

P L A N

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P A R K S

EL CERRITO PARK BOND PROGRAM

Primary Election - June 2, 1964

This literature paid for

by

CITIZENS FOR EL CERRITO PARK BONDS

CARL W. REHFUSS
Co-Chairman

ELMER J. FREETHY
Co-Chairman

CCO-EC-PARKS

SEP 1964

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Dear El Cerrito Resident:

On June 2, 1964 the voters and residents of the City of El Cerrito will be asked to pass on a proposed Park Bond Measure in the amount of \$1,200,000. A two thirds majority vote is required for successful passage. The Citizens for El Cerrito Park Bonds committee is charged with the responsibility of explaining the facts of the measure to the voters of El Cerrito.

We firmly believe that the Park Program represents a wise investment in the future of our community. It will further enhance the beauty of El Cerrito; it will provide greater opportunities to our citizens, young and old, for pursuit of leisure time activities; it will make our community more attractive to prospective new residents and new commercial ventures.

Since the City is already spending an annual amount for parks development sufficient to cover principal and interest payments on the proposed bond issue, the program would not require an increase in property taxes. Because of rising land values and construction costs the program can be most economically accomplished now through the proposed \$1,200,000 Park Bond Measure.

CITIZENS FOR EL CERRITO PARK BONDS

Carl W. Rehfuss
Co-Chairman

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Co-Chairman

. . .

April 13, 1964

EL CERRITO PARK BOND PROGRAM

HISTORY OF PARK DEVELOPMENT IN EL CERRITO:

The growth of the past twenty (20) years has seen our open fields and hills gradually taken up with housing developments. While we have become a finer community through this development, we have at the same time lost the open spaces that in previous times were a source of enjoyment for young and old alike. In the days when great open spaces were all around there was little appreciation for the eventual need for parks and open spaces to serve a completely developed community. Several small gullies were acquired by the city in the 1920's and some minimal park development was undertaken in the 1930's. In 1944, the city purchased a 17-acre parcel which is now Cerrito Vista Park.

A comprehensive program of park development and land acquisition was not undertaken until 1954 when voters approved a 10¢ park tax development levy. Since 1958, additional funds have been made available from the city's Capital Improvement Fund. The Capital Improvement Fund is designed to provide financing for all city capital improvement needs including parks. 25% of the city's sales tax receipts are by ordinance allocated to this fund.

Since the inception of the park development program in 1954, improvements have been undertaken on Poinsett, Tassajara, Castro, Huber and Cerrito Vista Parks; the El Cerrito Swim Center has been constructed, and land has been acquired for Canyon Park, Arlington Park and Hillside Park. A total of \$765,000 has been expended on park development and land acquisition during the past ten (10) years. In addition, gifts of land valued at an additional \$120,000 have been accepted by the city for park purposes. While many improvements have been achieved, a great deal remains to be accomplished to complete the proposals of the Master Plan for Parks and Recreation and the more specific recommendations of the recent El Cerrito Citizens Conference on the Community's Future.

The park development program, to date, has been financed on a "pay-as-you-go" basis with a small amount of work being accomplished each year with the current year's allocation. In an effort to be fair to all sections of the community, projects have been spread over a broad area. As a result, it has not been possible to totally complete any of the park projects initiated. It further has not been possible to even commence development on several additional planned parks.

The El Cerrito Citizens Conference on the Community's Future, on reviewing this problem, accordingly recommended that the City Council seek voter approval for issuance of general obligation bonds to finance the complete program. General obligation bond issues for cities require a 66 2/3% majority for successful passage. Previous park bond issues received 63.8% in 1958 and 65.4% in 1959.

The Citizens Conference urged bond financing rather than "pay-as-you go" on the grounds that it was felt that the cost of improvements should be shared by future users as well as present taxpayers and that rising costs of land acquisition and development would result in much higher if not prohibitive costs if projects were undertaken over a long period of years. The Conference Report further pointed out that a program calling for development of facilities over a long period of time was of little advantage to present families with growing children. The City Council found these arguments compelling and unanimously voted in favor of submitting the recommended program as a \$1,200,000 park bond issue to the voters at the primary election of June 2.

