

SUPPLEMENTAL*Memorandum***TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL****FROM: Albert Balagso****SUBJECT: SEE BELOW****DATE: 05-15-07**

Approved

Ray Winer

Date

5/4/07

Council District: 6

**SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENTAL MEMO REGARDING MAINTENANCE LEVELS AT
THE MUNICIPAL ROSE GARDEN****REASON FOR SUPPLEMENTAL**

To provide additional information on this subject which was added to the May 15 City Council agenda by Councilmember Oliverio at the Rules Committee meeting on April 18, 2007.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Direct the Administration to continue providing grounds maintenance activities at the Municipal Rose Garden, using in-house staff and associated resources;
2. Evaluate pilot contracting-out of maintenance services concurrently with the development of guidelines regarding Public/Private Partnerships;
3. Report back to the City Council with a work plan on Public/Private partnership opportunities during the month of June; and
4. Report back to the City Council with a status report regarding the level of maintenance at the Municipal Rose Garden in October.

BACKGROUND

The San Jose Municipal Rose Garden, located in Council District 6, is a 10.7 acre city-wide serving facility. (Within the facility, approximately 5.5 acres are defined as the formal rose garden area, while the balance is the open turf area.) As such, it has historically been maintained at a high level relative to other City parks. Until approximately 5 years ago, grounds maintenance services at this facility were provided by three full-time dedicated positions. Staff time was primarily focused on the following tasks:

- Daily maintenance of grounds, including litter pick-up and emptying trash cans
- Cleaning and servicing restrooms two to three times per day
- Maintenance and repair of irrigation systems
- Hand pruning, deadheading, fertilizing, disease prevention and pest management of over 3,500 rose shrubs, and planting of new rose shrubs
- Weeding of individual rose beds and other non-turf areas

Additionally, these dedicated resources were supplemented by other resources as follows:

- Weekly turf mowing was provided by one of the Department's six turf mowing routes
- Weekend restroom cleaning and lock-down was provided by route-based restroom maintenance staff, and
- Daily maintenance of the decorative fountain was provided by specialized staff that provided this same service to other like elements across the City

Approximately five years ago, one of the three dedicated full-time staff positions was eliminated due to budget reductions. No other service level reductions were taken at that time. The elimination of this position resulted in a significant reduction in the level of horticultural maintenance of the site, since the remaining staff were primarily focused on health and safety issues. Horticultural maintenance tasks were tended to only after all health and safety items in the facility were properly addressed. Weeding became a nearly continuous task as the time required for staff to cycle through all of the rose beds was significantly extended. When a weeding cycle was completed, the process immediately began again.

During the 2005-06 budget process, the maintenance of this facility was again impacted in two different ways. Most significantly, the Parks Division incurred a 24% reduction in maintenance positions. This reduction resulted in one day less of maintenance for every city-wide serving park in the City. Although staff opens the park and services restrooms on the non-maintenance day, they are then deployed elsewhere in the City to maintain other facilities. Additionally, four maintenance positions associated with turf maintenance were also eliminated. This resulted in all parks across the City taking a reduction in the frequency of turf mowing from weekly to bi-weekly. The combination of these two reductions has had a significant impact on the appearance and condition of turf in all City parks.

While these reductions have impacted the appearance and condition of the Municipal Rose Garden, the Department has implemented a programmed approach with regard to capitolly funded renovation across the entire park system. The intent of this program, implemented by the use of Construction and Conveyance (C&C) funds, was to improve the condition of the infrastructure of park elements across the system to make them easier to maintain. Over the last two years, improvements to the Municipal Rose Garden have included:

- Complete resurfacing of the decorative fountain
- Improvements to the irrigation system

- Renovation of the pump system
- Replacement of approximately 70% of the header board surrounding the rose beds

This work followed the completion of the Measure P bond funded project completed in April 2004. The bond funds implemented the master plan for the Rose Garden including renovation of its historic structures, new perimeter wrought iron fence, arbor, restrooms, maintenance and storage building, and new paving and lights.

Two full-time maintenance positions are assigned to the Municipal Rose Garden; however, one of these positions has recently become vacant due to an internal promotion in February. It is expected that this position will be filled by May 21. As the Department is working to fill the current vacancy associated with this facility, there are several other efforts in progress to restore the condition of the facility.

Staff has made extensive use of the following programs to augment the Rose Garden maintenance:

- General Assistance Program, which is a welfare-to-work program managed through the County's Social Services Department
- Alternate Work Program, which utilizes inmates through the County's Department of Corrections
- San Jose Conservation Corps to complete the remainder of the work associated with the header board replacement

The use of these programs, coupled with augmentation of staff from other facilities when feasible, has allowed for the removal of weeds in approximately 80 % of the rose beds and the pruning of approximately 40% of the rose shrubs. Continued use of these programs, in addition to filling the vacant position, will allow Department staff to have weeds abated in all of the rose beds no later than June 30. Not all rose shrubs will receive pruning this spring in the interest of having blooms during the months of May and June. This will be an intentional action, which may result in a different maintenance strategy for next year during the conventional pruning period (January/February) that will require extensive use of those programs listed above.

Additionally, when staff met with neighborhood representatives in the Municipal Rose Garden on April 5, several residents expressed an interest in reviving neighborhood-based volunteer efforts, specifically with regard to the maintenance of the rose beds. Staff is currently working to produce a plot map that could be used by the neighborhood to designate specific rose beds to individual and/or family volunteers. This program will be managed through the Department's Adopt-A-Park program. While this program has been highly effective to manage the Department's volunteer base, it is most effective when there is close coordination between the volunteers and the maintenance staff assigned to the site. This program, established approximately 15 years ago, has resulted in over 140 parks across the City currently having some level of adoption.

