



# Agenda

STUDY SESSION OF THE GOVERNING BODY  
NOVEMBER 18, 2019  
5:00 P.M.  
SWEENEY BALLROOM A  
SANTA FE COMMUNITY CONVENTION CENTER  
201 W. Marcy Street

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. PRESENTATION
  - a) Discussion of Parks Master Plan and Next Steps. (John P. Munoz, Parks and Recreation Director, [jpmunoz@santafenm.gov](mailto:jpmunoz@santafenm.gov), 955-2142)
4. NEXT STUDY SESSION
  - Monday, December 16, 2019
5. ADJOURN

Persons with disabilities in need of accommodations, contact the City Clerk's office at 955-6521, five (5) working days prior to meeting date.

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**SUMMARY INDEX  
STUDY SESSION  
SANTA FE CITY COUNCIL  
November 18, 2019**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
1. Call to Order	Convened at 5:00 p.m.	1
2. Roll Call	Quorum Present	1
3. Approval of Agenda	Approved as presented	1
4. Presentation		
a) Discussion of Parks MP and Next Steps	Discussion	2-20
5. Next Study Session	Set for December 16, 2019	20
I. Adjournment	Adjourned at 7:00 pm	20

**MINUTES OF THE  
STUDY SESSION OF THE  
GOVERNING BODY  
Santa Fe, New Mexico  
November 18, 2019**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

A Study Session of the Governing Body of the City of Santa Fe, New Mexico, was called to order by Mayor Alan Webber, on Monday, November 18, 2019, at approximately 5:00 p.m., in Sweeney Ballroom A at Santa Fe Community Convention Center, 201 W. Marcy Street, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Roll call indicated the presence of a quorum, as follows:

**Members Present**

Mayor Alan Webber  
Councilor Roman "Tiger" Abeyta  
Councilor Mike Harris  
Councilor Christopher M. Rivera  
Councilor Carol Romero-Wirth  
Councilor JoAnne Vigil Coppler  
Councilor Renee D. Villarreal

**Members Excused**

Councilor Signe I. Lindell, Mayor Pro-Tem  
Councilor Peter N. Ives

**Others Attending**

Jarel LaPan Hill, Interim City Manager  
Erin McSherry, City Attorney  
Yolanda Y. Vigil, City Clerk  
Carl Boaz, Council Stenographer

**Parks and Recreation Staff Presenting**

John Muñoz, Parks and Recreation Director  
Richard Thompson, Parks Division Director  
Jennifer Romero, MRC Administrator

**3. PRESENTATION**

Ms. Hill explained the subject of this study session was to engage in a good discussion. Mr. Muñoz and his team would present the Parks Master Plan with a series of questions and points for feedback. The presentation is meant to be a conversation and the session would stick to the 7:00 pm meeting deadline.

a) Discussion of Parks Master Plan and Next Steps (John P. Muñoz, Parks and Recreation Director, [jpmunoz@santafenm.gov](mailto:jpmunoz@santafenm.gov), 955-2142)

Mr. Muñoz reported comparisons nationally compared to Santa Fe: Parks and Rec programs have 50 users nationally compared to 233 users in Santa Fe. On average, a city the size of Santa Fe has 95,000 -100,000 participants that visit a park annually compared to Santa Fe residents and visitors at a rate of 1.5 million park visits per year. That indicates the City has a great responsibility to offer strong programming and take care of the facilities.

Mr. Muñoz introduced his staff, Jennifer Romero and Richard Thompson and indicated their consultant would arrive shortly.

He stated some objectives would be to discuss what the Parks Master Plan is and is not, discuss the current state of the parks, recreational facilities, open spaces and trails and policy issues. They collected feedback but he believed it makes sense to get feedback from City Councilors on what they hear from constituents.

The Park Master Plan was launched in January 2017 after outreach to Park Commissioners, elected officials, focus groups, public meetings, and surveys. In April 2018 the team presented the plan to the Parks Commission. The Master Plan is a guide and baseline and a source of information to inform their decisions in the future. The plan includes some findings and recommendations but does not point a way forward. He would review themes: skills of responsibility/resources; budget history; headcount; park locations and density; and the new reality.

The Parks Department maintains 77 parks, 548 medians and maintains 247 square feet of building space and provides snow removal as needed. As the City has grown, they need staffing to ensure they can provide excellent service. The FY 2009 budget for parks was \$5.8 million; in 2015 it was \$6.5 million and the budget increase FY 2018, was \$7.4 million, or over \$1 million above the previous budget.

The Consultant, Phyllis Taylor, arrived and stated she was the person who wrote the Parks and Recreation Master Plan that was approved by the Parks Commission (PARC) in 2018. There have been a lot of changes and she was present in case there are questions.

Mr. Muñoz reported in 2007/08 the headcount, temporary seasonal and classified was budgeted for about 120; in 2015/16 there were 67. The 2018/2019 budget is 80 head count in Parks for around 1100 acres of irrigated parks and over 3,000 open spaces.

The study of park location versus density show families are on the south and west side of the City and is the strongest growth. Most of the parks are on the east side. In addition to a growing city and growing tasks, homelessness, graffiti, pressure with pest management, is also growing.

