

# DRAFT FIVE-YEAR EVALUATION REPORT

BY THE FRESNO CITY PARKS, RECREATION AND ARTS COMMISSION (PRAC).

**Subcommittee Members:** Jose Leon-Barraza, Chair, McKay Duran, Jon Dohlin.

## RELEVANT EXCERPTS FROM THE MEASURE P ORDINANCE:

Section 7-1506 of Article 15 of the **Fresno Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Tax Ordinance** under Section 7-1506 entitled **Expenditure Plan** states: “The revenues generated by the retail transaction and use tax imposed by this ordinance shall be allocated by the City of Fresno on an annual basis with additional independent oversight provided by the Commission to ensure expenditures are consistent with this Section. Furthermore, Section 7-1509, under the heading **Fiscal Oversight and Budget Accountability**, subsection (e) reads: “The Commission shall have primary authority on behalf of the City to: Every five years, submit an evaluation of the program to the public and the City of Fresno.” (Item 7). This Five-Year Evaluation Report is being provided pursuant to that requirement of the Measure P Ordinance.

Section 7-1503. PURPOSE (f) It is the intent of the voters in adopting this ordinance that the expenditures made pursuant to this ordinance shall supplement the levels of spending made by the City of Fresno in Fiscal Year 2017-18 in the areas funded by this ordinance and that the additional expenditures shall not supplant the 2017-18 spending levels. Measure P funds started to be appropriated by the City of Fresno in Fiscal Year 2021/2022 until now. The funding levels from Measure P has ranged from \$26,246,100 starting in FY 2021/2022 to \$87,494,500 in FY 2025/2026. On average Measure P generates approximately \$40 million and the annual adopted appropriations are a combination of Measure P generated those years plus carryover funds..

The Fresno City Measure P Ordinance requires that the revenues generated by this tax measure be allocated proportionally as stated below (**Headings and percentage requirements are shown in bold**):

## SEC. 7-1506. EXPENDITURE PLAN.

(a) Funds shall be allocated for programs and projects that do one of the following:

- 1) Provide clean, safe neighborhoods parks for all Fresno residents;
- 2) Reduce crime and homelessness in parks;
- 3) Update and maintain park bathrooms and playgrounds;
- 4) Reduce graffiti and vandalism in parks;

- 5) Maintain and improve after-school, youth, and senior recreational programs;
- 6) Provide job training for at-risk youth and veterans;
- 7) Beautify landscaping and remove weeds and litter along major roads and highways;
- 8) Create parks in neighborhoods that don't have good park access, including soccer and sports fields;
- 9) Improve walking and biking access to parks and trails, including the San Joaquin River Parkway;
- 10) and Expand access to local arts and cultural programs.

b) The funds deposited in to the Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Account pursuant to Section 7-1504 shall be expended according to the following schedule:

**(1) Improving and Maintaining Safe, Clean Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds.**

**(A) Forty-six percent (46%) percent of funds made available from Section 7-1504 shall be dedicated as described in this paragraph.**

B) Funds in this paragraph shall be made available for improvement and restoration, rehabilitation, operations, and maintenance of projects and programs including, but not limited to, the following:

- i. Park rehabilitation and other capital improvements in existing parks, including lighting;
- ii. Facility upgrades to improve efficiency and safety;
- iii. Playgrounds and picnic areas;
- iv. New restrooms and restroom improvements;
- v. Park access for individuals with disabilities;
- vi. Improved maintenance and operations of existing parks;
- vii. A park ranger program to improve safety in and around park facilities;
- viii. Publicly owned sport facilities and swimming pools;
- ix. City-owned arts, cultural, and recreational facilities located in parks, including Storyland/Playland and the Veterans Memorial Auditorium;
- x. Other projects consistent with the Parks Master Plan, and subsequent updates;
- xi. The planning, designing, engineering, and permitting activities associated with the above improvements.

