



City of Rohnert Park

Joint Study Session  
Planning Commission  
&  
Parks and Recreation Commission

Staff Report

**DATE:** June 9, 2016

**ITEM NO:** 8.1

**SUBJECT:** Residences at Five Creek, Park Location

**LOCATION:** 12.7 Acre Area of the Stadium Area Master Plan, bounded by Dowdell Avenue, Labath Avenue, Martin Boulevard and Carlson Avenue (APN 143-040-124).

**REQUEST:** Discuss and provide direction to establish location criteria for a new city park within the Residences at Five Creek project

**APPLICANT:** Matthew J. Waken for MJW Investments LLC

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission discuss criteria and potential locations for a new city park within the Residences at Five Creek project and provide direction to city staff and the project applicant. Direction will be used to help formulate an application for a Final Development Plan for the project.

**Background:**

The proposed Residences at Five Creek project is located within the Stadium Area Master Plan (SAMP), a 32.8 acre site which was owned in its entirety by the City and was the former location of the Sonoma County Crushers Baseball Stadium. A portion of the SAMP has been sold and developed with the Fiori Estates and The Reserve apartment complexes. The property now being considered for development is a 12.7 acre parcel bounded by Carlson Avenue on the north, Labath Avenue on the west, the extension of Martin Avenue on the south and Dowdell Avenue on the East. (See Exhibit A - Residences at Five Creek Proposed Preliminary Development Plan). Carlson Avenue will be a 2-lane minor collector, with a center left turn lane and parking allowed on both sides. Labath Avenue currently functions as a 2-lane minor collector with parking allowed on both sides. Dowdell Avenue is designated as a 2-lane minor arterial with

dedicated bicycle lanes and no parking. The Martin Avenue extension is proposed as a private street with parking on each side.

A purchase agreement has been entered into between the city and MJW Investments LLC for the purchase of the property by the applicant. The purchase agreement, among other things, sets forth the terms of development of the site with a hotel, a separate retail-commercial center, a residential or office component and a public park. The City Council specifically required the developer to include a 0.65 acre park on the site, to address increasing concern about residential development west of Highway 101 – currently without access to a neighborhood public park. The developer has addressed this requirement in its Preliminary Development Plan (PDP) with a park located on the northeast corner of the site, adjacent to the existing Fiori Estates and Reserve at Dowdell developments (See Figure 1).

Both the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) and the Planning Commission (PC) have reviewed the PDP and expressed concerns over the location of the park. During its May 12 meeting, the PC specifically requested that a different location for the park be considered during the Final Development Plan process.

**Figure 1**

**Proposed Residences at Five Creek Layout**



The developer's efforts to finalize the location for the park are critical to its work on the Final Development Plan. While the size of the park is fixed, its location, shape and configuration can be modified. However, the ultimate size, shape and location of the park impacts all utilities and site grading so it is important that the developer have clear direction on an acceptable park in order to avoid potentially significant wasted effort and processing delays. Due to the importance of this topic staff is requesting that the PRC and PC review alternative concepts for the park location and provide direction on the preferred location before work begins on the Final Development Plan.

### **Park Location Criteria:**

To assist in the evaluation of these alternative locations, Staff has developed and circulated evaluation criteria. Staff acknowledges that this is a challenging site and not all criteria may be able to be met but the criteria will assist in comparing the various alternatives and arriving at the optimum location in light of constraints. The general location of the hotel and retail components of the project are fixed (requirement of the developer's financing). A preliminary list of evaluation criteria are listed below:

- Minimize exposure to the Costco blank wall and loading zone
- Minimize risk of busy streets
- Maximize "eyes on the park"
- Provide convenient access to Fiori / Reserve apartment projects
- Maximize "synergy" with retail
- Create an open space feature to compliment the new hotel
- Create a signature feature for the development
- Allow for convenient parking for visitors to the park
- Provide for amenities that don't exist in the apartment complexes
- Provide for amenities that don't exist elsewhere in Rohnert Park
- Maximize access from public ways and minimize the need for private easements to access a public park
- Provide "urban" (versus suburban) park features

While these criteria are not exclusive, neither the PC nor the PRC has provided additional criteria or direction for consideration.

