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Moraga Commons Park to receive updated irrigation system

By Vera Kochan



Moraga Commons Park to undergo major irrigation project Photo provided

Another dry winter has created a lot of yellowing lawns within Moraga, and trying to keep Commons Park from suffering the same fate could be a challenge for the town.

In June 2021, council members approved the Commons Park Irrigation Project within the Capital Improvements Program Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-22. According to a March 23 staff report by Parks and Recreation Director Breyana Brandt, Public Works Director/Town Engineer Shawn Knapp, and Senior Civil Engineer Bret Swain the project's scope will include "redesigning and installing an improved irrigation system with modern controls to increase efficiency, conserve water, and decrease maintenance and utility costs. The project was prioritized due to the increasing number of breaks in the existing system and the escalating utility costs associated with the breaks." The approved project was budgeted for \$215,000.

The town hired Gates + Associates, a Walnut Creek-based landscape architecture firm that specializes in urban design and master planning, to provide plans, construction documents, construction cost estimates, and construction landscape architectural support in preparation for the irrigation project. Gates' suggestions included the replacement and relocation of sprinkler heads to maximize irrigation distribution efficiency; the replacement of old and leaking irrigation lateral pipelines; the removal of a cross-connection between the irrigation system and potable water system; and the extension of stub-out (greywater collection plumbing which dead ends at a cap) for future expansion. Additional suggestions included the possibility of installing a weather station, including cables and conduits, to improve evapotranspiration (a smart controller device that accounts for rainfall based irrigation control).

With a game plan from Gates, the town attracted four viable bids and awarded the contract to Bruno Landscape Management & Construction, Inc. (Atascadero, Calif.) whose base bid was \$172,238 with an additional \$3,795 for the weather station installation. Bruno has recently completed projects for the county of Santa Barbara, the city of Mountain View, and the San Luis Obispo Animal Shelter.

The total construction cost comes to \$176,032 with an added contingency of 10% (\$17,603) equaling approximately \$193,636. The Commons Park Irrigation Project will see funding of \$150,000 from the FY 2021-22 CIP Adopted Budget. The balance of \$43,636 will come from Fund 750 -- Asset Replacement (Municipal Painting savings \$27,800; Commons Park Swings savings \$8,000; and Recreation Donation \$7,836).

Construction on the project is expected to begin in April and completed by Memorial Day Weekend.

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[back](#)

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