

Fw: Request for NSE Committee Action Regarding the Parks & Recreation Commission Work Plan Development Process

From Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>
Date Tue 10/28/2025 8:52 AM
To Tubera, Katerina <Katerina.Tubera@sanjoseca.gov>

From: City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2025 8:02 AM
To: Boards and Commissions Support <commissions@sanjoseca.gov>
Cc: Agendadesk <Agendadesk@sanjoseca.gov>
Subject: FW: Request for NSE Committee Action Regarding the Parks & Recreation Commission Work Plan Development Process

From: Parks and Recreation Commission 10 <PRC10@sanjoseca.gov>
Sent: Monday, October 27, 2025 9:02 PM
To: City Clerk <city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov>
Subject: Request for NSE Committee Action Regarding the Parks & Recreation Commission Work Plan Development Process

To City Clerk, please include this memo in the meeting package for the 12/11 NSE committee meeting.

TO:

Neighborhoods Services & Education Committee

City of San José

FROM:

Ken Brennan

Commissioner, Parks & Recreation Commission

SUBJECT:

Request for NSE Committee Action Regarding the Parks & Recreation Commission Work Plan Development Process

BACKGROUND

I am writing to express serious concerns regarding the process by which the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) annual work plan is currently being developed and presented for approval. The process, as it is presently managed, is not aligned with the intent of the Municipal Code, the Commission's Bylaws, or the City Council's Policy 0-4 on Commissions. It also fails to reflect the principles of public transparency, accountability, and commission independence that guide all City boards and commissions.

Over several years, PRNS Commission Support Staff have gradually taken control over nearly every aspect of the work plan process—not only deciding which topics are included or excluded, but also determining in what level of detail those topics are discussed, how much time is allotted for their discussion, and when in the year those topics are discussed. Staff routinely insert topics that support the narrative they want to communicate while removing or blocking those that might expose significant leadership, operational, organizational structure, productivity, cultural, or financial management issues within PRNS.

This approach eliminates the Commission's ability to identify and prioritize issues independently, undermines its advisory role, erodes public confidence in the integrity of the process, and calls into question whether adequate oversight and direction are being provided to PRNS by our elected leaders.

DISCUSSION

The work plan development process itself lacks both clear standards and documentation. There are no written procedures describing how the plan is created, how input from commissioners and the NSE Committee is to be collected or weighted, or how the public can understand or engage in the process.

This absence of standards and documentation has allowed Commission Support Staff to exercise broad discretion over a process that should, by design, reflect commission and community priorities—not departmental convenience or internal narratives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure compliance with both the letter and the spirit of the Municipal Code and Council Policy 0-4, and to restore accountability to this process, I respectfully request that the Neighborhoods Services & Education Committee take the following actions:

- 1. Do not approve the current work plan proposal, which is scheduled to come before the NSE Committee at its December 11th, 2025 meeting, in its present form.**
- 2. Direct PRNS Commission Support Staff to re-engage with the Parks and Recreation Commission to collaboratively revise the plan so that it aligns with the priorities of both the NSE Committee and the Commission.**
- 3. Require PRNS Commission Support Staff to establish and publish a clear, transparent, and standardized process—and ensure that the process is properly documented—for developing future work plans, including defined roles, and timelines.**
- 4. Ensure that the Commission is empowered to raise, discuss, and recommend action on substantive issues, including those relating to leadership, organizational structure,**

productivity, cultural, or financial management deficiencies within PRNS, without interference or restriction by staff.

5. Direct PRNS leadership staff to participate in Commission Support and Governance Training provided by the City Clerk's Office to ensure they fully understand how commissions are intended to operate under the Municipal Code, as well as their proper role in supporting—not controlling—the development of the commission's work plan.

