



CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT

TO: City Council **DATE:** August 10, 2026

DEPARTMENT: City Manager's Office

PREPARED BY: Isaac Whippy, City Manager

PRESENTER: Isaac Whippy, City Manager & Moneque Wooden, CV Starr Manager

AGENDA TITLE: Receive Report and Consider Adoption of a Parks & Recreation Service Delivery and Coordination Policy

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council:

1. Adopt the attached Resolution approving the City of Fort Bragg Parks and Recreation Service Delivery and Coordination Policy.
 2. Direct staff to utilize the policy when evaluating existing and proposed recreation programs and facilities.
 3. Direct the City Manager and/or CV Starr Manager to annually invite the Mendocino Coast Recreation and Park District (MCRPD) to participate in service coordination meetings to identify partnership opportunities, minimize unnecessary duplication of services, and improve recreation opportunities for the community.
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BACKGROUND

Parks and recreation are essential to the health, wellness, and quality of life of a community. In March 2026, the City conducted a community survey to help identify priorities for future investments and services. The results demonstrated overwhelming public support for expanding parks and recreation opportunities, *with 82 percent of respondents identifying parks and recreation as either "very important" (50 percent) or "somewhat important" (32 percent)*. Respondents also identified outdoor recreation, trails and open space, concerts and community events, youth sports, and after-school programming among the highest priorities for the City to pursue.

In response to these community priorities, and recognizing the City's expanding role in recreation services, the City Council established a dedicated Parks and Recreation Department. The Department was created to consolidate the operation of the C.V. Starr Community Center with the management and activation of City-owned parks and recreation facilities under a single department. Its purpose is *not to compete* with existing

recreation providers, but to complement their efforts, strengthen partnerships, maximize public investment, and address unmet recreation needs identified by the community.

Since its formation, the Department has significantly expanded recreation opportunities throughout the Community. Programs include:

- Learn-to-Swim programs
- Youth and adult aquatics
- Water fitness
- Summer camps
- Teen programs and Teen Night Out events
- Senior wellness activities
- Fitness classes
- Gym, weight lifting and Cardio Fitness
- CPR and Lifeguard Certification
- Music at the Park
- Water Safety Awareness Day
- Holiday celebrations
- Community events
- Facility rentals
- Outdoor recreation activities
- Numerous partnerships with schools, nonprofit organizations, youth sports groups, and community organizations

Beyond current programming, the Department together with the City Manager is responsible for implementing the City's long-term recreation vision. This includes maximizing recreational opportunities at Bainbridge Park, activating the Highway 20 property for future recreation uses, continuing to expand programming at the C.V. Starr Community Center, and advancing planning for the proposed Phase III expansion, which includes new basketball courts and additional recreation amenities to meet the evolving needs of the community.

Recently, during the Mendocino Local Agency Formation Commission's (LAFCO) Municipal Service Review process for the Mendocino Coast Recreation and Park District, the Commission encouraged continued coordination between recreation providers and indicated it would revisit the issue of recreation service delivery in approximately two years. Staff believes this presents an opportunity for the City to formally establish a Parks and Recreation Service Delivery and Coordination Policy that promotes collaboration, encourages efficient use of public resources, and provides objective guidelines for evaluating future recreation services while continuing to meet the recreational needs of the community.

DISCUSSION & ANALYSIS

The proposed Parks and Recreation Service Delivery and Coordination Policy establishes a comprehensive framework for how the City plans, evaluates, and delivers recreation services.

The policy is intended to ensure recreation services continue to reflect community priorities while promoting collaboration with other recreation providers and maximizing public investment in City-owned facilities.

Specifically, the policy establishes guiding principles requiring staff to evaluate:

- Community demand and public benefit.
- Consistency with the City's Strategic Plan and Council priorities.
- Opportunities for collaboration with recreation, enrichment and community organizations
- Existing recreation services within the community.
- Financial sustainability.
- Efficient use of City-owned facilities.
- Opportunities to maximize participation and community access.

The policy also recognizes that the City's responsibility extends beyond simply maintaining facilities. As owner and operator of the C.V. Starr Community Center and numerous City parks, the City has an obligation to actively program these facilities to ensure they remain vibrant, financially sustainable, and responsive to community needs.

The policy further recognizes that recreation services are not mutually exclusive. Multiple public agencies may appropriately provide recreation opportunities within the same community while serving different populations, utilizing different facilities, expanding overall capacity, or addressing unmet demand. The existence of similar programs alone should not be interpreted as unnecessary duplication.

To further promote collaboration, the policy directs the City Manager to annually invite MCRPD and other recreation, enrichment and community providers to coordinate recreation and community events calendars, facility scheduling, grant opportunities, special events, and future recreation initiatives. Whether or not another agency elects to participate, the City will continue documenting its good-faith efforts to collaborate in the best interests of the community.

Finally, the policy establishes an annual reporting process whereby the Parks and Recreation Department will present an Annual Parks and Recreation Report to the City Council summarizing participation, financial performance, community partnerships, facility improvements, grants, volunteer efforts, and future priorities. This report will provide transparency, accountability, and objective performance measures while supporting continuous improvement.

Over the past several years, the City of Fort Bragg has transformed its approach to parks and recreation by investing in facilities, expanding programming, establishing a dedicated Parks and Recreation Department, and developing a long-term vision for recreation services throughout the community.

The proposed Parks and Recreation Service Delivery and Coordination Policy formalizes that commitment by establishing clear principles for collaboration, transparency, and responsible service delivery. It provides staff with objective guidelines for evaluating recreation programs, encourages partnerships with other providers, and ensures that City-owned recreation facilities continue to serve residents throughout the Mendocino Coast in an efficient, financially sustainable, and community-focused manner.

Adoption of this policy positions the City as a regional leader in parks and recreation while reaffirming its commitment to collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement for the benefit of current and future generations.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Adoption of the proposed policy will have no immediate fiscal impact and can be implemented using existing Parks and Recreation Department staffing and resources.

The City currently invests approximately \$2.9 million annually in the operation of the C.V. Starr Community Center Enterprise, along with an additional \$40,000 in General Fund support for parks and recreation activities throughout the community. The proposed policy is intended to maximize the effectiveness of these investments by providing a consistent framework for evaluating recreation, enrichment and community services, promoting collaboration with other providers, and ensuring efficient use of City-owned facilities.

Over time, implementation of the policy is expected to strengthen operational efficiency, improve grant competitiveness, expand partnerships, maximize utilization of City recreation assets, and support the long-term financial sustainability of the City's Parks and Recreation Department.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Adoption of the Parks and Recreation Service Delivery and Coordination Policy is not a project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15378 because it constitutes an administrative action that will not result in a direct or reasonably foreseeable physical change to the environment.

CONSISTENCY

This item supports several City Strategic Plan goals, including:

- Public Places — Providing outstanding recreational opportunities and community gathering spaces.
- Fiscal Responsibility — Maximizing taxpayer investment through coordinated service delivery and financial sustainability.
- Community Engagement — Encouraging partnerships with recreation providers and community organizations.

- Organizational Excellence — Utilizing objective data and best management practices to guide service delivery decisions.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Resolution Adopting the Parks and Recreation Service Delivery and Coordination Policy
2. Parks and Recreation Service Delivery and Coordination Policy
3. March 2026 Community Survey Summary
4. Recreation Program Evaluation Checklist