### **Alternative Park Locations:**

The neighborhood where the site is located is a mixed use neighborhood which may factor into the location of a future park (see Figure 2). The site has two busy streets: Dowdell Avenue on the eastern edge of the site and Labath Avenue on the western edge. A minor street (Carlson



Avenue) runs along the northern edge of the site and Martin Avenue is proposed to be extended through on the southern edge of the site. The site has two apartment complexes to the north, one to the southwest and is reasonably accessible the Rancho Verde Mobile Home Park and Vida Nueva housing complex via the Hinebaugh Creek (Laguna de Santa Rosa) Trail. The remainder of the surrounding uses are commercial (e.g. Costco, office buildings, etc.). A future public safety fire station and city corporation yard is being planned to the south. The proximity and arrangement of these nearby uses should be factored into the decision as to where to locate the park.

**Figure 2**  
**Neighborhood Context**



- ◀ ■ ■ ■ ■ ▶ Creek Path
- ● ● ● ● 1/4 mi. Radius
- ● ● ● ● 1/2 mi. Radius

At the request of staff and the PC the developer has identified four potential locations for the future park (see Exhibit A). Planning Commissioner Giudice has suggested a fifth option which is also illustrated in Exhibit A. While the options for the park location are not limited to those depicted in the attachment, these five locations generally bracket the range of possible locations given the developer's constraint with the location of the hotel and retail complex.

- *Existing*. Located at the corner of Dowdell and Carlson.
- *Alternative #1*. Located along Carlson.
- *Alternative #2*. Located along Labath and Carlson.
- *Alternative #3*. This location is in the middle of the project.
- *Alternative #4*. This site has one end of the park fronting on Dowdell and extending into the site between the apartment complex and retail center.
- *Alternative #5*. This alternative is the mirror image of Alternative 4 and locates the park between the hotel and the apartment complex.

#### **Preliminary Screening:**

In order to facilitate review and discussion, Staff has applied the criteria to the proposed alternative locations. A location was given a score of "0" when it did not address a criterion; a location was given a score of "1" when it partially addressed a criterion; and a site was given a score of "2" when it fully addressed a criterion. The results of this preliminary screening are presented in Table 1 below. Staff recognizes that the PRC and PC commissioners may have additional input and thoughts on this review and will have the preliminary screening matrix available at the joint study session so that additional criteria, weighting concepts and locations can be evaluated.

**Table 1**  
**Preliminary Screening Matrix**

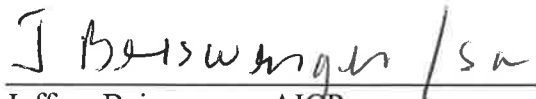
<b>Location Criteria</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Site 1</b>	<b>Site 2</b>	<b>Site 3</b>	<b>Site 4</b>	<b>Site 5</b>
Minimize exposure to the Costco wall and loading zone	0	2	2	2	1	2
Minimize risk of busy streets	0	1	0	2	1	1
Maximize “eyes on the park”	2	1	2	0	2	2
Provide convenient access to Fiori / Reserve	2	1	1	1	2	1
Maximize “synergy” with retail	2	0	0	2	2	1
Create a feature to compliment the new hotel	0	0	1	1	0	2
Create a signature feature for the development	1	1	1	2	2	2
Provide convenient parking for visitors to the park	1	2	2	0	1	2
Provide amenities that don’t exist in the apartment complexes	2	2	2	2	2	2
Provide amenities that don’t exist elsewhere in Rohnert Park	2	2	2	2	2	2
Maximize access from public ways and minimize private easements to access a public park	2	1	2	0	2	2
Provide “urban” (versus suburban) park features	2	2	2	2	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>

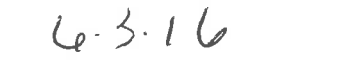
**Next Steps:** Now that the Residences at Five Creek PDP has been conceptually approved by the Planning Commission, a Final Development Plan may be submitted to the City. The park location is a critical component to finalizing the Final Development Plan application and starting the environmental review according to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Following appropriate environmental review of the plan, the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Planning Commission will be able to consider the application for the Final Development Plan at public hearings. The City Council makes the final determination on Final Development Plans.

