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April 21, 2021

Honorable Paul Krekorian, Chair
Budget and Finance Committee
City Clerk, City Hall Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

ATTN: Mandy Morales, Legislative Assistant

RE: Department of Recreation and Parks (RAP) Fiscal Year 2021-22 Budget

Dear Chairman Krekorian & Honorable Councilmembers:

The Mayor's proposed \$281,785,142 RAP budget for Fiscal Year 2021-22 represents an increase of \$18,667,326 from our current \$263,117,816 budget.

The vast majority of this increase will not be used to restore or increase public services reduced due to COVID-19, employee retirements and all related economic effects. Approximately 95% of RAP's proposed increases will be dedicated to reimbursing employee indirect costs previously supported by the General Fund (\$11,912,441), making negotiated payments to Separation Incentive Program (SIP) participants (\$5,851,716) and restoring funding cut in the current fiscal year budget associated with furloughs.

RAP is pleased funding for part-time, as-needed employees will be maintained at the current level as this should assist the Department as we transition from our current role in providing welfare and sheltering and remote learning services back to our more traditional recreational services.

However, most notably the Mayor's proposed budget deletes 140 full-time positions and their related funding based upon those SIP related vacancies. These disproportionate position deletions will create serious organizational and operational challenges for the Department as it seeks to rebound from the impacts of the pandemic and as public expectations and demand for recreational services are placed on our City. Also, not approved was the request for \$94,600 in funding for maintenance of security cameras located in various parks and facilities.

Therefore, RAP requests the following items be considered during your Committee deliberations:

- Restore the deleted 140 position authorities. RAP understands, due to the ongoing City-wide financial concerns, not all funding can be restored but ***requests that all 140 position authorities be kept in place with some funding restored for critical positions;***
- Approve two Assistant General Manager positions to be re-exempted and filled;
- Include \$94,600 for the maintenance of security cameras for public safety;



- Recommend an immediate unfreeze from the current hiring restrictions for as-needed part-time employees to assist RAP in restoring services for revenue generating and summer 2021 programming; and
- Approve some technical corrections to RAP's position authorities for positions which had been reallocated and pay graded but inadvertently excluded in the Budget Brown Book.

Discussion of RAP's Requests

RAP has proven time and again the ability to deliver services to meet community needs especially during this pandemic. The ability to maintain flexibility and selectively hire as RAP moves forward in recovery efforts to restore services especially to economically disadvantaged communities is essential.

RAP requests all 140 positions slated for deletion, due to employees participating in SIP, be reinstated and that some funding be restored for critical positions so the position authorities remain to maintain flexibility in hiring. Some of these positions will need to be backfilled. Particularly hard hit was RAP's Maintenance Division with over 80 authorities for gardeners, senior gardeners, light equipment operators and supervisory personnel proposed for deletion. These staff maintain all green space, clean and sanitize recreation facilities including gyms, restrooms and water fountains, inspect play equipment and maintain sports fields. RAP generally hires through the Targeted Local Hire Program to fill the entry level positions in this division. Without maintaining the existing authorities and some ability to fill positions as economic conditions improve, RAP's maintenance capacity will fall to below 60% of projected needs.

RAP is requesting an immediate unfreeze from the current hiring restrictions for as-needed part-time employees to assist RAP in restoring services for summer 2021 programming. As the economy improves, more people are vaccinated for COVID-19 and people return to work, there will be a great need for child care during the summer months. RAP is proposing to open 100-day camps and at least 25 pools, this summer. It is essential that RAP be able to hire additional part-time employees to meet the staffing needs to implement these programs. Additionally, many revenue generating activities will continue to recover and open, however they will need part-time employees to do so.

Also hit hard was our Recreational Services Branch. Over 30 positions are proposed for deletion, especially our facility directors and management staff. This will directly affect our ability to recover from and restore normal recreational programming and implement our Youth Sports Program (YSP) through our contract with the 2028 Olympic Committee. In short, RAP will simply lack the human infrastructure to manage full implementation of many recreational activities, including those which will generate revenue as the effects of the pandemic subside.

Additionally, RAP requests \$94,600 be included in our contractual services account for security camera maintenance. RAP's security camera inventory continues to grow and is an essential part of our safety and security program in deterring crime at RAP facilities. However, funding for installation of cameras is not enough, cameras must be inspected, cleaned and repaired to in order to maintain their effectiveness.

Lastly, RAP requests some technical corrections to the Department's Brown Book be made to properly align position authorities that have been previously reallocated and pay graded but inadvertently not changed. This will not include the addition of any positions.

Conclusion

Our Department is integral to our society's health and wellness and will assist in the post-pandemic recovery. To scrape away the foundation of this recovery jeopardizes the recovery of our City's youth, adults and seniors. RAP's focus will be to restore and increase our services to meet these community needs while still observing social distancing mandates and public health requirements. RAP continues to plan with an equity-based approach on meeting the needs of those communities hardest hit by COVID-19 and the depressed economy. This recovery may take time as RAP rebuilds its workforce, funding sources and infrastructure.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our budget requests. We look forward to discussing our budget with you further. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (213) 202-2633.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL A. SHULL
General Manager

MAS:NDW:ml

cc: Honorable Councilmembers

Barbara Romero, Deputy Mayor, Mayor's Office of City Services
Edna Degollado, Senior Policy Analyst + Equity Liaison, Mayor's Office
Sharon Tso, Chief Legislative Analyst
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