



**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA**  
**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT**

**AGENDA DATE:** August 24, 2022

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department

**SUBJECT:** Director's Report

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Commission receive a presentation on the status of various Parks and Recreation Department (Department) initiatives and activities.

**DISCUSSION:**

Post-Fiesta Park Restorations

Old Spanish Days' Fiesta celebration is a cherished community event in Santa Barbara. Many of the event's activities take place in City parks and Parks Division staff are responsible for both preparing park sites for Fiesta events and for restoring parks afterwards. Parks used by Old Spanish Days for Fiesta include MacKenzie Park, Pershing Park, Plaza del Mar, and De la Guerra Plaza. Mission Historical Park is also a prime gathering and picnic destination for Fiesta Pequeña. In addition, Chase Palm Park was the gathering and viewing location for the parades relocated to Cabrillo Boulevard.

Although parks provide great open spaces for large events like Fiesta, the heavy use results in significant compaction of turf areas. Irrigation breaks may be caused by erecting temporary structures and driving vehicles in parks. In order to minimize these problems, Parks staff flag and paint each sprinkler head and valve box in advance of the event to make it easier to avoid accidental damage. Staff also shut off irrigation systems to ensure that no water is applied for several days. This prevents leaks from happening during events and also makes the soil more rigid from the horses, crowds, trucks, and other heavy equipment that move throughout the parks.

Following Fiesta, staff re-pressurize irrigation systems to test main lines and inspect each sprinkler head for breaks. Staff spend many days checking and repairing irrigation and implementing turf renewal efforts. This year, staff report that no major irrigation breaks or issues were detected. Once irrigation systems are back up and running, staff can begin irrigating in short increments for a number of days. After several days, park soil is pliable enough to begin aerification and dethatching. Aerifying and dethatching soil allows water

and oxygen to get to turf roots and to allow fertilizer, seed, and soil amendments to reach fresh, moist soil. These efforts will encourage the turf to return to its previous health. The focus of turf renewal is on MacKenzie and Pershing Parks. Although De la Guerra Plaza previously required extensive renewal, due to the prolonged drought, it is not currently irrigated. In all, staff will spend approximately 300 hours completing the irrigation system and turf renewal work. .

### Recreation Afterschool Program

In conjunction with the start of the 2022/2023 Santa Barbara Unified School District (SBUSD) academic school year, the Department will launch the Recreation Afterschool Program (RAP) on Friday, August 19. Serving youth and providing important afterschool care for working parents, the program returns to pre-pandemic registration and staffing levels for the first time since being suspended on March 19, 2020. RAP provides recreation activities, sports, crafts, and special programs to first through sixth grade students at Adams, Monroe, Roosevelt, and Washington elementary school sites. RAP begins immediately following the regular school day, keeping children active and engaged in enriching activities until 5:30 pm. Staffing is at a 1:20 staff to child ratio at each RAP site and includes a Program Director and 3-4 additional Recreation Leaders who regularly meet with school staff to provide a well-supervised and engaging program. To reach as many students as possible, the fee-based program provides inclusion support services and scholarships. The program costs \$1,200 per child for the full school year, which represents \$30 per week per child, or \$2.05 per hour. There is also a payment plan option of \$120 per month. RAP registration commenced on May 31, and currently, all RAP sites are at capacity, with 220 students registered (Adams: 60, Monroe: 20, Roosevelt: 60, Washington: 80), and 2 on the waitlist.

### Afterschool Sport Leagues

The Department offers free afterschool sports leagues that promote physical fitness, develop school camaraderie, and teach basic sport techniques to participants. Historically occurring at ten SBUSD elementary schools, they are occurring at only four this year due to shortages in staffing, including vehicle drivers needed to transport participants between campuses for games. School teams in three sports: flag football, basketball, and soccer; participate in an eight-week program that includes weekly team practices with trained coaches and games with paid referees played against other local school teams. Participants receive skill and drill training before entering into an inter-scholastic league schedule. Each sport culminates with a season-ending tournament. One side benefit of the league is the opportunity for participants to meet and play against other school teams, building participant relationships (often cross-town) prior to entering junior high schools. Registration for the afterschool sport leagues begins September 22, with the capacity for a maximum of 120 students per sport. The direct cost for the delivery of the reduced program is \$30,000, which represents an average of \$28 per participant for each sport season, or \$3.47 per week per participant.

### Creek Week

Santa Barbara's 23rd Creek Week will take place Saturday, September 17 through Saturday, September 24. A variety of fun and educational talks, tours, volunteer events, and more will be offered. Community members are invited to join in and learn how they can help protect our creeks, watersheds, and ocean. The Creeks Division will host a tour of the Andrée Clark Bird Refuge Restoration Project during the regularly scheduled September Creeks Advisory Committee meeting on September 21, a tour of the Upper Arroyo Burro Restoration at Barger Canyon, and a tour on the Land Shark. They will also offer a series of "Coffee at the Creek" talks Sunday through Friday at 9:30 am. Creek Week is coordinated by the City of Santa Barbara Creeks Division, County Project Clean Water, City of Goleta, City of Carpinteria, UCSB, and Explore Ecology, with many local organizations hosting events throughout the week. Visit [Facebook.com/SBCreekWeek](https://www.facebook.com/SBCreekWeek) or [SBCreekWeek.com](https://www.SBCreekWeek.com) for a full schedule.

**APPROVED BY:** Jill E. Zachary, Parks and Recreation Director