



Recommendation for Action

File #: 19-2858, **Agenda Item #:** 37.

9/19/2019

Posting Language

Approve adoption of the Asian American Resource Center Master Plan.

Lead Department

Parks and Recreation Department

Fiscal Note

There is no fiscal impact to this item.

Prior Council Action:

September 13, 2017 - Council approved \$200,000 in one-time funds for the Asian American Resource Center Master Plan on Council Member Renteria's motion, Council Member Casar's second on an 8-3 vote.

For More Information:

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Council Committee, Boards and Commission Action:

August 20, 2019 - Approved unanimously by the Asian American Quality of Life Commission.

August 27, 2019 - Approved unanimously by the Parks and Recreation Board.

Additional Backup Information:

City Council initiated the master planning process for the Asian American Resource Center (AARC) through the one-time allocation of \$200,000 from the FY 2018 Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) Operating Budget (General Fund). Currently, PARD owns and operates the AARC, which is located on an approximately 15-acre site at 8401 Cameron Road. The mission of the AARC is to provide spaces, services, resources, and programs through an Asian American Pacific Islander perspective. The vision is to empower Austin's diverse communities through cultural understanding and life-enhancing opportunities. The AARC currently offers a variety of educational programs, senior programs and facility rentals that promote cultural experiences.

The Resource Center is the result of an initial master planning process that was started in 2006 by local planning firm Broadbudd & Associates. The consultant team engaged the AARC non-profit, the City's AARC Advisory Board, the Network of Asian American Organizations (NAAO), and the greater Austin community. The Phase 1 Master Plan helped guide the Asian American community's shared vision. The plan created a campus that included a pedestrian main street, a park with children's play area, informal outdoor spaces, an uncovered paved pedestrian walkway, an outdoor amphitheater, and parking lots. Phase 1 was 18,000 square feet and was completed in September 2016.

RVI Inc, a local landscape architecture firm, was hired in July 2018 with a contract not to exceed \$200,000. The consultant was to assist PARD staff with the development of a Phase 2 Master Plan that would serve as an update to Phase 1.

The public engagement process began in December 2018 and a draft master plan was completed in June 2019. The public engagement process included ten small focus group meetings, four public meetings, and two

online surveys. The small focus group meetings were designed to inform and gain input from a range of individuals and groups interested in the Phase 2 update. Attendance at each small group meeting ranged between 10 and 30 participants. The four public meetings were geared toward families and interested stakeholders and attendance at these meetings ranged from 10 to 35 participants. In an effort to engage with the diverse Asian community, PARD staff and the Communications and Engagement Office provided translations of all written and digital material used at the public meetings, including online surveys.

The Phase 2 Master Plan update takes into consideration the site's current usage and changes to the surrounding area, while also helping to inform the location of future development, and includes a design that reflects Asian cultural sensitivities. The update assesses the existing facility, expansion needs for programming and support facilities, storm water management, parking needs, and improved pedestrian and vehicular circulation. This update was tied to a bond passed in the November 2018 election, which allotted approximately \$7 million dollars for implementation. Due to the limitations of the bond funding, the Master Plan focuses on the immediate needs of the AARC, while providing a framework for future development. Phase 2 involves slight repairs/modifications to the existing facility as well as the addition of a new performing arts center with additional classrooms, support spaces and community-focused outdoor spaces. The design team estimates that the work shown in the Master Plan for Phase 2 will cost \$15 - \$20 million. Future development will include all other requested programmatic pieces, including main entry/drop off court, nature play area, sculpture garden, community garden, covered pavilion, pedestrian and vehicular bridge, creek overlooks, boardwalk, nature trail, and future buildings that can accommodate a variety of support uses that can be reasonably served by PARD. No date is set for design or construction of the future development beyond Phase 2, and such development will likely be split into multiple phases. During this process many innovative ideas were discussed, including the possibility of incorporating housing, private retail and office uses on site. Although these ideas were not identified as a priority during the public input and engagement process, they should be included in future discussions regarding the development of the AARC site