



County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors

Agenda Item Submittal

From: Parks, Open Spaces, and Cultural Services

Subject: Proposed 2025-26 Budget for Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services

Meeting Date: June 4, 2025

Formal Title: Consider approval of the Proposed 2025-26 Budget for Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services, including any supplemental materials, and take related actions, as outlined in the referenced budget documents, and as recommended by the County Executive Officer

Recommended Action

Approve the Proposed 2025-26 Budget for Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services, including any supplemental materials, as provided in the referenced budget documents:

- [Proposed Budget](#)
- [Fixed Assets](#)
- [Continuing Agreements List](#)
- [Unified Fee Schedule](#)

Executive Summary

The Proposed 2025-26 Budget for the Parks, Open Space, and Cultural Services supports four divisions: Parks Operations, Cultural Services, Art in Public Places, and County Service Area 11, with funded staffing of 55.0 funded full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.

Discussion

The mission of the Parks, Open Space, and Cultural Services (Parks) is to provide safe, well-designed and maintained parks and a wide variety of recreational and cultural opportunities for our diverse community. Department and division operational objectives are shown in the Proposed 2025-26 Budget document and 2025-27 Operational Plan. Both are available online at: www.SCCVision.us

The Parks Proposed Budget includes a negotiated salary and benefit increase as well as a change in facility charges to properly reflect the cost of facility services and utilities. The budget also includes \$5,114,356 that provides funding for eight capital projects. These projects can be reviewed in the in the [2025-30 Capital Improvement Plan \(CIP\)](#).

The budget excludes three state grants (Sea Level Rise grant, Greyhound Accommodations grant, and Non-Infrastructure Programming grant for Rail Trail), resulting in a decrease of \$2,472,988 in intergovernmental revenues and a corresponding decrease of \$2,377,958 in services and supplies. Any unused balances will roll over to the next fiscal year through concluding budget actions.

The budget reflects important service changes, including additional extra help staffing in Parks Maintenance and Aquatics, along with increased revenue from new rentals, expanded aquatics programs, and contributions from external agencies. Additional changes include rising liability insurance, utilities, and vegetation management costs.

Funded staffing of 55.0 FTE positions is status quo for 2025-26.

Budgeted funding will continue to support ongoing staff work, including ongoing efforts to provide access to well-maintained parks, as well as outdoor, recreational, and cultural services that support a healthy community. It also demonstrates continued efforts to improve the health and resilience of the natural environment.

Over the next fiscal year, Parks will be focused primarily on implementation of the recently passed Measure Q, ongoing climate change mitigation and vegetation management efforts, refinement and localization of equity metrics, and continued planning and development of the Rail Trail.

The Parks Proposed Budget reallocates several positions within the Recreation division, as well as absorbs the Recreation division into the Parks Operations division, with no impact on overall costs, to better match services.

Financial Impact

The Parks Proposed Budget includes \$17,975,463 in expenditures offset by \$8,370,450 in revenues, \$6,614,251 in General Fund contribution, a District Sales Tax contribution in the amount of \$2,000,000, and Other Fund contributions of 990,762. This reflects a total expenditure decrease of \$1,002,883 or 5.3% from the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Adopted Budget.

Strategic Initiatives

Equity Framework - Plans, Policies & Budgets, Leadership, Operations & Services
Operational Plan - Dynamic Economy, Operational Excellence

Submitted By:

Jeff Gaffney, Director of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services

Recommended By:

Carlos J. Palacios, County Executive Officer

Artificial Intelligence Acknowledgment:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) did not significantly contribute to the development of this agenda item.