



PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Parks and recreation are vitally important to establishing and maintaining the quality of life in a community, ensuring the health of families and youth, and contributing to the economic and environmental well-being of a community and region.

The City's diverse portfolio of recreation programs along with a robust, world-class system of parks, beaches, open spaces, and urban forest allow the department to contribute to the vitality and health of the community, provide the numerous popular tourist destinations, attract new businesses, and serve as environmental stewards of a vast and stunning array of natural resources.



Pillars of Our Work:

- ✓ Design Excellence
- ✓ Play, Community Health, and Interaction
- ✓ Safety First
- ✓ Good Governance
- ✓ Stewardship and Sustainability
- ✓ Connection & Accessibility
- ✓ Partnerships

Contact Us:

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Civic Auditorium
307 Church St.



DeLaveaga Golf Course
401 Upper Park Rd.



Harvey West Park Shop
300 Evergreen St.



*London Nelson
Community Center*
301 Center St.



*Municipal Wharf
Headquarters*
21 Municipal Wharf

Core Services

- Ensure the proper maintenance and operation of over 1,700 acres of City parks, beaches, open space, and urban forest through: refuse/green waste removal; tree permitting and inspections; plant, turf, and small tree care; and maintenance of park amenities (bathrooms, ballfields, pool, disc golf, golf course, wharf, skate parks, playgrounds, courts, and pathways and trails, for example)
- Ensure the proper maintenance and operation of department facilities, which total 169,000 square feet
- Create unique places that foster relationships with people and nature, and offer a civic presence through minor and major capital improvement projects
- Provide opportunities for City residents and visitors to play, learn, and socialize via in-person and online
- Offer a variety of programs specifically aimed at the needs and interests of the City's youth, teens, adults, and seniors
- Administratively support the department's facilities, programs, and activities by responding to public information requests, handling event/activity permitting, supporting advisory bodies, providing service assistance and education to the public, managing the budget and financial services as well as performing personnel services and development
- Ensure the long-range success of the department by managing community partnerships, planning and documenting systems and procedures, ensuring compliance with environmental regulations, managing large projects, complying with City, state, and federal policies and processes, budget planning, and developing new revenue strategies, and executing marketing and public information campaigns



FY 2025 Accomplishments

FY 2025 Accomplishments	<i>Fiscal Sustainability & Transparency</i>	<i>Strong Businesses & Vibrant Downtown</i>	<i>Housing</i>	<i>Homelessness Response</i>	<i>Public Safety & Community Well-Being</i>	<i>Natural & Built Infrastructure</i>	<i>Thriving Organization</i>
Advanced planning for the revitalization of San Lorenzo Park and Harvey West Park, and initiated grant-funded work to design, permit, and construct the San Lorenzo Park Riverlands project 🌲 ⚖️ 💕					X	X	
Completed 40% of the department's active Capital Investment Program projects, a portfolio that includes nearly 40 projects that is valued at close to \$8M 💕	X	X			X	X	
Enhanced the downtown core by completing the Downtown Beautification Project, which included the installation of new benches and trash cans as well as fresh paint for various amenities 💕		X			X	X	
Modernized the century-old septic system at Lower DeLaveaga Park with a new, updated system 💕					X	X	
Incorporated findings from the Age-Friendly survey into new and existing community programs and initiatives ⚖️ 💕					X		
Increased teen engagement by expanding trip offerings and reestablishing noontime programs at City middle schools 💕					X		
Commenced the replacement of the Grant Park playground and completed the Sergeant Derby Park playground replacement in December 2024 💕					X	X	

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Supported community engagement through ongoing events and celebrations, such as the Veteran's Day Recognition, Flag Day, Winter on the Wharf, and Surf Museum holiday lights ❤️		X			X		
Expanded community programming with the launch of new classes, including Skate Night and lunchtime Pilates ❤️					X		X
Fostered diversity, equity, and inclusion through the development of community activities like Retro Rainbow and the PRIDE prom 🏆❤️					X		
Completed the Senior Pavilion, a dedicated outdoor space for senior gatherings and celebrations 🏆❤️					X	X	
Achieved full registration for all four seasons of adult basketball leagues, indicating strong community interest ❤️					X		
Secured additional operations and maintenance funds, hired new staff, and completed essential facility repairs and upgrades to facilitate the early summer reopening of Harvey West Pool ❤️					X	X	
Successfully increased turnout at the 2025 Clam Chowder Cook-Off, achieving record attendance and generating \$142,000 in revenue ❤️	X	X			X		
Expanded community engagement by onboarding six new members to the Friends of Parks and Recreation Board 🌲🏆❤️	X	X			X	X	X