WHAT ARE THE COST CONSIDERATIONS OF THE PROPOSED BOND ISSUE?

If 66 2/3% majority of the voters approve issuance of general obligation bonds, the "pay-as-you-go" park improvement program would be discontinued. The present program is financed by the 10¢ park development tax levy, together with a Capital Improvement Fund allotment that has averaged about \$30,000 annually. It is estimated that a 10¢ bond tax rate, replacing the 10¢ park development rate, supplemented by approximately \$30,000 annually of capital improvement funds would be sufficient to pay principal and interest payments on a 20-year \$1,200,000 general obligation bond issue. In this manner, the park bond program can be financed without the necessity of increasing property taxes for this purpose.

It should be recognized, however, that when the park program is complete an additional 5¢ per \$100. of assessed value will be required to maintain the completed system. This amount would be required in any event under the "pay-as-you-go" program but at a much later date. It is estimated that the added cost of park maintenance for the completed park system would cost the typical homeowner with property valued at \$25,000 and assessed at \$5,000, a total of \$2.50 annually.

WHAT DOES THE PROPOSED PARK PROGRAM INCLUDE?

In summary, the park program includes development and land acquisition as required for facilities in all areas of the community. In some instances, this will involve construction of an entire new facility and in other instances the completion of existing facilities. The bulk of the planned projects are neighborhood parks. Wherever possible, neighborhood parks are developed adjacent to school grounds to facilitate joint use of city and school facilities and to avoid possible duplication of facilities. The following is an outline of the park projects, together with the major items of work proposed.

Harding Park - This facility, as proposed, will be developed entirely on Harding School site. Preliminary plans were prepared in 1959 in cooperation with the Richmond Elementary School District. Improvements will include a tot area, a turfed play area, neighborhood clubhouse and associated walks and patio areas. Tennis court improvements are also contemplated.

Canyon Trail Park - This park site is approximately six (6) acres of canyon land adjacent to El Monte School. The city has acquired approximately one-half of the needed area on a gift deed basis. A preliminary plan for this

facility contemplates retention of much of the natural character of the area. Tot areas and meadow-like playfields will be developed for active recreation; twin tennis courts and neighborhood clubhouse are also contemplated. In developing this site an extensive storm drain system will be required together with placement of a considerable amount of fill material.

Richmond Annex Addition Park - It is proposed that a single neighborhood park be developed on Central Avenue in the Richmond Annex area to serve both the El Cerrito and Richmond portions of the Annex area. In the event it is proven unfeasible to develop a joint facility with the City of Richmond, consideration will be given to development of a park area along Cerrito Creek. Such a facility could serve a dual purpose of providing a recreation area as well as to facilitate the needed enlargement of the Cerrito Creek channel.

Tassajara Park - Development of this three (3) acre park located at Barrett and Tassajara in upper Mira Vista has been underway since 1956. To complete this facility, it is planned to construct a neighborhood clubhouse together with associated deck area, install landscaping, a group activities area and twin tennis courts.

Huber Park - The city received Huber Park lands on Terrace Drive at Sea View as a gift in the 1920's. Early improvements were undertaken in the 1930's with WPA labor. The 2.6 acre park site is approximately one-fourth developed. Proposed improvements include construction of a recreation building to replace the existing shack, tree planting on steep hillsides and a trail and walkway system, improvements to the total apparatus area, installation of fencing and sprinkler system as required.

Poinsett Park - Land for this 1.5 acre park between Poinsett and Rosalind in lower Mira Vista was acquired by gift. Improvements were made in the late 30's and in the early 1950's. It is proposed to replace the present wooden shed with a new recreation building.

