



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO
Inter-Departmental Correspondence
Parks



Date: April 15, 2015
Board Meeting Date: May 19, 2015
Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Honorable Board of Supervisors

From: Marlene Finley, Parks Director

Subject: Mini-park Policy

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a resolution approving a Mini-park Policy for unincorporated San Mateo County.

BACKGROUND:

In 2014, San Mateo County Parks Department acquired two mini-parks: Friendship Park and Moss Beach Park respectively located in North Fair Oaks and Moss Beach. Both parks are less than an acre in size and provide services to both residents and others who visit the neighborhoods. These mini-parks are prime examples of the growing demand for smaller parks closer to urban areas, specifically within unincorporated areas of the County where there are no governmental agencies that currently serve this purpose.

It has not been a traditional role of the Parks Department to manage mini-parks as there is no reference or guidance legitimizing the classification of mini-parks within the General Plan, and no existing policies on the creation or management of mini-parks.

Parks and Recreation Commissioners Merrilees and Okelo volunteered to co-chair a mini-parks subcommittee and recruited a representative from each unincorporated community council in the County. The purpose of the mini-parks subcommittee, which met monthly, was to draft a policy that would establish the definition, goals, and policies for the need, acceptance, requirements, and management of mini-parks.

This policy is intended to serve as a guiding document for the Parks Department's efforts to manage future adopted or created mini-parks within the County. The policy outlines the process of submitting a formal proposal to the County Parks Director for the purchase of land, the construction of a park facility, and/or the adoption of a mini-park.

The requirements and criteria include:

- An applicant being a public agency or an active non-profit organization
- Demonstrate and prove need and community support for a park in the neighborhood of the proposed park
- Consider partnership with the applicant and/or other entities if there is an unmet need that could be filled in the particular community
- County in its discretion may purchase, lease, or transfer land for a mini-park
- Consider partnering with an existing agency to take on the management and maintenance of an existing park

A proposal must provide:

- Name of the organization
- List of collaborating entities
- Location, size and history of considered parcel
- Mini-park conceptual site plan
- Clearly demonstrate the need and support of the community
- Estimated costs and funding model for the mini-park

Though the operation of mini-parks may require different personnel or expertise, management will be consistent with the current administration of the Parks Department.

DISCUSSION:

The County's Parks and Recreation Commission at their April 9, 2015 meeting reviewed the Mini-park Policy developed by the subcommittee and unanimously recommended its approval to the Board of Supervisors to adopt the policy. The policy is attached to the resolution for this item.

Approval of this policy is essential to achieve the County Parks' strategic vision of providing a unique system of natural parks and a broad spectrum of recreational facilities. The resolution to adopt a Mini-park Policy contributes to the 2025 Shared Vision goals for an Environmentally Conscious Community as it will integrate mini-parks within the jurisdiction of County Parks and embrace the operation and maintenance of these specialized facilities. Through this policy, the County will add mini-parks to the County Parks classification system within the San Mateo County General Plan, and thus provide a balance of park types and locations.

County Counsel has reviewed the resolution as to form.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no immediate net county cost from the adoption of the policy. There could be future fiscal impact dependent upon the resources required for management of new mini-parks relative to the nature of the park, partnership, and factors specific to each mini-park.