CONCLUSION

The current lack of transparency, standards, and documentation allows PRNS Commission Support Staff to exercise unchecked control over a process that directly affects public accountability and policy development. This not only diminishes the Commission's purpose but also weakens the effectiveness of the City Council's oversight role through the NSE Committee, by depriving it of accurate, unfiltered, and representative input from the advisory body established to provide it.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to take immediate corrective action to restore the integrity of the work plan process and ensure that it operates in full compliance with the City Charter, Municipal Code, Commission Bylaws, and Council Policy 0-4.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Brennan | City of San José

Parks & Recreation Commissioner

200 E. Santa Clara Street, San Jose, CA 95113

██████████ | PRC10@sanjoseca.gov



Fw: PRNS oversight by NSE - NSE Committee Meeting 12/11

From Parks and Recreation Commission 10 <PRC10@sanjoseca.gov>

Date Mon 12/8/2025 12:05 PM

To Tubera, Katerina <Katerina.Tubera@sanjoseca.gov>

Here is the email and original memo attached below that that I would like to include in the NSE agenda as public comment. Please confirm this will be added asap.

Ken Brennan | City of San José

Parks & Recreation Commissioner

200 E. Santa Clara Street, San Jose, CA 95113

 | PRC10@sanjoseca.gov



From: Parks and Recreation Commission 10 <PRC10@sanjoseca.gov>

Sent: Monday, December 8, 2025 8:43 AM

To: Casey, George <George.Casey@sanjoseca.gov>; Doan, Bien <Bien.Doan@sanjoseca.gov>; Campos, Pamela <Pamela.Campos@sanjoseca.gov>; Ortiz, Peter <Peter.Ortiz@sanjoseca.gov>; Mahan, Matt <Matt.Mahan@sanjoseca.gov>; Candelas, Domingo <Domingo.Candelas@sanjoseca.gov>; Kamei, Rosemary <Rosemary.Kamei@sanjoseca.gov>; Tordillos, Anthony <Anthony.Tordillos@sanjoseca.gov>; Cohen, David <David.Cohen@sanjoseca.gov>; Mulcahy, Michael <Michael.Mulcahy@sanjoseca.gov>; Foley, Pam <Pam.Foley@sanjoseca.gov>; The Office of Mayor Matt Mahan <mayor@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; District2 <District2@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>

Cc: Parks and Recreation Commission CW <PRCCW@sanjoseca.gov>; Parks and Recreation Commission 6 <PRC6@sanjoseca.gov>; Parks and Recreation Commission 2 <PRC2@sanjoseca.gov>; Parks and Recreation Commission 7 <PRC7@sanjoseca.gov>; Carl Salas <carl.salas@salasobrien.com>; d10leadershipchair@gmail.com <d10leadershipchair@gmail.com>; D1leadershipcoalition@gmail.com <D1leadershipcoalition@gmail.com>

Subject: PRNS oversight by NSE - NSE Committee Meeting 12/11

Hello all, I wanted to follow up on this email with a simple summary of how the NSE committee can immediately help drive better oversight of PRNS before we support adding funding to the organization. Drawing on the 7 critical issues I highlighted below in my email and memo, here is quick summary of what NSE can ask PRNS to put on the workplan for this year before accepting it.

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We have an opportunity to drive critical change with PRNS but if we don't get it on this years workplan we will loose this opportunity.

Best Regards,

Ken Brennan | City of San José

Parks & Recreation Commissioner

200 E. Santa Clara Street, San Jose, CA 95113

 PRC10@sanjoseca.gov



From: Parks and Recreation Commission 10

Sent: Friday, November 7, 2025 4:26 PM

To: Casey, George <George.Casey@sanjoseca.gov>; Doan, Bien <Bien.Doan@sanjoseca.gov>; Campos, Pamela <Pamela.Campos@sanjoseca.gov>; Ortiz, Peter <Peter.Ortiz@sanjoseca.gov>; Mahan, Matt <Matt.Mahan@sanjoseca.gov>; Candelas, Domingo <Domingo.Candelas@sanjoseca.gov>; Kamei, Rosemary <Rosemary.Kamei@sanjoseca.gov>; Tordillos, Anthony <Anthony.Tordillos@sanjoseca.gov>; Cohen, David <David.Cohen@sanjoseca.gov>; Mulcahy, Michael <Michael.Mulcahy@sanjoseca.gov>; Foley, Pam <Pam.Foley@sanjoseca.gov>; The Office of Mayor Matt Mahan <mayor@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; District2 <District2@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4

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Subject: PRNS staff control of the PRC work plan and the unfavorable impact to effective PRNS oversight

To Members of the City Council,

Please read the memo I submitted to the NSE Committee for the **December 11 NSE meeting**, attached at the bottom of this email. Please also acknowledge receipt of this message so I can be sure that my correspondence has been received.

