

**MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**DATE:** September 02, 2020  
**TO:** Board of Directors  
**FROM:** Rafael Payan, General Manager  
**SUBJECT:** DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM: Status of Laguna Grande Regional Park

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**SUMMARY:**

This report provides a timeline highlighting steps taken to date and the required next steps leading towards the planning and development of the proposed Trail Maintenance Strategy, Master Plan, and related Environmental Documents Project for Laguna Grande Regional Park.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

\$60,000

**FUNDING SOURCE:**

Laguna Grande Improvements: Account #6953

**FUNDING BALANCE:**

\$60,000

**DISCUSSION:**

As reported, the cities of Seaside and Monterey have met with MPRPD staff to discuss developing and implementing a plan that will enhance portions of the trail network and native habitat at Laguna Grande Regional Park's (Park) southern and southeastern sectors. MPRPD's staff and Board previously identified and authorized funds, respectively, in the amount of \$60,000 to perform an environmental study, develop plans, and undertake the initial maintenance and improvement of trails at this site.

**September 30 and October 28, 2019:** The Park's Joint Powers Agency (JPA) held public meetings at the City of Seaside Council Chambers for the purpose of the JPA's reception of an update from staff, to accept public comment, and provide comments and direction related to the Park. The cities of Monterey and Seaside, and MPRPD comprise the JPA.

The meetings were congenial, informative, and productive. Several residents spoke, stating that they appreciated the JPA holding the public sessions, and offered their ideas and assistance related to the "remaster planning" of the Park to address current challenges and enhance its future use.

During those meetings, the cities outlined several Park-wide improvements they had recently undertaken. Law Enforcement discussed some of the challenges the Park's extant conditions pose, including:

**City of Monterey P.D. (Police Chief, Dave Hober):**

- A. The Park's boundaries are "unknown or undiscernible" to many members of the public thus, they are often confused as to who they should call when trying to reach a law enforcement agency.
- B. An extant agreement between Monterey and Seaside allows for law enforcement personnel to "cross-over" for minor infractions, such as a park user disturbing the peace by being too loud. Felonies, however, are referred to the respective city in which the alleged felony has taken place.
- C. Local fire departments respond to illegal fires set within the Park.
- D. Monterey and Seaside coordinate with other organizations to provide options for the homeless. Services are especially provided for homeless women, victims of violence, and veterans. Unfortunately, not every homeless person wants, or seeks, help.
- E. Law Enforcement personnel typically engage in numerous arrests at this Park during the year but must stress that being homeless is NOT a crime.

**City of Seaside P.D. (Deputy Police Chief, Judy Veloz):**

- A. In the past, the police department partnered with the Seaside Public Works Department to address homeless camps.
- B. A "Homeless Outreach Team" has been created to interface with the homeless to provide social and other services.
- C. In 2018, the police department stopped issuing citations to the homeless. The removal of camps continues however, in alignment with statutory parameters.
- D. The city's 2019 encampment removal project resulted in 90% of the homeless in that encampment leaving the area. No telling if or how long it would be before they would return. The cost for that project was \$8,000.
- E. A new ordinance should be developed to discourage homeless encampments – however, new legislation is being developed that may result in even more homelessness in parks and other public places. This proposed legislation resembles Boise, Idaho's response to homelessness wherein when homeless shelters are full, the homeless are authorized to sleep on public property – especially parks. Again, it has been deemed that being homeless is NOT a criminal activity in and of itself. Thus, the homeless may sleep in parks from 7pm to 7am. They must not impede public access or create a public nuisance – but

what constitutes a public nuisance is often a challenge to legally define or prosecute.

**October 28, 2019:** The JPA requested, during that date's meeting, that:

- A. The Parks Extant Master Plan be Evaluated:** The park's extant master plan be evaluated to determine if that document can be used for this and future planning efforts. In either case, it was recommended the extant master plan be repealed by the JPA, and that it be replaced with a new concept plan that includes the proposed environmental and habitat restoration plan, and that details the proposed improved trail network and its budget. The new concept plan should be presented to the JPA for its review and consideration at a future meeting.
- B. Meet with Adjacent Neighborhood Residents to Seek Input -** JPA Chair, Mayor Roberson – City of Monterey, recommended that staff meet with the adjacent neighborhoods' residents to identify additional potential uses for this Park. A resident attending the October 28, 2019 meeting proposed that a portion of the Park be adaptively re-purposed as a dog park like those often found in other communities.
- C. Concept Plan Development -** The cities' and MPRPD's staff were directed to meet to assess the park's extant authorized and unauthorized (social) trails to determine which trails may be kept for public use. New trails linking extant trails would also be identified. Compatibility with the proposed native habitat restoration project(s) will inform maintenance and enhancement of the subject trail network.
- D. MPRPD Funds (totaling \$60,000) -** The JPA also recommended that MPRPD's proposed funds for the park's environmental planning and initial trail maintenance (by the way of reconstruction/improvement) be transferred directly to the cities, thereby allowing the cities to serve as the endeavor's project managers. MPRPD supports this recommendation.

These funds were previously authorized by MPRPD's Board and are presently included in MPRPD's FY 2020-21 Budget. The City of Seaside requested that MPRPD consider providing a similar funding mechanism for that city's use on "its side" of the park. The JPA agreed that the project's priorities should drive all expenditures, favoring site improvements rather than planning as much as possible.

- E. Purchasing Policies -** Ms. Kim Cole, Planning Director – City of Monterey, recommended, and the JPA unanimously voted in favor of, using the City of Monterey's purchasing policies.

**F. Secure Legal Counsel** - The JPA also discussed securing Legal Counsel. Payment should be on an hourly basis. The JPA voted 3-0, favoring that the City of Monterey take this matter to their respective City Council, requesting that said city authorize the use of their in-house Legal Counsel by the JPA.

**Fall 2019:** Staff jointly developed, reviewed, revised, and released a Request for Proposals (RFP) entitled: *REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR PREPARATION OF TRAIL MAINTENANCE STRATEGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT and LAGUNA GRANDE PARK MASTER PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT*. The RFP outlined the project's scope and deliverables (**Attachment 1**).

**January 2020:** Four (4) firms submitted proposals by the deadline.

**January - March 2020:** The cities and MPRPD staff-based coalition, which composes the project's Evaluation Committee, reviewed the four firms' proposals. The next steps were to hold interviews with the firms to identify the firm deemed most responsive to the proposed project's scope. The "selected firm's" qualifications would subsequently be presented to the JPA for their consideration to enter a professional services agreement.

***Then, the COVID-19 pandemic materialized, and the project's momentum was upended, and schedules were delayed.***

**August 2020:** The project's Evaluation Committee is in the process of scheduling interviews with the four candidate firms. The interviews will be held via Zoom, or a similar instrument, as soon as possible. As of the writing of this report, a date had not yet been identified but the candidate firms were being contacted and a schedule was being developed. MPRPD's Board and the Park's JPA will be notified once an interview date has been identified. A revised schedule will also be provided.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Staff recommends the Board receive and file this report, and provide direction to staff on how to proceed with this multi-jurisdictional, coalition-based project.

**ATTACHMENT:**

1. [Laguna Grande Park Master Plan and Environmental Documents RFP](#)