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WILLIAM A. CARROLL AMPHITHEATER RENOVATION

NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

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CURRENT CONDITIONS:

The Amphitheater was developed as a depression era project by the WPA between 1935 and 1942. The horseshoe-shaped amphitheater is terraced with low retaining walls, stone steps, and a series of wood benches providing seating for some 700 with additional lawn seating in front of the stage and seating along the low stone walls. In 1960 a semicircular concrete stage and stone-clad backdrop were added.

Today it sits little used except for Cal Middle School graduations and Sacramento City College's "Shakespeare in the Park" series each summer. To produce the Shakespeare series, however, each year the College must do a wholesale up-grade. They bring in chain-link fences, lighting and sound equipment, and multiple portables (toilets, sound and lighting storage, ticketing, and a control booth). Even then, the facilities are barely adequate—the acoustics are bad, the stage is badly laid out, the seats are uncomfortable, the sight lines are poor, handicap-access is minimal.

The City College drama department persists because the site is so charming and has so much potential. Primitive though it may be and with all its shortcomings, this is the only amphitheater in our area, and its park setting and rough-hewn WPA architecture give it a special magic. Imagine what it could be if its shortcomings were fixed permanently—a regional attraction for plays, concerts, recitals, children's theater, as well as a site for numerous graduations and an enhanced setting for Shakespeare's plays. The historic features and characteristics of the amphitheater and stage, such as the architectural style, stone seat walls and paving, terraced seating, the distinctive landscape features including the turf in the front of the stage for informal seating, clipped hedges and Italian cypress backdrop, are to be preserved and maintained.

PROJECT GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND CONSTRAINTS

The purpose of this project is to develop a Facilities Master Plan in order to renovate and improve the William Carroll Land Park Amphitheater as a modern outdoor performance facility as well as improve access and visibility to the site.

Renovations and General Code Compliance including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The amphitheater renovation will trigger requirements for upgrades that will bring it into compliance with the California Building Code (CBC) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). While many elements of the amphitheater are "grandfathered" into the CBC, the ADA, by contrast, is a federal civil rights law that prevents discrimination against disabled individuals. Title III of the ADA requires public and commercial entities to meet minimum ADA standards for accessibility at all times, whether a facility has been renovated or not. Failure to comply with ADA standards can leave the City vulnerable to legal action. The Amphitheater is a historical landmark and a highly publicized site, and while it should meet ADA requirements already, the renovations will draw more attention to it, and therefore increase the liability of the facility. The renovation would allow the City the opportunity to make the necessary improvements as required by the CBC as well as comply with the ADA. In the effort to provide equal access to the amphitheater, upgrades and necessary repairs are identified throughout this report along with the construction costs associated with it.

ADA Guidelines and Existing Buildings

While new construction is generally built to comply with all sections of the ADA, applying this law to existing buildings is a bit more complicated. In existing facilities like the Land Park Amphitheater, the law requires that barriers to accessibility be removed when it is readily achievable and can be accomplished without excessive difficulty up to 20% of the cost of renovation. Ideally, compliance with the ADA should be a singular action but BCA is recommending a prioritized approach based on what we believe to be the City's greatest vulnerabilities, from access at the entry and primary seating areas to goods and restrooms (which are also located elsewhere in the park). This is dependent upon the City's level of available funds.

The improvements identified in this report are based on the four priorities recommended by the Title III ADA regulations for planning readily achievable barrier removal project (majority of the necessary improvement in proposed Phase 1 focuses solely on **Priority 1 and Priority 2**):

