

Director's Corner

Parks, Recreation and Marine - January 2021 Highlights

Prepared by Director Brent Dennis

1. **New Service Priority Budgeting for Fiscal Year 2022:** A new budgeting process is being introduced for the next fiscal year where budgeting will be based upon prioritization of services with extensive community engagement opportunities. Staff has been involved in a series of training sessions to prepare for the new process that began this month. The FY/22 budget forecast still projects a possible \$30.0 million operating deficit.
2. **COVID and COVID Vaccinations:** Our department is experiencing an unfortunate surge in COVID positive cases in all bureaus. Team members of Parks, Recreation, Marine and Animal Care Services are now scheduled to be offered COVID vaccinations in March. Our Community Recreation Services team members who were involved with senior meals distribution were offered vaccinations in mid-January as Tier 1A essential service providers in accordance with the State of California distribution priority protocols.
3. **Trees In the Bay:** The de-installation process of 67 colorful, floating illuminated trees from the annual display that opened on Thanksgiving night and ran through New Year's Day commenced the week of January 4, 2021. It is expected that the displays would be disassembled and stored within 3 weeks as the effort occurs after regular maintenance duties are accomplished daily. Another GREAT presentation and well-received holiday tradition by the Marine Bureau that was appreciated by the community.
4. **Sunnyside Cemetery:** Sunnyside Cemetery transfer to the City of Long Beach was accomplished this month. The historic 13-acre property is an important asset that joins the adjacent municipal cemetery and Willow Springs Park in the heart of Long Beach. On a sad side note, long-time Sunnyside Cemetery board member and champion, Linda Meador passed away over the holidays. We extend our sincerest sympathies to Linda's circle of friends and family.
5. **Major PRM Capital Projects Underway:** El Dorado Park will see both the Duck Pond Renovations and the Synthetic Soccer Field projects moving forward as the bid process concludes and City Council approves the projects' funding. Golden Grove improvements are nearly completed in El Dorado Park. Public Works partners with PRM to manage capital improvement projects in parks.
6. **Mobile REcess and Learning Hubs:** Our mobile recreational programming that was launched in mid-October and expanded to ten sites including Grace Park on Fridays have been very successful. These programs are being continued through March 1, 2021, although the Grace Park site is being reconsidered for safety reasons following a recent drive-by shooting incident. Four Learning Hubs were activated to provide academic support, internet access, sports, fitness and safe afterschool activities at Houghton, McBride, Orizaba and Veterans parks weekdays from 7:30am to 5pm. All

CARES Act program funding concluded December 31, 2020, so continued programming is general fund supported until March 1, 2021.

7. **Citywide Memorial Bench Master Plan**: Plans are underway to develop a citywide master plan that will illustrate potential donor opportunities for memorial benches in all parks, marina and beach areas. Partners of Parks is supporting two intern positions to accomplish the master plan.
8. **Conservation Corps Partnership Highlight**: Good news for tree lovers as the Conservation Corps received a grant for the planting of 400 trees for the west side of Long Beach. The organization continues to be very involved in DeForest Park and more active in Willow Springs Park.
9. **Furloughs**: PRM's first seven furlough Fridays have gone very well with no complaints from the community. Administrative offices were closed. Exceptions to operational closures included the El Dorado Nature Center, after school programs, and the Belmont pool, all of which remained open. The Marine Bureau chose to use Tuesdays as their furlough day of office closures since Fridays are their busiest business day. As a reminder, the FY/21 furlough program contributed \$11.0 million in savings towards the City of Long Beach's projected \$30.0 million operating deficit.
10. **HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!!!**