Mr. Muñoz stopped for questions.

Councilor Rivera asked if it was known how Santa Fe compares on headcount to other cities and how to determine how many are needed to care for the area.

Mr. Muñoz replied the National Parks Association determines headcount by population. Santa Fe did their own studies and worked with Constituent Services to compare Santa Fe with comparable cities in acreage and headcount. Las Cruces has one third the acreage and an average of 199 employees. He also had other comparisons with similar cities he could provide.

Councilor Rivera asked if medians and rights-of-way are those typically under the Parks and Rec Department.

Mr. Muñoz said they are not, and it is something that throws the financials off. In Santa Fe the Department is also responsible for medians and ROWs that typically fall under Public Works/Solid Waste.

Councilor Harris asked if Mr. Muñoz was suggesting that Santa Fe compared to Las Cruces, has lighter staffing.

Mr. Muñoz agreed.

Councilor Harris noted the Master Plan states in a number of places that Operations and Maintenance staffing levels are high compared to peer cities. It goes on to say it could be because demands for public events are higher than typical for a number of facilities for a city of this size. He thought the examples Mr. Muñoz used appeared specifically for parks in terms of people. But much of the Master Plan is based on Parks and Recreation in its entirety.

He asked to confirm that Mr. M's opinion given the number of parks, is that Santa Fe is understaffed.

Ms. Taylor explained they did not separate Parks from Parks and Recreation. She added that Santa Fe is comparable across the board to other cities included in the study that also have a big focus on outdoor recreation and are tourist destinations. The comparison is difficult because each department in the various cities manage differently; medians, streetscapes, golf courses, etc. Parks and Rec is not always combined.

Mr. Muñoz added that Santa Fe has over 2 million visitors annually (1.5 million visit

parks) and they hold and support 400 events a year. So, there are additional tasks for the Parks and Rec team.

Mayor Webber noted data points on page 76-77: the number of participants per program is 233 for Santa Fe compared to 50 for all reported Parks and Recreation agencies. So, the level of participation is four times higher. He read, "total number of parks is 71 compared to 22; total park acres 971.5 compared to 491." He said they are looking at total acres of 91 of non-park sites for Santa Fe compared to 10 acres as the medium of other Parks and Rec agencies. He read the last line on the page under Park land, "*Santa Fe's total land area is much larger when open space, undeveloped park land, golf course, and school sites are included.*"

Mayor Webber said they are looking at an ambitious management task. He asked Mr. Muñoz to recite the staff numbers again.

Mr. Muñoz reviewed the 2007/2008 numbers when Santa Fe had the strongest staffing, noting that this year staff has increased. There were about 120 employees 10 years ago and today they have 80.

Councilor Harris asked if that was for Parks and Rec or specific to Parks.

Mr. Muñoz replied the 120 are Parks employees.

Councilor Harris recalled reading there were 179 full-time employees (FTEs) for the Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Muñoz agreed.

Councilor Abeyta asked if the report included park areas that belong to the public schools and if they were part of the statistics.

Ms. Taylor indicated the park area belongs to the City but is at school sites.

Councilor Abeyta expressed concern because the public was not allowed to use school sites. District 3 has beautiful park space, but it is locked on weekends.

Mayor Webber suggested using the session to identify questions needing clarification. The document raised questions such as Councilor Abeyta's on the joint use of facilities. That doesn't solve the problem, but hopefully flags what they should discuss.

Councilor Romero-Wirth added that a reason the schools lock the playground is because of a liability issue. The City would have to agree to take a financial implication to use the playground off school hours.

Councilor Abeyta explained he brought up the schools because he didn't want it to appear it was all park space, especially in District 3. The space is not available to them.

Mr. Muñoz clarified they also maintain 247,000 square feet of space in municipal buildings and school grounds.

Councilor Villarreal clarified this was not talking about all public schools; there were four elementary schools listed that the City could not access. Mr. Muñoz agreed.

Councilor Vigil Coppler asked if the information would be updated since the document referred to is 1½ years old. She wanted to know what their approach was - if it was to correct the data.

Mayor Webber explained he and the City Manager were trying to make this a productive work session. He looks at the document as a useful springboard to questions, not solutions. Out of this meeting, Mr. Muñoz and his team are looking for guidance; if there are the right number of parks or too few parks; are the parks in the right locations; is the staffing/budget appropriate; is this an area the Governing Body should be more mindful of need. The document is an opportunity to ask questions that would guide budget and policy direction.

Councilor Vigil Coppler noted a lot was heard about tennis courts the other night. She thought that a real issue and wanted that to be addressed in the upcoming that and Parks planning. Kids in town do not have a lot to do and idle hands drift where they do not want them. Tennis, swimming, and all of the recreational activities are a good outlet. Many younger kids play tennis and she would like that addressed.

She noted page 45 listed Via Caballero Park but not a park behind her house. The city spent money to cordon the road off and to Councilors who visited her about the park and a "Road Closed" sign for Yucca Street, among other things. That park should also be on the map.

Mr. Thompson explained the land / open space at the end of Yucca is not a dedicated park. Parks maintains a little vegetation management, the posts and cable, and security, and cleans out the illegal dumping in the area. He did not know if any park dedication.