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Increased program access for vulnerable youth by increasing the number of youth scholarship awards by 62% and awards to Medi-Cal recipients by 135%, compared to FY 2024, through improved outreach and process management 🏛️💖					X		
Addressed 95% of 2023 safety inspection corrective items, which included installing a new fire panel in the Parks Administration building, replacing the Golf Maintenance Facility roll-up door, repairs to the Civic parking lot pavement, installing handrails in the Civic Auditorium, and repairing the London Nelson Center roof 💖					X	X	X
Improved workplace safety by completing supervisor training on accident investigation and updating three key department safety plans: injury illness and prevention, fall protection, and ladder safety 💖					X		X
Collaborated with the city's Emergency Operation Command (EOC) to manage the impact of a high-surf event caused a partial collapse of the SC Municipal Wharf, including its safe closure and reopening after completion of a structural assessment 💖		X			X	X	
Established a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Museum of Natural History to support their expansion plans 🌲🏛️💖	X				X	X	

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In partnership with the Museum of Art and History, the London Nelson Community Center launched its first annual celebration of the life and contributions of London Nelson from May 5 th (his birthdate) to May 17 th (the date of his passing) 🏛️💖					X		
Established a partnership with the American Red Cross to provide free swim lessons to Santa Cruz youth at the reopened Harvey West Pool 🏊💖	X				X		
Enhanced local biodiversity by planting 1,000 highly endangered tarplant starts in Arana Gulch (Area A) 🌲						X	
Planted and established over 75 new trees, hired a new Assistant Urban Forester, completed structural pruning on Pacific Avenue trees, and secured Parks and Recreation Commission approval of an updated Street Tree List that promotes a diverse and resilient tree canopy and incorporates nine new native tree options, all made possible in part through the previously awarded USDA Urban Forestry grant 🌲💖	X	X			X	X	X
Partnered with the Fire Department to develop a Wildfire Resiliency Plan, outlining shovel-ready projects for enhanced open space wildfire preparedness 🌲💖					X	X	

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Removed invasive species in the Pogonip and Moore Creek open spaces, successfully completing the final year of grant funding for this initiative 🌲						X	
Continued implementing energy-efficient lighting at the Civic Auditorium and initiated the partial conversion of hand tools to battery power at DeLaveaga Golf Course, leveraging City Carbon Fund Grants 🌲💖					X	X	
Led ongoing efforts to reduce encampments and litter in city open spaces, promoting a cleaner environment 🌲💖				X	X	X	
Installed nets to shield Harvey West Park solar panels from ballfield activities 🌲	X					X	
Improved user experience by streamlining online web registration, automating field lighting controls, and enhancing the user-friendliness of the web registration portal 💖	X				X		X
Partnered with system vendors and IT staff to transition special event and tree permitting to a new software system, conducted audits of all department web pages for the new website platform transition, and assisted supervisors with change management related to the City's new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system implementation 💖	X						X

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Evaluated department career ladders and unmapped / unbenchmarked positions, and delivered comprehensive feedback on the 2024 Employee Compensation Study 🏛️💖							X
Fostered employee growth through internal promotions and enhanced career ladders for Open Space Management, Urban Forestry, and the Golf Course with position additions and adjustments 🌲💖					X	X	X
Increased revenue and reach by collaborating with direct service partners on activity guide promotions and ad sales 💖	X						
Completed the department's strategic communications plan to effectively market and highlight goals, initiatives, and messaging 💖					X		X
Completed a department-wide Facility Condition Assessment to inform the evaluation of the current 5-Year Capital Investment Program and extend the department's planning horizon to 10 years 🌲🏛️💖	X				X	X	X
Secured approval from the Parks and Recreation Commission for financial sustainability recommendations 🌲🏛️💖	X				X	X	X
Expanded use of mobi-mats and beach wheelchairs at Cowell Beach, funded by a \$20,000 grant for accessibility pilots 🏛️💖	X				X		

