



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council **DATE:** August 10, 2026

DEPARTMENT: City Manager's Office

PREPARED BY: Isaac Whippy, City Manager

PRESENTER: Isaac Whippy, City Manager & John Smith, Public Works Director

AGENDA TITLE: Consideration of a Resolution Authorizing Updated Community Engagement and Development of a Partnership and Site-Control Framework for the Timberwolf Stadium Track and Multipurpose Athletic Field Improvement Project

RECOMMENDATION

1. Receive the staff report and public comment.
2. Adopt the attached resolution authorizing staff to:
 - a. Conduct an updated community engagement process consistent with Statewide Park Program Round 5 requirements, in partnership with the Fort Bragg Unified School District, Mendocino Coast Sports Foundation, local tribes, and other community organizations;
 - b. Confirm project-site ownership, parcel boundaries, and existing agreements; and
 - c. Evaluate and negotiate a working partnership framework under which the District would retain property ownership, the City would serve as the anticipated grant applicant and administrator, the City and District would enter into a grant-compliant joint-use and site-control agreement, and the Foundation would support engagement, fundraising, and project advocacy through a partnership memorandum of understanding.
3. Direct staff to return to the City Council with the community engagement results, a community-supported project concept, preliminary cost estimate, confirmed ownership and site-control framework, draft partnership agreements, operations and maintenance plan, long-term capital-replacement strategy, proposed funding and grant-administration plan, and any required grant-authorizing resolution.

BACKGROUND

Timberwolf Stadium, located at Fort Bragg High School, is one of the Mendocino Coast's principal athletic and community gathering facilities. The stadium supports football, soccer, track and field, physical education, graduation ceremonies, community recreation, and other public events.

The Mendocino Coast Sports Foundation was formed in 1992 to help develop the lighted playing field that became Timberwolf Stadium. The Foundation, Fort Bragg Unified School District, local volunteers, businesses, and community members have made substantial investments in the facility over several decades.

The existing all-weather track and synthetic multi-purpose athletic field now require replacement. The proposed project would protect this long-standing community investment while improving the facility's safety, accessibility, reliability, and usefulness for students and the broader community.

Prior Grant Application

In 2020–21, the Mendocino Coast Sports Foundation submitted an application for funding through Round 4 of the Statewide Park Development and Community Revitalization Program. Although the project was not selected for funding, the prior application established a detailed preliminary scope and demonstrated substantial community and organizational commitment to the facility.

The prior application requested \$6,225,000, consisting of

Prior project component	2020–21 estimate
Replace the existing track with an all-weather track	\$3,275,000
Replace the football/soccer field with an all-weather synthetic field	\$1,500,000
Replace field lighting with LED lighting	\$650,000
Construct two family restroom facilities	\$400,000
Construction management	\$400,000
Total requested	\$6,225,000

Round 4 was highly competitive statewide. California State Parks received 468 applications requesting approximately \$2.42 billion, while 112 projects initially received approximately \$548.3 million. The prior unsuccessful application provides a strong foundation for a renewed effort, but the project must be updated to address Round 5 requirements and current community priorities.

Existing Plans and Project Information

The Mendocino Coast Sports Foundation has provided an 88-page plan set for the original Fort Bragg High School Sports Complex. The plans generally date from 1995 and include civil, grading, drainage, utility, landscaping, architectural, structural, track and field layout, stadium, lighting, electrical, and plumbing information.

These documents demonstrate that substantial engineering and design work has been completed and provide useful baseline information regarding the original stadium configuration and infrastructure. However, they should not be characterized as current construction-ready plans.

The plans will need to be field-verified and updated to reflect:

- Current site and utility conditions.
- Improvements or modifications made since the original construction.
- Current building, accessibility, electrical, structural, and stormwater standards.
- Current track and athletic-field standards.
- Drainage and subgrade conditions.
- Synthetic turf, infill, heat, durability, recycling, and disposal considerations.
- LED lighting performance and neighborhood compatibility.
- Current construction costs, contingencies, and escalation.

The prior plans and application will allow the project team to build upon existing work rather than begin project development from the ground up.



DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

1. Statewide Park Program Round 5

Proposition 4 provides approximately **\$188.5 million** for SPP Round 5. Current program information identifies a minimum request of \$200,000, a maximum request of \$8.5 million, and no required local match. Cities, counties, qualifying districts, joint powers authorities, and eligible nonprofit organizations may apply.

As of August 4, 2026, California State Parks lists the Round 5 application deadline as **TBD**. [California State Parks Round 5 information](#)

The prior \$6.225 million scope is within the current maximum grant amount. However, the estimate predates several years of construction-cost escalation and does not separately identify all potential design, engineering, permitting, environmental review, contingency, and preconstruction expenses. Staff will prepare an updated estimate following the community-planning process.

2. New Community Engagement Is Required

The community engagement completed for the Foundation's 2020–21 application provides useful historical information but does not satisfy the community-based planning requirements for Round 5.

California State Parks allows qualifying meetings held after November 5, 2024, to count toward Round 5. Meetings conducted before that date may be included as historical context but do not count toward the current requirements. The State also requires previously unfunded Round 4 projects at the same site to conduct at least two additional meetings to ensure that the project continues to reflect current community priorities.

[California State Parks community-planning requirements](#)

Staff therefore recommends conducting a new engagement process consisting of at least five accessible, interactive, in-person community meetings. The meetings will be supported by a community survey and outreach at the Fort Bragg Farmers Market.

The engagement process will address three principal outcomes:

1. Selection and detailed design of the recreation features to be included in the project.
2. Location and layout of the selected features.
3. Safe public use, accessibility, climate resilience, and beautification.

The process will establish replacement of the track and synthetic field as the core project need while allowing the community to help shape the final design, supporting amenities, public-access arrangements, and long-term community uses.

3. Proposed Community Engagement Plan

Staff proposes the following engagement framework, subject to coordination with the School District and the final State application guide for the month of August- September 2026:

Activity	Location or format	Intended outcome
Community survey	Online and paper formats	Gather broad input regarding facility use, priorities, barriers, desired improvements, and community-access needs
Meeting 1: Project launch	Fort Bragg High School Gym	Present existing conditions and prior application; identify current needs, users, concerns, and measures of success

Activity	Location or format	Intended outcome
Meeting 2: Stadium site walk & Design	Timberwolf Stadium or School Gym	Review the track, field, drainage, access, lighting, circulation, and physical site constraints. Evaluate track and field options, supporting amenities, accessibility, public use, and environmental considerations
Meeting 3: Draft concept review	Timberwolf Stadium or School Gym	Review preliminary layouts, costs, priorities, safety, access, beautification, and community identity
Meeting 4: Final concept and prioritization	Fort Bragg High School Gym	Confirm the community-supported concept and identify essential versus optional project elements
Meeting 5: Farmers Market outreach	Fort Bragg Farmers Market	Reach residents who may not attend formal meetings, promote the survey and meetings, and gather additional comments

At least two formal meetings will be scheduled during evenings or weekends. Meeting times and locations will be selected to provide reasonable access for working families, students, seniors, and other community members.

The Farmers Market activity and survey will supplement the five interactive meetings. They will not replace the formal meetings unless the State confirms that a Farmers Market event has been structured and documented in a manner that satisfies its meeting requirements.

4. Outreach and Documentation

Outreach should include:

- Students, student-athletes, coaches, and physical education staff.
- Youth sports organizations.
- Track, walking, and running users.
- Families and nearby residents.
- Seniors and people with disabilities.
- Fort Bragg Unified School District representatives.
- Mendocino Coast Sports Foundation and Timberwolf Boosters.
- Local health, recreation, and community organizations.
- Local Tribal representatives.
- Spanish-speaking and other historically underrepresented residents.

The City and its partners will use school communications, social media, email lists, flyers, the community survey, Farmers Market outreach, and direct invitations to encourage participation.

Each meeting will be documented through notices, agendas, participation records, summaries, photographs where consent is obtained, community comments, design concepts, and an explanation of how the input was incorporated into—or excluded from—the proposed project.

5. Preliminary Project Scope

The recommended core project scope is:

- Replacement of the existing all-weather track.
- Replacement of the synthetic multi-purpose football and soccer field.
- Associated drainage, subgrade, accessibility, utility, and site improvements necessary to provide a complete and durable project.