**C) Of the funds available pursuant to this paragraph, no less than fifty percent (50%) shall be made available for highest-need neighborhoods as defined in Section 7-1508.**

(D) Except for projects funded pursuant to subparagraph (C), projects that leverage state, federal, or philanthropic funding shall receive funding priority.

**(E) Of the funds available pursuant to this paragraph, no less than five million dollars (\$5,000,000) annually shall be designated for improving operations and maintenance of existing parks and facilities.**

(F) Projects funded pursuant to this paragraph shall attempt to provide multiple benefits, including water conservation, air quality improvements, climate pollution reductions, habitat protection, and public health improvements.

## **2) NEW Neighborhood Parks; Senior and Youth Recreation Facilities.**

**(A) Twenty-one point five (21.5%) of the funds made available from Section 7-1504 shall be made available on an annual basis to improve the park system by investing in new park development and recreational facilities consistent with the Plan.**

B) Funds in this paragraph shall be made available for acquisition, development, operations, maintenance and improvement projects including, but not limited to, the following:

- i. New neighborhood parks, pocket parks, and community gardens;
- ii. Public restrooms in new parks;
- iii. New senior and community centers associated with the park system;
- iv. New regional parks located in the City of Fresno;
- v. Playgrounds and picnic areas in new parks;
- vi. New public sport facilities and swimming pools;
- vii. The planning, designing, engineering, and permitting activities associated with the above improvements.

**C) Of the funds available pursuant to this paragraph, no less than fifty percent (50%) shall be made available for highest-need neighborhoods as defined in Section 7-1508.**

(D) Except for projects funded pursuant to subparagraph (C), projects that leverage state, federal or private funding shall receive funding priority.

(E) Projects funded pursuant to this paragraph shall attempt to provide multiple benefits, including water conservation, air quality improvements, climate pollution reductions, habitat protection, and community health improvements that result in reduced health burdens.

## **(3) Youth and Senior Recreation Programs; After School Programs; and Job Training for Youth and Veterans.**

**(A) Eight point five percent (8.5%) of the funds made available from Section 7-1504 shall be dedicated as described in this paragraph.**

B) Funds in this paragraph shall be available for the planning and delivery of projects and programs including, but not limited to, the following:

- I. Physical activity programming that promotes recreation and accessibility to recreational facilities;
- II. Sports, arts and active programs;
- III. Community and senior recreation center programs;
- IV. Swimming and water-oriented recreation programs;
- V. Junior lifeguard, science and education, summer day camps, and other youth oriented programs;
- VI. After-school programs for youth;
- VII. Job-training and employment opportunities for youth, young adults, and veterans.

**C) Of the funds made available from this paragraph, not less than fifty percent (50%) shall be made available on an annual basis for programs that provide job training, career development, or both, to youth, young adults and veterans, including education and/or certification for jobs within the conservation, science, arts, green technology, and parks and recreation fields.**

(D) Programs funded pursuant to this paragraph shall prioritize service for at-risk youth and seniors as defined by the PARCS Department, in conjunction with the Commission.

#### **4) Expanded Access to Arts and Culture.**

**(A) Twelve percent (12%) percent of the funds made available from Section 7-1504 shall be made available on an annual basis to invest in competitive grants for nonprofit organizations that support and expand access to arts and cultural programming.<sup>1</sup>**

(B) Grants funded pursuant to this paragraph shall be implemented by the Commission in partnership with the Fresno Arts Council, or its successor local arts agency, using multiple solicitations that allow for a diverse set of programs, with different program sizes and reach, including core operating and project-support grants, to be funded. The

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<sup>1</sup> This report does not address any items relating to the pending investigation being conducted by local and federal law enforcement authorities on the loss of funds under the Expanded Access to Arts Culture Program.

Commission shall ensure that grant applications are reviewed in a transparent, competitive process.

