

## MEMORANDUM

To: Parks & Recreation Commission  
County of El Dorado  
From: Wayne Lowery  
Cc: Vickie Sanders, Manager  
EDCo Parks & Trails Division  
Date: June 10, 2021  
Subj: Recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding Chili Bar Park

As I am unable to attend the June 17, 2021, Commission meeting and will miss the opportunity of sharing my thoughts with the commissioners and staff directly. I appreciate the opportunity to summarize them here. I do not have the advantage of hearing your discussion or public comments beyond the two recent workshops so please accept the following in that context.

### **Recommendations:**

- Knowing that El Dorado County has limited discretionary funds in its budget and already struggles to fund park/trail/open space maintenance and operations—including long term deferred maintenance—my recommendation to the Board of Supervisors is to approve Option #1.
- The cost of ongoing as well as deferred maintenance should be a paramount consideration in determining what improvements are approved and when they are installed.
- None of the priorities—including Option #3--have an attractive rate of return. In providing the public with recreation opportunities, ROI should not be an absolute consideration but the ability to provide quality, ongoing maintenance should.
- If Option #1 is approved, our recommendation for the future improvements and operation of Chili Bar Park can still be modified as community use and needs evolve in the future. Option #1 does not lock the county into a single scenario. This option could include a site master plan with the future addition of play equipment, sports courts, or other amenities. In other words, elements from Options #2 & #3 could be in the design but relegated to the future based on funding opportunities.
- Addressing accessibility as it relates to individuals with special needs should be a top priority. All three options reference the need for river access on the lower terrace.
- The installation of interpretive signs which provide a history of the area, environmental education, as well as river use and safety are important.

### **Alternate considerations:**

- The county should explore public/private partnerships. E.g., a site concessionaire, joint development and/or operations with the City of Placerville, or a nonprofit organization. An updated agreement with the American River Conservancy is already a consideration in the Conceptual Design Options.

- El Dorado County has many camping opportunities so the limited capacity of Chili Bar Park to offer this amenity appears obviously unnecessary unless
  - An arrangement with the neighboring Nugget private campground can be arranged, or
  - A concessionaire who can fund, install and operate a campground—glamcamping(?)—can be identified.
- Whatever option is approved, improvements can be constructed in phases based on county priorities and funding opportunities.
- If the store is converted to a restroom, can the restroom at the west end of the park be converted to a storage building if needed? The structure appears solid.
- The cost of keeping and upgrading the store and house are prohibitive for county purposes. However, this may be feasible if leased out providing the lessee pays for the capital costs.
- The majority of the current—and likely future—use of the area is primarily for pass through to the river. Therefore, it is unlikely that converting the existing buildings into an educational facility (museum?) has value and could even become a liability without adequate security.
- The issue of trail connectivity still needs to be addressed.

### **CIP Priorities**

- When capital improvement projects (CIP) compete for limited funding or other resources, they should be evaluated and weighed based on the following criteria:
  - Operations & Maintenance: Consider the costs to maintain and operate including staffing, supplies, wear & tear, and utilities. Is there a dedicated maintenance funding source? Are costs recoverable through programming, user fees, rentals, and/or joint use agreements?
  - Socio Economic Impact: Are there spin-off effects of the project to the community: Job creation, aesthetics, and other quality of life improvements.
  - Community Impact: Will residents have improved access or service? Will it provide or continue education and recreation opportunities? Does it meet a need called out in the Parks & Trails Master Plan? Does it positively serve a diverse cross section of the population? Does it assist an underserved segment of the community?
  - Alternative Funding: Is the project eligible to receive grant funding?
  - Coordination with other Projects: Can project coordinate with other projects? Will coordination minimize environmental impacts and maximize resources?

###