

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: EMILY ANDER, PARK PLANNER ASSISTANT  
JEN SANTOS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR - PARKS  
TRANSPORTATION & PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT  
SUBJECT: NAME CHANGE OF CREEKSIDE OPEN SPACE TO MARY  
TRAVERSO OPEN SPACE

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Transportation & Public Works Department that Council, by resolution, change the name of an open space park, APN 049-497-005, located at 0 Creekside Road from Creekside Open Space to Mary Traverso Open Space in accordance with the provisions of Council Policy 000-25 – Park Naming Policy and Procedure.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Resolution is to change the name of Creekside Open Space to Mary Traverso Open Space in honor of Mary Traverso's contributions to Creekside Open Space and inspiring volunteerism in Santa Rosa. This request is supported by Southeast Santa Rosa residents and the larger Santa Rosa community.

BACKGROUND

Creekside is a 3.63 acre open space park located in Southeast Santa Rosa between Creekside Road and Matanzas Creek. Creekside was dedicated to the City on February 17, 1967 and is designated as open space in the Santa Rosa General Plan 2035. Open space parcels are considered natural resources, are integrated into parks or provide connections between parks, have minimal improvements (benches, trails, picnic tables, etc.) and are available to serve the recreational needs of the entire City. Open space provides passive recreation, visual enjoyment, watershed protection, and conservation and hazard reduction benefits.

Creekside Open Space is a mostly wooded site with Matanzas Creek running along the southern property boundary and through the southeast portion of the site. The park topography is flat along Creekside Road and drops significantly down to the creek.

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Creekside contains benches, a trash can, dog waste stations, decorative bird boxes and an Adopt-A-Park sign. The City has had an Adopt-A-Park agreement with Bennett Valley Vision for park maintenance since 2004. In 2016, a memorial bench was installed at Creekside and dedicated in honor of Mary Traverso. The bench was donated by the Traverso Family.

In April 2018 Travis Berding, son-in-law of Mary Traverso, came forward to the Board of Community Services (BOCS) with a request to change the name of Creekside Open Space in honor of Mary Traverso. The BOCS placed the item on its May 2018 agenda for discussion. At the May 23, 2018 BOCS meeting the renaming request was discussed and the BOCS asked staff to look into what it would take to rename the open space from Creekside to Mary Traverso.

On January 22, 2020, staff presented a very detailed and thorough review of its findings to the BOCS as well as the need to update Council Policy 000-25: Park Naming Policy & Procedure (1989). The Board received public comments, discussed the name change, recommended renaming the open space and requested community input before making a recommendation to Council.

A public meeting was scheduled for April 2020 but had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A virtual community meeting was held on November 5, 2020 with live Zoom polling and opportunities for attendees to ask questions and provide comments. Following the meeting an online survey was available for two weeks and received 98 responses.

The data from the meeting polls and the survey were combined and presented to the BOCS on December 9, 2020. The BOCS received public comments, discussed the poll and survey results and requested additional community input from residents of the Southeast Quadrant. After the winter holidays, the online survey was posted again, for one month, and received 127 responses. A public input report was assembled containing the results of the three separate public input opportunities, the results of the combined data and a summary of the public outreach and notification methods used (Attachment 1).

At the May 26, 2021 BOCS meeting, staff presented a detailed history of the renaming request and a thorough review of all collected data and results as well as public outreach. The BOCS received public comments, discussed the renaming and voted unanimously in favor of approving the park name change from Creekside Open Space to Mary Traverso Open Space.

### PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

Not applicable.

## ANALYSIS

Council Policy 000-25: Park Naming Policy and Procedure (Attachment 2) was utilized to determine if the renaming request met the policy. The entire portion of the policy that relates to Change of Name can be found on page 3 and reads:

*A park or recreation facility name may be changed but only if the following conditions are met:*

*A. Occurrence of event of national or local significance. A waiting period of no less than two years between the event and the actual naming of the park or recreation facility is required.*

*B. If the name becomes inappropriate.*

The name Creekside comes from the park's location along Creekside Road so the name Creekside Open Space is appropriate and does not meet Condition B. The renaming request must be evaluated based on Condition A. Mary Traverso passed away in April 2016, over five years ago, so this meets the second half of Condition A.

Policy Condition A requires evaluating if Mrs. Traverso's contributions to her community were an *occurrence of event of national or local significance*. In 2005, Mary Traverso co-founded Bennett Valley Vision, an all volunteer group focused on making Bennett Valley an even nicer place to live. Bennett Valley Vision holds two annual clean up days to weed, prune, remove litter, spread mulch and install new plants at Creekside Open Space, Yulupa Avenue sidewalk areas, Summerfield Road traffic islands and sidewalk areas, Arroyo Sierra Creek and Bethards Road. In 2007, Bennett Valley Vision received the Santa Rosa Merit Award for Neighborhood Enrichment. For years, Mary and her husband, Bill, maintained Creekside Open Space, which is very near their home, by mowing grass, removing invasive species and taking care of the bird boxes. Mrs. Traverso was also a known part of Traverso's Market – a small business that was part of the Santa Rosa community for 80 years (1932-2012).

