



County of Santa Clara

Parks and Recreation Department

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To: Jeffrey V. Smith, County Executive

From: Julie Mark, Acting Director, Parks and Recreation *Julie Mark*

Date: March 4, 2011

Subject: FY 2012 Requested Budget Submittal and Department Overview

The Parks and Recreation Department administers the County's 46,000-acre park system which includes the operation and maintenance of 28 diverse regional parks, and the provision of recreation and interpretative programs. Parks staff works with cities, special park districts, contiguous counties and the State of California on mutually beneficial projects and to develop complementary park and recreation programs.

FY 2011 Highlights

Renovation of Casa Grande Mansion

Dedication of the fully restored Casa Grande mansion was held on November 13, 2010 with over 1,000 guests in attendance. Casa Grande is the most significant historic structure in the New Almaden National Historic Landmark District. The building is a brick, un-reinforced masonry building built in 1854. It served as the mine manager's residence until 1927.

Restoration and rehabilitation of the building includes seismic upgrades, repairs to correct late 20th century building modifications, restoration of windows and doors, plaster repairs, removal and replacement of deteriorating brick material, new roof and HVAC system, landscaping, new restrooms, media room and outdoor gathering space.

The New Almaden National Historic Landmark District was designated as a national, state and locally significant area in the mid 1960s for its association with quicksilver mining. Almaden Quicksilver County Park is the site of the largest mercury mining operations of the late 19th century.

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Martial Cottle Park

Martial Cottle Park (“Park”), comprised of approximately 256.64-acre public parkland, is located in south San Jose, bounded by Branham Lane, Snell Avenue, Chynoweth Avenue and Highway 85. The new joint State and County park was the result of a generous donation from Mr. Walter Cottle Lester, where he transferred 136.52 acres of the property to the State of California and 120.12 acres to the County.

On February 8, 2011, the County Board of Supervisors approved the Martial Cottle Park Master Plan project. Subsequently, the State Park and Recreation Commission adopted the General Plan for Martial Cottle Park on March 2, 2011. These two agencies’ approvals concluded a three-and-a-half year public planning process.

The establishment of the Park is intended to provide recreational and educational resources that honor the Donor’s intent to preserve and educate visitors about Santa Clara Valley’s agricultural history. The Park’s agricultural uses would be a component of educational and interpretive programming about the agricultural history of the Santa Clara Valley. The main uses of the Park would include recreational facilities and trails, educational and interpretive programming related to the site’s cultural and natural resources and agricultural production that relates to the site’s history.

With the approved Park Plan, the Department is now able to proceed with design development of the initial phase for Martial Cottle Park. Phase one would focus on establishing basic infrastructure and facilities to enable farming operations to be initiated during phase one, as well as necessary improvements to allow for public access and limited recreational activities, such as the main Park entrance on Snell Avenue, one service/emergency entrance and unpaved service roads, signage, gates, fencing, multi-use trails and non-vehicular neighborhood access points including buffer landscape treatments, utilities, the Visitor Center complex, day use areas, corporation yards for the Park and agricultural uses, set-up of the leased agricultural areas and the cooperative management areas, and other support facilities.

The Department has set aside approximately \$20 million for the design development and construction of Phase one components of the Park Plan. In addition, \$300,000 has been earmarked by the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority, and \$250,000 of approved federal funding from the Transportation Housing and Urban Development Appropriations (California 15th Congressional District) will be used towards phase one development.

The Department will be responsible for operating and maintaining the Park, where it is anticipated that cooperative partners will operate and maintain facilities for youth agriculture, agricultural research, demonstration programs, urban forestry programs, and community gardens. Production agriculture will be managed by a cooperative partner or a lease with a “master farmer,” where the Department will provide a certain level of coordination. The size and intensity of uses within the developed Park will require

approximately an estimated range of 16 to 18 full-time equivalent staff to be dedicated to the Park once the Park is fully built and all programs are operating. During phase one, an approximate range of \$1 to \$1.5 million would be needed to operate and maintain the park. At this time, the Department does not have this level of operational funding on an ongoing basis. It is our hope that by the time the design is completed, the economy will begin to rebound such that the Park Charter Fund can cover the ongoing management costs.

