



Memorandum

TO: PUBLIC SAFETY, FINANCE
& STRATEGIC SUPPORT
COMMITTEE

FROM: Jon Cicirelli

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: October 1, 2018

Approved

Date

10/3/18

SUBJECT: PARK RANGER PROGRAM STATUS REPORT UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the status report on the Park Ranger program and continue discussion to the December 13, 2018 meeting of the Public Safety, Finance and Strategic Support Committee.

BACKGROUND

On March 15, 2018, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) presented an update to the Public Safety, Finance and Strategic Support Committee on the 2017 Park Ranger Program Annual Report¹. The update included information about program highlights, Watershed Protection Team activities, St. James Park patrols, resource successes, staffing retention challenges, and opportunities for improvement. Following the presentation, community members and Committee members raised concerns about the safety of Park Rangers as they perform the functions of their job.

To address these concerns, the Committee directed the Administration to cross-reference the Park Ranger Program Annual Report to the full City Council. The Department presented a Supplemental Memorandum² at the April 17, 2018 City Council meeting requesting approval to form a working group by recommendation of the Administration. The purpose of the working

¹ The 2017 Park Ranger Program Annual Report may be viewed at <https://sanjose.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3350338&GUID=4B478A43-2DAA-4EB4-B9E2-DE5326AB5E1C&Options=&Search=>

² The April 17, 2018 Supplemental Memorandum to the 2017 Park Ranger Annual Report can be viewed at <https://sanjose.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3427963&GUID=5FDABF08-7A3E-4346-B20D-229997290506&Options=&Search=>

group was to review the current Park Ranger Program service delivery model and evaluate current work practices. The Administration's recommendation included a directive to PRNS to return to City Council in late fall of 2018 with a report on the outcomes of the working group.

The Park Ranger Program Working Group began meeting in June 2018. The Working Group is a collaboration between City departments, agencies, and community members including participants from:

- Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services
- San José Park Rangers
- San José Police Department
- San José Fire Department
- Housing Department
- Environmental Services Department
- Human Resources Department
- City Manager's Office
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- County of Santa Clara, Office of the District Attorney
- Santa Clara Valley Water District
- NAACP – San José Chapter
- Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful
- Friends of Los Gatos Creek
- South Bay Clean Creeks Coalition
- Guadalupe River Park Conservancy
- West Valley College – Park Management Program

The working group is advisory to the Director of PRNS. At the conclusion of the process, the PRNS Director will consider the working group's recommendations and make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the future service delivery model for the Park Ranger Program.

ANALYSIS

The purpose of this memorandum is to update the Public Safety, Finance and Strategic Support Committee on the status of the Park Ranger Program Working Group. In the April 17, 2018 Supplemental Memorandum, staff estimated that the proposed evaluation process would take a minimum of six months. As of the date of this memorandum, the Working Group continues its work to thoroughly evaluate the current Park Ranger Program service model as it pertains to Park Ranger safety and the program's overall scope and impact.

The Park Ranger Program Working Group has convened seven meetings where participants diligently worked through facilitated discussions to clarify the main roles of a San José Park Ranger and defined the types and levels of service needed in creeks, neighborhood parks, regional parks, and trails. Discussions have also focused on the service model of the Park Ranger Program in consideration of current agreements and obligations related to the Watershed Protection Team's operations.

The Park Ranger Program Working Group continues to review and analyze the need for the Park Rangers to be armed. Additional information is needed for the Working Group to make an informed recommendation. If the recommendation is for the Park Rangers to be armed, the

Working Group will also need to consider whether the Park Ranger Program would fit existing community needs more efficiently and safely by being placed under the supervision of the Police Department or by remaining with PRNS.

The Working Group's ability to develop an informed recommendation on the matter of arming Park Rangers requires review of the following information, which has impacted the original six-month timeline:

1. A Park Ranger Job Hazard Analysis by the Department of Human Resources;
2. A separate review of any proposed recommendations to arm the Park Rangers by the San José Police Department; and
3. A review of any proposed changes to the Park Ranger classification series by the City Manager's Office of Employee Relations and relevant bargaining units.

As the Working Group addresses these outstanding reviews, separate meetings will also be conducted with the Park Rangers to discuss recommendations that may change the Park Ranger classification series and program service model. The result of the Park Ranger Job Hazard Analysis and input from the Park Rangers will help the Working Group create a detailed action plan to increase safety for the Park Rangers, including a short-term strategy if the recommended action plan cannot be immediately implemented.

CONCLUSION

Additional time for review will allow the Park Ranger Program Working Group to complete the final phases of its multi-phase evaluation. The Department, in coordination with the San José Police Department, plans to provide the Public Safety, Finance & Strategic Support Committee with a full report of the Park Ranger Program Working Group's outcomes at the December 13, 2018 committee meeting.

COORDINATION

This memorandum was coordinated with the Office of Employee Relations, Police Department, and the City Attorney's Office.

/s/

Jon Cicirelli

Acting Director of Parks, Recreation and
Neighborhood Services

For questions please contact Justin Long, Parks Division Deputy Director at (408)793-5579.

