



Memorandum

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Councilmember Kansen Chu
SUBJECT: Funding Recommendations for New Park Facilities
DATE: November 15, 2010

APPROVED:

DATE:

11/15/10

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve staff recommendations for funding new park facilities with the following amendments:

1. To extend the pilot program through December 31, 2013; and
2. To expand the pilot program to include all priority projects and not limit development of any new park, trail, or recreational facilities to only "existing" or "Priority 1" projects in the adopted Greenprint update.

BACKGROUND:

On February 9, 2010, the City Council approved a recommendation to defer the design and construction of new parks and recreation capital projects through Fiscal Year 2010-2011 in order to avoid the impact of ongoing operations and maintenance costs to the General Fund.

The staff memorandum issued on October 26, 2010, recommends implementing a pilot program through December 31, 2011 to proceed with a particular park project if at least three years of maintenance funding could be identified. This pilot program will not only allow certain projects to move forward, but also contribute to the overall quality of life in our communities.

As stated in the staff memorandum, Newhall Park is the only eligible project facility that would move forward immediately under the pilot program. While Newhall Park is fully funded and is ready to bid for construction, the remaining three projects are fully funded for design and construction: Buena Vista Park, Mabury/Commodore Park, and Martial Cottle Community Garden. We should take this opportunity to maximize our resources and efforts to include more than one project in this pilot program. Rather than allowing funding for these parks to remain idle in their reserves, I am recommending that the pilot program be extended through December 31, 2013 to allow time for these additional parks that are fully funded to complete their design phase.

Furthermore, the staff recommendation limits the development of any new park, trail, or recreational facility to "existing" or "Priority 1" projects in the adopted Greenprint update. Since many of the deferred park projects on this list do not fall under this category, I recommend we expand the pilot program for as many eligible parks as possible by including park priority projects.

Instead of continuing to defer projects for decades, we should take this time to complete the necessary design work so that our parks are positioned to be ready to bid for construction once the necessary funding for maintenance has been identified while working creatively and collaboratively with our stakeholder groups to identify funding sources for the three-year park establishment period. In light of the City's budget constraints, the parks that Council has deferred in 2009 will be un-built for decades longer if their funding reserves continue to sit idle while their designs are never completed. This approach may be the only realistic opportunity of moving forward of the construction of the long awaited parks.

I respectfully ask my colleagues to support the extension of the pilot program through December 31, 2013 and expand the program to include priority projects. We need to be accountable to our residents and move forward on projects that have been long awaited by our communities.