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City of Long Beach, City Auditor



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City Auditor

Enhancing Quality of Life

While growing up in Long Beach, I played softball for the Los Altos Bobby Sox League and spent countless hours practicing at El Dorado Park just a few blocks from our home. I have many great memories playing with my friends as well as just hanging out with them in our parks.



Knowing our beautiful parks play a vital role in our neighborhoods and are an important part of our quality of life, my Office recently conducted an audit which brought attention to the declining conditions of these precious assets. Our audit found that although the City has done a good job expanding park space, they did not factor in the maintenance costs to keep our parks at a level that is healthy and sustainable. Some of our audit findings include: one in four park trees are dead or in poor condition; widespread trash on park grounds; sports groups reporting field conditions that exposed players to injuries; and an antiquated irrigation system that caused flooding and water-logged turf.

Based on our findings, we estimated there was a \$1 million annual shortfall for park and park tree maintenance. We understand the City has constraints and funding is a problem, so we made the recommendation for a strategic plan that includes additional funding for park maintenance, as well as recommendations for alternative, non-traditional solutions. This included innovative ideas such as sponsorships, public-private partnerships, and seeking grant money for future parks and projects to offset the cost of park maintenance. As you know, our parks are too important to our quality of life to have them deteriorate. We need effective stewardship.

Sharing our audit with the public ultimately sparked discussion amongst community members on actions that could be taken to improve our City park conditions. We are very grateful for the outpouring of support of how important park conditions are to our community. We know we must improve and maintain these assets for future generations. We are pleased that since our audit, the City has taken action and has allocated more money for park maintenance, requested a tree life-cycle management plan, and started a median watering pilot program.

This audit is just one example of our dedication to prioritizing and working on projects that enhance the quality of life for those who live, play and work in Long Beach.