



CITY OF POMONA COUNCIL REPORT

September 8, 2025

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Anita D. Scott, City Manager

Submitted By: Mark J. Gluba, Assistant City Manager

**SUBJECT: AUTHORIZE STAFF TO SEEK PLANNING GRANT
OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PALM LAKE GOLF COURSE SITE**

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council authorize staff to partner with the Trust for Public Land (TPL) to submit planning grant applications for reenvisioning recreational uses at Palm Lake Golf Course.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Palm Lake Golf Course, a public recreational space, has been non-operational since 2017. After multiple unsuccessful attempts to revitalize the site through leases with private entities, the property continues to experience significant deterioration. It continues to present ongoing public safety, blight, and fire risks due to unauthorized use, vandalism, and lack of maintenance. The site's current condition highlights the need for strategic planning and reinvestment to reactivate the land into a safe, accessible, and vibrant recreational space for the community. To support this vision, the City engaged with Trust for Public Land (TPL), a nationally recognized nonprofit organization with extensive experience in park development, land conservation, and public funding strategies. TPL identified the former golf course as a prime site for redevelopment and recommended that it be prioritized for future competitive grant applications.

SB1439/GOVERNMENT CODE §84308 APPLICABILITY:

☐ When this box is checked, it indicates the agenda item is subject to the Levine Act SB1439 requirements. Councilmembers are reminded to check their campaign contributions and determine whether they have received a campaign contribution of \$500 or more that would require disclosure and/or recusal from discussing or acting on this agenda item. Campaign contributions of \$500 or more made 1) by any person or entity who is identified in the agenda report as the applicant or proposer or 2) on behalf of the applicant or participant, including a parent, subsidiary or otherwise related business entity, or 3) by any person who has a financial interest in the agenda item requires a councilmember to comply with SB1439.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact in submitting a grant application, and the various currently identified funding opportunities do not require a grant match.

DISCUSSION

In 1939, the Phillips Family deeded the parcels currently known as Palm Lake Golf Course to the City for parks and recreation purposes. Records show that the City leased Palm Lake Golf Course under various operational agreements dating back to at least 1959. Most recently, the City released RFPs for the operation of the Golf Course in 2013 and again in 2017. However, both respondents to the efforts were ultimately unsuccessful in restoring the long-term operational viability of the Golf Course. Over time, the site was abandoned, including its associated structures and facilities, leaving the area vulnerable to deterioration. In the absence of active use or regular maintenance, the property became an attractive nuisance and detriment to the surrounding community.

Overall, maintaining and operating a golf course is expensive, due to factors such as labor, equipment, and upkeep. The current state of the site underscores the urgent need for thoughtful planning, community investment, and sustainable redevelopment to restore the area as a safe and beneficial recreation space for Pomona residents.

To support this vision, the City engaged with Trust Public Land (TPL), a nationally recognized nonprofit organization whose mission is to “create parks and protect land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come.” Founded in 1927, TPL has completed 5,000 park-creation and land conservation projects across the United States, protected over 3 million acres, and helped pass more than 500 ballot measures that have generated \$70 billion in voter-approved public funding for parks and open spaces. TPL is also known for its leadership in publishing data-driven research on parks, conservation finance, and climate change adaptation. Headquartered in San Francisco, TPL is one of the nation’s largest conservation nonprofits, operating approximately 30 field offices across the country, including a federal affairs office in Washington, D.C. Their extensive experience makes them an ideal partner for identifying and securing grant funding opportunities as well as fostering a robust community input process to actualize the long-term potential of the Palm Lake site, while addressing the desires and needs of the surrounding community.

On June 12, 2025, staff from Public Works and Community Services met with a representative from TPL to conduct a site tour of several City-owned properties that are currently closed - Veterans Park, Palm Lake Golf Course, and the Pomona Armory. The purpose of the visit was to provide TPL with an in-depth understanding of each site's physical condition, historical context, and potential for revitalization. During the tour, staff shared the unique challenges that each location faces, such as infrastructure limitations, maintenance and operational concerns, fiscal constraints, and barriers to equitable community access. In addition, the group discussed the community’s demographics, priorities, and the critical need for inclusive public spaces and recreational opportunities. Following the tour, TPL expressed a strong interest in the Palm Lake Golf Course site, noting its potential for future development. Based on TPL’s experience, history of numerous successful projects, and a focus on community needs and data-driven solutions, TPL is widely recognized as an expert in the field of developing parks and outdoor spaces.

As a next step, City staff is seeking approval from City Council to actively pursue planning grant opportunities that support early-stage planning, design, and public input efforts, to facilitate scoping of future uses for the site, with the support of TPL. These funding opportunities are essential for laying the groundwork for larger, shovel-ready capital projects that align with the community's needs and funding priorities. If grant opportunities are successfully identified and approved, staff will bring back grant acceptance and approval of an agreement with TPL to assist with implementation efforts for future Council action.

Any future planning process will be shaped by a strong commitment to community engagement. Residents, neighborhood groups, and stakeholders will be invited to provide input at key stages to ensure the ultimate vision for the Palm Lake site reflects the priorities, values, and aspirations of the community it is intended to serve.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES & GOALS:

This item supports the 2021-2022 City Council Priority 1: Fiscal and Operational Responsibility – Goal C: Obtain additional grant funding and other revenues to help achieve City goals.

Prepared by:

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