The Department is also pursuing other means to increase the level of maintenance at all facilities across the City. In developing the operating budget for fiscal year 2007-08, the Department has proposed use of Enhanced Parks Maintenance reserve funds which would restore turf mowing to a weekly activity at every park in the City.

ANALYSIS

Given the current resource levels, there are several options available to address the current service level of the facility.

Option #1: Maintain in-house resources

As previously stated, the Department is in the process of filling the recently vacated Groundworker position at the Rose Garden. Once this position is filled, the Department will be in a better position to maintain the facility at the budgeted service level. This approach will result in an improved and more uniform service level at the facility. However, while improved, this service level may not address all of the issues requested by the surrounding neighborhood.

Option #2: Contract-out maintenance

Completely contracting out the grounds maintenance functions of this facility would require contract management and inspection services that are not currently provided by the Department. Given the current resource level of personal services (\$146,000) and a contract administration/inspection rate of 15% to 20%, the amount of funding allocated toward a maintenance contract would be in the range of \$122,000 to \$127,000 annually. While the actual costs of contractual maintenance may be lower than in-house staff, the additional administrative and inspection costs should also be considered.

Beyond contract administration and inspection costs, there are additional issues regarding existing labor agreements. The grounds maintenance work is currently performed by City employees represented by the International Union of Operation Engineers, Local #3 (OE#3). Therefore, if the work is to be contracted-out, the City must satisfy any meet-and-confer obligations as required by the Meyers-Miliias-Brown Act (MMBA) and the labor agreement between the City and OE#3. In addition, the contract may need to be reviewed by the Contracting-In Committee and be subject to the Competition Policy.

Option #3: Supplementing in-house maintenance

The current resource levels at the Rose Garden provide approximately 65% of the maintenance that was performed on site 5 years ago. The most significant impact has been in the area of the condition of the rose beds. This area of maintenance is the most seasonal,

with high maintenance demands during the months of January and February to adequately prune each rose shrub. Because of this seasonality, this element of maintenance has presented the greatest challenge.

Three low cost options are potentially available to address this need. These options include increased use of the General Assistance program and Alternate Work program (direct costs limited to supervision), as well as increased use of the San Jose Conservation Corps (funded through the capital budget). Should these efforts prove unsuccessful, the Department could then explore an option of contracting-out this specific element of maintenance at this facility. Funding issues will be considered at that time.

Option #4: Pursue Public/Private Partnerships

Staff from both PRNS and the City Manager's Office have formed a committee to expedite pending proposals and identify issues for a policy discussion regarding partnerships with private corporations, non-profits, and individual donors willing to provide supplementary resources for parks maintenance as well as other City services. The issues being reviewed include the applicability of procurement, wage, and insurance requirements, as well as collective bargaining issues. Several of these issues need to be addressed in order for any measure of contracting-out to move forward. Many of these issues are inter-dependent and may have implications to business models in place elsewhere in the City, as well as obviously being dependent on having willing partners. The City makes every effort to deliver quality services in the most cost-effective and efficient manner. If the City proceeds to contract-out maintenance of the Rose Garden, pursuant to City Council Policy No. 0-29, Public Private Competition Policy, a public-private competition process may be required in order to determine the most competitive service delivery method. For these reasons, the Department is recommending considering any contracting options concurrently with this process.

As previously stated, this is an area in which several members of the community previously expressed an interest in supplementing the City's resources with their own volunteer labor. Department staff is currently compiling information for representatives of the neighborhood that would assist in this effort.

It should also be noted that the Heritage Rose Garden, which is located in the Guadalupe River Park on Taylor Street, near Coleman Avenue, provides a successful volunteer model for the maintenance of a municipal rose garden. The Heritage Rose Garden volunteers, who provide the primary maintenance functions for the rose plants, are coordinated by the Friends of Guadalupe River Park. City staff provides the general upkeep and grounds maintenance of this area of the park. To meet the regular maintenance needs of the rose plants, the Friends of Guadalupe River Park host weekly volunteer events to ensure the ongoing health and maintenance of the over 3,000 rose plants and numerous rose beds in this area. Lead volunteers, who are trained by certified rosarians, coordinate and train regular volunteers to perform the rose maintenance tasks. This arrangement has resulted in a very high level of

maintenance at the Heritage Rose Garden without impacting other areas of the facility. Staff will also investigate whether this rosarian certified led volunteer program could be expanded to include some level of adoption at the Municipal Rose Garden as well.

Additionally, neighborhood associations and other non-profits groups are often eligible to apply for city-funded grants. There are examples elsewhere in the City where neighborhood associations have received grant funding to assist in their neighborhood improvement efforts that often include community-based work (both maintenance and improvement projects) in parks. As a result of these efforts, there is often an increase in neighborhood ownership and pride in the park, resulting in a reduced occurrence of graffiti and other types of vandalism, as well as an increase in the overall aesthetics of the park.

CONCLUSION

Having considered all of the above options, the Department recommends concurrent pursuit of options #3 and #4. Under these options, the Department will continue to perform the maintenance of the Municipal Rose Garden using in-house staff and associated resources. The Department will also pursue supplementing maintenance of the rose beds, by pursuing volunteer efforts and other existing programs available to the City. In the event that these efforts are not sufficient to adequately maintain the rose beds, the Department will pursue alternative strategies to address the seasonal maintenance needs of the Municipal Rose Garden. These strategies will be addressed and considered concurrently with the discussion on public/private partnerships.

COORDINATION

This memo has been coordinated with the Office of Employee Relations.

CEQA

Not a project.



Albert Balagso
Director, Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood
Services

For questions, please contact Todd Capurso, acting Deputy Director, at 793-5563.