I have served on the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) for almost two years now (District 10 representative) and need to bring this concern to your urgent attention. I hope this will lead to Council action to address this **governance and oversight issue** related to PRC work-plan development. Our Parks **Commission is not operating as it is supposed to**. It has effectively been dormant for years, and **bureaucratically skilled** PRNS staff have filled this void by taking effective control of the development of the annual PRC work-plan. **PRNS is in desperate need of effective oversight** from our elected bodies. The first step toward achieving real oversight is to **return full control of work-plan development to the NSE Committee and the PRC Commission**. The Council needs to drive this effort, as the PRC currently lacks the mindset and leadership responsiveness required to regain control of the work-plan development process from staff.

For context, I would like to highlight several topics below (just a sample) that have been raised by commissioners over the last two years, each highlighting significant leadership, productivity, cultural, fiscal responsibility, and policy issues within PRNS. None of these core issues made their way onto this year's PRC work plan. Therefore, they will not be discussed this year unless the NSE rejects the current work plan and asks the PRC to redo it. There are, however, several items on the PRC work plan that serve little purpose other than allowing staff to demonstrate how busy they are.

Just a few examples of Critical Issues Excluded from the PRC Work Plan

- **Park Rangers:** Rangers rarely leave Happy Hollow or Alum Rock Park, remain in offices with paper-covered windows, perform little meaningful enforcement, and no longer fulfill the purpose for which the Municipal Code originally created them. As a result, **our parks are unprotected**, and vandalism and rule violations continue unchecked. Most residents don't even know San José has park rangers. This program, in its current state, is a **huge waste of resources—and a lost opportunity**. The Rangers program needs a new documented strategy to bring it back from the dead and fulfill its role per the Municipal Code.
- **Water Management:** There is **no active or documented water-reduction strategy** in our parks, even though water is PRNS's single largest operating cost. PRNS's water-management process is dysfunctional and in dire need of oversight.
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develop at least a basic understanding of how this figure is derived rather than relying on broad, decade-old generalizations from Public Works. Where outside of government could someone communicate a number like that to justify funding requests without providing any detailed context?

- **Water-Play Features:** System-wide, nearly all children’s water-play features are turned off, and PRNS staff cannot explain why—or how much it would cost to restore them. Some parks, like **Rotary Playground**, have fully functional features with minimal water usage that have been turned off for years for no apparent reason.
- **Access to Data:** Commissioners have been denied access to public parks information/data arbitrarily when staff began receiving detailed questions based on that access. The lack of a published access policy allows PRNS leadership to **restrict public information arbitrarily** and without clear legal justification. It also creates the **perception that staff are obstructing commissioners** from performing meaningful research that exposes management issues.
- **Family Camp:** The City’s Family Camp program has operated at a **substantial annual loss** for years, **wasting millions of dollars** without a break-even strategy in place. PRNS should be required to develop a clear plan to eliminate ongoing losses. Without Council direction, this issue will remain buried and continue to drain resources from our parks.
- **Maintenance Productivity:** Chronic productivity issues affect PRNS maintenance teams. There have been incidents of employees sleeping in vehicles, idling trucks to pass time, taking long routes to avoid work, lacking proper equipment or supervision, and operating without quality-control or efficient daily work-plans. Casual observation highlights that routes are not optimized, that multiple different groups visit the same parks for different activities, and that “in-park” time of the existing resources is severely reduced as a result. There is roughly a **40 % productivity deficit** in maintenance operations that no one is addressing. How many full-time positions does that represent? These issues belong on the PRC work-plan—especially since PRNS continues to request more funding for maintenance.

You will not see any of these **substantive, critical issues** in the staff-driven PRC work-plan this year, even though they have been raised repeatedly. That is because PRNS staff have taken control of the process, actively control the agenda of the PRC and what ultimately gets exposed to council.

This **status quo is failing our residents.**

I respectfully ask for your engagement on this issue and for your support of the **five recommendations in my memo.** Control of the PRNS work-plan development process must be placed entirely back in the hands of the NSE Committee and the PRC Commission.