**Exhibits**

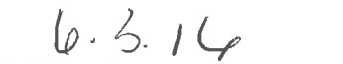
A. Park Location Options

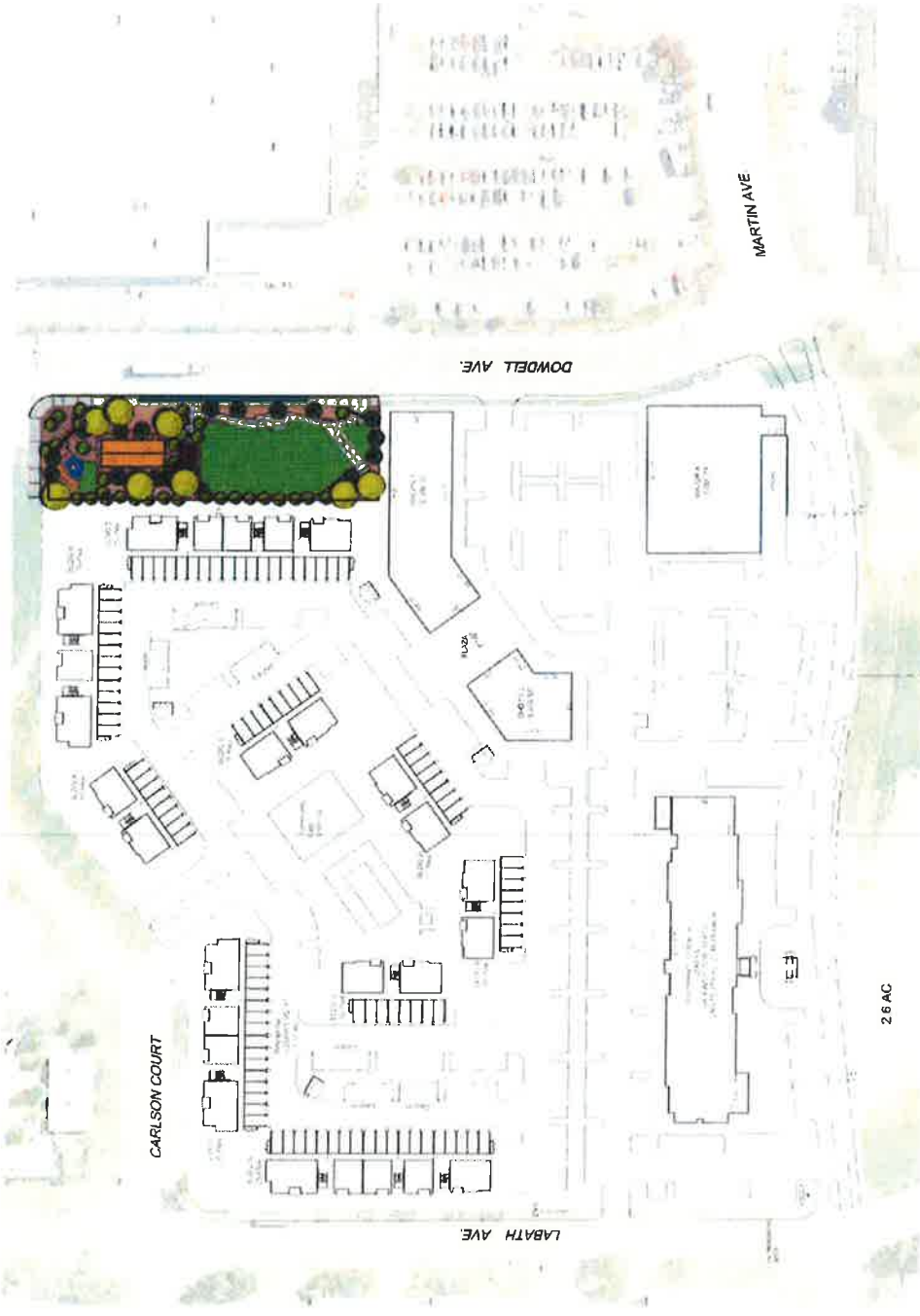
APPROVALS:

  
Jeffrey Beiswenger, AICP  
Planning Manager

  
Date

  
Mitch Austin  
Community Services Manager

  
Date



**Existing Design:**

The park is currently proposed to run North/South along Dowdell Ave.

The proposed location of the community park provides the following:

- "Eyes on the park" – Security with good visibility from Dowdell Ave., Carlson Court, the MFR project, and the commercial area
- Best location for direct access to the park in respect to the existing neighboring residential areas
- A good buffer between the MFR units, the Dowdell Ave. collector, and the truck loading side of Costco
- Meets all of the criteria identified as important to the Park's Commission

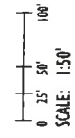
The City has a safety concern of children being able to run into Dowdell Ave. while playing at the park.

The proposed design has a skate sidewalk area and planter area between the recreation lawn and the street. The distance from the lawn to the street, in most instances, will suffice without a fence. If the City feels there is additional need to control errant balls from reaching Dowdell Ave. and kids chasing after them, a low ornamental fence would be recommended (42" maximum) to prevent children from running into Dowdell Ave.



KEY MAP

**PARK OPTION EXHIBIT: EXISTING DESIGN  
CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN**



**RESIDENCES AT FIVE CREEK**

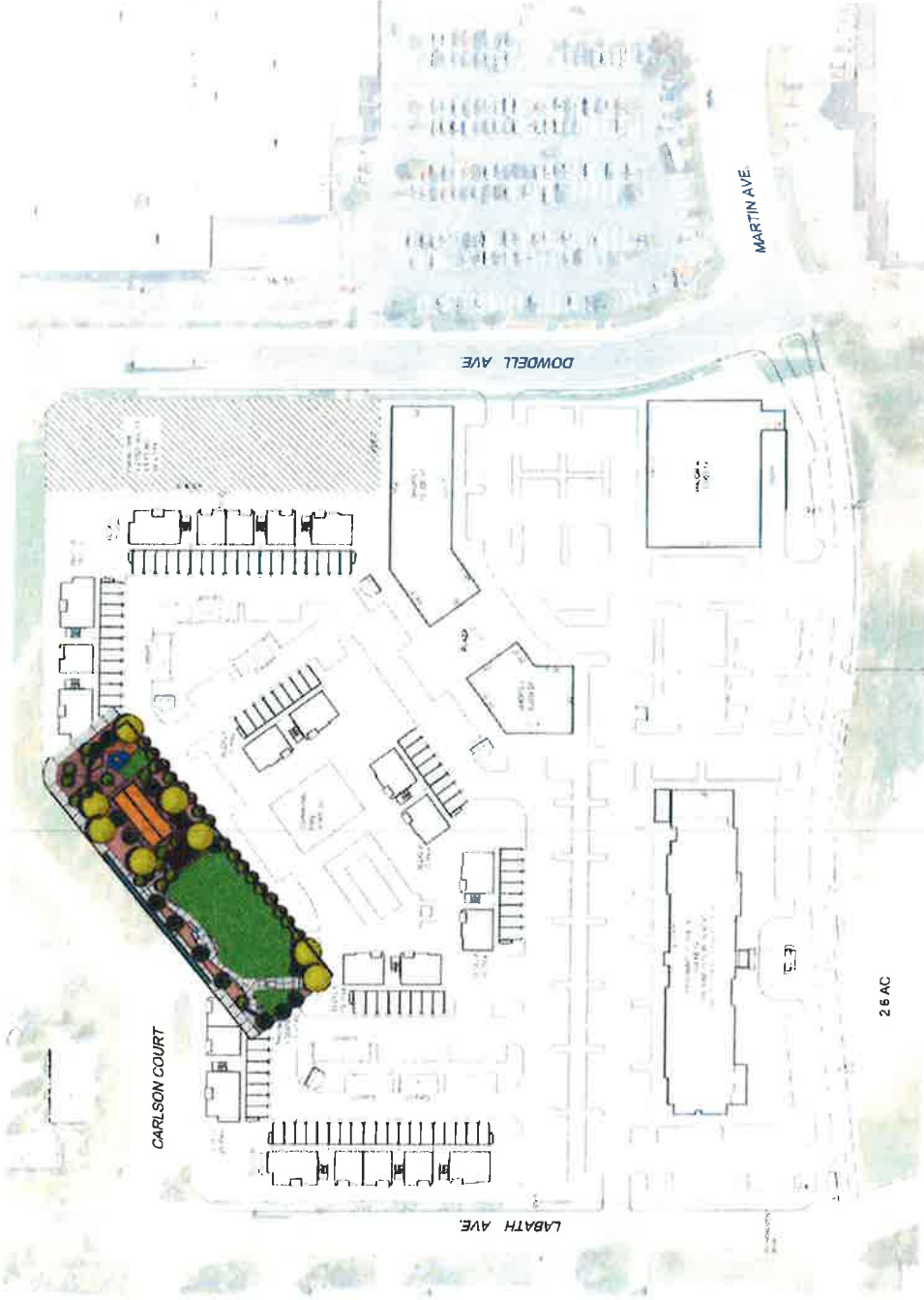
**MW** INVESTMENT GROUP  
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THE FIVE CREEK PROJECT

