

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION QUESTIONS
February 24, 2021 MEETING

Item 5.1 – San Antonio Mini-Park Conceptual Review and Recommendation, Project 20-48

1. Is there any general rule-of-thumb regarding how far away from an oak tree's trunk or canopy one must plant before healthy/consistent lawn can be grown? Is this different with the oak planted in a "seatwell" planter?

Ideally, oak species are planted with no surrounding irrigated lawn beneath their canopy. Oak species native to this area are accustomed to winter rains and long periods with no supplemental water (summer through early fall). The design intent is to replicate these conditions with no lawn below its canopy or irrigated lawn 15 to 20 feet out from the trunk. As for the seat wall, it will likely act as a partial barrier / container to the tree depending on its depth to further protect the tree from lawn water. It is best practice to locate it at the anticipated drip line of a more mature tree to minimize impact on the tree.

2. Can we see an example of what a bosque would look like?

See image included at the end of the PRC Questions. This image will also be included in staff's presentation.

3. What type of native garden is proposed for Plan D? How would the public interact with it? Could instead native plants be used as part of the plant palette in the garden?

The garden would be planted with California natives. The focal planting area would be the 'oval' with a DG pathway and bench seating around it. The residual areas around the oval-shaped pathway would also be planted with California native plant material so that the whole "panhandle" is devoted to this garden. In terms of interaction, it could be as simple as being immersed in the garden (visual, smell, tactile connections to the plant material).

4. Why is additional funding being requested?

The cost estimate of the revised concepts are higher than the previous concepts and staff expects to see further increases in cost when the project is released for construction bids. However, the proposed budget is still within the original forecasted budget for the Park Land Fund. In order to more effectively commit and utilize the Park Land Dedication Fund, staff purposely try to bring projects to the PRC for two Park Land Fund commitments. The first commitment is for design or through the Park Land and CIP process as a starting budget to get the project underway. The second commitment typically comes at the conceptual design stage when construction costs become better known. The current budget is the first commitment that was done through the Park Land and CIP process. PRC is being asked to commit funds for the second time now that the construction costs are better known. Staff had projected this additional funding in forecasting the Park Land Fund commitments.

Item 6.1 – Community Services Department Proposed Budget Requests for Fiscal Year 2021-22

1. With regard to the offset increased janitorial services, can you elaborate on the number of hours and/or city parks services that would be cut back to attain the \$57K in savings?

Staff are proposing to offset the cost of the janitorial services to the parks restrooms with \$57,000 in wages from the Parks crews: North Parks, South Parks, and Shoreline. This equates to approximately 2,500 hours. The offset is being recommended because of the difficulty to hire and retain hourly staff. Under current legislation, hourly staff are limited to 1,000 hours of work per year before they must be benefitted. This equates to approximately 20 hours/week over a year. Due to the optimal hours needed of hourly positions, it is difficult to hire someone for 20 hours/week when they need to work from 6am to 10am five days a week. As a result, the Parks Division has savings in wages every year. Therefore, the budget offset of using wages towards the contracted services is not anticipated to impact existing service levels, but rather facilitate the work of the permanent staff to focus on other parks maintenance efforts other than restrooms cleaning and sanitization.

2. What is the source of offset funding for the three PMWI/II positions?

The offset is also wages from the different Parks crews. Through bringing the Ranger Program and weekday janitorial services for restrooms in house, a sizeable amount of funds designated for contract services were converted to wages. However, due to the difficulties described in above, CSD is recommending to apply these wages towards contractual services and fulltime positions.

3. With regard to the \$532K net increase (\$679K-\$147K) from the Discretionary Requests, what year over year percentage increase would that represent over the corresponding sector of the annual CSD budget? (Just seeking perspective on how large a request this is in comparison with the total budget).

Staff will show in their presentation that the budget for the Shoreline, Forestry and Roadways, Parks, and Recreation Divisions for FY20-21 (current fiscal year) is approximately \$20,677,200. If staffed received \$532K in additional budgetary requests for FY21-22, the year over year increase is approximately 1.03% to the budget. However, this doesn't take into account the Administration, Performing Arts, and Golf and Restaurant Divisions. Out of those Divisions, only the Performing Arts Division has additional budget requests.

4. Is the department reducing janitorial contractors and adding permanent positions? For example with the Day Porter?

All janitorial services being requested are through the City's janitorial service provider. The fulltime staff equivalent is just a measure for the service – 8 hours a day, 5 days a week. The City currently utilizes a day porter(s) for multiple city facilities throughout the day and this would add a fulltime position to the contractor in order to focus on the Community Center with additional services at the Senior Center and Teen Center as needed.

Additional Question

1. At Cuesta park tennis courts, the signs read, "Masks required at all times including on court while playing." However, none of the players on the 12 courts were wearing masks. (The clubhouse was open and staffed.) What is the current official policy on wearing masks while playing tennis? Is this a County, City, or Mountain View Tennis policy?

The State of California updated the guidance for "Outdoor and Indoor Youth and Recreational Adult Sports" in early January that called for face coverings to be worn at all times. The State updated this guidance again on Friday, February 22 to state for Face Coverings that the following is encouraged, "Face coverings worn by participants during practice, conditioning and during competition, even during heavy exertion as tolerated." In addition to the State's encouragement of face coverings, the County also encourages face coverings to be worn "whenever you're outdoors and may come within six feet of anyone outside your own household". Staff continues to watch the ever-changing guidance and updates signage as necessary. Staff will also reach out to Mountain View Tennis to inquire about this incident raised in the question as Mountain View Tennis should be monitoring face coverings when possible.

2. How is communication to the public happening? I only happened to hear about it through a neighborhood organization - not mine.

Generally, marketing of this opportunity occurs in conjunction with the Arbor Day event itself but since the event will not be happening, we need to adjust the marketing plan. Staff intends to extend the deadline for the program and will look into additional promotional opportunities to encourage more participation through our new communications team in the City. We currently only have 22 applications and look forward to increasing the communication to the community to increase the number of applications to levels seen in previous years.

3. Why is the city offering the "California" Pepper Tree? It is a large tree with aggressive roots, drops leaf litter, and is considered an invasive weed by the UC IPM in certain parts of California.

Invasive is dependent on location in the Urban Environment. A California Pepper tree is a good shade tree for a location where it can grow with limited proximity to a sewer or mainline. Staff try to have a diverse selection of trees each year and we change the list every year to try to increase interest in people participating. Staff will again review this and other species on the current list.

4. Why offer a Southern Live Oak when there are locally native oaks that will reach a similar size?

Staff select a variety of trees to entice residents to participate. Southern Live Oak is known for its spreading canopy even among the Oaks. We do offer natives on our lists and rotate

them into the selections. Based on input received during the Community Tree Master Plan item earlier this month, staff will look to add more natives as feasible to the list.

