

**Resolution # 18-18 and Resolution # 18-19
Pedro Park Staff Report**

INTRODUCTION:

The Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA) has entered into a tentative Developer Agreement for the sale of the Public Safety Annex (PSA) to the Ackerberg Group. As a result, the HRA of the City requested the Department of Parks and Recreation to undertake a public process to create a conceptual design for Pedro Park with the PSA building remaining.

BACKGROUND:

In the summer of 2018, City staff initiated a community engagement process. As part of the process, the City designed a survey that was advertised publicly and received 221 responses. Results were used to inform the design team on preferences and uses that the community members were most interested in seeing. In addition, the City organized a Design Advisory Committee with representatives from surrounding businesses, residents and community groups totaling 15 members plus city staff. This committee met for a series of 3 meetings on May 3rd, May 24th and June 21st, 2018 to review the site context and garner design recommendations for the park. A conceptual design for Pedro Park emerged from feedback and input received through this public process.

PROPOSED CONCEPT PLAN:

The concept plan for Pedro Park includes open space for play and programming, a designated play area for children, plaza spaces that include fixed and movable seating, shade structures, lighting, a water feature, public art, and a pet relief area. The park was designed to be expandable in the future if additional land becomes available. The sale to the Ackerberg Group would provide revenue for permanent improvements of Pedro Park. In addition, the Ackerberg Group would provide \$40,000 in annual funding to support ongoing maintenance of Pedro Park upon substantial completion of the park.

The park has a recommended budget of \$3,746,810.79. Funds would be allocated from sale of the building (\$1,317,500), existing parkland dedication funds (\$199,310.79) and Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) funds (\$2,230,000).

The Development Agreement will be presented to both the HRA and City Council on October 24th and will include the demonstration that the terms for community engagement for conceptual design for Pedro Park have been met. Approval for the project would initiate the final design



process for Pedro Park at which time the Design Advisory Committee would be brought together for two additional meetings to provide input on refinements to the design. Construction on the park is anticipated to begin in 2019.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

The Parks and Recreation Department recognizes the need for parkland in downtown Saint Paul as documented through planning documents including the City’s Comprehensive Plan.

The City has made repeated unsuccessful requests for funds to complete the permanent development of the .45-acre park. The sale of the Public Safety Annex building to The Ackerberg Group would provide \$1,317,500 in sale proceeds toward the park’s estimated cost of \$3,746,810.79.

The design process for Pedro Park was done thoughtfully and carefully with community participation and input. The final product will be a high-quality park and a great asset to the growing downtown neighborhood. The design allows for expansion if additional land and financing become available.

REQUEST OF THE COMMISSION:

Adopt Resolution #18-18 and Resolution #18-19

COMMUNITY CONCERNS:

Friends of Pedro Park and other members of the community disagree with the sale and redevelopment of the Public Safety Annex. They feel they were promised a full block park and have filed a lawsuit against the City. This lawsuit is currently underway.

In addition, five members of the Design Advisory Commission resigned from the committee. Two resignations occurred at the May 24th meeting, but alternates from the organizations replaced them on the committee. One representative resigned at the end of the last meeting on June 21st. Two resigned at the second meeting on May 24th and were not replaced.