TO: Neighborhoods Services & Education Committee City of San José

FROM: Ken Brennan

Commissioner, Parks & Recreation Commission

SUBJECT: Request for NSE Committee Action Regarding the Parks & Recreation Commission Work Plan Development Process

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Ken Brennan

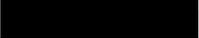
Commissioner, Parks & Recreation Commission

City of San José

Ken Brennan | City of San José

Parks & Recreation Commissioner

200 E. Santa Clara Street, San Jose, CA 95113

 | PRC10@sanjoseca.gov



Fw: PRNS oversight by NSE - NSE Committee Meeting 12/11

From Parks and Recreation Commission 10 <PRC10@sanjoseca.gov>
Date Mon 12/8/2025 1:41 PM
To Ortiz, Peter <Peter.Ortiz@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>
Cc Tubera, Katerina <Katerina.Tubera@sanjoseca.gov>

Hello, CM Ortiz, I would like to respectfully ask that in the 12/11 NSE meeting that you as chair ask to remove the PRNS work plan from the consent calendar to discuss these concerns before approving the work plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,

Ken Brennan | City of San José
Parks & Recreation Commissioner
200 E. Santa Clara Street, San Jose, CA 95113
 | PRC10@sanjoseca.gov



From: Parks and Recreation Commission 10 <PRC10@sanjoseca.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 8, 2025 8:43 AM
To: Casey, George <George.Casey@sanjoseca.gov>; Doan, Bien <Bien.Doan@sanjoseca.gov>; Campos, Pamela <Pamela.Campos@sanjoseca.gov>; Ortiz, Peter <Peter.Ortiz@sanjoseca.gov>; Mahan, Matt <Matt.Mahan@sanjoseca.gov>; Candelas, Domingo <Domingo.Candelas@sanjoseca.gov>; Kamei, Rosemary <Rosemary.Kamei@sanjoseca.gov>; Tordillos, Anthony <Anthony.Tordillos@sanjoseca.gov>; Cohen, David <David.Cohen@sanjoseca.gov>; Mulcahy, Michael <Michael.Mulcahy@sanjoseca.gov>; Foley, Pam <Pam.Foley@sanjoseca.gov>; The Office of Mayor Matt Mahan <mayor@sanjoseca.gov>; District1 <district1@sanjoseca.gov>; District2 <District2@sanjoseca.gov>; District3 <district3@sanjoseca.gov>; District4 <District4@sanjoseca.gov>; District5 <District5@sanjoseca.gov>; District 6 <district6@sanjoseca.gov>; District7 <District7@sanjoseca.gov>; District8 <district8@sanjoseca.gov>; District9 <district9@sanjoseca.gov>; District 10 <District10@sanjoseca.gov>
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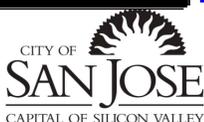
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- **Water-Play Features:** System-wide, nearly all children's water-play features are turned off, and PRNS staff cannot explain why—or how much it would cost to restore them. Some parks, like **Rotary Playground**, have fully functional features with minimal water usage that have been turned off for years for no apparent reason.
- **Access to Data:** Commissioners have been denied access to public parks information/data arbitrarily when staff began receiving detailed questions based on that access. The lack of a published access policy allows PRNS leadership to **restrict public information arbitrarily** and without clear legal justification. It also creates the **perception that staff are obstructing commissioners** from performing meaningful research that exposes management issues.
- **Family Camp:** The City's Family Camp program has operated at a **substantial annual loss** for years, **wasting millions of dollars** without a break-even strategy in place. PRNS should be required to develop a clear plan to eliminate ongoing losses. Without Council direction, this issue will remain buried and continue to drain resources from our parks.
- **Maintenance Productivity:** Chronic productivity issues affect PRNS maintenance teams. There have been incidents of employees sleeping in vehicles, idling trucks to pass time, taking long routes to avoid work, lacking proper equipment or supervision, and operating without quality-control or efficient daily work-plans. Casual observation highlights that routes are not optimized, that multiple different groups visit the same parks for different activities, and that "in-park" time of the existing resources is severely reduced as a result. There is roughly a **40 % productivity deficit** in maintenance operations that no one is addressing. How many full-time positions does that represent? These issues belong on the PRC work-plan—especially since PRNS continues to request more funding for maintenance.

