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Residents vote for park amenities; board opts out of golf course purchase

By [Julie Samrick](#) [From page A3](#) | September 02, 2015

EL DORADO HILLS — Approximately 30 residents participated in a public priorities workshop at the Valley View Elementary gym last month as part of the process to update the El Dorado Hills Community Services District's Master Plan.

Groups sat together in solidarity. A bocce ball contingent led by Carl Renner wants to see more lighting and courts at Promontory Park despite the CSD's plans to build a bocce court at Oak Knoll Park, east of Bass Lake Road.

"An additional bocce court might not get used (at Oak Knoll Park)," Renner told Village Life before the meeting started. "I would rather there be an additional court at Promontory, where the (current) court is always occupied. The money is there; it's just a matter of politics."

"We are here to make sure baseball's voice is heard," El Dorado Hills parent Erika Garcia-Ciucci said. "There are 700 kids in El Dorado Hills Little League. There's speculation any new field would be for soccer only. I want to make sure it would be a multi-sport field."

Yvonne Griffin was there to represent seniors. "We need a new senior center," she said. "We are bursting at the seams."

Outside agency MIG was hired to lead live voting regarding parks and facility priorities, though the emphasis was on parks. Each person in the room powered a real-time, data collecting clicker and answered questions with A, B, C or D options. Questions began with demographics (what age range are you?) and led to visual preference questions regarding pictures of parks, trails and open space and how likely they were to want each one. Recreation in general scored high throughout the survey, but participants overwhelmingly preferred the pictures of open space (versus more play parks and/or spray grounds for young children), which indicated there's a stronger preference for multi-generational amenities including an outdoor amphitheater, walking paths and benches set in nature.

During the break, Griffin said the plans all looked fine but asked, "Where is the open land to do all this?" Director Billy Vandegrift has been at odds with the board regarding money spent on surveys and the upcoming advisory ballot measure.

"I've voted against all these expenditures," he told Village Life. "The outreach for this master plan update process has cost \$86,000. We know what the community wants. Why are we spending all this money to

find out what we already know? Instead let's get something done that's attainable. If members of the board don't know the community by now, then shame on us."

After the visual preference survey, participants broke into small table groups where they could share their own park needs. People mentioned another public swimming pool and more basketball courts. CSD General Manager Brent Dennis called the evening a success.

"I was super pleased with the wide range of thoughtful input and visionary suggestions from our community members who attended," he said. "Everyone really rolled up their sleeves in joining the master planning process, all for the benefit of the greater community."

Golf course land too pricey for CSD

The El Dorado Hills Community Services District Board of Directors reported out of a closed session meeting Aug. 27 that the CSD will not pursue purchasing the 98 acres of open space known as the former Executive Golf Course at Serrano after two separate appraisals valued the land at \$24 million — much higher than the CSD expected.

Owner Parker Development Co. has applied to the county to change the land's current recreation/open space zoning to residential. The plan is to build 763 dwelling units on the property, including some high density and commercial, leaving 35 acres open space and 15 acres for a public park.

"Since the El Dorado Hills CSD was the only logical local government agency (other than the county) with the power to obtain and maintain/program a property such as the former Executive Golf Course, the CSD Board of Directors conducted its own survey in April 2014 to determine to what extent the community would support the EDHCS D in possibly purchasing the property," Dennis wrote in a press release. "The results of the professionally conducted survey demonstrated overwhelming support of such an acquisition and illustrated at what levels the community may be willing to tax themselves to pay for purchasing the property.

"In order to negotiate in good faith and be more knowledgeable of local market values of the former executive golf course property, the CSD Board of Directors then commissioned an appraisal to obtain an approximate market value of the property," Dennis continued. "In comparing the appraiser's conclusion with our previous survey results suggesting public funding support for levels of approximately one-third of that appraised value, it became clear to the board that the CSD was not in a financial position to enter into productive negotiations for acquisition of the property at this time."

Dennis said an advisory vote (Measure E) asking residents whether they want the golf course to remain recreation/ open space will still be on the Nov. 3 ballot. Advisory votes are non-binding and do not change the law, but the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors may be more likely to deny a rezone if the community so strongly opposes it.

The EDHCS D Board of Directors holds its regular meetings on the second Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm. For additional information call (916) 933-6624 or visit edhcsd.org.