

Director's Corner

Parks, Recreation, Marine and Animal Care Services

May 2021 Highlights

Prepared by Director Brent Dennis

1. **SYMPATHIES EXTENDED TO FRIENDS & FAMILY OF RICKY RIN:** One of our Community Recreation Services team members and WRAP Site Directors, Ricky Rin who had been admitted to the hospital a week or so after he had received his vaccination, has passed away. It was clear over time that his reactions were in no way related to his vaccination, but nonetheless his medical team chose to put him under a period of sedation to relieve some of his somewhat mysterious symptoms. I am very sorry to share this news of Ricky's passing. We are still processing the suddenness of all this, especially on the heels of such a stressful year and the loss of other members in our PRM work family already. Ricky had been with PRM since he was a teen working in our Skate Park on Wheels program and developed into one of our brightest stars, rising through the ranks to be a Site Director where he was known for his jovial and outgoing personality. He was a go-to facilitator for many presentations and trainings. His smile and warm presence will be missed by his immediate and work family. We will keep you posted on any services. We are offering employee assistance in grief counselling should any of his co-workers find that need during the days ahead. Let's be here for each other. Ricky will be honored along with other PRM team members who have passed away while in active service to the community within our future memorial grove of trees to be planted in El Dorado Park. Our sincerest sympathies to the friends, co-workers, and family of Ricky Rin.
2. **Park Planning & Partnerships Bureau Leadership Change:** Beginning Monday, May 24th, Nancy Villasenor will begin serving our Department as the new Park Planning & Partnerships Bureau Manager. Current PP&P leader Meredith Reynolds, who has served PRM for over 6 years, has been reassigned to the City Manager's Office to oversee the Economic Recovery Act program. Meredith will manage the \$220+ million federal funds that the City of Long Beach is receiving this year. Meredith has led some important advancements in community partnerships and increased revenues for PRM over the years, on top of significant development of park vision plans, tool kits, and capital improvement projects grant funding. Nancy is joining us following an illustrative career for the City of Long Beach, most recently in the Public Works Department. We wish Meredith and Nancy great successes in their new career paths in service to the community.
3. **PRM Administrative Office Reconfiguration:** The main offices in El Dorado Park will be undergoing a strategic reconfiguration with the goal of bringing bureau teams together for more effective collaboration and improved efficiencies. We also hope to welcome Partners of Parks back to our main campus to solidify our progress towards a more successful working relationship and expansion of community partnerships.
4. **Arbor Day 2021 Tree Planting Successes:** Last month with the support of various neighborhood groups, Council District Offices and the Conservation Corps of Long Beach, over 400 new trees were planted across the city. A special thank you to Parks Grounds Maintenance Superintendent Kelly Parkins for her leadership in the planning and scheduling so many tree planting events. I personally enjoyed sharing and the recording of my favorite reading of Dr. Seuss' "The Lorax" to kick off our Earth Day/ Arbor Day celebrations as part of our virtual program offerings.

5. **New Service Priority Budgeting for Fiscal Year 2022:** The new City of Long Beach service area priority budgeting process that was introduced for the next fiscal year is moving forward. The FY/22 PRM budget was presented to the City Manager in early May where we outlined targeted reductions goals that were met along with a review of requested budget enhancements. The FY/22 and FY/23 budget forecasts still project a significant multi-million-dollar operating deficit. Federal stimulus funding will help soften the budget impacts expected as the economy slowly rebounds from COVID. An economic recovery plan for Long Beach was presented to City Council in early March.
6. **PRM Fee Recommendations Presented to Council:** The 654 current PRM fees that were studied yielded a range of recommendations that will come back before City Council on May 18th for final review and anticipated approval. As a General Fund department, PRM maintains the view that where justifiable, cost recovery of certain fees will help offset annual expenses is important to our ability to provide programs and services. We take our responsibility seriously to establish fees that are fair and equitable to provide affordable and diversified services to all individuals.
7. **Major PRM Capital Projects Underway:** El Dorado East Regional Park has upcoming upgrades at the main entrance to help facilitate annual pass holders through a separate lane with a vehicle identification/automated entry arm system. The Duck Pond Renovations project had a recent bid opening that unfortunately had no bids submitted, thus the project will be re-evaluated and re-bid soon. The Synthetic Multi-Purpose Sports Field project is moving forward in the construction phase.
8. **PRM Strategic Plan:** The public outreach and opportunities for input in the shaping of our PRM Strategic Plan has closed and recommendations are being planned for presentation to the Parks and Recreation Commission at their June meeting and then to the Long Beach City Council during the month of July for “Parks Make Life Better” month. We are very encouraged by the level of participation across the city in the strategic plan survey.
9. **Summer Programming to Offer FREE Hybrid Camps for Youth with Extended Mobile RECess:** Our mobile recreational programming that was launched in mid-October has been very successful and is being extended through August 27th. These programs are offered at 9 locations where PRM staff drive trucks loaded with supplies and equipment to provide recreation activities for youth ages 5 through 14 (Grades K-8). Hybrid (virtual and in-person) Camps will take place throughout the week with virtual camps taking place on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10am to 4pm to include enrichment activities, arts and crafts, fitness and games to fill the day with fun engaging opportunities. In-person recreation will take place on Tuesday and Thursday from 10am to 4pm at Heartwell Park where campers will enjoy arts and crafts, games and physical fitness fun.
10. **HAPPY ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDERS MONTH and MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH!**