Councilor Vigil Coppler explained she called it a park because the two Councilors who came to her house called it that. She agreed it did not get much attention.

Mr. Thompson said there are incidents there all the time. the parks are regularly inspected but not the open space. They rely heavily on citizens for their eyes and ears.

Mr. Muñoz offered to look at the area and make the correction.

Ms. Hill asked for a conversation and guidance on whether all parks should be treated equally and if some should get a higher level of maintenance, or less. Ms. Hill said she wanted to know the right level of funds dedication and resources and if there should be different tiers. That level of discussion would be instructive to discuss.

Mr. Thompson replied the Department recognizes standards of care and they referred internally to the number of feet that go to a park, weekly, monthly, and annually. He provided an example of Ragle, Franklin Miles, Alto, Las Solaris, and SWAN that are much busier than Las Acequias or Llano, Solana or Herb Martinez.

He said his preference is to establish a standard of care that explains what the department is budgeted for and intends to do rather than the public being concerned about what the Department is not doing. They do not maintain tennis or basketball courts in the parks, that is a CIP program. The Department does not have the expertise, the equipment, or the funding to resurface the courts or build new courts. However, they continually maintain sanitation, turf, irrigation, electrical, and respond to special events.

Mr. Muñoz said he wanted to utilize the Councilors time in the best way and get their feedback on themes he included in the presentation. There is a constituency very interested in tennis courts and that is important, and tennis is a sport for all ages. Also pickle ball is growing at an amazing rate. As mentioned, 233 Santa Feans on average that love Parks and Rec and who place importance on recreation and being outdoors. It is the City's responsibility to find a way to do this.

Mayor Webber noted the guiding principles on page 7 and the policy guidelines of the City of Santa Fe with regard to Parks, and read, *"Provide every neighborhood with a park within walking distance. Provide access to significant regional open spaces. Acquire and build trails along the major spines."* And then, the guiding principles for parks, *"Adopt the standard for parks of 15 acres of developed park land per thousand regional residents, etc."*

Those are the policy guidelines by the Council the Department is expected to perform by. He said it would be useful to not just address questions of the team but discuss whether to adhere to the national idea policy goal of a park within walking distance for residents. Or, in a city surrounded by open space; a western city that is more open and sprawling unlike Chicago or New York, etc., should they change it.

Mayor Webber to the City Manager's point: do they want different levels /types of parks to create a hierarchy, and then provide that as a direction. Do they think they can continue to pay for the park physical assets they own. Given the point Councilor Abeyta made about certain parts of the City being underserved; are they going to add more parks are change the location of existing parks or turn those into other uses.

He was looking to the document for data, not for the answers, the answers have to come from the Governing Body.

Mayor Webber put opening policy questions out for discussion:

- *Are they committed to the idea of a park in walking distance for all residents; or is that not relevant to a city structured, shaped, and laid out in the manner*



## *Santa Fe is?*

Councilor Romero-Wirth added something to consider when thinking about the question. The only place that talks about water management is at the top of page 105, Recommendation and Implementation section. In New Mexico's dry climate and the awareness of climate change and having less water, she was not sure the Department had worked on what was needed to conserve their parks. Constraints should be considered, and water is one, when thinking about the number of parks the City should have, what they look like and their level of care.

Mayor Webber noted on page 23 several were mentioned; one mentioned the policy of cutting off irrigation in the winter. He was not sure what that would do to the trees. It also states a Drought Management Plan is needed, but there is no indication there is such a plan. And also talks about green infrastructure, low impact development solutions and he saw no evidence in the document that they City ever had that. On page 25 states that the City has median design standards, but he is not aware of any.

Councilor Romero-Wirth said her intent was to make them aware of another constraint besides staffing and budget, there is water to consider.

Mr. Muñoz agreed that was a valid point and he and his team are working on that to propose more efficient ways for the use of water, such as at the MRC. Another piece is their work with a task force to get a median plan design the Mayor mentioned. There are over 320 pieces of vegetation (species) that can be planted in the medians and is difficult to manage. The plan was set up 15 /16 years ago and now with more education on climate change there are plants on the list that do not do well in Santa Fe. They are working on that.

Councilor Romero-Wirth added the public has talked about the need for more water conservation in parks and she assumed that would be addressed in the Five-Year Water Conservation Plan.

Councilor Harris commented on things he took from this. He said for the record he wished he had seen the document 1 1/2 years ago. He thought the 15 acres per thousand is a high standard and there is no reason to work toward that. But to create something within walking distance has value. In his neighborhood they have 4 acres in the middle of the subdivision with pathways and a couple of benches and a little open space. He thought the area mentioned by Councilor Vigil-Coppler was really open space.

He said also it was clear to him that District 3 has a significant scarcity of parks. As they look at CIP, he was always amazed there was very little conversation about Las Soleras of what that could mean for the south-central part of town.

Councilor Harris added special events was a burden and he thought they would

probably be supporting Wine and Chili. He noted a number on the bottom of page 105, the Department has a \$25,000 budget for special events and the cost is \$96,000. There is no reason not to make those balance out and at minimum should generate money for wear and tear.

