

Special Notice / Hearing: None
Vote Required: Majority

To: Parks and Recreation Commission
From: Nicholas J. Calderon, Parks Director
Subject: Fiscal Year 2021-23 Budget Priorities

RECOMMENDATION:

Accept the Parks Department's Fiscal Year 2021-23 Budget Priorities.

BACKGROUND:

In 2013, the County of San Mateo ("County") implemented a two-year budget cycle which facilitates longer-term financial planning. The second year of the two-year budget cycle focuses on improving performance and service delivery.

For Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-23, the County Manager's Office is reforming the Performance Management Program to focus on (1) ensuring performance is meaningful and delivers better outcomes; (2) incorporating the County's priorities of equity and innovation; and (3) communicating performance to the public in an effective and accessible manner. It has yet to be determined how this will impact the Department's budget or services.

Pursuant to the existing schedule, the Board of Supervisors will finalize budget and Measure K priorities on February 9, 2021, and hold public hearings regarding the Recommended Budget the week of June 21, 2021.

DISCUSSION:

The Parks Department ("Department") categorizes its budget priorities in three ways: (1) Visitor Services; (2) Infrastructure and Facilities; and (3) Natural Resource Management.

Visitor Services

The Department anticipates that during the first year of the FY 2021-23 budget cycle, operations will still be modified to satisfy COVID-19 safety protocols. For this reason, the Department desires to onboard additional park aides to assist in: (i) the cleaning and restocking of restrooms; (ii) garbage and recycling pick up services; (iii) educating guests on park rules; and (iv) the cleaning of playgrounds.

The Department is also preparing to resume Interpretive Program events, including Take A Hike, Nature Hikes, Movies in the Park, and more. The manner in which these events are offered will depend on trends in COVID-19 cases and local and state health guidelines. The Interpretive Program will also complete its 5-year Interpretive Plan, and funds will be allocated in the budget to enable implementation of programs and initiatives identified in the plan.

Infrastructure and Facilities

The Department intends to upgrade several utilities throughout the County's park system, including the water distribution systems at Huddart Park and Memorial Park. The Department also desires to evaluate the water distribution and wastewater collection systems at the Coyote Point Recreation Area to develop a strategy to upgrade the systems accordingly. By upgrading entire systems instead of spot repairing, overtime the Department can allocate more resources to direct visitor services, vegetation management, and maintenance of trails, playgrounds, and other amenities.

The Department also has three significant capital projects that will be prioritized during the upcoming two-year budget cycle. These include the Tunitas Creek Beach Improvement Project, Re-Imagine Flood Park, and the Coyote Point Eastern Promenade project.

Natural Resource Management

Core to the Department's mission, preservation of the County's natural resources will be a focus for the FY 2021-23 budget. The Natural Resource Management division will be collaborating with the San Mateo Resource Conservation District to implement a 415-acre forest health project in Huddart Park and Wunderlich Park designed to reduce the impacts of Sudden Oak Death and invasive species. The division will also lead the department's wildfire fuel management program.

In an effort to restore and preserve sensitive resources, the Natural Resource Management division will also conduct extensive invasive species control projects to reduce jubata grass, slender false brome, eucalyptus, gorse, and other harmful non-native plant species.

FISCAL IMPACT:

At this time, the County Manager's Office has not provided County departments with upcoming Net County Cost targets. Furthermore, the County Board of Supervisors are tentatively set to approve Measure K and budget priorities for the next two-year budget cycle early next year. When more information is provided, the Department will inform the Commission.