

# Walnut gets first look at concepts for \$20 million recreation complex

SAN  
GABRIEL  
VALLEY **TRIBUNE**



Architectural rendering of the new aquatic center considered for Walnut Ranch Park and the main community building in it. (Courtesy of Aquatic Design Group)

By [Richard Irwin](#), San Gabriel Valley Tribune

10/15/14

Walnut has some big plans for Walnut Ranch Park. The city is considering a \$20 million aquatics complex that will be second to none off Amar Road.

City council looked at the first schematics during a study session last week. The master plan was done by the Aquatic Design Group of Carlsbad.

The plan was presented by Aquatic Vice President Justin Caron and Mary Rooney, Walnut's Community Services Director.

The design group was contacted by Walnut in February to develop ideas for the new aquatics center. After meeting with the city staff, Aquatic provided four different proposals.

It was then hired to provide a master plan for an aquatics center, community building, amphitheater and new parking lots. The plan also included relocating the existing trailhead and adding restrooms for the soccer field to the east and trail users.

“We considered one pool vs. multiple pools as well as indoor vs. outdoor pools for the Walnut Ranch Park Expansion,” Caron said.

The master plan features two pools. An 8,512 square foot recreation pool will have a river current channel, zero-depth beach style entry and six swimming lanes. An 8,684 square foot competition 35-meter pool will offer 14 lanes.

“The city could build the recreation pool first if funding becomes an issue, then add the competition pool later,” Caron noted.

The city plans to sell unused park land in Three Oaks. It officially abandoned the land so it could seek bids to sell it.

“We would sell the property and use the funds to build the new facility since we don’t have the funding now,” explained Mayor Nancy Tragarz at the time.

The new aquatic center at Walnut Ranch Park will also have a 4,945 square foot spray park with interactive play equipment. Adding to the fun will be three waterslides with individual run-out flumes.

“Younger children love spray parks, which are safe for them because there’s no standing water,” Caron said.

A new amphitheater with covered stage and four tiered seating area will hold up to 1,000 people for the very popular concerts in the park and other performances. A secondary restroom will serve either the amphitheater or pools. It will also have a concession stand.

The 6,828 square foot main building will become the long awaited community building. This will feature a 2,200 square foot multipurpose banquet room with a garden reception area and concessions area.

The building will also hold men’s and women’s locker rooms, a lobby, five staff offices and two storage areas.

“Residents have been asking for a community center for many years,” said Tragarz.

The complex would have a large parking lot with space for 333 cars, as well as a smaller lot with 33 spaces.

“We calculated the parking we would need for the soccer field plus community building, amphitheater and pools,” said Community Services Director Rooney. “The recreation department won’t schedule multiple events for the same time.”

The entrance will be off Amar, an extension of the existing Alta Sierra Road. A new traffic signal and turn lanes will be required.

City council wants the aquatics center to pay for its operating costs.

In his report, Caron noted that municipal pools historically generate about half their operating cost.

He said the more recreational features a pool offers, the more potential it has to recover its operating cost. These features include water slides, interactive play features, river currents and birthday party areas.

“With adequate recreation features and programs, a municipal aquatic center can achieve as much as 70 to 100 percent annual operating cost recovery,” Caron explained.

Council emphasized that this master plan was not a final design. The city still has to approve moving forward into more detailed design.