On page 77 there is information discusses staffing and expenditures and the General Fund expenses per park acre was \$15,000 in 1989. He thought it was apparent that need to look at their capital budgets and putting that in line with tennis courts; there is no reason for not keeping up the tennis courts. But more importantly they need more resources in District 3.

Councilor Harris said staffing levels may be high for good reason, with the events and the facilities that have an Olympic swimming pool and an ice rink and other amenities. The numbers seem much higher for expenditures and according to NRPA General Agency Performance Report, *"a typical Park and Rec agency has an annual operating expense of \$77.32 per capita."* Santa Fe has higher than average at \$242.84 per capita and it states, *"due to extensive parks system and a wide range of facilities"*.

Councilor Harris said Santa Fe is not that extensive a parks system, but they do have a wide range of facilities. They need to get their numbers in line in the management of the Parks and Rec Department must be better. A recreation plan should have been developed and there are a number of things referenced in the document that have not been accomplished. He challenged Mr. Muñoz, Mr. Thompson and staff in Parks and Rec to consider how to make the department more efficient. He thought they could do better, particularly if per capita is 242 in Santa Fe and 77 is the NRPA number.

Mayor Webber said this reminded him of the conversation about the police foundation study. The study did not answer the question of how many police officers were needed but spoke to how the officers were being used and retained. The Parks numbers are all over the map. The document gives no indication, given Santa Fe's composition of parks, the population, and responsibilities that they would do better if they had the same number of staff as 10 years ago or the 40 fewer positions they have today.

Ms. Taylor responded that the NRPA number looks at every agency that is a member of the NRPA Association in the country. They are not necessarily comparable to Santa Fe. The document also compares other communities like Santa Barbara and the Bend Oregon. Staff thought those were more similar to Santa Fe in their focus on outdoor recreation and tourism. Those comparisons are also all over the place.

She said it was difficult because they are not all managing the same kinds of things, or in the same way. She noted they had talked about things done by this department that is not done by all communities.

Ms. Taylor pointed out that half of the budget when the report was prepared went to the management of the GCCC and MRC. They are flagship facilities that are heavily used and popular.

Mayor Webber agreed. He pointed out there are policy decisions in the document he was not a party to and that predates many of them; such as an ice rink next to a heated swimming pool. The actual expenditures back to 2015/2016 (page 78) show administration as a tiny sliver of \$67,000, so they obviously did not invest in management or managerial software/practices/systems, or the number of things identified such as the lack of scheduling practices, etc. They put almost half of the budget into two flagship locations.

Going forward they need to determine what, as policy makers, they want to try to reconfigure when determining location, programming, maintenance / upkeep, and shedding what was mentioned as responsibilities of other departments in other communities.

Mayor Webber noted the institution has been asked to do an enormous amount of work for a large community expectation. The number of staff has declined, and they do not know the number of staff needed to do the tasks. They do know they have put a tiny amount of money into management practices, oversight, software and planning, and that half of the budget goes into GCCC and the MRC.

He thought the question is do they like that; do they want to change it. This is an opportunity to make adjustments to management, operations, and programming for a critical resource for children and families.

Councilor Abeyta added if they dig deeper, more disturbing is the two biggest pieces of the pie come from dedicated GRT. Without that, the City was putting even less into Parks and Rec.

Mayor Webber said for years the City either changed their mind or did not keep up with their ambitions to feed programs they wanted to serve people. It is to the Council to pull the data out of the report and come to their assessment of the situation.

He said asked what Mr. Thompson's summary of the policy issues and his takeaway; he could help guide them.

Mr. Thompson addressed Councilor Romero-Wirth and Councilor Harris' combined question. Water is \$2.2 million of their \$5.8 million Parks Division budget. They pay the commercial rate after 1000 gallons runs through the meter daily which jumps from \$6 per thousand gallons to \$11 a thousand. Conservation is high on their list, historically Cottonwoods were one of the most popular trees in parks. The annual consumptive use is 51 inches a year - a lot of irrigation. They also nurture a lot of Siberian Elms, which reproduce every year and the Department does not use the tools to reduce invasive species.

Mr. Thompson stated he has only been with the City 5½ years, but the five staff members behind him on average have 19-20 years with the City. They have seen major changes in the source of funding and some funding sources have disappeared. The amount of responsibility as well as the area of responsibility has increased. Very few parks have been added and there is a greater demand for recreational activities. They have to do more with less in the same amount of area.

They do have a Water Conservation Plan and administered a Drought Management Plan 11 years ago that he understood they were criticized on the loss of turf areas. They participated in the Sustainable Santa Fe and in practices that include planing land, introducing berms and swales to redirect water toward trees, etc. There are experts on staff that would like to get a budget for soil amendment to retain water more efficiently. There are opportunities for improvement, and they look forward to that.

Mr. Thompson said he has seen the Governing Body change in 5½ years, and in the last year was exciting to see the extreme changes in paradigm; what the most important thing they do is and what about the incremental mission creed that scares taxpayers and the Governing Body and how deft, well placed steps could be made into different management regimes. He said they are doing it and will continue to do that.

He said Mr. Muñoz had asked them to go back to the district allocation of labor and they have set up 5 parks districts. They segregated the arterials, horticulture, and trails and will address those separately. They see exciting opportunities to save and invest money more wisely and get water consumption down.