Priority 1: Accessible approach and entrance

Priority 2: Access to goods and services

Priority 3: Access to rest rooms

Priority 4: Any other measures necessary

RENOVATION PROGRAM

A. Proposed Amphitheater Improvements:

- Increase stage area, to accommodate both theatrical and music performances, which will allow access to the audience area from the stage center.
- Add a cover over the stage area, to protect performers, and musicians from seasonal weather and sun exposure and to provide infrastructure support for lighting and sound equipment.
- Improved sound and light infrastructure, for theatrical and musical performances.
- Add an energy efficient lighting system, throughout the amphitheater, to allow safe movement of patrons during and after performances at night.
- Replace the amphitheater seating, with backed benches, accessible seating, and improved sight lines to stage.
- Accessibility and signage improvements to the amphitheater and performance areas.
- Low water use landscape and water efficient irrigation system improvements.
- Renovate the existing grass seating in front of the stage which allows picnics and casual seating during performances and replace the turf under the amphitheater seating with decomposed granite paving, which is a more suitable and easily maintains surface.
- Provide an entrance that provides a sense of place, including facility name and informational signage, drop-off and pick-up area with seating options, accessible parking spaces and drinking fountain.
- Restroom facilities, that allow safe and convenient access from the seating area.
- Improved back of house area, including restroom and improved dressing room areas to accommodate the requirements for Screen Actor Guild contract performers who frequently are included in the theatrical performances.

- A ticket and small administrative office, to allow sale and distribution of tickets and various office and accounting necessities.
- The historic features and characteristics of the amphitheater and stage, such as the architectural style, stone seat walls and paving, terraced seating, the distinctive landscape features including the turf in the front

B. Needs Assessment:

The Technical Advisory Committee, Vice Mayor and City Council Member Steve Hansen; and City staff have participated in the site assessment and constraints of the current Amphitheater which identified community needs, vision concepts, and service priorities with respect to the William Land Park Amphitheater. They identified the Amphitheater as an important player in meeting these important community needs:

- Life-long learning opportunities and entertainment for all ages by exposure to the performing arts.
- Places for children and families to engage in activities that develop community and social interaction.
- Spaces and activities that bring people together to help break their isolation.
- An amphitheater that is attractive, enjoyable, sustainable, usable and that is an inviting, comfortable destination place for the community and visitors.
- Community support to strengthen the amphitheater's capacity to realize the vision and provide the desired services.
- A space that is inclusive of everyone in the community and provides a "level playing field" for all ages.
- A program that helps create community by engaging the public, creating opportunity for people of Land Park to connect with one another, and that makes the Amphitheater the community's favorite gathering place.

Once in that facility, they most want:

- Accessibility: site upgrades and repairs for accessibility (**Priority 1 Title III ADA regulations**)
- Security: Safety and security of users; ability to fence off for ticketed events
- Usability: Improved sound and lighting quality to allow a wider range of performing groups; more usability throughout the seasons
- Comfort/Wants: Comfortable seating, shade structures; restroom facilities, upgrade in technology

RENOVATION NARRATIVE

Two Phases developed in this assessment report:

Phase 1, Partial Renovation of the Land Park Amphitheater with the necessary stage improvements and expansion and site accessibility upgrades as required by Title III ADA regulations and prioritization; and

Phase 2, Renovation to complete the Land Park Amphitheater upgrades with the addition of the accessory structure and entry feature from the driveway/drop-off point along Land Park Drive.

SCOPE OF WORK FOR EACH PHASE IS AS FOLLOWS:

PHASE I

The site accessibility upgrades, as required by federal law under Title III ADA regulations, drives this initial phase's cost estimate. Renovation costs reflect all of Priority 1 needs which focuses mostly on the accessible approach and entrance improvements. This prioritization is a necessity as well and a requirement by law to allow equal access, safe access, and usability of the amphitheater. It also protects the City from any risk or liability.

Specific site work includes site re-grading, trenching for and installation of new utility line/s, providing ADA-compliant paving, and installing handrails as required by code for safety and compliance. The need for upgraded and possibly new utility lines for power, data, irrigation, sewer and water is necessary at this phase to bring the amphitheater to the level of usability that is expected in today's performance-viewing market.