(C) Prior to the implementation of subparagraph (B), the Commission shall work in partnership with the Fresno Arts Council, and local arts and cultural stakeholders, to develop a Cultural Arts Plan for the City of Fresno that would identify needs in the arts and cultural community; prioritize outcomes and investments; and develop a vision and goals for the future of Fresno arts and cultural programs that are reflective of the cultural, demographic, and geographic diversity of Fresno. This process shall include a robust community engagement process, including multiple public meetings. The Cultural Arts Plan shall be updated every five years by the Commission.

(D) Funding for operating support distributed pursuant to this paragraph shall support organizational stability for arts and cultural organizations that reflect the cultural, geographic and demographic diversity of the City of Fresno; and reflect the proportion of each grantee's overall operations that serves residents within, or visitors to, the City of Fresno sphere of influence.

(E) Grants funded pursuant to subparagraph (B) shall prioritize organizations and programs that support and expand diverse public or youth engagement and equity.

**5) Safe Walking and Biking Trails; Street Beautification and Litter Removal; and the San Joaquin River Parkway.**

**(A) Eleven point twenty-five percent (11.25%) of the funds made available from Section 7-1504 shall be dedicated as described in this paragraph.**

**(B) Of the funds made available pursuant to this paragraph, forty-seven percent (47%) shall be made available for acquisition, development, improvement, restoration, operations, maintenance, or rehabilitation projects including:**

- I. Trail development, including bike, pedestrian and equestrian trails, as identified in the Active Transportation Plan, including trails that support safe routes to schools;
- II. Urban greening and tree planting along designated trails in the Active Transportation Plan;
- III. The planning, designing, engineering, and permitting activities associated with the above improvements.

**C) Of the funds made available pursuant to subparagraph (B), no more than twenty percent (20%) of the funds shall be made available for operations and maintenance of trails.**

**(D) Of the funds made available pursuant to subparagraph (B), no less than twenty-five percent (25%) of the funds shall be prioritized for Class I and Class IV pedestrian and bicycle pathways along the "Priority Network" as identified in the Active Transportation Plan.**

**(E) Of the funds made available pursuant to this paragraph, eighteen percent (18%) shall be made available for operations and projects consistent with the San Joaquin River Parkway Master Plan, in coordination with the San Joaquin River Conservancy and the San Joaquin River Parkway Trust.**

**(F) Of the funds made available pursuant to this paragraph, thirty-five percent (35%) shall be made available for development, improvement, restoration, maintenance, or rehabilitation of projects including, but not limited to, the following:**

- i. Litter and debris removal along major roads and streets within the City of Fresno, and along highways within the City of Fresno and its county islands;
- ii. Landscape beautification and restoration projects along major roads and streets within the City of Fresno, and along highways within the City of Fresno and its county islands;
- iii. The planning, designing, engineering, and permitting of activities associated with the above improvements.

**(G) Of the funds made available pursuant to subparagraph (F), prioritization shall be given to projects that**

ii. Reduce overall water usage or include drought-tolerant plantings in landscaping;

Leverage local, state, federal and private funding.

**(H) Where appropriate, projects funded pursuant to subparagraph (F) shall be coordinated with Caltrans.**

## **SECTION A**

## **FINDINGS: Compliance With Proportional Allocation Requirements of Measure P**

- 1) Based on the review of approved budget appropriations for the fiscal years of 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026 provided by City Parks staff (EXHIBITS A) and annual Measure P budget reports filed by City parks staff with the Commission, the City of Fresno has complied with the proportional allocation and identified eligible program categories specified in the Measure P Ordinance as described above.
- 2) In the implementation of the Expanded Access to Arts and Culture Programs, Section 7-1506, 4(C) which in part states: “develop a vision and goals for the future of Fresno arts and cultural programs that are reflective of the cultural, demographic, and geographic diversity of Fresno.” The allocation of Culture and Arts funds under this category has expanded access to culture arts experience overall to residents of the City of Fresno.
- 3) The City of Fresno can improve the distribution of funds to existing and emerging nonprofit organizations that serve communities of color in Southeast, Southwest and Southcentral neighborhoods in Fresno by enhancing its outreach efforts, provide technical assistance to existing and emerging cultural nonprofit organization and improving its documentation of how these programs are reaching those neighborhoods by all funded arts and culture groups. This Section also states that access to these funds should be made “on an annual basis” Henceforth, the City of Fresno should provide access to these funds on an annual basis, as required by the Measure P Ordinance.