Mr. Thompson discussed the Water Conservation section. He would like a better industrial rate for parks than \$11 per thousand gallons. They have two 8-inch mains at Ragle and Franklin Miles, that are irrigated three nights a week hitting the 1,000 gallons in a minute and a half. They have a lot of ball fields and have a greater demand for sports turf than what is available.

Mr. Muñoz added the bottom line is that they have a set number of assets and a set budget and a set number of employees and they are looking at the ratio.

In regard to previous history and management there are things he would have done differently. After being here a year some things he would not have done the same way and would have made more sense to ask for more budget.

He wanted to focus on their current status and how to move forward and provide the service Santa Feans deserve. He noted on page 19 of the Master Plan it notes the density of families growing in the south and west of the City, where there are fewer parks. They have the opportunity to create and establish new parks and to create those by purpose. The master plan mentions 13.2% have some kind of disability. The solution could be if they create a new park in District 3, it could be a century park, or ADA friendly, or a miracle field where children regardless of their disability can play.

Mr. Muñoz asked, given their requests and potential budget and possible staffing, what should they do to move forward.

Councilor Abeyta asked if they could identify parks in other districts not being used and sell the property and invest in parks in other areas that are used.

Mr. Muñoz replied the density and usage could definitely be looked at, but his focus is when they create new parks, to make those "smart" parks with an outdoor gym facility. That would provide relief for some of the recreational sites and people could exercise outside.

Councilor Vigil Coppler asked about the proper equipment needed to be more efficient when cleaning and maintaining the parks. When she sees a large park being cut with a weed eater, that is not efficient. The last time she discussed this, she was told the City had very few mowers and some were out of commission. That should not happen.

It appears on the pie chart that do not pay a lot for Management. But they have to have managers who know how to manage and look at efficiencies and can prepare budget request knowing what is needed. When you are more efficient you are more effective and can get more done. They should research equipment to ensure they are doing things in the most efficient way.

Also, they have to look at management trends. The weeds are predictable; they know where the parks are, and this is a no-brainer. When she was here, they did not have to have a work-study session about weeds. Managers went out and managed. For example, snow removal- they knew which streets were their responsibility, where the traffic was and what had to be plowed and in what priority. They knew if their equipment was ready to go and when it needed repair. They never waited until it needed repair to get it fixed.

Councilor Vigil Coppler said she was not accusing anyone but knowing how to manage the parks and the weeds - they know where they are. She would create a map. They know which skate parks are hit with graffiti; they should send the crew first thing in the morning to see if it was hit. They need a plan to take care of it and to make sure they have all the supplies needed to do that.

She added with the staff, they should know time management; how much time a task takes, and the number of employees needed to do it. She was aware that park employees are sometimes pulled away because of vacancies. They have to protect the turf in the parks as well as their staff. If they find they can't cover an event, then someone has to put their foot down and get more money for more staff.

Councilor Vigil Coppler saw much of this as a management issue. The planning and budgeting- the buck stops with the manager and requesting the budget.

Councilor Vigil Coppler asked whether Parks had looked at using artificial turf where possible. The schools are moving toward that and places in Albuquerque are turning to that. She was not certain of the costs, but in the long run wouldn't take as much to maintain or as much water. Also, there have been suggestions to use inmates or the homeless and work with the shelters to put people to work.

Mr. Muñoz replied they are in partnership with Community Services and will be employing and utilizing some of the homeless with maintenance and cleanup. He added this goes back to his comment that prior to his coming there was no preventative maintenance plan for the equipment. His team works hard, and the City paid \$249,000 of overtime last year. That indicates two things - to look at efficiency and whether they are properly staffed.

Another piece is preventative maintenance with equipment. They should have been checking equipment to ensure they were working as efficiently and safely as possible. The team works hard and long hours with a good attitude and deserves good management and good tools.

Mr. Muñoz said they are looking at artificial turf, especially on soccer fields. Initially it will be more expensive but better in the long term.

Mayor Webber addressed the comments about management and "the good old days." Part of the report reminded him of the McHard Report and on page 42, Park Notes, the team made the following notes regarding maintenance, staffing and planning issues with parks, *"there are no maintenance management plans for park sites."* Mayor Webber reminded them the report is roughly 2 years old and predates Mr. Muñoz. He continued reading, *"Park maintenance and Operations do not use a work order system to track work, repair, replacement or responding to graffiti or fixing issues identified by the public. Per city policy Parks maintenance does not use herbicides or pesticides. There is an Integrated Pest Management ordinance in place that is not always followed. The Parks maintenance staff we spoke with indicated it was not sustainable to continue to develop parks without taking into account the limitations of maintenance staffing and how they are able to take care of the properties, especially regarding materials and site amenities. For example, we heard that hand weeding the landscape beds is very labor-intensive, and at Railyard Park there are mice. Similar comments were received regarding gophers. Park maintenance is not on the utility blue stake call list, encroachment and dumping are issues in parks that have areas with adjacent private landowners."*

Mayor Webber said the management effort required to address these historical issues is first to get the City up to speed. A lot of it is like the deferred maintenance seen in other departments whether potholes, issues with police staffing levels, etc. Here there is no maintenance management plans and they do not use a work order system. This report states that needs to be corrected to get them into 21<sup>st</sup> Century Park management practices. There are not only staffing issues, but historical management issues where work plans are not in place to do resource allocation and management

practice commensurate with the task.