Property Management Database Project

Since the Board of Supervisors acceptance of the Management Audit in November 2007, the Parks Department has moved forward to implement Audit recommendations, including establishing a system to inventory all land holdings and property management agreements, which requires establishment of a property management database. A Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Analyst position was created and the position filled in May 2010; however, the Department is seeking a cross-departmental solution that could benefit the entire County in managing its land assets.

Parks has convened an interdepartmental working group to pursue a countywide solution for land holding and property management business needs. To date, representatives from Facilities and Fleet (FAF), Information Services Department (ISD), the Assessor's Office, the County Surveyor, Health and Hospitals, and Roads and Airports (RDA) have participated in this working group. If budgetary resources can be obtained, a database build is anticipated in the final quarter of 2011, with population of the database, in the areas of lease tracking, and acquisition and easement history, to follow. If no mutually acceptable internal solution is found for multiple departments, then it will be necessary to re-evaluate the possibility of a collective solution, and determine if individual departments would need to utilize and/or establish separate tracking systems. A full estimate of cost to scope, configure, and populate an internal program used by Health and Hospitals (the ARCHIBUS database) for all of the needed modules is estimated at \$500,000. Though detailed estimates are not available at this time, it is assumed that ongoing costs will range from \$15,000-\$25,000 per year.

Fantasy of Lights

The 2010 Fantasy of Lights event was one of the most successful in the twelve years that the Parks Department has presented the event. Gate revenues were \$389,130, a 17% increase over the previous high year of 2008.

In 2010, the Department introduced a new element to the event called the Reindeer Express Bus. This pilot premium service program allowed event patrons to board a bus coach in downtown Los Gatos to experience the event without waiting in the often long vehicle entrance lines on weekends and holiday dates. The pilot program was well received and had an occupancy rate of 100% for the eight bus trips advertised. The buses

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were provided through a sponsorship with Royal Coach Tours Inc. and registration and marketing was provided through a partnership with the Los Gatos-Saratoga Recreation organization. Our intention is to expand the service to additional weekends for the 2011 event.

The Jingle Bus was another pilot program for the 2010 Fantasy of Lights event and was geared for disadvantaged children and their families in the county. The Jingle Bus was presented in partnership with the Social Services Agency's Department of Family and Children's Services (DFCS). The Jingle Bus program provided school bus transportation from two community pick-up locations. Everyone received a goody-bag with a pair of holiday 3D glasses, and a stop was made inside Vasona Lake County Park for warm drinks and holiday treats, all at no cost to the participating families. Costs for the program were provided by DFCS while staffing was shared by both DFCS and Parks. The families were very appreciative of the program and provided positive feedback about the experience. Based on this response, Parks and DFCS are planning to expand the Jingle Bus event to more families for the 2011 Fantasy of Lights event.

Camping Yurts

In 2007, the Department completed a feasibility study on establishing yurts in County park campgrounds, particularly those campgrounds that were not very popular with the camping public. Based on the positive outcomes identified by the study, the Department implemented a pilot project of five yurts at Mount Madonna County Park in the FY 09 capital budget. Construction of the yurts was completed in March 2010 and the yurts were open to the public on May 1st. The public loved the yurts and in fact, the yurts would be reserved for year round use if they had a heat source. Staff performed an analysis which is presented below:

Total cost for purchase, installation, and furniture for five yurts =	\$197,945 or \$38,589 / yurt
Annual Maintenance Costs per Yurt =	\$2,166 / year
Revenue for Five Campsites w/out Yurts for 5/1/09 to 1/31/10 =	\$5,077
Revenue for Five Campsites w/ Yurts for 5/1 /10 to 1/31/11 =	\$48,000

Based on this data, the Department is projecting a return on investment in five to six years assuming same level of occupancy.

