



CITY OF FORT BRAGG

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COUNCIL COMMITTEE ITEM SUMMARY REPORT

MEETING DATE: JULY 27, 2021
TO: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
FROM: HEATHER GUREWITZ, ASSOCIATE PLANNER
AGENDA ITEM TITLE: RECEIVE REPORT AND PROVIDE DIRECTION ON STATE PARKS RRT GRANT PROGRAM APPLICATION

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW:

The Rural Recreation and Tourism (RRT) Program is administered through California State Parks and intended to create new recreation opportunities within rural communities to support health-related and economic goals. This program is funded by Proposition 68 (2018 Bond Act), which is found in Public Resources Code §80090(a)(b).

The City recently applied for funds to renovate Bainbridge Park from the Prop 68 Statewide Parks Program (SPP). The application is still pending, and State Parks staff will conduct a site visit on July 28, 2021.

The RRT program has a different focus than the SPP program and can be used for recreation features that support both local recreation and tourism.

Competitive grants will range from \$200,000 to \$3 million. There is no match requirement because the median household income for Fort Bragg is below \$56,982. The due date is November 5, 2021 and the City Council will have to pass a resolution for the grant application.

At the Community Development Committee meeting on March 23, 2021, the Committee requested that staff bring back 3-4 projects to review. Staff evaluated several possible projects:

1. Rehabilitating the former pool building to provide a recreation space
2. Construct ball courts at the CV Starr Center
3. Purchase and construct a pocket park at the corner of Redwood and Franklin
4. Acquire land along the Noyo River for trail and river access
5. Modify parkland around Guest House Museum to create public gathering space

Three projects that were identified as possible options were:

1. Pool Building Conversion - Turning the former pool building in City Hall East into a multipurpose recreational atrium including structural improvements to the existing gym and the creation of public restrooms at the site.
2. CV Starr Covered Outdoor Ball Courts – The plans developed for the CV Starr courts in 2016 were estimated at \$12 Million which is beyond the scope of this project. However, it is possible to do a limited version of the project and create two outdoor covered and fenced courts.
3. CV Starr Indoor Ball Court – Another option is to create one indoor ball court (max 5,200 Square Feet) at the CV Starr Center

These options were presented to the Committee at the meeting on April 27, 2021. The Committee asked staff to take all three projects to the public for scoping and to include a pocket park at the vacant parcel located at N. Franklin St. and Redwood St.

Staff attempted to contact the owner of the parcel located at the corner of N. Franklin St. and Redwood St. to determine if purchasing the lot for the pocket park was feasible. The property owner made it clear that he was not willing to talk with City staff and would only consider an official offer letter before discussing anything further. Purchasing property with this grant would require that the property owner be willing to cooperate with the City and work with us through the process. Based on the interaction(s) with the property owner, staff determined that this was not a feasible option for these funds. The committee may wish to direct staff to research other opportunities to purchase and develop this property.

Staff conducted three public scoping sessions:

1. Fort Bragg High School – May 25, 2021
2. Fort Bragg Middle School – June 3, 2021
3. Fort Bragg Farmers’ Market – June 30, 2021

Staff also provided an online survey option for individuals interested in participating. The City issued a press release for the Farmers’ Market table and the online survey and it was announced on KOZT that morning. Eighty-one students from the High School and Middle School participated in the project scoping. There were 29 participants of the online survey and there were 42 participants at the Farmers’ Market table. The scoping sessions at the schools focused on youth and the online survey was anonymous. Participants at the Farmers’ Market included a broad cross section of the community including young children, adults, and seniors.

The results from this process are as follows:

What kind of recreation feature should the City of Fort Bragg make?

	School Visits Scoping	Online Survey	In person Farmers’ Market	TOTAL
Multipurpose/Renovation	19	12	24	55
New Indoor Court	11	8	6	25
New Outdoor Courts	10	8	12	30

Participants were also asked what activities the space should accommodate. Because the combination of new indoor and new outdoor courts was equal to the number of “votes” for a multipurpose room/renovation of the old pool building, staff also considered what

activities were selected. The listing below is the top five activities with the number of selections by collection method:

Top 5 Activities/Features From School Session	
Volleyball	32
Basketball	23
Gymnastics	18
Soccer	12
Dance Floor & Mirrors/Play equipment (Tie)	6

Top 5 Activities from Online Survey	
Basketball	16
Equipment For live performances	14
Dance Floor and Mirrors	12
Soccer	11
Local Art	9

Top 5 Features/Activities from Farmers Market*	
Equipment For live performances	20
Soccer	14
Basketball	13
Dance Floor and Mirrors	7
Local art	6

Top 5 Features/Activities - All Methods	TOTAL
Basketball	52
Volleyball	45
Soccer	37
Equip for live performances	35
Gymnastics	32

A key element to the project eligibility is that it will support both recreation and tourism. The following is an analysis of how each project supports both.

	Multipurpose Room	New Outdoor Courts
Local Recreation	Diverse activities including: table tennis, badminton, gymnastics, and fitness classes. Supports all age groups	Supports high demand for basketball, volleyball, and soccer. Mostly supports youth and adults
Tourism	Live performance space Meeting and events space	Supports tournaments Space for arts and crafts fairs

	Space for arts & crafts fairs Creates downtown public restrooms	
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Additionally, because these two projects were so closely ranked, staff contacted the Mendocino Coast Parks and Recreation District to request their input on the project. The following response was received from Moneque Wooden, District Administrator:

“Thank you for reaching back out to me. After our conversation yesterday, It is my opinion that at this time the community would best be served by revamping and remodeling the “Old Rec Gym”.

After much consideration, it is mine and my staff’s belief that, although the building cannot be remodeled in such a way in which it would house two full indoor courts it can be remodeled to have an additional multipurpose room. This new room could house many other activities such as table tennis, martial arts classes, theatrical plays, and many other enrichment classes. Having such a versatile area in which to house numerous activities could serve everyone in the community not just a small few.

We do agree that the community is in desperate need of having additional indoor courts (basketball, tennis, pickle ball), at this time and because this particular grant cannot support the cost of fully enclosed indoor courts our vote is for remodeling the “Old Rec Gym”. The community does have access to many outdoor courts already, the park and all school sites and a covered court would not protect the users from the cold and wet weather we have here on the Coast.

Thank you for reaching out to me and for your time.

Kind regards,

-Moneque”

Because both projects are high priority projects for the City and desired by the community, regardless of which project the committee recommends to the council, the committee may wish to also recommend that staff continue to research grant opportunities and source funds to support other park projects.

RECOMMENDATION:

Direct staff to apply for funding from the Rural Recreation and Tourism Grant Program to fund one of the two recommended projects and to research alternative sources of funding to support the other priority project(s).

ALTERNATIVES:

Direct staff to get feedback from the City Council or direct staff not to apply for funds for either project.