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Established the City Council Ad Hoc Subcommittee for the Wharf to evaluate the next steps and ensure the Wharf's long-term sustainability, which worked to receive full Council approval of repair recommendations 🌲 ⚖️ ❤️	X	X			X	X	
Enhanced the harbor entrance to Arana Gulch through rehabilitation with new deconstructed granite and improved drainage ⚖️ ❤️					X	X	
Restored access to a popular trail in Moore Creek damaged by winter storms and replaced the Overlook fence ❤️					X	X	
Installed new landscaping along Rail Trail Segment 7, Phase 2, improving the trail's aesthetic appeal and user experience 🌲 ❤️					X	X	



FY 2026 Goals

FY 2026 Goals	<i>Fiscal Sustainability & Transparency</i>	<i>Strong Businesses & Vibrant Downtown</i>	<i>Housing</i>	<i>Homelessness Response</i>	<i>Public Safety & Community Well-Being</i>	<i>Natural & Built Infrastructure</i>	<i>Thriving Organization</i>
Complete priority renovations at select parks and recreation facilities, including a new playground at Poet's Park and ADA improvements to Market Street Senior Center, as outlined in the department capital investment program 🏛️💖	X				X	X	
Utilize the findings of the Facilities Condition Assessment and Fee Study to develop a 10-year plan that strategically allocates resources in alignment with infrastructure and community priorities 🌲🏛️💖	X				X	X	X
Enhance program management efficiency by integrating RecTrac forms for class proposals and implementing Event Management best practices 💖	X				X		X
Increase community engagement in events and programs through strategic fundraising events and the introduction of a new indoor fall sport 💖	X				X		
Optimize aquatics offerings by maintaining pool operations, providing accessible swim lessons, and hosting special events that engage diverse community segments 🏛️💖					X		
Systematically assess and respond to community needs by establishing a community needs assessment methodology 🏛️💖					X		X

FY 2026 Goals	<i>Fiscal Sustainability & Transparency</i>	<i>Strong Businesses & Vibrant Downtown</i>	<i>Housing</i>	<i>Homelessness Response</i>	<i>Public Safety & Community Well-Being</i>	<i>Natural & Built Infrastructure</i>	<i>Thriving Organization</i>
Leverage new funding sources to continue invasive species management and habitat restoration strategies 🌲	X					X	
Expand Urban Forestry program capacity and complete Open Space management transition 🌲💕					X	X	
Enhance two to three partner relationships with clear agreements that update responsibilities and benefits 🌲⚖️💕	X				X	X	X
Strengthen the Friends of Parks and Recreation Group to independently support department fundraising goals 🌲⚖️💕	X				X	X	X
Secure sponsorships to support departmental programs and events ⚖️💕					X		
Proactively address safety concerns by clearing illegal encampments and completing critical infrastructure repairs, including Civic Auditorium generator replacement and electrical panel upgrades 💕					X	X	X
Reduce safety incidents and enhance staff safety awareness by updating staff training matrices and improving remote training facilities 💕					X	X	X
Implement sound fiscal practices by developing procedures to evaluate course proposals for alignment with financial goals 💕	X						

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Enhance program viability through the development of clear operational and business plans focused on cost recovery 🏛️💖	X				X	X	
Improve departmental efficiency through Enterprise Resource Program solution implementations and collaborate with City departments to address enforcement capacity challenges 💖	X				X	X	X
Improve online registration and reservation services through implementation of 2-3 recreation software improvements 💖					X		X
Secure Council approval for a comprehensive financial plan to fund ongoing maintenance, repairs, and improvements for the Wharf, ensuring its long-term viability as a key economic driver 💖	X				X	X	X
Implement key financial sustainability recommendations to realize improved cost recovery in FY 2027 🏛️💖	X				X	X	X
Launch the FY 2026-2028 Parks and Recreation Department Strategic Plan, aligning department priorities with citywide goals and community needs 🌲🏛️💖	X	X		X	X	X	X
Develop West Cliff design and signage standards through consultant work and community input to create a unified identity and improved visitor experience 🏛️💖					X		