High School Park - The area in the vicinity of El Cerrito High School is almost entirely built up and is not presently served by any City park facility. There are several alternatives for development of a facility in this neighborhood but a precise site selection has not been made. This facility would be designed to meet the needs primarily of young children since most other neighborhood recreational needs can be adequately accommodated at the high school.

Castro Park - This area is a City Park - School playground facility on the grounds of the Castro and Cameron Schools. Castro Park is being developed under a 1958 agreement with the Richmond Elementary School District under which the District undertakes improvements of primary importance to schools and the City bears the expense of those elements primarily for community use. Development has been on the basis of a plan approved by the City and Schools in 1958. The remaining elements to complete this facility are construction of group activities area, twin tennis courts and landscaping.

Fairmont Park - It is proposed to acquire land adjacent to the school playground for development of a joint city-school park playground. Proposed elements of this project are construction of a turfed playfield, tot area and remodeling of existing recreation building.

Arlington Park - This 5 1/2 acre neighborhood park site on the Arlington at Brewster is adjacent to the Camp Herms Boy Scout camp. It is planned to coordinate the development of this facility with already existing playfield on Boy Scout property. The major elements planned for this park include tot play area, twin tennis courts, neighborhood club, turfed playfield and landscaped quiet areas.

Hillside Park - Natural Area - The Hillside Park - Natural Area is proposed to preserve the natural beauty of 120 acres of steep hillsides interlaced with wooded canyons. This park would accommodate a wide range of nature studies, hiking, photography, picnics, etc. There are also areas that would be suitable for day camp areas for use by girl scouts, cub scouts, church groups, city recreation department, etc.

The Hillside Park would actually consist of two separate blocks of land connected by a walkway system. The northerly section would combine approximately 31 acres of hillside land in the vicinity of Ganges Avenue water tank north of Potrero Avenue. Four acres are now owned by the City leaving an estimated 27 acres to be acquired. The southerly section would have Moeser Lane as its southern terminus and Schmidt Lane opposite the City nursery as its principal entry point. Of the total of 90 acres the City now owns approximately 60 acres with 30 acres proposed for eventual acquisition. All property acquired to date has been acquired on a gift deed basis. A multi-purpose outdoor little theater campfire circle would be developed in the north end of the quarry floor. This area would serve as an outdoor little theatre for the production of plays, musicals, pageants, etc. and would serve as an organization activity center for presentations and activities of boy and girl scout groups, etc. The area would also be suitable for special events such as Easter morning religious services.

Cerrito Vista Park - Cerrito Vista Park on Moeser Lane adjacent to Portola Junior High is the City's community park. The 15 acre facility has been developed under agreements with the Richmond High School District. The first agreement entered into in 1952 provided for city development and district sharing of the cost of those facilities that would be utilized in the school program. A 1958 agreement provided for development of the Swim-Community Center on School District land. The remaining items of development on this facility are park improvements including development of an adult area at Avis and Moeser including putting green, quiet landscaped area with tables and benches, court area for all age groups at the rear of the present clubhouse, shuffleboard, croquet, badminton and horseshoe courts. A 5-court tennis center is proposed for the Cerrito Vista Park-Portola School area. This facility will be planned to accommodate joint city-school use.

Completion of the El Cerrito Swim-Community Center is also proposed. The Swim Center element has already been constructed. The Community Center building remains to be completed. The joint mechanical and heating plant room for the Center building has already been constructed in conjunction with

Swim Center development. The community center building as planned would tie in closely with the swim center. A large social hall will overlook the pool area to the north and an enclosed patio area to the south. Three smaller club rooms separated by movable partitions would provide areas for arts and crafts and organizational uses.

The Community Center building would accommodate a wide range of uses and would permit scheduling of several independent activities at the same time. The Center would be designed primarily for those programs and activities of a community-wide nature that could not be adequately accommodated in school facilities or in other private or semi-public facilities. Such activities would include (1) Recreation Dept. organized directed programs which would be largely self-supporting through user fees and charges, 2) Recreation Dept. sponsored groups and activities that would be essentially self-regulated and directed, and 3) civic organizations whose membership is open to all eligibles would be accommodated on a second priority basis.