You will not see any of these **substantive, critical issues** in the staff-driven PRC work-plan this year, even though they have been raised repeatedly. That is because PRNS staff have taken control of the process, actively control the agenda of the PRC and what ultimately gets exposed to council.

This **status quo is failing our residents**.

I respectfully ask for your engagement on this issue and for your support of the **five recommendations in my memo**. Control of the PRNS work-plan development process must be placed entirely back in the hands of the NSE Committee and the PRC Commission.

TO: Neighborhoods Services & Education Committee City of San José

FROM: Ken Brennan

SUBJECT: Request for NSE Committee Action Regarding the Parks & Recreation Commission Work Plan Development Process

BACKGROUND

I am writing to express serious concerns regarding the process by which the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) annual work plan is currently being developed and presented for approval. The process, as it is presently managed, is not aligned with the intent of the Municipal Code, the Commission's Bylaws, or the City Council's Policy 0-4 on Commissions. It also fails to reflect the principles of public transparency, accountability, and commission independence that guide all City boards and commissions.

Over several years, PRNS Commission Support Staff have gradually taken control over nearly every aspect of the work plan process—not only deciding which topics are included or excluded, but also determining in what level of detail those topics are discussed, how much time is allotted for their discussion, and when in the year those topics are discussed. Staff routinely insert topics that support the narrative they want to communicate while removing or blocking those that might expose significant leadership, operational, organizational structure, productivity, cultural, or financial management issues within PRNS.

This approach eliminates the Commission's ability to identify and prioritize issues independently, undermines its advisory role, erodes public confidence in the integrity of the process, and calls into question whether adequate oversight and direction are being provided to PRNS by our elected leaders.

DISCUSSION

The work plan development process itself lacks both clear standards and documentation. There are no written procedures describing how the plan is created, how input from commissioners and the NSE Committee is to be collected or weighted, or how the public can understand or engage in the process.

This absence of standards and documentation has allowed Commission Support Staff to exercise broad discretion over a process that should, by design, reflect commission and community priorities—not departmental convenience or internal narratives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure compliance with both the letter and the spirit of the Municipal Code and Council Policy 0-4, and to restore accountability to this process, I respectfully request that the Neighborhoods Services & Education Committee take the following actions:

1. Do not approve the current work plan proposal, which is scheduled to come before the NSE Committee at its December 11th, 2025 meeting, in its present form.
2. Direct PRNS Commission Support Staff to re-engage with the Parks and Recreation Commission to collaboratively revise the plan so that it aligns with the priorities of both the NSE Committee and the Commission.
3. Require PRNS Commission Support Staff to establish and publish a clear, transparent, and standardized process—and ensure that the process is properly documented—for developing

future work plans, including defined roles, and timelines.

4. Ensure that the Commission is empowered to raise, discuss, and recommend action on substantive issues, including those relating to leadership, organizational structure, productivity, cultural, or financial management deficiencies within PRNS, without interference or restriction by staff.
5. Direct PRNS leadership staff to participate in Commission Support and Governance Training provided by the City Clerk's Office to ensure they fully understand how commissions are intended to operate under the Municipal Code, as well as their proper role in supporting—not controlling—the development of the commission's work plan.

CONCLUSION

The current lack of transparency, standards, and documentation allows PRNS Commission Support Staff to exercise unchecked control over a process that directly affects public accountability and policy development. This not only diminishes the Commission's purpose but also weakens the effectiveness of the City Council's oversight role through the NSE Committee, by depriving it of accurate, unfiltered, and representative input from the advisory body established to provide it.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to take immediate corrective action to restore the integrity of the work plan process and ensure that it operates in full compliance with the City Charter, Municipal Code, Commission Bylaws, and Council Policy 0-4.

Respectfully submitted,

Ken Brennan

Commissioner, Parks & Recreation Commission

City of San José

Ken Brennan | City of San José

Parks & Recreation Commissioner

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