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Upgrade high-need playgrounds based on the 15-year plan, prioritizing safety and accessibility 🏡❤️					X	X	

Workload Indicators

Workload Indicators	Strategic Plan Focus Area	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Estimate	FY 2026 Goal
# of participants in programs, classes & events 🏡🌳❤️	Strong Businesses and a Vibrant Downtown; Public Safety and Community Well-Being	99,797	100,338	110,495	115,552	117,450
# of facility, field, court & picnic areas reservations 🏡🌳❤️	Public Safety and Community Well-Being	10,851	8,704	13,913	13,670	14,000
Tons of general refuse/green waste removed 🌳❤️	Natural and Built Infrastructure	331/88	546/98	445/149	435/130	475/126
# of annual labor hours (maintenance of recreation facilities)/ 1,000 sq ft ❤️	Natural and Built Infrastructure; Thriving Organization	99.54	99.54	99.54	119.45	119.45
# of annual labor hours (maintenance of parks and open space)/per acre ❤️	Natural and Built Infrastructure; Thriving Organization	68.57	67.37	61.35	72.18	73.38

Performance Measures

Performance Measures	Strategic Plan Focus Area	FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Estimate	FY 2026 Goal
% canopy cover as defined in Street Tree Management Plan 🏡 🌲 ❤️	Natural & Built Infrastructure;	38.9	38.9	38.9	38.9	38.9
% of residents within a 10-minute walk to a park 🏡 🌲 ❤️	Public Safety and Community Well-Being	96%	96%	96%	96%	96%
Operating expenditures per acre of parkland*	Fiscal Sustainability; Thriving Organization	\$9,168	\$9,805	\$10,931	\$10,794	\$12,200
% of operating expenditures recovered from non-tax revenues*	Fiscal Sustainability; Thriving Organization	40%	36%	34%	36%	29%

* Excluding the department's Central Service Allocation Plan expenditures



Staffing

Positions	FY 2023 Amended*	FY 2024 Amended*	FY 2025 Amended*	FY 2026 Proposed	FY 2026 Change
Administrative Assistant I/II	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	-
Administrative Assistant III	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	-
Administrative Services Supervisor	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-
Assistant Golf Course Superintendent	-	1.00	1.00	1.00	-
Assistant Urban Forester-Limited Term	-	-	1.00	1.00	-
Associate Planner I/II	1.00	1.00	-	-	-
Box Office Representative	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	-
Building Maintenance Worker I/II	2.00	2.50	3.00	3.00	-
Custodian	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	-
Director of Parks and Recreation	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-
Facility Attendant	2.00	2.00	2.50	2.50	-
Field Supervisor	3.00	3.00	4.00	4.00	-
Golf Course Superintendent	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-
Light Equipment Mechanic	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	-
Parks Field Crew Leader	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	(1.00)
Parks Maintenance Worker	28.00	28.00	28.00	28.00	-
Principal Management Analyst	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-
Recreation Coordinator	6.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	-
Recreation Superintendent	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-
Recreation Supervisor	5.00	5.00	5.50	5.50	-
Senior Parks Maintenance Worker	7.00	7.00	7.00	7.00	-
Senior Planner	-	-	1.00	1.00	-
Service Field Crew Leader	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	-
Special Events Coordinator	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-
Superintendent of Parks	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-
Urban Forester	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-
Wharf Construction Crew Leader	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-
Wharf Construction Worker	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	-
Wharf Supervisor	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-
Total	84.00	86.50	91.00	90.00	(1.00)

* "Amended" refers to the FTE count as of the adopted budget of the indicated fiscal year, plus any adjustments authorized by City Council within the course of the year