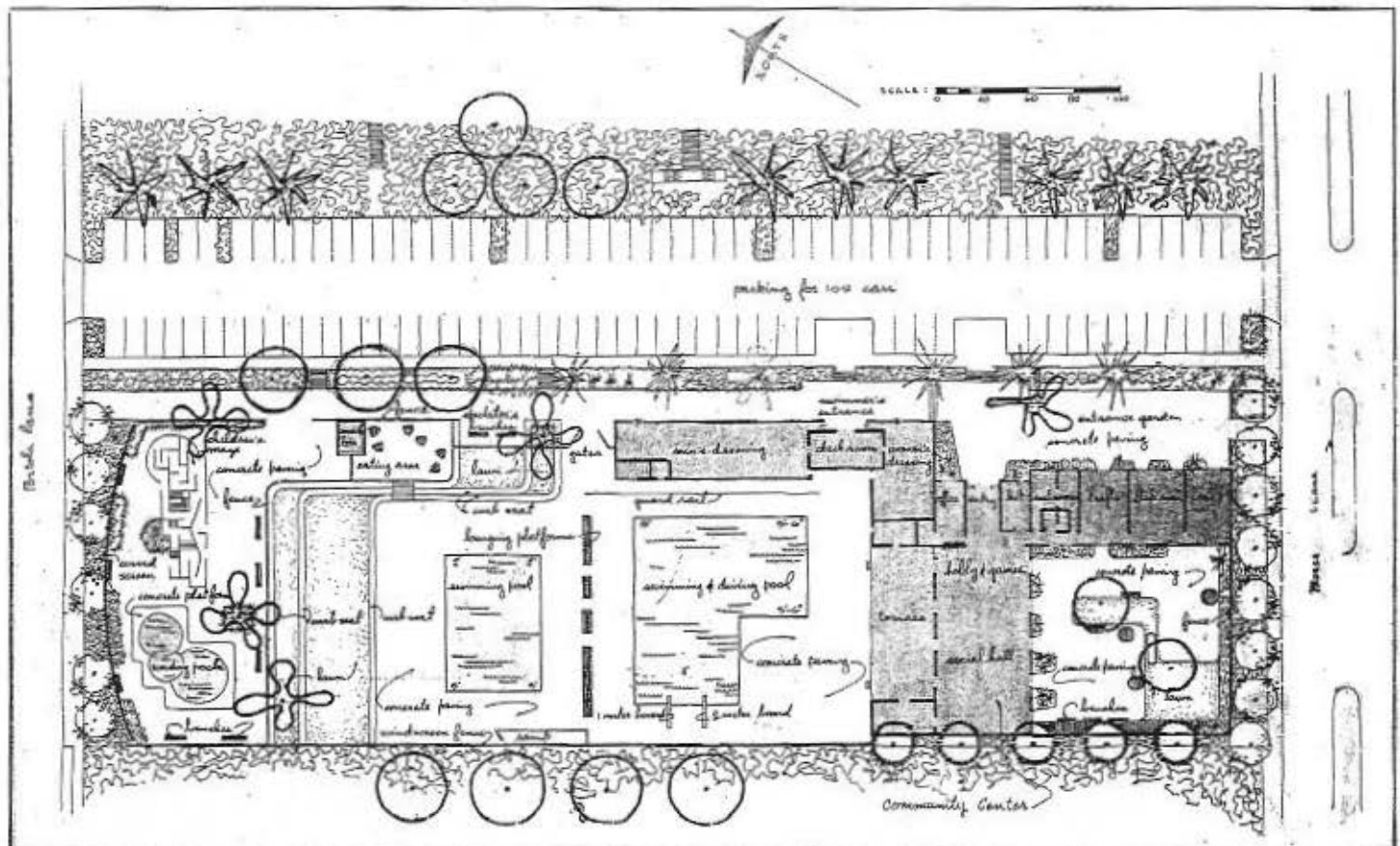
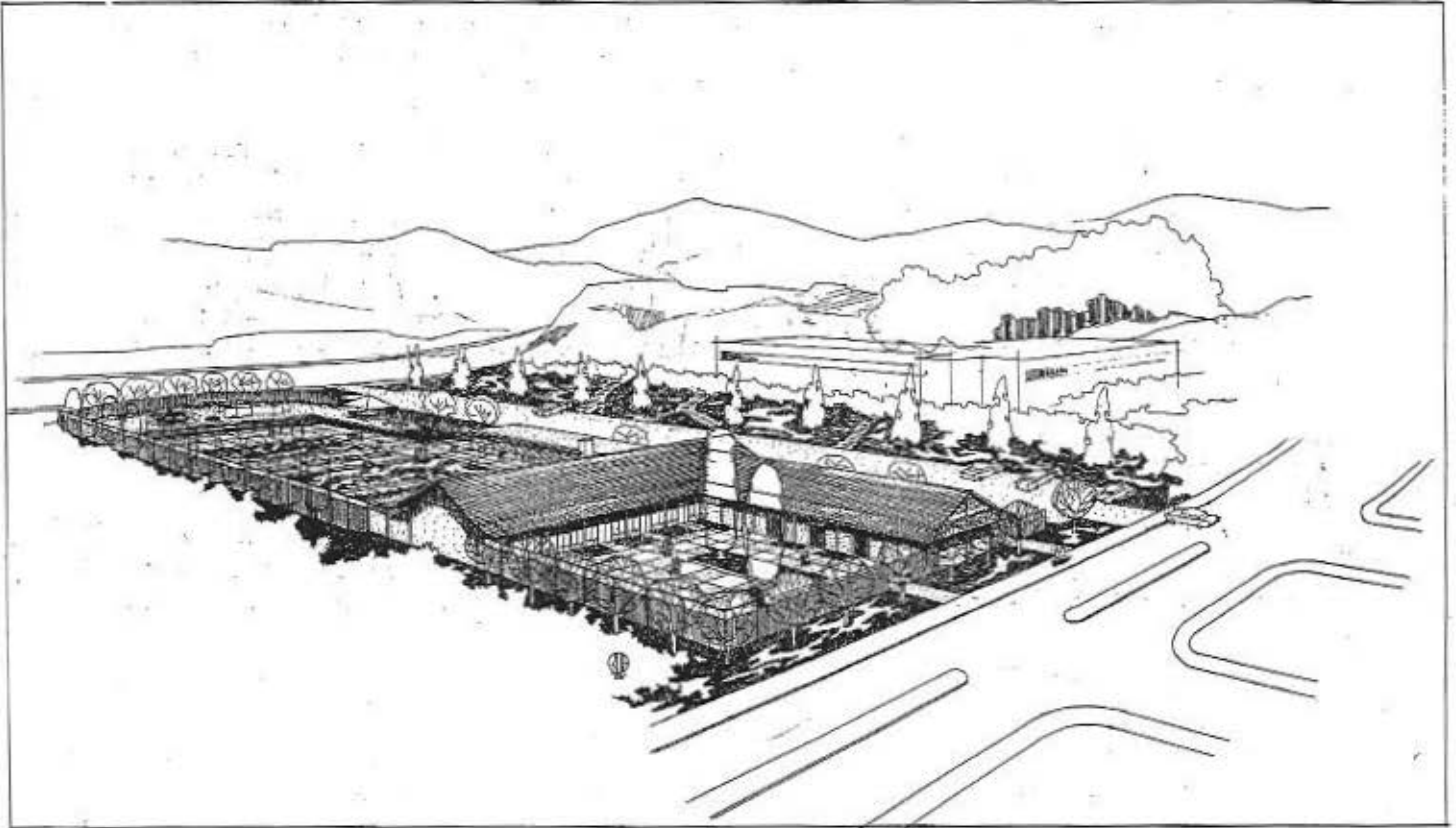
The Community Center building would supplement public outdoor recreation on parks and playgrounds by providing for enjoyment of a wide range of building-centered leisure time interests by citizens of all ages.