Mayor Webber said shifting to a district approach, and having people committed to overseeing certain areas is a step in the right direction. There are even more areas in the report they could point to of specific improvements in the last year and a half.

Councilor Villarreal noted it was helpful to her to have demographics and trending statistics and the reasons for shifts in demographics. They are important for parks as well as services, especially related to age and ethnic break downs. Also, comparable cities were helpful but difficult to compare because of the different funding sources, revenue sources, etc.

She said she was interested in the deficiencies. The Operations and Maintenance section talks about the need for a clear set of maintenance standards and operation procedures. She was trying to find a way to improve [reading on page 83], *"the recreation and building maintenance is deferred at times due to coordination with other City departments. In general recreation center maintenance is handled through the City's Maintenance Department through a work order system and does not fall under the duties of Parks and Rec maintenance staff."*

Councilor Villarreal said that disconnect should be addressed. She was curious if the Department had looked at the maintenance work orders that were not being addressed timely. She noted many of their staff know what works and does not work and that also falls into operations and maintenance.

She asked the staff what the plan had provided them in insight or system changes of what was needed and whether that would require funding or just better organization. She said for her the red flag was operations and maintenance and that was where there is a deficiency, but it is not because they don't know what to do.

Mr. Muñoz responded it does require a budget, but it is difficult to get maintenance done when depending on another group. A remedy to that until they ask for more staffing, is that have lifeguards that help them clean, etc. it is not ideal, and they will be looking at doing that internally. It is specialized work and the hours are different - GCCC opens early in the morning until late at night and that has to be covered.

He said prior to looking at this plan, he sat with the team to cover some of the gaps and needs. They need to work on that area.

Councilor Villarreal asked if he had ideas of how to improve the issues. Maintenance has been deferred for decades. She thought they were constantly reacting rather than being proactive. She said the plan talks about a clear set of maintenance standards and operation procedures but what does that translate into for the Department. She asked how the Council could provide support and help.

Mr. Muñoz explained that Mr. Thompson could talk about the standards, but he appreciated the time tonight to get together and find a solution on the maintenance in the report. Creating an internal maintenance group to Recreation would be the most effective manner to address this.

Mr. Thompson pointed out the reference to the Master Plan by Councilor Villareal was specific to the recreation centers. Parks Division does not maintain those, Facilities Management and Public Works maintain them. Parks relies on them heavily and speaks weakly and provides support in parks. Occasionally they call them to do things the Division is not licensed to do. Staff performed a task in the past that the person was not certified to do, and it resulted in a fatality. Now they are under a microscope with the CID (Construction Industry Division) of the state.

He explained operations in regard to the management plan, mows the grass every day and has 5 equipment operators that no where they are going to work each day. Their supervisor oversees and ensures they have the equipment and supplies needed. The department has been doing that for a long time but a lot of it is not written down.

Regarding the weed eaters in parks. Those are used only in unirrigated parks because they use specialized mowers. When he first started, they had excellent equipment. Managing a fleet of equipment means looking at the entire cost of the equipment including preventive maintenance and repairs to the equipment. This year the budget is \$169,000 over last year's \$25,000 and most of it is in capital equipment. They will receive new pickups, the first since 2013, and salvage 9 vehicles.

He would like a lease option rather than outright purchase and they could return the equipment after five years in good condition and get new equipment. The lease option is similar to a capital replacement program. Currently the Division maintains their equipment and has service contracts and is looking at contracting plumbing and electrical maintenance as well.

Councilor Villarreal noted a matrix on page 96 for recommendations and implementation for each facility and Operations, etc. There were things on the list as high priority that were recently funded. She asked how often they look at the matrix.

Mr. Muñoz replied some things have been resolved and others are on the Division's list or CIP, etc.

Councilor Villarreal thought it would be helpful how parks are used, their popularity and why they are popular. She indicated Ashbaugh Park was used a lot but is not now because of the number of gopher holes. She noted that Salvador Perez has turf that was not maintained, and money was just allocated to improve it recently. If that had been done sooner, they would not have to deal with the cost. It is all about the deferred maintenance the Department has to deal with. They need to look at why fields should be maintained in addition to why the park is popular.



Councilor Rivera said he read recently that artificial turf has a lifespan of about six years before the plastic gets hard. Cost of replacement is significant.

Mr. Muñoz replied it is and some fields have passed their life span and that needs to be addressed. He identified some fields that should be replaced in doing the assessment. They need to decide whether to replace with artificial turf at a million plus dollars every six years, or turf that has to be maintained and watered. Something that helps the lifespan they are doing is regular maintenance. Some of the fields were not cared for and quickly depreciated the six-year lifespan.

Councilor Romero-Wirth encouraged Mr. Muñoz to look at the pros and cons. Some turf is needed but they should not blanket the City. The City needs to be smarter and Mr. Thompson had underscored the point that there is room to do better.

