



**Park Improvement Committee
Blue Heron Park Improvement Project
Questions and Issues**

Introduction

The following is a summary of questions and issues considered by the Park Improvement Committee during the Feasibility Study and Conceptual Design phases of the proposed Picnic/Shade Shelter and Restroom facilities. These issues were brought to the Committee's attention at HOA meetings, the planning workshop, personal conversations, mail, and email.

1. Why is the Board considering adding a restroom to the Park?

A community survey was conducted in April/May 2015 to seek input from HOA members about what facilities, equipment, events, issues and policies should be addressed by the Board of Directors (BOD). The Community Survey responses indicated 31.5% of respondents were in favor of adding a restroom in the park. The 2015-16 BOD created the Park Improvement Committee to research the need for new park equipment and facilities and help to procure replacements for damaged items.

As part of Phase 2 Park Improvements, the BOD requested the Committee to research the feasibility and cost of adding various park facilities including pathway lighting, tree uplighting, a picnic/shade shelter, a restroom, drinking fountain, bocce ball court and other recreational equipment. After initial evaluation the Committee recommended to the BOD, and it was approved to limit further research to the Picnic shelter, restroom, drinking fountain and storage room. The other suggested improvements were removed from further consideration.

The BOD and management company had received numerous member complaints over the years about children and adults relieving themselves in the park behind bushes, on the slope, behind the electrical box, and in the past, behind the storage shed. (The shed has been removed.) Parents of young children have been known to hold their small children over a trash can to urinate. There have also been complaints of use of portable toilets for HOA events due to unsanitary conditions, smell, and darkness in the evening. The 2015-2016 BOD decided the addition of a restroom at the park should be considered to address these complaints and to provide a benefit to Eastbluff residents.

2. Why do we need a restroom in the park? Can't people just go home to use the bathroom?

The Park Improvement Committee has supported the facility because they believe a clean, well-maintained restroom in the park would provide a private, sanitary facility for Eastbluff children and adults to relieve themselves, wash hands, or change diapers when visiting the park for relaxation or recreation. Park visitors include moms with kids, picnicking families, seniors out for a walk, residents

walking their dogs, joggers, grandparents with their grandchildren, teens playing, children at birthday parties, and members and their guests attending Eastbluff HOA sponsored events.

Justification includes the distance between homes and the park for most members. Eastbluff HOA is more than a mile long. Not all homes are convenient to the park and many residents choose to walk to the park for exercise. Families, children and adults alike must cut their visits short or forgo trips to the park due to need for a restroom. Urinary urgency affects many adults and kids who “just can’t wait!”

3. What size and design features are recommended?

- The covered Picnic/Event Shelter would include a single stall gender-neutral restroom and storage area for supplies. The proposed facility would be a total of 960 Square feet in size. The shade area is designed to accommodate 4 picnic tables.
- The restroom would include a changing table, hot-air hand dryers, water-saver automatic faucets, soap dispensers, graffiti-resistant surfaces, anti-microbial fixtures.
- The single restroom allows for mixed parental/child genders or patient/caretakers of different genders.
- A low roofline below the height of previous trees would keep a low profile and allow views over the structure.
- The proposed facility would be Handicap ADA accessible for our Eastbluff neighbors with mobility challenges.
- The facility would result in removal of over 1,000 SF (including walkways) of turf area and is fiscally and environmentally responsible.

4. What locations were considered and why was the recommended location selected?

The Committee considered a variety of building designs and locations over a year and a half. The initial idea was to build the restroom and picnic shelter as separate structures near the existing park pathway. After receiving input from residents and considering alternatives, the committee decided a single structure that includes both features would be more cost effective for construction, infrastructure, utilities and usefulness.

The recommended location is in the center of the park to be at least 100 ft away from homes surrounding the park as requested by Basswood residents, and to be convenient to the playground and area where HOA events are held. The central location also provides better access to water, power and sewer connections, and is more visible to routine police patrols.

5. Several members expressed concern about security problems they believe will occur due to having a restroom at the park. How were these concerns researched and addressed?

- The central location and open design are recommended for visibility from all sides. The proposed open design with minimal landscaping will allow clear views by police patrols and neighbors.
- A tamper-resistant lock with key fob controlled access would grant entry by homeowners and accompanied guests only, with an audit trail history of which key was used.

- Signs in the park identify Blue Heron Park as a private park to discourage non-residents from using the facility and enable enforcement.
- Regular police patrols will monitor the park and restroom. NBPD has officers assigned to each area of the city that they routinely patrol, including Eastbluff. They have 4 shifts for a 24-hour period. NBPD has stated officers patrol past the park 10-12 times a day depending on traffic, and are more frequent in the evening hours.
- Park Rules and Private Property signs have been posted in the park and the Association has filed documents with the City to permit NBPD enforcement of the Rules on Eastbluff's private park property.
- Eastbluff has an active and successful Neighborhood Watch program in which neighbors are encouraged to watch out and report suspicious activity. All owners are responsible to observe community activities and to report to the NBPD any suspicious behavior.

6. Would it invite vandalism and graffiti?

- The recommended design includes tamper resistant locks, vandal and graffiti-resistant materials and exterior lighting with a motion sensor to discourage loitering and vandalism.
- Scott Smith, Manager of South Coast Property Management Company indicated that SCPM manages 7 other communities with pools and restrooms and there have been no issues with them being vandalized.

