

# MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor and Council  
**THROUGH:** Councilmember Navarro  
**FROM:** Birchett Park Working Group  
**DATE:** March 22, 2018  
**SUBJECT:** Birchett Park Plan



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## **PURPOSE:**

The Birchett Park working group was formed to explore ideas to improve and enhance the park recognizing its location is a gateway to downtown Tempe.

## **RECOMMENDATION OR DIRECTION REQUESTED:**

Request for Council to move forward with a plan to identify and phase in, as part of the overall Parks CIP, general landscape and hardscape improvements for Birchett Park that may include consideration of a public art piece to enhance the park that complements the neighborhood character area.

## **CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITY:**

This meets council priority #3 to enhance the quality of life for all Tempe residents through investment in neighborhoods and parks.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Birchett Park is a three-acre park situated at the intersection 13<sup>th</sup> Street and Mill Avenue adjacent to the ASU Gammage Auditorium. It was dedicated in 1984 in honor of the Birchett Family who settled in Tempe in the early 1900's. Primarily due to its location and lack of usability due to flood irrigation, the park has long been under-used, and isn't included in the 5-year Park Capital Improvement Program (CIP) plan.

Councilmember Navarro set out to examine options for the park recognizing that its location made it a prime site for enhancement. Three park plan designs were created as a starting point for discussion. The designs emphasized providing access to and through the park, as well as activating the space.

Public feedback was sought through two neighborhood meetings held on October 17, 2017 and January 31, 2018. Additionally, two online public forums were opened from October 17-29, 2017 and January 31-February 14, 2018. The general neighborhood consensus was not in favor of any major or moderate improvements to the park. Neighborhood preference for was to provide minor park improvements by keeping it as public space for visual relief from downtown development and to focus attention on maintaining existing landscape elements, specifically, the roses and trees. Any future park improvements that would extend beyond minor landscape improvements will be taken to the neighborhood for input.

## **FISCAL IMPACT or IMPACT TO CURRENT RESOURCES:**

Phase one park maintenance will be managed by allocating current staff to meet the park's immediate landscape needs, specifically by properly maintaining the existing roses.

Phase two park improvement will be identified in a condition assessment of all city landscape areas within parks, as part of a possible capital improvement landscape component.

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

Public Input Summaries from October 2017 and January 2018

**WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:**

Councilmember Joel Navarro

**STAFF MEMBERS WHO WORKED WITH THE WORKING GROUP:**

Don Bessler, Director of Public Works

Tony Miano, Deputy Director of Public Works

Shelly Seyler, Deputy Director of Public Works

Craig Hayton, Parks Manager

Dave McClure, Landscape Architect

Eric Iwersen, Transit Manager

Julian Dresang, Traffic Engineer

Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Program Manager

Rob Cox, ASU Public Affairs

Kate Borders, President of Downtown Tempe Authority

Elizabeth Higgins, Chief of Staff to the Mayor and Council

Parrish Spisz, Council Aide