



Staff Report

RECOMMENDATION FROM THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION FOR A RESOLUTION TO ENDORSE THE PARKS FOR THE FUTURE BALLOT MEASURE

Summary

On February 26, 2008 the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors had the final reading to approve the Parks for the Future ballot initiative. The recommendation was approved to (1) Adopt an ordinance proposing a 1/8 cent retail transaction and use tax for park and recreation purposes in San Mateo County; and (2) Adopt a resolution calling an election for the purpose of submitting to electors a proposition for the improvements, maintenance, programs and operations of parks and recreation agencies in San Mateo County.

Background

In 2004, the County and representatives from the municipalities located within San Mateo County, began discussions on alternatives to increase funding for the operation, improvement and maintenance of parks located within San Mateo County. The effort grew from recognition that there is strong public support for the parks and recreation activities within the County, and that other budget priorities have eroded the ability to maintain and improve park and recreation amenities in the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County.

A steering committee developed a proposed measure, to be submitted to a vote of the electorate at the November 2006 election, to establish a 1/8 cent sales tax for parks and recreation purposes. The measure had strong support from local Cities. Unfortunately, the measure failed.

Discussion

The Steering Committee believes that there is still strong support for a measure to support parks and recreation activity within the county, and a need for additional funding is greater than ever in light of tighter financial reserves. The Steering Committee is seeking endorsement of the Parks for the Future ballot measure from both appointed and elected officials within the San Mateo County jurisdiction, which will be put before the electorate on the June 2008 ballot. The major components of the measure are the following:

- The measure would be in effect for a period of 25 years, and could be extended by a vote of the electorate.
- Net tax revenues must be used to support parks and recreation services, including

maintaining and improving park bathrooms, picnic areas and athletic facilities, repairing and upgrading playgrounds and play structures, improving access to parks and playgrounds for the disabled, preserving open spaces and maintaining hiking and biking trails.

- Allocation of net tax revenues, after deduction of administrative expenses, would be: 42% to the County, 6% to the 3 par districts operating in the County, and 52% to the cities within the County, with the allocation to the cities to be distributed based on population. Any growth in sales tax revenues exceeding 4% from one year to the next will be shared by the cities and districts only.
- The City/County Association of Governments will oversee the allocation of funds, will periodically audit the distribution and use of the funds, and will report on the status of the distribution and use of funds at a public meeting.
- Because the measure is a special tax, it must be approved by a 2/3 vote of the electorate. Polling conducted on two occasions has indicated strong public support for the measure. SB 203 required a 2/3 vote of the Board to place this measure on the ballot, therefore a 4/5 vote was required. If the measure is passed by the electorate, collection of the sales tax will begin in October 2008.

Fiscal Impact

The City of Belmont would be scheduled to receive \$268,000 annually, for a period of 25 years.

Recommendation

Staff Recommends that the Parks and Recreation Commission:

- Endorse the Parks for the Future ballot measure.
- Commission recommendation to the City Council to approve a resolution endorsing the Parks for the Future ballot measure.

Alternatives

1. Take no action.

Attachments

- A. San Mateo County Board of Supervisors Ordinance.
- B. San Mateo County Board of Supervisors Resolution.

Respectfully submitted,

George D. Brunson
Interim Co-Director Parks and Recreation