Based on this information, it was understood that Mary Traverso was active in the community and inspired volunteerism. She is loved by her family and known in the community from Traverso's Market. However, the Policy offered no information nor direction regarding how to measure or who should determine whether the request met the Policy's intent of significance. Staff recognized that the Policy required updating and began the analysis and research necessary to update the Policy.

The BOCS heard the request for changing the name of Creekside Open Space during their January 22, 2020 meeting. The BOCS acknowledged the accomplishments of Mary Traverso, provided by her family, likely constitute an occurrence of local significance and therefore supported changing the name of Creekside to honor Mrs.

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Traverso. Before making their recommendation to Council they asked that a public meeting be held to gauge the community's support.

On November 5, 2020 a virtual community meeting was held via Zoom webinar. There were 33 attendees, 39 percent of whom lived outside the City of Santa Rosa. The meeting included four Zoom polls with 28 attendees participating. The public was notified of the meeting through:

- a direct mail postcard to a half-mile radius around Creekside,
- City Connections e-blast,
- signs at Creekside and two nearby parks,
- the City's Park Projects webpage,
- Nextdoor,
- Facebook and
- the Traverso family.

Following the virtual meeting, an online survey was available from November 5 – November 21, 2020 for the community to weigh in on the renaming request. Ninety-eight responses were received. The survey and Zoom poll data was shared with the BOCS during their December 9, 2020 meeting. The data was not overwhelmingly in favor or against the renaming and the responses were reasonably distributed across the city rather than from the Southeast Quadrant, where Creekside is located. The BOCS requested additional community input from the Southeast Quadrant and the neighborhood adjacent to Creekside before making a final recommendation.

The online survey was reopened for a month from January 3<sup>rd</sup> – February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2021 and available through the Park Projects webpage. The Traverso family promoted the survey via Nextdoor, Facebook and word of mouth in the Creekside neighborhood and the Southeast Santa Rosa community. The second survey received 127 responses.

Staff returned to the BOCS on May 26, 2021 and presented the history of the project and the results of the three opportunities for the public to be involved in the project and to share their opinion with the City. Based on the combined data, the BOCS approved the park name change from Creekside Open Space to Mary Traverso Open Space with 73 percent of Southeast Santa Rosa resident respondents and 62 percent of City of Santa Rosa resident respondents in favor. This is 12 percent above the threshold of 50 percent or greater community support, which was favored by all meeting attendees and survey respondents, as an appropriate amount of community support in order to change the name of park land.

### FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of this action does not have a fiscal impact on the General Fund. The park name will be updated on City maps, marketing materials and the website the next time the materials are scheduled for updating and printing.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The proposed action is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under CEQA Guidelines Sections 15378 and 15061(b)(3) in that there is no possibility that the implementation of this action may have significant effects on the environment, and that no further environmental review is required.

### BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On April 25, 2018, Travis Berding came forward to the Board of Community Services to request renaming Creekside Open Space after his mother-in-law, Mary Traverso.

On May 23, 2018, the BOCS discussed the renaming request and asked staff to look into changing the name of the open space.

On January 22, 2020, staff presented a very detailed and thorough review of its findings to the BOCS as well as the need to update Council Policy 000-25: Park Naming Policy & Procedure (1989). The Board received public comments, discussed the name change, recommended renaming the open space and requested community input before making a recommendation to Council.

On December 9, 2020, staff presented the Zoom poll results from the November 5, 2020 virtual community meeting and the online survey results. The BOCS received public comments, discussed the poll and survey results and requested additional community input from residents of the Southeast Quadrant.

At the May 26, 2021 BOCS meeting, staff presented a detailed history of the renaming request and a thorough review of all collected data and results as well as public outreach. The BOCS received public comments, discussed the renaming and voted unanimously in favor of approving the park name change from Creekside Open Space to Mary Traverso Open Space with 73 percent of Southeast resident survey respondents and 62 percent of City resident survey respondents in favor. This is 12 percent above the threshold of community support favored by all meeting attendees and survey respondents as an appropriate amount of community support in order to change the name of park land. The Board of Community Services recommends Council approval of the same.

### NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

### ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Creekside Open Space Proposed Renaming: Public Input Report
- Attachment 2 – City Council Policy 000-25: Park Naming Policy & Procedure

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- Attachment 3 – Location Map
- Resolution

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