

## PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The following information is provided in follow up to questions asked during presentation of the Parks and Recreation Proposed FY 2010 Budget to City Council on May 4, 2009.

**1. DOWNTOWN ORGANIZATION CONTRACT - Increasing the proposed cost shift from \$200,000 to 50% of the contract cost.**

The proposed FY 2010 contract with the Downtown Organization for the maintenance of State Street landscaping and the cleaning of sidewalks is \$625,242. The proposed budget includes a cost shift of \$200,000 from the Downtown Parking Fund toward the General Fund cost of the contract in the Parks and Recreation budget. Councilmember Williams suggested that the cost shift be increased to fifty percent of the total contract; which would be \$312,621 for FY 2010.

**2. CAPITAL PROGRAM – Potential impact if Parks and Recreation capital funding was suspended one year.**

Councilmember Horton inquired about the impacts of suspending the proposed FY 2010 capital funding for one year. The proposed FY 2010 Parks and Recreation Capital Program of \$482,600 includes \$50,000 for fence and sidewalk replacement from the Shoreline Park landslide, \$50,000 for the replacement of the lower portion of the Mesa Lane Steps, \$237,000 for the renovation of the large restroom at Oak Park, and \$145,000 for a new playground next to the West Beach Wading Pool.

There would be a number of impacts to park users as well as the Department if these projects were delayed for a year. These projects address basic park needs. The Shoreline Park project provides a limited response to safety needs at the park surrounding the landslide. It does not address drainage issues and safety needs at MacGillivray Point in addition to other needed park improvements. The lower section of Mesa Lane Steps is deteriorating and a growing safety concern. Further deterioration may result in closure of the steps. Renovation of the Oak Park restrooms has been on the Department's capital needs list for almost 10 years. The restrooms have had few improvements since they were constructed in the 1960s. The interior tile, stalls, lavatories, urinal, and toilets are outdated and in poor condition.

An additional concern is the impact to staff. Reductions in the department's capital FY 2009 funding and what was originally proposed for FY 2010 have resulted in restructuring of the Project Management Team for FY 2010 and elimination of the Landscape Architect position. The Project Technician, funded by the capital program, serves as the project manager overseeing project design

and implementation and assisting with grant development and management. If the capital funding was delayed for a year, the Department would likely have to eliminate this position. The loss of this position, combined with the proposed layoff of the Landscape Architect, would severely impact the Department's ability to pursue new grant opportunities and limit its options for any capital projects if funding becomes available in the future.

### **3. LOS BANOS – Cost to reinstate the Sunday Lap Swim Program, clarification of number of people impacted by service reduction.**

The Lap Swim Program is currently offered 7 days a week at Los Banos. On Sundays this is the only program which takes place, which provided the department the opportunity to reduce services for the greatest level of cost savings. Cost to reinstate Sunday Lap Swim would be \$4,420. No revenue impact is considered due to the assumption that lap swimmers will continue to purchase passes for use on the other days. Records show the average number of Sunday lap swimmers is 47. Remaining hours of lap swim available to patrons each week is 24.5.

Staff is working with swimmers and members of the Friends of Los Banos who have expressed interest in raising funds to reinstate this service. There is preliminary interest in raising funds to reinstate the Ortega Park Rec Swim Program (\$8,600), and \$30,000 to repair the Oak Park wading pool.

### **4. ZOO CONTRACT – Opportunity to reduce General Fund support?**

Councilmember Williams expressed interest in possible General Fund savings associated with the Zoo contract. The City's 25-year lease with the Zoo provides annual General Fund support for a portion of the Zoo's water use and grounds maintenance, budgeted in the Parks Division. The FY 2010 contract amount is projected at \$158,322. The contract will be up for renewal in December 2012. The Zoo, understanding the City's fiscal challenges, has offered to enter into early renegotiation and consider a 3-year phased reduction of the General Fund support. This could potentially provide a savings to the General Fund of \$52,774 in FY 2010, 2011, and 2012.

### **5. BEACH CLEANING – Opportunity to shift costs to Measure B Funds?**

Councilmember Falcone inquired about the feasibility of shifting the costs associated with beach cleaning from the General Fund to Measure B. Staff responded that from the inception of the Creek Restoration/Water Quality Improvement Program, the intent of Measure B funds has been to supplement rather than supplant existing City programs.

This proposal was discussed briefly by the Creeks Advisory Committee at their May 13, 2009 meeting as part of their budget item. While the Committee was

sympathetic to the City's current budget challenges, Committee members expressed unanimous concern about the proposal; concluding that such a shift would inappropriately violate the intent and purpose of Measure B, and would set a poor precedent for future funding decisions. The Committee recommended that this cost shift not be included in the Creeks Division proposed FY 2010 budget.

#### **6. URBAN FORESTRY PROGRAM – Impact of 40% service reduction to park and facility trees**

Councilmember Schneider asked for more information on the effects of reductions in Forestry for FY 2009 and proposed with FY 2010. The General Fund reduction in the Forestry program affects park and facility trees (i.e., Library, Police building, Carrillo Recreation Center, etc.) versus street trees, as that tree maintenance is funded by the UUT.

Proposed reductions in tree pruning for FY 2010 include a number of activities that the Department believes will have the least immediate impact. These include the elimination of palm tree pruning for Fiesta, limitation of facility tree pruning to trees adjacent to facility entrances and exits, reduction in palm tree pruning at beach front facilities, prioritization of tree pruning on known or anticipated safety issues, and a reduction of neighborhood improvement program forestry projects from 4 to 2. Tree pruning in 11 open space parks will be limited to safety issues. Tree pruning in developed parks and City facilities will be focused on trees adjacent to high use areas such as playgrounds, picnic tables, and entrances or exits. Other trees within parks and facilities will be addressed based on tree safety and other needs once the high use areas are completed. The Department anticipates up to a 40% reduction in its tree pruning goals due to the prioritization of tree safety over aesthetics. The extent of the reductions will depend on the type of pruning required as well as the need for emergency pruning.

To offset the reductions in FY 09, the Parks Division redirected Park operations staff to provide tree pruning assistance, used volunteer labor, and focused park and facility tree pruning on species that require limited pruning.

In FY 10 the Department will also suspend its tree pruning cycle goals. Reductions will likely have a longer-term impact that is difficult to quantify in any specific year if tree maintenance continues to be deferred.

#### **7. NEIGHBORHOOD AND OUTREACH SERVICES – Specific service impacts to Teen Programs**

Staff is finalizing documents providing greater clarification of what the proposed merger of Teen Programs and Community Services into Neighborhood and Outreach Services would mean for services and staffing. This information will be presented at the May 27, 2009 Park and Recreation Commission meeting.