Councilor Rivera noted that District 3 was identified as needing parks and was in the Master Plan and other Councilors have mentioned that. The County has South Meadows and Rufina dedicated as park space and they have partnered on soccer to improve MRC for \$500,000 each. He wondered if they could partner to develop the park into something ADA compliant and recognized nationally as a great place for all kids. There is a lot they could do there and the County would probably be willing to partner.

He noted not long ago they combined the Parks and Recreation Departments because of the budget deficit. He wondered after the conversation whether that had been the right move. In thinking about things Recreation has to go through, like lifeguards, it is a huge undertaking and is a big issue for a consolidated management team. Parks, with the weeds and medians - that is another huge undertaking. They have combined two departments into one with little increase in staff and asked them to undertake two huge issues.

Councilor Rivera suggested they convene a group to determine if that is the right model to continue going forward.

Mayor Webber replied they have been looking at overall organizational structure of City departments and Councilor Rivera had asked the right question; if this the right way going forward. Looking at management structure and the number of people reporting to the City Manager, they may have made themselves overly concentrated in an area where it doesn't work.

He added one point raised on page 8, is the City's relationship with the County. Councilor Abeyta raised the policy question of the MOU with the School District. Similarly, they need to look at the MOUs with the County. There is a focus on some like the County utilization of the library or the City's utilization of the jail. They haven't thought about as Councilor Romero-Wirth commented on, the water policy with the County. That is another area of missed opportunity to think about tighter relationships and more collaboration and better utilization of their resources.

They haven't looked to the County as a resource, an asset, or partner as they examine land, funding, utilization patterns and growth of the community's expectation, outside resources.

Mayor Webber noted when the document was written there was no State Department of Outdoor Recreation as they have now. That Department has \$100,000 in grant money available for local communities and the City should be eagerly seeking to put that to use. They have good relations with the State at all levels, including the legislature and should partner with the State Department of Outdoor Recreation.

The data suggest when they look inward, they are biting off more than they can chew. He appreciated Councilor Villarreal pointing out on page 83 the levels of operations and Santa Fe compared to other communities and practices they have or do not have with established maintenance plans. A lot of materials are highlighted.

They have more demands than they can meet in terms of managing it successfully If they look inside the city government. But they also may be missing opportunities for partners or as Councilor Rivera pointed out, to be mindful of opportunities.

Councilor Abeyta said on Councilor Rivera's point, page 61 talks about general interest programs. It states, *"Santa Fe's Parks and Recreation Department currently does not offer youth or adult general interest classes or programs, however general interest programs in summer camps in particular are often a major focus for recreation departments. This plan recommends that the City place a greater focus on these programs in the future, with an emphasis on offering additional summer and school vacation camp programs, currently provided by through the City's Youth and Family Services Division."* He said he never understood why the City's summer recreational program was run by Youth and Family and not Parks and Rec and the report supports that.

He suggested as they look into the medians and weeds, this is another area they should address. Especially as they put more pressure on community services to solve their homeless problem and other issues.

Councilor Harris joked about how he never heard the word aspiration until he became a City Councilor and now hears it every two weeks. On that goal, he wants to be sure Mr. Muñoz reconsidered the second ice arena. He said that made no sense.

He added that Mr. Muñoz talked a lot about deferred maintenance and described potholes as an example. He thinks about progress made on potholes and the progress on the streets - even to the point of having \$4 million as a remainder for an \$11 million dollar gas tax revenue bond. He gave credit to Mr. Muñoz, Mr. Thompson and the rest of staff and knew they were working hard, but the pace of improvements was not keeping up with other departments.

He said a question for Mayor Webber as well as staff, is what it will take to pick up the pace.

Mayor Webber replied part of the answer could be what he just referenced. What made the street paving possible was the Governing Body decision to go to the voters to pass additional revenue to provide additional resources.

Mayor Webber said in the case of paving he would go back to his comment that they have friends at the State and are the beneficiaries of a new administration in the Roundhouse. There is a new head of NMDOT (New Mexico Department of Transportation) that was willing to help.

Councilor Harris clarified that his response on pace had to do with why it took a year and a half to get the Master Plan. He wasn't sure what was behind the reorganization referred to by Mr. Muñoz by district, possibly it had to do with the maintenance plan. He thought that more was needed, and he is not alone in that thought.

Mr. Muñoz said he did not disagree and since coming here there has been an improvement. They have received feedback that things have improved. His team works hard, and they will continue to do that. If they have gone from very bad to good that is fine, but they need to improve; they can't stay at good. They should provide more for citizens.

He said regarding aspirations, having a miracle field and modernizing the parks made sense, and so does a second ice arena. They will leave that to the City Council and the people.

Mr. Muñoz said they are digging themselves out of a hole and the pace needs to improve. They have had pockets of improvement and will continue to improve, some of which will require more budget, some more equipment, and some more headcount.

Mayor Webber responded that some of it will require reviewing the policies. He started by laying out guideline questions, but they have not grappled with those. He noted that Councilor Harris tried to talk about population and distribution and that the gap analysis shows District 3 is under parked and is irrefutable.

