



PARKS, RECREATION & BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT

TO: Parks, Recreation & Beautification Commission

DATE: February 21, 2019

FROM: Kathy Petker, Parks and Recreation Director

SUBJECT: Consideration of South County Skate Park Operations

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Commission review operation recommendations regarding the South County Skate Park for forwarding to the City Council.

BACKGROUND

The South County Skate Park was built in 1999 and is an impressive 13,000+ square foot concrete park where skateboarders, in-line skaters and scooters enthusiasts exercise their sport. The park is a very significant asset to Grover Beach. After having the Park open for a year, the City experienced numerous issues related to the operation of the Park, bullying, loitering, vandalism, and delinquent behavior. In order to address some of those issues, by direction of the City Council, the City installed an 8' fence, hired staff to enforce the rules and began charging an entrance fee. Virtually overnight, the Park became a safe place for youth. At its height of attendance, the Park attracted nearly 40-50 skaters a day during summer months over the years. Over time the general use of the Park declined as there was limited funding for training, programming and special events. Furthermore, additional skating facilities were being built around the County. For the last four years, the City entered into a lease agreement (\$1 per year plus reimbursement for several maintenance items up to \$4,500) with the YMCA(Y) to staff and operate the park. The City has continued to provide maintenance on major repairs as needed. The Y has provided the much needed structure over the years including staffing, programming, lessons, camps, mentoring and concession sales.

DISCUSSION

Across the country, the approach of how to manage public skate parks has been challenging in respect to enforcing the law. California law states that participants using a public skate park are required to wear full gear, including a helmet, elbow and knee pads. In addition, that the law and rules must be posted and enforced if there are onsite staff. The requirement to wear full gear has not proved to be successful most of the time. In an effort to learn more about the current trends in skate parks, staff contacted the City's Joint Powers Association (CJPIA) and several agencies with skate parks in SLO County for feedback. Agency representatives from the City of San Luis Obispo, County of San Luis Obispo (Los Osos, Templeton and Nipomo) and the City of Paso Robles. The City of Atascadero provided information on their website. The City's Police Chief Peters stated calls to service to the Skate Park in the past year were minimal; furthermore, he contacted police departments throughout the county for feedback related to their respective skate parks.

Overall, each jurisdiction stated their skate park was a positive asset from a participant perspective and that most participants were males. The successful parks included programs for volunteer assistance, weekly cleanings, family events, camps, professional skater demonstrations and constant communication with participants. Furthermore, a strong donation and sponsorship program for events.

Current Trends

Generally speaking, all agencies stated gaining compliance with the state law is a quandary and a frequent issue that is rarely achieved. It should be noted that an agency is less liable by not staffing a skate park if the rules and ordinance is posted. All agencies reported ongoing behavioral issues including bullying, foul language, littering, loitering and alcohol use, although rare. Overall, the trend of public skate parks is to be non-staffed and non-fee based with respective rules and hours posted.

Please see table below for comparisons:

City	Fee	Staffed	Notes
Grover Beach	Yes	Yes	YMCA Operation
Morro Bay	No	No	Adjacent to teen center
Atascadero	Yes	Yes	Indoor & Outdoor
San Luis Obispo	No	No	Newest in County
Los Osos	Yes	Yes	\$50-60k/annually
Nipomo	TBD	TBD	Proposed unstaffed/no fee
Templeton	No	No	Adjacent to P&R Offices

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Based on current information received from local agencies and the YMCA's desire to focus programming in other areas, staff believes the City should consider operating the Skate Park similar to other local jurisdictions. As noted, the trend of skating is still very popular with alternative options including skateboards, scooters and inline skates. In addition to the fact that most jurisdictions in our County have installed skating facilities and allowing more participation.

FISCAL IMPACT

The City currently budgets approximately \$6,000 per year for reimbursement of maintenance service items related to the Skate Park, per the operational agreement with the YMCA. If the City returned to operations and maintenance, the fully burdened costs would need to be determined with the assistance of the Public Works Department. Primary costs would include landscape maintenance and irrigation. Minor and major asset replacements and repairs would be determined as needed. A rough estimate for maintenance would be approximately \$20k per year.

ALTERNATIVES

The Commission has the following alternatives to consider:

1. Staff recommends the Commission review operation recommendations regarding the South County Skate Park for forwarding to the City Council; or
2. Provide alternate direction to staff.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The agenda was posted in accordance with the Brown Act.