



Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission

CONSENT CALENDAR
June 17, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission
Submitted by: Allan Abshez, Chairperson
Subject: Cesar Chavez Park Nature and Recreation-Based Conceptual Plan

RECOMMENDATION

Request that City Council approve Parks Recreation and Waterfront Commission process and direct Councilmembers Kesarwani and Taplin to appoint members of the César Chávez Park ReVision Team.

Summary

At the City Council's November 18, 2024 Special Meeting to provide feedback and direction on how to proceed with the Waterfront Specific Plan process, the City Council directed that a nature and recreation-based conceptual vision for César Chávez Park be prepared.

The goal of the process proposed by the Commission is for the Commission to prepare, for the City Council's review and consideration, a community-driven nature and recreation-based conceptual vision ("basis of design") for César Chávez Park in its larger context (Berkeley Marina, McLaughlin Eastshore State Park State Seashore) that:

- Reflects the voices of and serves all Berkeleyans.
- Addresses climate change and the extinction crisis.
- Is worthy of its extraordinary site and achievable.
- Can be used as a "basis of design" for César Chávez Park.

On April 9, 2025, the PRW Commission took the following action: Request that City Council approve Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Commission process and direct Councilmembers Kesarwani and Taplin to appoint members of the César Chávez Park ReVision Team (M/S/C: Cardile/Rybczynski/U): Abshez; Cardile; Cox; Diehm; Hurtado; Rybczynski; Noes: none; Abstain: Kawczynska.

Proposed Process

Over a 2-3 month period, the Berkeley Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission will conduct 4 community input workshops. A volunteer team, jointly appointed by Councilmembers Kesarwani and Taplin, of Berkeley-based park leaders with experience in contemporary park-making issues such as equitable access, ADA expertise, engaging youth, human health, climate change, urban biodiversity, sustainable design, operations and maintenance would be appointed to assist to inspire and engage participants and assist the process.

The ReVisioning Team would be convened by former Berkeley Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commissioner, Michael Boland, after consultation with the Commission. Michael Boland is a life-long Berkeley resident and recently retired as the Chief Park Officer of the Presidio Trust.

On weekends prior to each of the four workshops, Parks Department Staff, the Commission, Revisioning Team, and members of the public would tour of César Chávez Park, with opportunities for on-site public input provided.

To ensure that there is broad participation from across the Berkeley community, each workshop will be held in a different neighborhood:

- Southwest Berkeley (Francis Albrier Community Center)
- Northwest Berkeley (James Kenney Community Center)
- Southeast Berkeley (Willard Clubhouse Recreation Center)
- Northeast Berkeley (Live Oak Community Center)

Each site visit and workshop would be documented by a hired facilitator/scribe.

At the initial workshop, an overview of the process, its scope and its schedule would be provided. This would be followed by a 'listening session' where background and input from stakeholder groups and interested members of the public would be received to orient and educate the Commission and the ReVisioning Team. The ReVisioning Team would then make a brief presentation regarding themes in contemporary park making, such as equitable access, engaging youth, human health, climate change, urban biodiversity, sustainable design, operations and maintenance.

The "basis of design" would then be evolved by the Commission in three subsequent workshops (and a final session), which would have the following components:

- The ReVisioning Team would present to the Commission and the public ideas arising from the prior site visits and sessions as the ideas are evolved.
- Public feedback and comment regarding would be received by the ReVisioning Team and the Commission.

- The Commission would provide feedback and direction at the conclusion of each workshop to guide the next session and the evolving “basis of design.”
- All public input received at the four workshops will be compiled and posted on the internet along with a video recording of each workshop.
- Between each workshop, the ReVisioning Team would meet internally to discuss the prior session and prepare ideas for and discussion at the next site visit and workshop.

During the process, the Commission will also invite comments and suggestions from relevant City Commissions and Boards. Input from all four workshops will be compiled into a draft “basis of design” that will be presented at a concluding public hearing held by the Commission. At the conclusion of the hearing the Commission will then provide final direction for the “basis of design” to be forwarded to the City Council for its review and final action.

FISCAL IMPACTS

The ReVision Team would serve on an unpaid, volunteer, basis. The workshop process anticipates engaging a workshop facilitator/scribe to document ideas and input at the workshops..

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no negative environmental impacts were identified as a result of this recommendation.

RATIONAL FOR RECOMMENDATION

See body of report.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None

CONTACT PERSON

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