## **SECTION B**

### **Status of Capital and Maintenance Projects (Last available annual report, FY 2024)**

The PARCS Department categorizes projects through a lifecycle of initiation, design, construction, and completion:

- Completed Projects (25 in FY 2024): Notable completions include irrigation improvements at Al Radka Park, play structure replacements at Jaswant Singh Khalra Park, tennis court resurfacing at Roeding Park, and the completion of Phase 1 for the new Trolley Park.
- Projects in Construction (11 in FY 2024): Active construction includes new parks such as Broadway Parque and Les Kimber Park, along with major improvements like the Fink-White splash pad and play structure replacements at Willow & Balch.

- Projects in Design (68 in FY 2024): This phase includes large-scale future assets like the Southeast Fresno Sports Complex, a new community garden at McKinley, and a citywide Senior Center, alongside rehabilitations for Mary Ella Brown and Maxie L. Parks.
- Initiation and Planning - Budgeted but Not Yet Started (19 in FY 2024): These early-stage projects include land acquisitions on Church Avenue and College Avenue for new parks, and deferred maintenance such as multi-use court resurfacing at Lions Park.

FINDING #1. Measure P has successfully transitioned Fresno’s park system from a state of critical underfunding to one of active revitalization and expansion. Prior to Measure P, approximately 80% of existing parks were in fair or poor condition. The guaranteed 30-year funding source has enabled the City to not only address a \$112 million backlog in lifecycle replacements but also to launch the Park Ranger program, which provides 19 trained rangers to improve safety and community engagement across all policing districts.

FINDING #2: Since the implementation of Measure P, the City of Fresno has significantly expanded its park infrastructure and services, managing a portfolio that grew to 123 capital improvement projects by Fiscal Year 2024 (for context, up from 49 capital projects in 2022). These projects address both the construction of new parks and critical major maintenance for existing facilities to fulfill the vision of the Parks Master Plan.

## **SECTION C**

### **Resident Access and Performance Indicators**

A key metric for Measure P is the percentage of residents living within a 1/2 mile walking distance of a park:

- Access Trends: In 2024, GIS analysis determined that 33% of Fresno residents (182,599 people out of 552,507 residents) live within a half mile of a park. While earlier reports using different methodologies cited 40%, the 2024 analysis established a more precise baseline by focusing strictly on PARCS-owned/maintained parks to align with highest-needs funding requirements.
- Programmatic Impacts: Participation in PARCS programs has seen dramatic growth. Adaptive Recreation attendance increased by 141% in FY 2024, and Senior Program participation rose by 47%.
- Youth Engagement: The Youth Sports Fee Waiver program now serves an average of 61% of all youth sports participants, significantly reducing financial barriers for families.

- Active Transportation: In FY 2024 alone, the City added 2,961 new street trees and 12.3 miles of new sidewalk, enhancing safe routes to parks.

FINDING: The City of Fresno with Measure P has transitioned to a model that has seen growth in community participation and accessibility with parks, facilities, and programming.

## **SECTION D**

### **Audit Oversight and Corrective Actions**

Measure P mandates an annual independent audit of the Clean and Safe Neighborhood Parks Account.

- Transparency: Every capital project is assigned an audit number (such as #0216 for basin improvements) to ensure expenditures can be tracked directly against published financial statements.
- Addressing Equity: To address historical inequities identified in park planning, the City Council took corrective action in November 2024 by adopting a redefined "Highest-Need Neighborhood" map. This updated definition, informed by 1,427 community survey responses, weights factors like park condition and poverty more heavily to ensure that at least 50% of funds for existing and new parks are reaching the most underserved census tracts.

FINDING: Measure P has established proactive equity in planning to ensure historically underserved areas are properly included in project and programmatic funding.