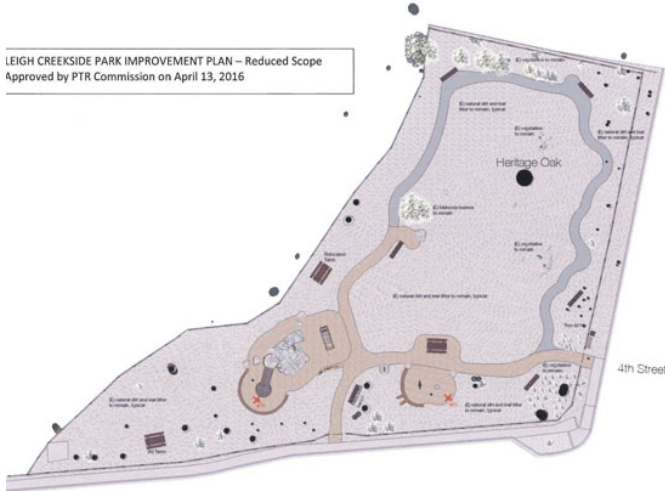


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## Leigh Creekside Park Discussion Continues

By Cathy Tyson

LEIGH CREEKSIDE PARK IMPROVEMENT PLAN - Reduced Scope  
Approved by PTR Commission on April 13, 2016



The recommendation to amend the Leigh Creekside Park Master Plan to change its designation from a passive park to an active neighborhood park was discussed at the May 9 Lafayette City Council meeting. The council also reviewed the park's condensed design plan along with its reduced budget.

The newly proposed plan incorporates play elements where children can spin, rock, bounce, balance, sway, slide and climb in an active play area that is less than 7 percent of the total area of the park. Additional passive features like handicap accessible pathways, picnic table areas and more take up 12 percent of the area, but leave the majority of the park in its natural state.

Leigh Creekside Park Improvement Plan - Reduced scope approved by PTR Commission on April 13, 2016

Many neighbors came to the city council meeting to voice their concerns about the revised plans, while others asked that the park be cleaned up and not

developed, simply left in its natural state. Many residents of nearby Merrill Gardens signed form letters in favor of the Leigh Creekside Park Improvement Plan. Woody Karp, senior project developer of nearby Eden Housing, wrote the council urging support of new ADA-accessible pathways as a wonderful destination for its senior residents.

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Parks, Trails and Recreation Commissioner Geoff Bellenger highlighted that this version represents a "vast compromise" and utilizes play elements that will attract children for active use. "Part of our job is to make sure our parks can serve all children and adults," he said.

Although the council did agree on a designation change - from passive to active - they appeared to support a compromise, but didn't make a decision on keeping some of the park, especially the heritage oak, in its natural habitat while including a smaller play area and handicap accessibility. Council Member Traci Reilly suggested a hybrid solution that seeks a balance in order to "speak to the entire community."

"I think we can do both," agreed Council Member Mike Anderson, who supported the PTR Plan. "I don't think having structures destroys a park experience," explaining that it is not an either-or situation. He added that there is no funding for this at the moment anyway; this is just the beginning of the process. The hunt for money starts a year from now.

The issue of Leigh Creekside Park, and firmer information on costs and maintenance estimates, will be back before the city council on June 27. If a decision is made at that meeting, the proposed plans will go to the Planning Commission for further review.



Model view of active play elements: Saklan Climbing Rock/Platform, Cargo Net Hammock, Slide, Pioneer Wagon, Pioneer Store. Images provided



Spinning Cup, Rocking Animal, Log Climb/Balance

Reach the reporter at: [cathy@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:cathy@lamorindaweekly.com)

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