such as access via a vehicle.
Park Renovation Phase 1A

It is recommended that due to the level of Phase 1 construction costs an interim phase be looked at as a first step. The estimated construction cost is $165,000. This Phase 1A would include the following work on the lower terrace:

- Grinding of existing asphalt (to remove the top level and create a firm base), and replacement of asphalt
- Demolition of former community deck concrete foundations and retaining walls and grading to allow for temporary planted slope until Phase 3.
- Removal of asphalt and base and install proposed turf area with supporting irrigation.
- Removal of existing basketball backstops and replacement with new backstops and striping as shown on the proposed plan.

This Phase 1A would require that ADA compliance is negotiated so that access is not required. An accessible basketball court is located at Codornices Park, approximately 1.6 miles west from Terrace View Park.