Budget Summary - Parks and Recreation

		Fiscal Year 2025			Fiscal Year 2026
		Fiscal Year 2024	Adopted	Amended	Fiscal Year 2026
		Actuals*	Budget*	Budget*	Adopted*
				Year-End	
				Estimate*	
EXPENDITURES BY CHARACTER:					
Personnel Services		11,064,074	12,450,008	12,709,770	12,667,457
Services, Supplies, and Other Charges		10,175,653	9,742,083	11,695,276	10,533,845
Capital Outlay		254,486	95,000	168,398	95,000
Debt Service		25,065	15,313	15,313	15,313
Total Expenditures		21,519,278	22,302,404	24,588,756	23,311,615
EXPENDITURES BY ACTIVITY:					
Parks and Recreation Administration	3101	4,656,757	5,082,568	5,415,824	5,782,707
Urban Forestry	3105	884,853	682,973	1,695,866	717,332
Neighborhood Parks	3106	2,252,428	2,408,787	2,462,146	2,018,185
Community & Regional Parks	3107	2,600,606	2,215,431	2,380,565	2,334,420
Parks Maintenance West	3110	25	-	-	-
Parks Maintenance Central	3111	-	-	36,850	-
Parks Maintenance East	3112	5,721	-	-	-
Arana Gulch Habitat Management	3114	94,194	114,811	114,811	106,623
Youth Summer Trail Crew	3115	26,708	31,849	31,849	29,870
Medians	3116	-	63,134	63,134	163,683
Parks Open Space	3120	1,378,513	1,489,149	1,602,709	1,611,679
Delaveaga Golf Course	3131	2,255,879	2,471,201	2,476,201	2,485,516
Recreation Classes	3201	365,095	293,144	293,144	294,703
Special Events/Brochure	3202	133,849	187,202	187,202	178,870
Beach Flats Community Center	3204	9,980	10,676	10,676	10,834
Sports	3205	514,373	520,741	520,741	517,192
Youth Programs	3206	671,678	622,295	623,495	611,435
Teen Services	3207	347,234	465,249	465,249	482,511
Aquatics - Pool Programs	3208	86,409	207,548	598,908	555,072
Museum	3210	50,489	53,013	53,013	53,849
London Nelson Community Center	3212	1,059,853	1,116,916	1,093,181	1,157,788
Civic Auditorium	3213	946,742	1,045,506	1,087,850	984,962
<i>Subtotal General Fund</i>		18,341,384	19,082,193	21,213,414	20,097,231
Parks and Recreation Administration	3101	71,515	150,000	62,785	-
Parks Support	3108	-	-	749	-
Parks Open Space	3120	12,000	-	-	-
Street Trees	3151	8,118	15,000	25,000	15,000

*Sums may have discrepancies due to rounding

Budget Summary - Parks and Recreation

		Fiscal Year 2024 Actuals*	Fiscal Year 2025			Fiscal Year 2026 Adopted*
			Adopted Budget*	Amended Budget*	Year-End Estimate*	
Special Events/Brochure	3202	-	2,350	2,350	1,000	2,350
Youth Programs	3206	-	33,500	-	-	-
Teen Services	3207	974	-	71,150	3,623	-
Aquatics - Pool Programs	3208	-	-	7,647	-	-
Museum	3210	-	-	53,546	-	-
Municipal Wharf	3211	3,067,340	3,009,361	3,115,103	2,927,025	3,177,034
London Nelson Community Center	3212	-	-	27,012	-	-
Civic Auditorium	3213	10,866	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Park & Recreation Trusts	3912	7,081	-	-	-	10,000
<i>Subtotal Other General Funds</i>		3,177,894	3,220,211	3,375,343	2,956,648	3,214,384
Total Expenditures		21,519,278	22,302,404	24,588,756	22,685,720	23,311,615
RESOURCES BY FUND:						
General Fund	101	4,718,100	4,477,761	5,762,185	4,987,260	4,444,850
Municipal Wharf	104	1,664,508	1,500,000	1,524,000	1,572,544	1,509,000
Civic Equip Maintenance/Replace ment	121	8,400	11,550	11,550	10,000	11,550
Street Tree Fund	125	18,919	24,600	24,600	72,500	44,000
Contributions and Donations - Parks & Recreation	162	40,687	14,700	14,700	12,248	24,850
	170	2,000,000	-	3,253,271	1,000,000	-
Technology Surcharge	295	310	400	563	300	400
Total Resources		8,450,924	6,029,011	10,590,869	7,654,852	6,034,650
NET GENERAL FUND COST:		(13,068,354)	(16,273,393)	(13,997,887)	(15,030,868)	(17,276,965)
TOTAL AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL:		FY 2024 86.50		FY 2025 91.00		FY 2026 90.00

*Sums may have discrepancies due to rounding

Organization Chart