This Phase's proposed site improvements would allow access from the street into the amphitheater, including safe access to seating and the stage area (all within Priority 1 and Priority 2 requirements of Title III). Energy efficient lighting system will be installed throughout the amphitheater site to allow safe movement of patrons during and after performances at night. An entry paved area will be poured in place as part of the site improvements. The large rotunda-like paved area at the top of the Amphitheater will help define and provide a sense of place. It will help define the drop-off and pick-up area and will be visible from the accessible parking spaces. Utility stubs will be in place for the building pad area designated for the future accessory building that will be built in Phase 2.

Stage improvements and repairs are necessary during this phase. Improvements such as: (1) Stage access via a ramp as required by ADA; (2) Stage expansion through different levels to accommodate a variety of performances (typically theatrical and musical performances); (3) A structural shade structure framing that will double as an equipment rig for lighting and sound equipment. An industrial strength shade fabric will be used to protect performers and equipment from weather.

Theater equipment purchase is not included in this phase. However, to make the amphitheater usable to existing users who rent their own equipment, rigging mechanisms will be included in the main structure.

Replacement and repositioning the existing benches with backed bleacher-type bench seating will be a part of the site improvements. The new benches will be more comfortable and spaced accordingly to meet code compliant minimum clearance width(s). ADA seating will be distributed in varied viewing

levels. These wheelchair accessible seating will have an adjacent companion chair and will be in compliance with Federal law requirements under Title III ADA regulations for equal access.

Maintenance cost reduction is also a priority in this renovation project. Some low maintenance solutions include: (1) Replacement of the existing grass seating in front of the stage with a low-water use type lawn which allows for picnics and a casual seating option during performances; and (2) the replacement of the turf under the amphitheater seating with decomposed granite paving. Granite paving is currently used in the existing WPA Rock garden and is a suitable alternative to lawn or turf. It is affordable and easily maintainable.

A need for support facilities are included in this phase to serve the needs of the performers. An existing storage shed at the back wall of the stage can be utilized to serve this purpose. Currently it is used to house miscellaneous items. These items can be stored offsite to allow for a higher purpose and use for the space. Renovation of the existing storage from a non-conditioned space to a conditioned space for the back of house will be a more appropriate use. An additional area is required as part of this improvement to include a restroom and dressing room to accommodate the requirements for Screen Actor Guild contract performers who are typically included in the theatrical performances. Full mechanical, plumbing and electrical upgrades and fire protection systems would be required.

PHASE 2

An entry portal element at the entrance from the street will provide a sense of place. This entry portal will be attached to the accessory building that will house a ticket and small administrative office, to allow sale and distribution of tickets and various office and accounting necessities for each hosted event. The footprint of the proposed accessory structure is small minimizing the impact to the site as well as the vistas that are important to the historic nature of the project.

A multi-user restroom facility will be part of the accessory structure. There are currently no restrooms that are conveniently located immediately serving the amphitheater guests. The proposed number of plumbing fixtures shown in the accessory building is insufficient to serve all the amphitheater guests at full capacity. The amount of plumbing fixtures shown will need to be tripled in order to meet the code minimum thereby satisfying the plumbing needs of the amphitheater guests at full capacity. Phase 2 shows the less than minimum requirement for fixtures to be respectful of the cultural and historic nature of the site by putting a small building footprint that does not obstruct the views/vistas. There are other restroom facilities in the park that guests can access that can satisfy code requirements.

A small storage room will be provided as part of the accessory structure. This area will be used to store small equipment during scheduled performing events. All large equipment owned by the City will be stored off-site.

Engaging community by allowing alternative seating options will be beneficial for this project's versatility and usability. Expanding the amphitheater by improving lawn area on the West of the Amphitheater seating area would allow more families to have picnics and casual seating options during performances. Minimal regrading will be done in this area to accommodate this need.

Comfort of guests at the seating area is a consideration for Phase 2. Heat and glare are problematic during summer performances, a shade structure provided in the rear of the amphitheater seating would

be the ideal location for additional shade. City has the option to add this work to Phase 2 as allowed by available funds.