Developers are asked to develop a park but then they turn it over to the City to manage. The City simply assumes that is a public good without any additional revenue or resources or added headcount. It is a given that the City will find the means and mechanism to manage that goes with the asset. They are ambitious and have aspirations, but aspirations are driving them, rather than them checking their headcount; management software, etc.

He noted that page 83 read like the McHard report. He repeated there is no established maintenance plan built into daily operations and the annual CIP plans, etc. That tells him historically that the Parks Department was demand responsive. They

divert from a regular plan to send people out to fight the fire of the moment. That is not good management.

Councilor Vigil Coppler indicated she would go back again to the "good old days" not the recent, but the days when things were organized and worked well. She noted regarding Councilor Abeyta's point, the Recreation Department ran the summer program and it ran well. She thought if the City chose to do that again it is an ideal spot.

Councilor Vigil Coppler noted with respect to dividing the two departments, back then the Recreation Department and the Parks Department were two separate departments and worked well.

Regarding Management and headcount, she has heard there are often not enough heads in their chairs. She has received complaints from staff about extreme absences. She thought if the higher-level staff was not in the chairs to do their jobs there is a disconnect and should be something that is a part of also making the department successful.

Councilor Romero-Wirth thought the Council and the City should remember that the City has grown significantly and may suffer from that. There was also a recession and no money to maintain everything and may have resulted in poor policy choices, such as turning off the water completely. There are real reasons why they are in a deficit, but they can be smarter.

She wanted to remind everyone that the park in the vicinity they live is important, all over the city. The community has proven over and over that parks are important to them because bonds for parks are always supported overwhelmingly. This is very important, and the City needs to be smarter about the use of their resources and how they deploy staff and manage. Clearly there is room for improvement; it takes a lot of work and will not happen overnight because they did not get in this hole overnight.

Mayor Webber said it was constructive to remind them that deferred maintenance takes a long time to set in and a long time to fix. Now they are trying to work their way back from a reduced budget and headcount to something that fits demand and need.

Councilor Harris directed them to page 25 on the 2020 Impact Fee Capital Improvements Plan. He read that the plan proposed a new impact fee schedule for parks and trails. He asked if that had happened, because he did not remember addressing the impact fee schedule for parks.

Mr. Thompson replied there were changes and Jason Kluck moved as the Land Use Assistant Director. His first step was to revisit the ICIP and CIP listed for Parks. He was invited to look over the list. When he came, he had asked how impact fees were collected and directed. In the General Plan in 1999 they outlined that the urban footprint of the park impact fee is the entire City. The funds can be spent throughout the City

and he believed the balance was \$1.4 million.

Councilor Harris replied they need to look at the balance of impact fees and what projects were identified that could use the funds. And at some point, they should look at the impact fee schedule for parks.

Councilor Harris noted as well they should break out the Parks and Rec CIP separately because it is buried in a spreadsheet that is not prioritized. He had never seen a specific CIP - other than the 20008/2012 Parks Bond and that still has baggage.

Councilor Romero-Wirth clarified the bond passed overwhelmingly but how it was managed was a different story.

Councilor Harris reiterated they should look at what is eligible for the impact fees and at the line items. He also thought they should improve some of the tennis courts, and if they are not on the list, go through the process to put them on the list.

Councilor Rivera said there are a lot of documents, but one missing is the MRC Master Plan dealing with the soccer fields, additional fields on top and clubhouse. It would be appropriate for that to be included with the plan document.

Councilor Abeyta asked if he could follow up with Ms. Hill on issues in an email that were not discussed or of concern with the parks. He would like to follow up on the liability issue. As the Chairman of Finance, he did not see many lawsuits from injuries at the parks when looking at risk and liability. He could approach the schools and let them know that was not as big an issue as they may think.

Ms. Hill agreed. She offered to follow up on any other issues not addressed as well and would schedule the appropriate staff to discuss reorganization.

Mr. Muñoz thanked the Council for their time and feedback and his team for their hard work this year and hours they put in. He also thanked staff for attending because it was not required but they were sold out.

Mayor Webber appreciated their efforts to put everything together. He indicated that Councilor Harris requested this, and they did not want the Councilor's service to go by without trying to meet this request to discuss the plan.

Mayor Webber noted there was not time to discuss everything, but they are starting the conversation. Important points were raised about equity, forward planning, management, budget, headcount, standards, and their definition of victory for Parks and Recreation. etc.

He said Councilor Romero-Wirth reminded them how important it is to the community and this goes beyond medians and weeds and to livability, neighborhoods, quality of life, and a sense of place. It is worth coming back to that in the context of the

budget going forward. The City Manager offered follow up emails for those things that were not summarized.

Councilor Villarreal asked Ms. Hill to summarize what was captured, and the Council could add to that.

Mayor Webber thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:00 p.m.

**4. NEXT STUDY SESSION – Monday, December 16, 2019**

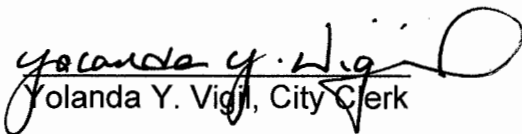
**5. ADJOURN**

The Study Session was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor Alan Webber

ATTESTED TO:

  
Yolanda Y. Vigil, City Clerk

Respectfully submitted by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Carl G. Boaz, Council Stenographer