

Director's Highlights

Parks, Recreation, Marine and Animal Care Services

September 2023 Highlights

Prepared by Director Brent Dennis

1. Labor Day holiday weekend seemed to clearly mark the end of our amazing Summer Season of 2023. Congratulations to our entire team for providing quality programming, classes, special events, and welcoming parks, beaches, and facilities for our residents and visitors to Long Beach. Our parks are looking beautiful as autumn weather takes hold across the City.
2. Our Parks, Recreation, Marine, and Animal Care Services team was both thankful and pleased with the City Council's approval of the FY24 Budget. With an overall, City budget of \$3.2 billion, our department is benefiting from a welcome array of structural funding enhancements, one most notable is the structural funding of all our 11 Be S.A.F.E. program sites. We also appreciated additional funding to support Animal Care Services and address overcrowding and spay & neutering medical needs. The Marine Bureau has a \$2.5 million trash interceptor barge approved to help collect LA River debris before most of it ends up on our beaches and in our marinas. Senior program funding support to help expand and enhance essential services to our seniors. Our Operating Budget in total that includes General Fund and Tidelands funding, will be \$78,528,151; and our Capital Improvements Budget for the coming year will be at least \$9.0 million in park improvements including \$2.75 million to acquire and develop future park land.
3. Budget Highlights: One-time funding of \$300,000 to support the clean-up of large homeless encampment sites, including waste and other items illegally dumped in parks and open spaces. One-time funding from the \$7.5 million in Monsanto settlement funds to be utilized for projects and programs that prioritize impacts to water quality, including \$500,000 for new tree planting and funding for the Urban Forest Management Plan. Continued investment in youth by providing safe, secure, and engaging programming activities by structurally increasing the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Marine's (PRM) Be S.A.F.E. Program budget by \$216,000 to provide programming at all 11 sites. Additionally, one-time funding of \$90,000 and \$190,000 for PRM to continue offering the Hoops After Dark Summer Season and the Mobile Recess Program, respectively. \$70,000 for senior field trips, \$100,000 for free summer block parties, and \$100,000 for neighborhood cleanups.
4. Elevate '28
In 2028, the City of Long Beach will once again co-host the Olympic Games with the City of Los Angeles. An additional investment known as "Elevate '28" is a plan that builds upon the five-year infrastructure plan approved last year and includes three focus areas: preparing the City to host the LA 2028 Olympics, renovating, and refreshing our parks to support future generations of competitive athletes, and making historic cultural and community investments to uplift and celebrate the diversity and history that Long Beach has to offer. The plan includes \$214.6 million from multiple funding sources anticipated

to be available from FY 24 - FY 27 dedicated to preparing the city for the Olympics games, inspiring the community, and creating a legacy for post 2028. The Elevate '28 plan includes 64 new projects that will enhance park space throughout the city, continue to improve water quality, provide wayfinding signage, place making efforts, transportation, and mobility improvements, and prepare to elevate the city to the international stage.

5. The Park Ambassador team has entered their fourth month following a successful launch in June. The second shift team of ten hard-working members have been covering evening hours to midnight with focused attention to additional maintenance and repairs of our 55 freestanding park restroom and then securing them each night as our parks close. We continue to receive positive feedback from all our Council District offices as well as Friends groups and neighborhood associations. The two former Park Ranger vehicles are being transferred from LBPd to support the transportation needs of our Park Ambassadors.
6. The long-awaited completion of the new Admiral Kidd Park Playground was celebrated in late August. A special thanks to Partners of Parks for the significant support through community fundraising to purchase all the playground equipment. The Port of Long Beach also has provided funding to enhance the playground environs with new trees, landscaping, and bioswales for improved storm water management.
7. We joined Mayor Richardson, District 8 Councilman Al Austin, and our colleagues at Public Works for the recent celebratory groundbreaking for Phase 2 of Davenport Park. Forecast for completion in the Summer of 2024, the park improvements include athletic fields, multi-purpose trails, exercise stations, park amenities, and over 200 new trees.
8. More dedicated pickleball courts will soon be appearing at both Veterans Park and DeForest Park next month. This popular sport continues to attract more enthusiastic players across the City. Each park will receive eight dedicated, lighted pickleball courts for the public to enjoy later in October.
9. The fire detection and suppression system for Rancho Los Cerritos is ready for public bidding. The City of Long Beach funding of \$600,000 for each of the ranchos for these critical projects to protect the historic architecture will prove to be a strategic investment in this pair of community treasures. The Annual Rancho Walk will be held on Saturday, September 23rd, with the origin this year to begin at Rancho Los Cerritos and end up at Rancho Los Alamitos.
10. Park Planning & Partnerships Bureau Manager Nancy Villasenor and Special Deputy City Manager for Recovery, Meredith Reynolds will be attending this month's Awards Program of the American Planning Association to represent the City of Long Beach and Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine in receiving an Award of Merit in the Advancing Diversity and Social Change (Paul Davidoff) awards category for "Parks Make Long Beach: Department of Parks, Recreation and Marine Strategic Plan". An incredible honor we are all very proud to receive and be recognized by the APA for the State of California.