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**Alternative #1:**  
 This option locates the park along Carlson Court.

This location presents a big issue with the entire MFR Layout and the access point midway along Carlson Court. Carlson Court has always been designed as the primary access point to the North Project area, and this location would be severely detrimental to the current layout.

Relocating the project entry to the east or west could create traffic issues by being too close to the adjacent intersections. This would also decentralize the entry and cause less efficient vehicular circulation for the residents.



**PARK OPTION EXHIBIT: ALTERNATIVE #1  
 CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN**

**RESIDENCES AT FIVE CREEK**

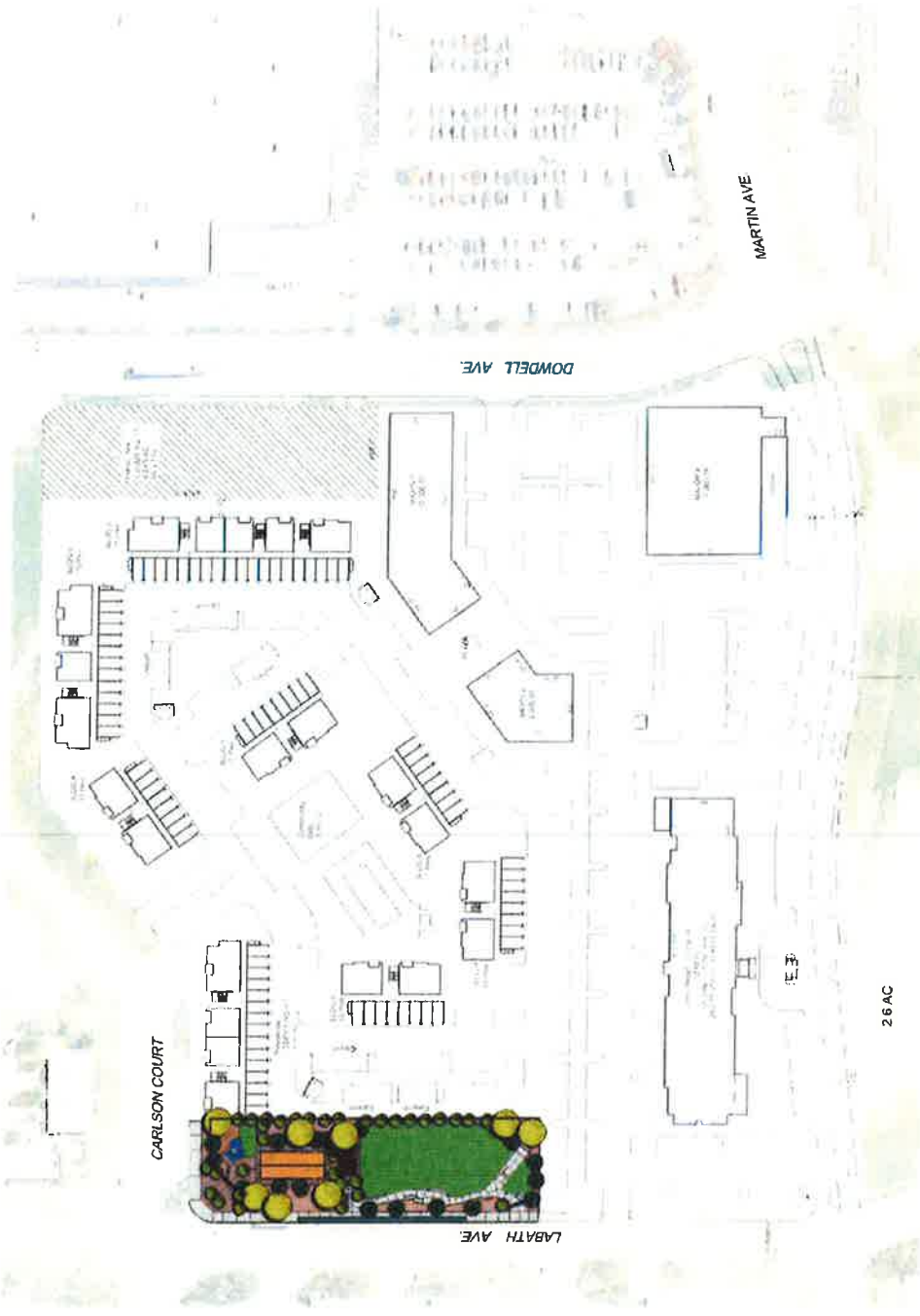
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**Alternative #2:**

This option locates the park along Labath Ave.

This is the least offensive alternative location, but it takes away from the City's desire for this park to serve the neighboring residential. The park would front commercial uses along Labath Ave. and the neighboring residents of the Fiori Apartments would not have convenient access to the park.

Labath Ave. traffic concerns should be equal or greater than the existing location along Dowdell Ave. Eyes on the park from a commercial area and from regular traffic (typical on Dowdell Ave.) would be lost.



