



Memorandum

TO: MAYOR LICCARDO
SUBJECT: BUDGET DOCUMENT

FROM: Councilmember Mahan
DATE: May 27, 2021

Approved

Date: May 27, 2021

RECOMMENDATION

Fully fund the new combined Integrated Pest Management (IPM)/Turf Team in order to preserve our park infrastructure and reduce safety hazards.

Proposal

Program/Project Title: IPM/Turf Team

Amount of City Funding Required: \$1,202,135

This change is:

One-time Ongoing

Cost Estimate Number (if applicable):

Proposal Description, including the reason for the need and anticipated outcomes (Please describe how the proposal will affect services for San José residents, community groups, businesses, etc.):

It has become crystal clear during the COVID-19 pandemic that parks play a critical role in our City. 2020 has seen a dramatic increase in park use that is expected to continue for some time, both because the pandemic is lasting longer than we expected, and because so many new people have discovered their neighborhood parks and will continue to use them to take walks along paths long after the pandemic is over.

However, our parks are being decimated by rodents such as gophers and ground-squirrels. Some parks have so many holes that the turf is completely unusable as it is filled with large holes that pose tripping hazards. Residents and Staff have reported twisted ankles and bruised bodies caused by falling after getting a foot caught in a rodent hole.

Residents have also reported similar injuries to their dogs as well. Families can no longer have picnics in the park or use the turf to have neighborhood games of soccer, catch, or volleyball. In addition, there are so many tunnels that our concrete walking paths are beginning to collapse.

As a general principle, basic maintenance of our parks and prevention of safety risks should take precedent over our investments in park activation. The lasting value of activation is undermined by the poor condition of our parks.

PRNS is fully aware that it is much cheaper to maintain infrastructure than to rebuild it, so they have created an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) team to address the most rodent infested parks. The efforts of this small team do not eliminate the rodents 100% but reduces the number down to a level that Park Maintenance staff can work to manage the population.

This proposal would combine the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and the Turf Replacement teams into one team with staffing changes better focused on results. This combined team would consist of:

- 3.0 Gardeners
- 3.0 Groundworkers
- 4.0 Maintenance Assistants
- 1.0 Senior Maintenance Worker.

This proposal differs from the current team make up in that the Park Maintenance Repair Worker Position has been replaced by an additional Gardener position. The Department anticipates this change will allow completion of a higher volume of projects as the Gardener is able to complete a wider scope of duties. To mitigate the loss of the Repair Worker position, each district would have their Park Maintenance Repair Worker available as needed for individual projects.

The current, separate teams consist of the Turf Replacement team (1.0 Senior Maintenance Worker, 1.0 Park Maintenance Repair Worker, and 1.0 Groundworker; all Overstrength positions expected to end June 30, 2021) and IPM team (2.0 Gardener, 2.0 Groundworker, and 4.0 Maintenance Assistant; limit dated positions expected to end June 30, 2021). It is important to note that the original Turf Replacement team, budgeted in 2019-2020, also included 1.0 Heavy Equipment Operator and an additional 1.0 Groundworker; those positions were no longer needed nor budgeted in 2020-2021 as the Department was able to consolidate the team and achieve efficiencies through experience.

The IPM/ and Turf Replacement teams are projected to service 3.3 million square feet (77 acres) across 16 parks and sports fields in fiscal year 2020-2021 for pest management. Staff have utilized effective techniques on managing burrowing pests and reduced active burrows in treated parks by 51.2% this fiscal year.

By collaborating with park maintenance districts, this combined team will be an effective tool for such tasks as rebuilding of valves, lateral breaks, and some minor irrigation repairs. This fiscal year, the teams are projected to complete turf renovations across 16 parks, consisting of 24 ball fields, improving safety and playability for youth and adult park users and athletes. The team has become familiar and proficient with machinery usage and scheduling for park renovation and has established a system for coordinating and handing-off completed projects to the park districts they support.

Funding Source

Essential Services Reserve:

Other (Please specify program/project/fund):

Placemaking 50%: \$601,067.50

ARPA 50%: \$601,067.50

Amount could vary by reducing Viva Calle to only 1 instead of 4, limiting the number of Viva Parks to only those necessary for gang prevention, and eliminating the \$40K+ per district for festivals/parties.

Staff and Council should consider how to make this team a permanent part of the budget ongoing.

Department or Organization Contact

Please list the contact information for the individual that certified cost estimates contained within your recommendation:

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