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Community Council OKs \$5,000 for projects related to soccer field at Mar Vista Rec Center

BY VINCE ECHAVARIA

The Mar Vista Community Council has approved the spending of up to \$5,000 for various projects related to a new synthetic turf soccer field at the west end of the Mar Vista Recreation Center, 11430 Woodbine St., Mar Vista.

The Community Council <which is the official Neighborhood Council for Mar Vista > voted unanimously Tuesday, August 9th, to approve an appropriation of up to \$5,000 from the council's annual budget of \$50,000.

Tom Ponton, Mar Vista Community Council president, said the \$5,000 will be used to cover the costs associated with projects to help enhance the area and protect the new artificial turf soccer field at the park.

Construction of the new \$700,000 soccer field at the 18-acre park was completed at the end of April and the field officially opened for use in mid-June.

The new project expenditures are subject to the final approval of the Mar Vista Park Advisory Board and the cooperation of the City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks.

"There are things that can be done to protect the field, including putting up new bike racks," Ponton said.

The City of Los Angeles Department of Public Works Bureau of Engineering had installed a six-foot chain-link fence in June to help protect the surface of the field. But the city removed the fence soon after because many community residents complained that the fence subdivided the open space area on the west end of the park.

Joelene Knight, a Park Advisory Board member, said that nearly half of the people who use the new soccer field arrive at the park on a bicycle.

Many people have been inadvertently leaving their bikes around the field and on the artificial turf, Ponton said.

"There's no area to park their bikes, so they leave them unattended," Knight said.

The bikes can potentially damage the artificial surface and can create a hazard for athletes on the field, Ponton said.

"We've found bikes lying on the turf, which is not good because people can trip," he said.

The Mar Vista Community Council has proposed purchasing two to four new bicycle racks that would be installed near the soccer field.

The new bicycle racks, which will accommodate about 20 bikes and cost between \$600 and \$1,000 each, will be the largest expenditure in the \$5,000 budget appropriation, Ponton said.

Ponton said Park Advisory Board members have also proposed to use the money to install boulders and trees near the soccer field to enhance the area.

"The Park Advisory Board would like to get some rocks and trees to put in the area for beautification purposes," he said.

The boulders and trees would be strategically placed in order to help protect the field and prevent cars from entering the area, he said.

Another proposed expenditure includes the purchase of small soccer goals to allow for more people to access the field at one time, Knight said.

Ponton said the Mar Vista community will work with the city Department of Recreation and Parks to begin the projects as soon as possible.