KEY MAP

**PARK OPTION EXHIBIT: ALTERNATIVE #2  
CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN**

**RESIDENCES AT FIVE CREEK**

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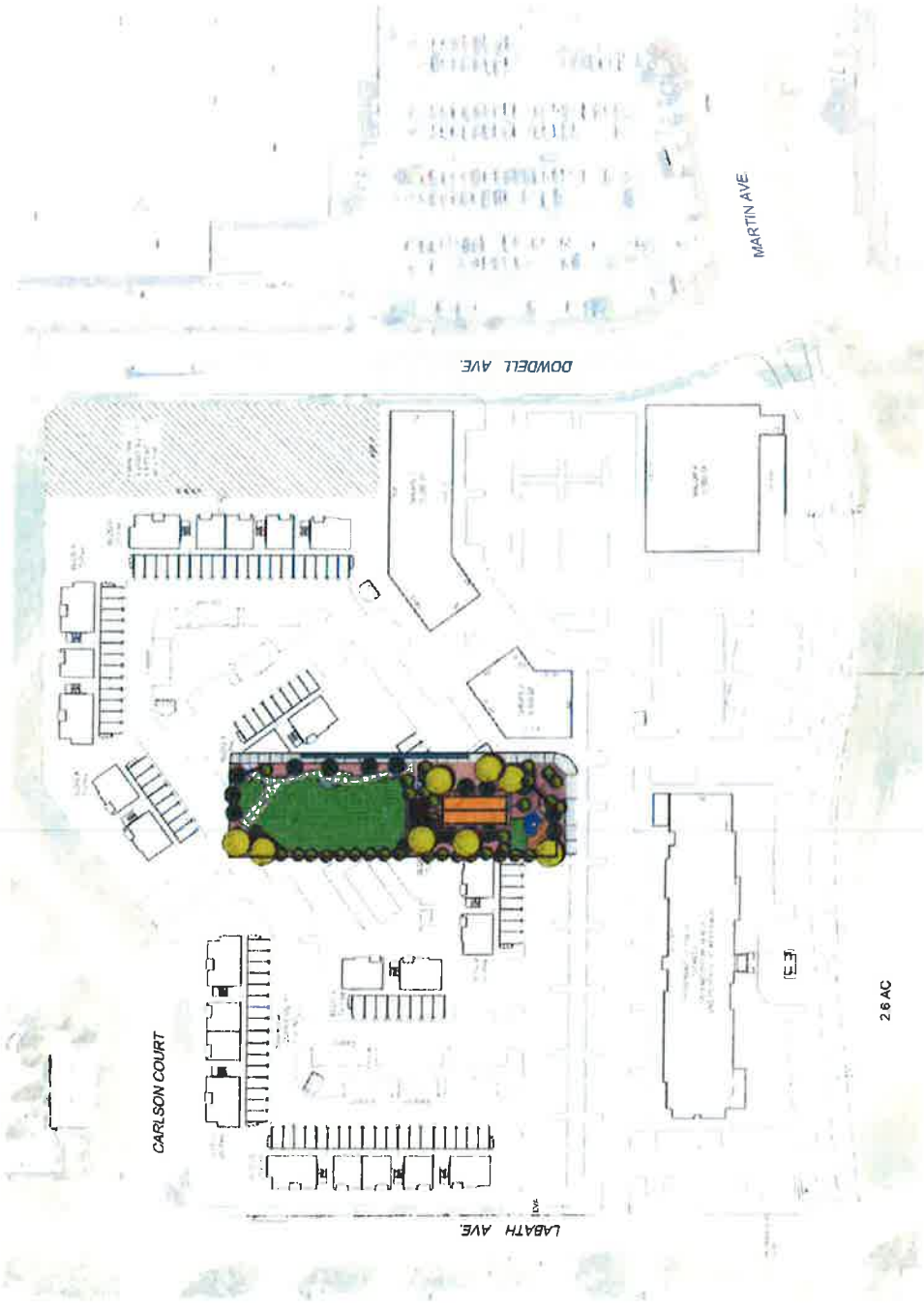
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**Alternative #3:**

This option centrally locates the park between the MFR, Hotel, and Retail projects.

This alternative location is unfeasible. A public owned park in the middle of private property creates a number of liability issues, concern for security of residents, issues with access and parking. It also does not meet the City's desire to create a community park that serves the neighboring residential.



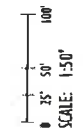
**PARK OPTION EXHIBIT: ALTERNATIVE #3  
CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN**