The engagement process will determine whether other improvements from the prior application remain community priorities, including:

- LED field lighting.
- Family restroom facilities.
- Community walking and running access.
- Seating, shade, drinking water, storage, and spectator amenities.
- Accessibility and circulation improvements.
- Landscaping, public art, and community identity.
- Improvements addressing heat, stormwater, drought, and other climate vulnerabilities.

6. City, District, and Foundation Partnership

Because Timberwolf Stadium is located on School District property, the application must clearly address:

- Project-management and grant-administration responsibilities.
- Long-term site control.
- Public-access and community-use hours.
- School and community scheduling.
- Ownership of completed improvements.
- Operation and maintenance responsibilities.
- Future track and turf replacement.
- Insurance, indemnification, and risk allocation.
- Grant reimbursement and cash-flow requirements.

The Mendocino Coast Sports Foundation should remain an active project partner. Its prior application, institutional knowledge, fundraising experience, existing plans, and long-standing relationship with the facility will strengthen the application.

7. Property Ownership and Grant Site Control

Timberwolf Stadium is located on property associated with the Fort Bragg Unified School District. Before submission of a grant application, staff will confirm the fee ownership of the project site, applicable parcel boundaries, ownership or control of existing stadium improvements, and any existing agreements affecting the property. Acquisition of the property by the City is not currently contemplated.

If the City is selected as the grant applicant and does not own the project site, the City will be required to demonstrate grant-compliant site control through a lease, joint-use agreement, memorandum of understanding, easement, or comparable agreement with the property owner. The agreement must authorize construction of the project, establish public recreational access, assign operational and maintenance responsibilities, and provide the required long-term site control. Staff will work with the District, the Mendocino Coast Sports Foundation, legal counsel, and California State Parks to develop the appropriate agreement for consideration by the City Council and District Board before submission of the grant application.

FISCAL IMPACT

No construction appropriation is requested through this action. City staff time and minor engagement expenses will be absorbed within existing FY 2026/27 appropriations. If professional facilitation, engineering, grant writing, surveying, cost estimating, or other services require an additional appropriation, staff will return to Council.

The prior application requested \$6.225 million. That amount is historical and should not be treated as the current project budget. Staff will prepare an updated estimate after receiving community input and completing preliminary technical review.

Although Round 5 does not require a local match, an award may create grant-administration, reimbursement cash-flow, public-access, and long-term operation and maintenance obligations. Those responsibilities must be defined before application submission and grant acceptance.

ENVIROMENTAL REVIEW

The recommended action initiates community engagement, information collection, grant preparation, and preliminary project development. It does not approve a final physical project or authorize construction.

Staff recommends that the Council find that the current action is not a project under the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15378(b)(5) because it consists of organizational and administrative activities that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes to the environment. The appropriate environmental review will be completed before approval of a definite physical project.

STRATEGIC PLAN/CONSISTENCY

The proposed engagement and project development advance the City's 2024–2028 Strategic Plan goals for Public Places and Recreation, Community Engagement, Resilient Infrastructure, Collaboration, and Fiscal Responsibility.

NEXT STEPS

Following Council approval, staff will:

1. Establish a joint City-District-Foundation project team.
2. Review the prior application and obtain any available State scoring or reviewer comments.
3. Confirm the final Round 5 application requirements and schedule with the State project officer.
4. Present and gather feedback from the FBUSD.
5. Prepare and distribute the community survey.
6. Conduct at least five interactive community meetings at the Fort Bragg High School Gym and Timberwolf Stadium.
7. Conduct supplemental outreach at the Fort Bragg Farmers Market.
8. Prepare a community-supported concept plan and updated project cost estimate.
9. Develop the site-control, public-access, operation and maintenance, and partnership framework.
10. Return to Council with the engagement results, recommended project scope, updated budget, funding strategy, and grant-authorizing resolution before submitting the application.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Draft resolution authorizing community-based planning and preliminary grant development.
2. 2020–21 SPP Grant Scope and Cost Estimate.
3. Historic Fort Bragg High School Sports Complex Plan Set.
4. Draft Community Engagement Plan and Survey.