

# **The Frederick N. Evans Memorial Rose Garden At McKinley Park Renovation Master Plan December 2009**

## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

The Frederick N. Evans Memorial Rose Garden (also known as the McKinley Park Rose Garden) is located in McKinley Park, an existing 36 acre community park at 601 Alhambra Boulevard in East Sacramento.

The McKinley Park Rose Garden was designed and developed in 1928 by Frederick Evans. Mr. Evans is a well known landscape architect and Sacramento's first Parks Superintendent. The Rose Garden was named Frederick N. Evans Memorial Rose Garden on December 13, 1946 by the City Council after Evans' death. The Garden has been known over the years for its beauty, contemplative and memorial attributes. It has been used for small family events, mostly weddings and memorial services and has gained significance not because of its size or grandness but for the countless ordinary small events that have had meaning to so many Sacramentans.

The Rose Garden is over eight decades old and is in need of a significant renovation.

## **PLANNING PROCESS**

In early 2009 the Sacramento Rose Society proposed to replace many of the roses in the garden. In response, the Department of Parks and Recreation initiated a new master plan process to guide the Sacramento Rose Society proposed improvements and incorporate them into a renovation master plan.

Two public meetings were held to discuss the rose garden and to present a master plan renovation concept on April 22 and June 20, 2009. Those in attendance at the meetings were supportive of the proposed master plan and any requested changes were integrated into the final master plan including type of entry sign, maintaining existing dedication plaques, and presenting a modern rose display, which groups roses by color and type.

On August 17, 2009, Park Planning and Development Services Committee of the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) reviewed and supported the proposed renovation master plan. On October 1, 2009, the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) reviewed and supported the proposed renovation master plan (see master plan graphic). The proposed renovation master plan will be presented to City Council for review and approval on January 19, 2010

## ELEMENT DESCRIPTIONS

The following are descriptions of the major elements of the renovation plan:

1. **Accessible Walkway:** Currently, all of the walks in the rose garden are turf. The plan calls for a central accessible walkway that will run from the new accessible parking area behind the existing Tiny Tot Building to the public sidewalk along H Street. The walkway will consist of a hard surface material (either concrete or brick) five feet wide. The central accessible walkway will branch off into two side walkways surrounding planters at the center of the rose garden creating a central garden area.
2. **Accessible Rose Garden Map:** An accessible rose garden illustrative map will be located in the accessible central garden area. The map will be mounted on a pedestal with color graphics and annotations describing features of the rose garden.
3. **Accessible Benches with Center Armrest and Adjacent Wheel Chair Spaces:** six new benches with center arm rests and adjacent wheel chair spaces will be located around the central garden area. End arm rests will be eliminated on one end of the benches to provide for easy transfer from a wheelchair to the bench. A 3 foot by 3 foot hard surface space will be located at the armless end of the bench to facilitate transfer from wheelchair to bench. In addition this space can also be used by wheelchair users that want to stay in their chair but stay out of the main path traffic.
4. **Accessible Parking Spaces:** Two accessible parking spaces will be provided in the existing paving area behind the Tiny Tot Building. These parking spaces will be available only to park patrons with California Disabled Person Parking Placards or Plates.
5. **Walkway and Pavement Repairs / Accessible Repairs / Accessible Drinking Fountain:** The existing paving at the Tin Tot Building will be renovated to provide better accessibility and to esthetically match the new central area and main walkway paving. In addition, an accessible drinking fountain will be installed in this area.
6. **Concrete Planter Curbs:** New concrete planter curbs will be installed at all planting beds throughout the garden.
7. **Bubbler Irrigation:** The existing spray irrigation is outdated and inefficient. In addition, direct water spray is not conducive to rose plant health and vitality. Therefore, a new bubbler system is proposed for the entire garden. This bubbler system will help improve plant health by delivering water only to the root system and improve water use efficiency by eliminating water loss due to overspray and evaporation.

8. **Entry Sign (Frederick N. Evans Memorial Rose Garden):** A new entry sign will be installed at the intersection of the main accessible walkway and the H Street sidewalk. The entry sign will be replicate the architectural character of the existing park sign by using the same forms and materials.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

The proposed improvements are significant and the costs will be substantial. Given the limited funding available for this effort implementation will have to occur in phases.

The City's top priorities for improvements to the rose garden are to install a new irrigation system and provide universal access improvements. The Sacramento Rose Society has proposed to replace the existing damaged and unhealthy roses and tree roses once the City has replaced the irrigation system.

No schedule has been developed for improvements to the rose garden until projects are further defined and estimated and project funding is secured.

## **EXISTING GARDEN DEDICATION PLACQUES**

In the mid-1980's, City staff launched a giving program to secure funds to replant sections of the Garden and secure some maintenance funds. The public was allowed to dedicate sections of the Rose Garden by replacing existing plaques identifying the variety of rose with a new plaque that included a personal inscription. Donors were asked to contribute between \$100 and \$200 to underwrite a section of roses with a typical life span of 15 to 20 years.

From the launch date through 1994, this opportunity met with overwhelming response from the community as an opportunity to honor a loved one in this most cherished site. In response, Parks and Recreation staff expanded the giving program and added over 20 wrought iron benches with plaques, and approximately 24 tree roses with plaques. Significant staff time was spent working with donor families to organize and implement gifts, most of them memorials for recently lost loved ones.

Having maximized the opportunity for personalized inscriptions in the Garden, the giving program was closed in 1994. Since then, staff has heard from hundreds of families requesting a personalized plaque in the Rose Garden. Requestors are referred to other giving opportunities that include plaques, such as park furnishings and the South Natomas Community Park Rose Garden.

At the recent master plan meetings, past donors attended and expressed strong concern the City maintain the plaque(s) in the Garden. As this is a sensitive issue for the families, staff recommends the existing rose dedication plaques remain in place for

a period of 5 years, thereby affording each donor family an opportunity to have a plaque in the garden for at least 20 years.

To help raise funds for future, major improvements, staff recommends a new giving program focus on a centralized, on-site recognition opportunity such as a stand alone monument recognizing donors at various contribution levels, as is typical with community built improvements in the park system.

## **CONCLUSION**

McKinley Park and the Frederick N. Evans Memorial Rose Garden in McKinley Park are significant and valuable public park resources. Renovation of the rose garden will further enhance the esthetic character of the park and give many additional decades of life and vitality to this well loved and well used park amenity.