* * *

In summary, the proposed El Cerrito Park Bond Measure would:

- . . . Allow development of planned neighborhood parks as well as completion of Cerrito Vista and Hillside Park in the near future, rather than over a period of many years.
- . . . Provide for development of a wide range of facilities designed to serve citizens of all ages as well as residents of all areas.
- . . . Prevent loss of needed park sites by allowing quick acquisition of desirable park land.
- . . . Require no tax increase since funds now being allocated to the present "Pay-As-You-Go" program are sufficient to pay principal and interest on the proposed bond measure.
- . . . Promote tax equity by spreading costs of park development upon future as well as present park users.
- . . . Make El Cerrito a more attractive and pleasant place in which to live.

Swimming Pool and Community Center Building



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- 1) HOW DOES THE EL CERRITO PARK BOND MEASURE RELATE TO THE PROPOSAL TO JOIN CONTRA COSTA COUNTY TO THE EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK SYSTEM?

Both measures will be on the June 2nd Primary ballot. The East Bay Regional Park District proposal is a proposal to develop a system of large acreage Regional Parks in Contra Costa County at an estimated annual cost of 10¢ to the \$100 of assessed valuation. The City of El Cerrito Park Bond measure is designed to provide a system of local and neighborhood park facilities for the residents of El Cerrito.

- 2) WHAT HAPPENS IF THE BONDS FAIL TO PASS?

The city provides capital improvements on the basis of the 10-Year Capital Improvement Program adopted by the City Council each year. The recommended revised 10-Year Capital Improvement Program suggests increasing the special Park Tax rate to 15¢ when the 10¢ rate is scheduled to expire in June, 1965. The 10-Year Capital Improvement Program would provide for continued park development programs on a "pay-as-you-go" basis with approximately 12 years required to complete the recommended program.

- 3) WHY NOT DEVELOP HILLSIDE LANDS INTO SUBDIVISIONS AND PUT LAND ON THE TAX ROLLS, RATHER THAN DEVELOPING A HILLSIDE PARK-NATURAL AREA?

Lands proposed for acquisition for Hillside Park are largely unsuited for residential subdivisions because of difficult topography. These lands would provide fine opportunities for hiking, nature study, painting and photography, as well as day camp experience.

- 4) WHY IS THE COMMUNITY CENTER INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM?

To allow a better balanced system of parks and recreation in El Cerrito. Even with present maximum use of available school facilities there is an acute need for a facility suitable for a wide range of building-centered recreation activities. For example, during school hours when school facilities are unavailable the center could be utilized for women's programs in physical fitness, arts and crafts, etc. and for special programs directed toward young mothers, senior citizens, and pre-schoolers. After school and evening uses could include teen age programs, physical fitness program, arts and crafts, etc. Recreation Dept. sponsored groups could utilize club rooms for meetings and special programs.

5) HOW MUCH OF THE \$1,200,000 BOND FUNDS ARE PROPOSED TO BE
SPENT FOR LAND ACQUISITION?

It is proposed to expend approximately \$275,000 for land acquisition, \$925,000 for development of neighborhood parks, and for completion of Cerrito Vista Community Park and Hillside Park - Natural Area.

6) WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

Clip and mail to : Citizens for El Cerrito Park Bonds
10890 San Pablo Avenue, El Cerrito

Date _____

I will be pleased to serve as a member of the Citizens
for El Cerrito Park Bonds and:

will be able to participate actively ☐

will not be able to participate actively, but will
be pleased to be identified with the Committee ☐

I wish to contribute \$ _____ toward the campaign.
Checks may be made payable to Citizens for El Cerrito
Park Bonds.

(Signed) _____