7. Would it attract homeless, vagrants, sexual predators or "outsiders"?

Blue Heron Park is closed from sunset to sunrise every night and park rules are enforceable by the NBPD, who regularly patrol the neighborhood.

- A tamper-proof lock with key fob controlled access may prevent non-residents from using the restroom.
- The Committee contacted Newport Beach property managers and public officials to research this question.
 - George Ross, property manager for Harbor View Hills (Port Streets where homes are similar to Eastbluff), reports experiencing some attempts at vandalism and breaking into their community pool, but has had no issues of crime, vandalism, vagrants or criminal behavior at the public restroom in their park, which is a City facility.
 - Sean Levin, Assistant Director of Senior and Recreational Services, City of Newport Beach stated: "What few instances of loitering occur in the parks at the beach, not those located in residential areas. This is despite the fact that almost all City restrooms are open 24/7 with no locks. Newport Beach has 18 public parks with restrooms, and we've had no major enforcement issues."
 - Newport Beach Police Department Lt. Steve Rasmussen stated:

"I have worked for the Newport Beach Police Department since 2001 and I can tell you anecdotally that public restrooms have not traditionally been a magnet for crime in our city, especially on the east side of the city where the Eastbluff neighborhood is located. Over the years, we have had some issues on the peninsula with vandalism or transients sleeping in restrooms overnight, but this is mainly due to these restrooms' open access and location near high traffic areas like the boardwalk. Also, it is quite routine for our police officers to check public restrooms in their area during their

patrols, so even this type of behavior is infrequent. If the association does decide to install a restroom in the park, and they put in place a system where it is either locked after-hours or is limited only to residents via an access code, this will further prevent it from being accessed by vandals as well as limit its use as an over-night shelter for someone passing through.”

- Blue Heron Park is posted as a private park which discourages non-resident use of the park and enables police enforcement.
- Our active and successful Neighborhood Watch program encourages residents to call police if suspicious or unlawful activity is observed.

8. Who would keep it clean?

- The initial plan is for the HOA to hire a professional cleaning service for service 3 times a week and after each HOA community event.
- The HOA would also contract with CVL, our landscape company, as part of their park maintenance scope of work, to do light cleanup on their service days including pick up of trash, wipe down of tables, benches, toilet and sink and emptying the trash containers. CVL will also keep the shade shelter floors and walkways clean.
- Signs would encourage a good neighbor policy.
- Blow dryers will eliminate paper towels.
- Graffiti-repellent materials would make cleanup easy.
- The Committee believes most Eastbluff members who use the park will take pride in the picnic/event facility and restroom and help keep it tidy and report any problems should they occur.

9. Will more people use the park, including a substantial increased use as a venue for large gatherings, outside groups such as athletic teams, or unauthorized night time use?

- A Picnic/Shade Shelter with a restroom will likely lead to more Eastbluff HOA members and their guests enjoying use of Blue Heron Park by providing shade, hand-washing, diaper changing, and toilet facilities. This is a benefit for all members who own the park and are the only people authorized to use it.
- A restroom with owner-only key fob controlled access would not be accessible to or attract unauthorized users.
- Blue Heron Park is closed from sunset to sunrise every night. Lighting for pathways and trees was considered but not recommended due to cost and potential of increasing evening use of the park.
- Newport Beach Police Department currently patrols Eastbluff and will monitor and investigate any illicit nighttime activity in the park. Neighborhood Watch participants would also report to the NBPd any suspicious behavior in the park.

10. What is the potential for Long-Term Disrepair by an uncaring board in the future?

- Reserve funds are proposed in the cost analysis to accumulate funds each year to cover any necessary maintenance and repair to the facility.
- Neighbors who have pride of ownership in a well-designed and well-built facility will demand upkeep as needed.
- Regular professional cleaning service will keep it well-maintained and report any needed service or repair to the property manager.
- The members of the HOA community will speak up if the BOD is not meeting the community's needs for maintenance and repair of all community assets including park facilities.

11. What impact if any will this have on the association insurance regarding liability?

There is no significant increase to the association insurance. In June 2016 the Association increased the umbrella coverage from \$3 million to \$5 million with very little difference in cost.

12. Will picnic tables would be bolted down under the shade structure?

The recommended plan calls for adding 4 picnic tables and not bolting them down. This allows flexibility to reconfigure the picnic shelter tables for HOA or members' reserved events.

13. Would there be a fund-raising campaign to reduce costs?

Yes, The Committee has recommended to the BOD that if the project is approved by members, a campaign to seek voluntary contributions to help offset construction costs should be undertaken prior to final decision on a construction loan financing. A donor recognition program would acknowledge donors at different levels and encourage community-wide participation.

14. How much will the project cost and how will the HOA pay for it?

The estimated cost for building, maintaining and establishing a replacement reserve for the recommended facility is \$266,000. The cost per HOA home would be approximately \$100 per year. (\$8.33 per month). It is anticipated the HOA would obtain a construction loan with a 10-year term to pay the cost. The loan payments, O&M costs and reserves would be paid from HOA annual dues. A detailed report on the estimated cost has been prepared by the HOA Treasurer for review at the members' community workshop and onsite preview event.

Park Improvement Committee

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