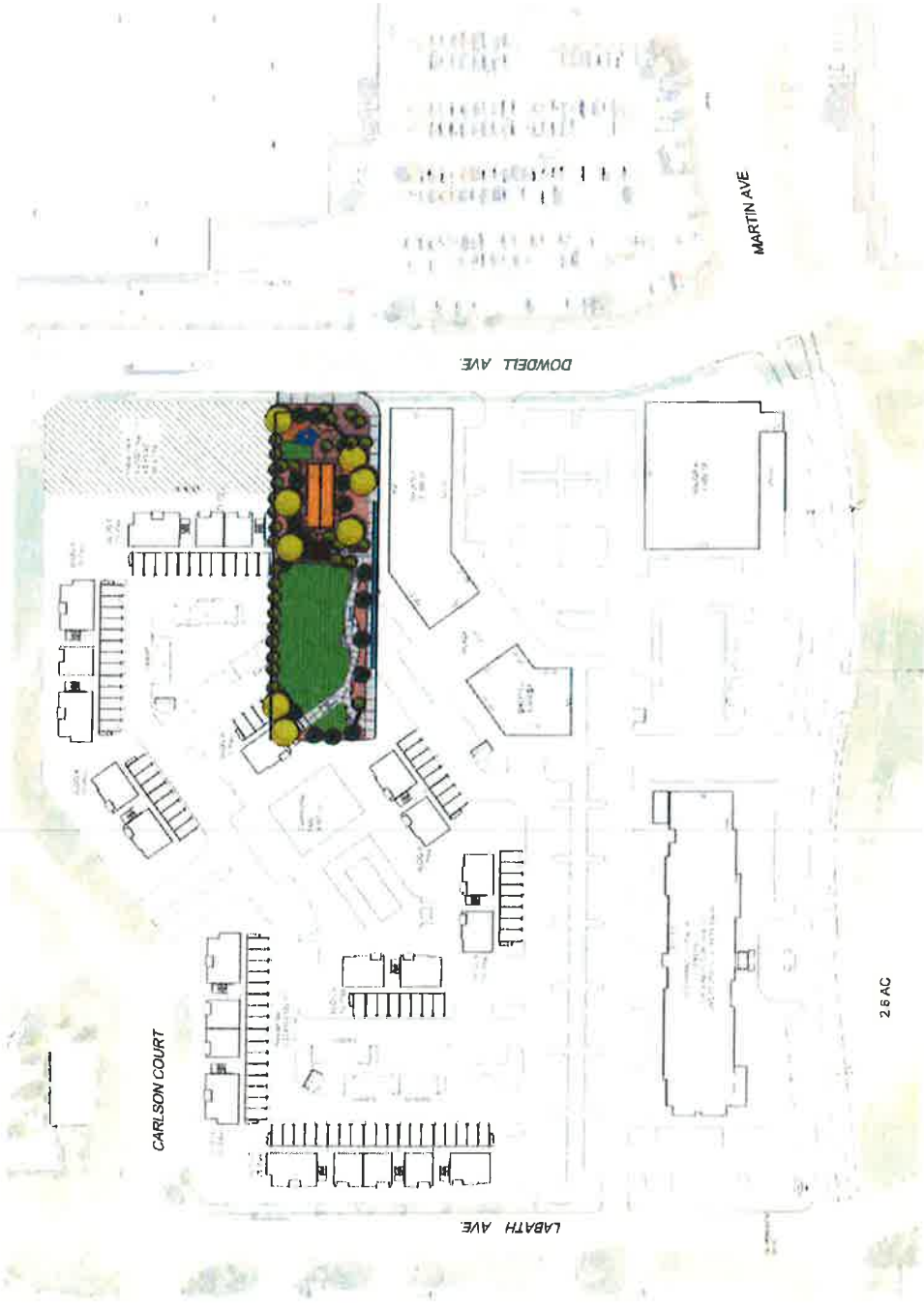
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**Alternative #4:**

This option locates the park on Dowdell Ave., running East/West between the MFR and Retail projects.

This alternative location fronts onto the back of house of the Retail project and the long depth of the park into the site would make police/public observation from Dowdell Ave. difficult.

**PARK OPTION EXHIBIT: ALTERNATIVE #4  
CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN**

**RESIDENCES AT FIVE CREEK**



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KEY MAP



0 25' 50' 100'  
SCALE: 1"=50'

ALT-05

**PARK OPTION EXHIBIT-EXISTING DESIGN-  
CONCEPTUAL SITE PLAN**

**RESIDENCES AT FIVE CREEK**

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