For fiscal year 2012, the Department is recommending an expansion of the yurt program with a second phase of construction consisting of five additional yurts at either Grant Ranch County Park or Sanborn County Park. Based on reservation data and user comments, a heating source will be included in these yurts to extend the use to year

round.

FY 2012 Budget Highlights

Fixed Assets

To ensure compliance with current State emissions requirements for off-highway diesel vehicles, the Department will be purchasing a replacement front loader tractor, a replacement Toro ride-on turf grass mower (replacing two current mowers), and a replacement Crawler Tractor/Bulldozer (replacing 2 current tractors) for a total cost of \$301,000. The current equipment cannot be retrofitted in a cost effective manner due to the age of the equipment. This equipment is essential for weed control activities, turf mowing, as well as facility construction and repair work.

Also included in the fixed asset purchase requests are a tractor mounted turf aerator unit and a flatbed trailer. The flat bed trailer is needed to meet State emission standards as it will allow Parks staff to trailer tractors to park sites instead of driving. The turf aerator unit is necessary to continue the Department's turf renovation program. Parts are no-longer available for the current aerator unit and it is constantly in the shop for repairs due to age and use. The total cost for these two units is \$40,000.

Lastly, the Department recommends the purchase of an ATV (All Terrain Vehicle). The ATV would primarily be used for public safety patrols, EMS-rescue and resource management projects at Coyote Lake Harvey Bear County Park. The trails in this park have become very popular especially for mountain biking and equestrian riding. Of the 19 miles of trails 14.7 miles are of single track design and ATV's are the only way to patrol them or access them for emergency response or search and rescue

Please see the attachment for specific descriptions of each piece of equipment.

Proposed Capital Improvement Projects

The Department proposes to fund the following capital improvement projects for FY 2012:

Equestrian Improvements - \$50,000

This project will provide equestrian related improvements, as identified by the Equestrian Feasibility Study, at parks with equestrian trail access. The improvements could be additional water troughs, warm-up corral, or other amenities that facilitate the public's use of equestrian riding trails.

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Preventive Maintenance Program (Phase 3) - \$250,000

The focus of this ongoing preventive maintenance program is to renovate and upgrade park restrooms, bridges, and kiosks. This phase of work includes completing restroom renovations and bridge restoration or replacement projects.

Chitactac Adams Restroom Replacement - \$60,000

The existing restroom at this park has exceeded its serviceable life and needs to be replaced with a new restroom building.

Motorcycle County Park Site Plan Development- \$100,000

This project will develop a site plan of the park that integrates the existing multiple site uses with the park's natural resources in order to guide future development of the facility.

Santa Teresa County Park Grazing Program Implementation - \$250,000

This project will implement the required infrastructure needed to support a cattle grazing program as identified in the park's grazing plan. Due to regulatory requirements, the Department was required to complete a grazing plan for the park as a method to suppress non native grasses growing on the serpentine soils. Grazing removes nonnative grasses and allows native grasses to re-establish and become habitat for endangered species such as the bay checkerspot butterfly.

Welch Hurst Feasibility Study - \$150,000

This funding will allow staff to conduct a study of the building's future uses. Given its landmark status and need for extensive rehabilitation, the Department would like to understand the future re-use opportunities for this building prior to embarking on a renovation project.

Yurt Implementation Phase 2 - \$400,000

This project will implement a second phase of yurts in a County park following the success of the first phase constructed in Mount Madonna County Park.

Carpet replacement at Parks administrative offices - \$75,000

This funding will provide replacement carpeting for the Department's administrative offices as the carpet has exceeded its useful life and replacement carpet squares are no longer available.

Martial Cottle perimeter buffer design - \$250,000

The Department is a recipient of a federal earmark grant of \$250K from the Department

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of Housing and Urban Development; the grant funds will be used to design the buffer and perimeter trail components of the park.

The Department looks forward to reviewing its budget submission package with you at our annual review meeting. In the meantime, if you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Ann Feng, Fiscal Officer, at 355-2241.

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