



Conejo Recreation & Park District

GENERAL MANAGER
Jim Friedl

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DATE: September 3, 2026

TO: Board of Directors

FROM: Jim Friedl, General Manager 

SUBJECT: **Authorize Staff to Seek Architectural Design Proposals for Improvements at 401 W. Hillcrest Drive for Therapeutic Recreation & Multi-Purpose Community Recreation and Event Center Space**

RECOMMENDATION

Authorize staff to advertise a Request for Proposals regarding architectural design and construction cost estimation services for improvements at and around 401 W. Hillcrest Drive.

DISCUSSION

This topic was discussed during the July 16, 2026 CRPD Board meeting. Staff is now seeking authorization to request proposals from architectural firms to create design and construction cost estimates. A professional services agreement along with the recommended proposer would be brought back to the board for consideration at a future meeting.

Background – Fireworks Hill Acquisition

On June 30, 2026, the Conejo Recreation and Park District acquired "Fireworks Hill" from the City of Thousand Oaks for \$31.4 million. Fireworks Hill is located just north of the Oaks Shopping Center and West of the Janss Marketplace.

The 61-acre property purchase includes two primary buildings (401 and 403 W. Hillcrest Blvd.) The existing CRPD administrative offices and Hillcrest Center for the Arts community center at 403 W. Hillcrest total 34,000 sf. The adjacent 401 W. Hillcrest building is 21,000 sf and was the former National Park Service headquarters for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

The 21,000 sf building at 401 W. Hillcrest is currently vacant and is the subject of this CRPD board agenda item.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

403 West Hillcrest Drive, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360-4223
805-495-6471 | 805-497-3199 | parks@crpd.org | www.crpdpd.org

Background – Conejo Community Center

In the years prior to CRPD's acquisition of Fireworks Hill (and 55,000 sf of buildings), CRPD had been planning and saving to construct a new community center at Conejo Community Park located less than 1 mile from Fireworks Hill. The new 19,000 sf Conejo Community Center building would have replaced the existing 7,000 sf Conejo Community Center building and been 2 stories rather than 1 story in approximately the same location.

As the opportunity to acquire Fireworks Hill came to light, CRPD recognized that it had an opportunity to not only become an owner (rather than tenant) of its administrative headquarters and Hillcrest Center for the Arts (403. W. Hillcrest); but CRPD could also acquire 61 acres of land suitable for parkland serving existing and future residents; AND it could acquire an additional 21,000 sf of new indoor recreational space while retaining the existing 7,000 sf Conejo Community Center building. Thus, CRPD's focus (and capital project resources) shifted from replacing and expanding the Conejo Community Center to acquiring the Fireworks Hill

Proposed Uses for 401 W. Hillcrest (Therapeutic Recreation – Multi-Purpose Recreation and Meeting Space - Multi-purpose Community Event Center)

In the six months leading to the acquisition of Fireworks Hill, CRPD staff held numerous meetings to think systemically about the programming and facility needs of the public – today and in the years ahead. And, if 401 W. Hillcrest were available, how could that additional square footage be utilized to best serve the broad recreational programming and gathering needs of the public in the years ahead?

That process resulted in 3 primary uses for 401 W. Hillcrest.

1. Therapeutic Recreation Unit's main office/programming space;
2. A multi-purpose community event center space; and
3. A multi-purpose meeting and recreation programming space.

The TR Unit serves a population with special needs, while the multi-purpose event center and multi-purpose room(s) will serve a broad range of the general public with all sorts of recreation and gathering needs. All 3 uses will serve people throughout the district.

Therapeutic Recreation

The "TR" Unit currently operates primarily out of the 3,400 sf Old Meadows Center. TR staff offices and additional TR programming space would move into approximately 8,000 sf at the eastern end of the 401 building, which would include multiple meeting/programming spaces as well as sufficient office space for TR staff, including a new "Senior Recreation Specialist for Inclusion". At 401 W. Hillcrest, TR would be able to run more programming within a climate-controlled building and have easy access to larger multi-purpose rooms and event center space for larger events and programs. The existing Old Meadows Center and Rotary Dreamcatcher Playground would remain available for TR programming while also allowing more space and time for other recreational programming and permitted community uses.

Multi-Purpose Recreation & Meeting Space

Unless CRPD receives \$20 million for a new community center building, the existing 7,000 sf Conejo Community Center will continue to serve the community. The proposed plan for 401 W. Hillcrest includes a 2,800 sf multi-purpose room which can hold larger recreational classes, rehearsals, programs, events, and would be available for recreational staff and contract instructor-led programming (like other community centers) and be available for permitted use by the community (like other community centers).

Multi-Purpose Community Event Center Space

Just under half of 401 W. Hillcrest (9,000 sf) would be used as a multi-purpose community event center, offices, kitchen, storage, and meeting space. Indoor gatherings would use the space for community events, programs, comedy, lectures, trainings, and rehearsals, as well as private rentals for weddings, family, team, club, business, and non-profit events. Rather than a full-service kitchen, staff believes a catering kitchen will best serve the broad interests and budgets of a wide spectrum of the population. Staff believes that user groups will find the distance from neighbors, park setting, elevated location, and dramatic sunset views quite attractive.

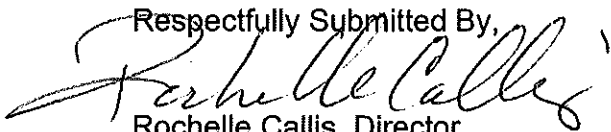
A preliminary budget shows the ability to have a positive net balance if the event center is rented 90 weekend days per year at \$4,000 for the day.

Staff has also researched 10 other rental options in the City of Thousand Oaks and neighboring communities, which provide indoor space that can accommodate approximately 200 – 300. Staff also met with and toured the City of Agoura event center and City of Calabasas banquet hall. The Conejo Valley Chamber staff and the City of Agoura staff visited 401 to discuss the possibilities of our space being an event center and the possible need in our community. We have had encouraging conversations and positive feedback for us to provide this type of facility. One of the big differences is that this facility is not expected to have a required food and beverage service with room rentals. The community is able to work with any caterer or no caterer at all if they choose, which gives families the ability to work within their budgets.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPLIANCE

Meets 2026 Strategic Plan Goal 1.1: Offer diversified programs that meet the needs of the community. 1.8 Continue to evaluate, develop, and enhance services for special populations programming. 3.2 Evaluate existing and seek new revenue sources to enhance programming, property acquisition, park improvements, and capital facility replacements.

Respectfully Submitted By,



Rochelle Callis, Director
Recreation and Community Services

Attached: Color-Coded Site Plan of Current Proposal for 401 W. Hillcrest Drive