



Memorandum

TO: MAYOR LICCARDO

FROM: Councilmember Sylvia Arenas

SUBJECT: BUDGET DOCUMENT

DATE: May 22, 2019

Approved

Date

5/22/2019

RECOMMENDATION

That the following recommendation be enacted.

Proposal

Program/Project Title: Lake Cunningham Water Quality Restoration Project

Amount of City Funding Required: \$140,000

Fund Type (i.e. General Fund, C&C funds, etc.):

Lake Cunningham Fund:

Ending Fund Balance: \$100,000

Lake Cunningham Future Water Quality Improvements Reserve: \$40,000

This change is:

One-time Ongoing

Proposal Description, including anticipated outcomes (Please describe how change would affect services for San José residents, businesses, community groups, etc.):

Lake Cunningham has long been a valuable community asset in Evergreen and the East Side. For many children, this is their only access to a body of water with the potential for recreation. Pollution in the lake from chemicals in runoff, bacteria from waterfowl fecal matter, and a lack of water flow and aeration have all contributed to the decline in quality. The quality of water is now low enough that not only is swimming prohibited, but even water surface activities like boating are not allowed. The dock lies unused.

The lake's current state harms our general water quality along the Lower Silver Creek Watershed area, harms our general ground water quality, prevents generation of Evergreen and East Side families from having any open water for recreation, and is a legal liability for our city.

PRNS provided this description of the small first step they recommend to move forward on water quality:

*Improving the water quality of Lake Cunningham will require an ongoing effort. This budget request will be used to install and maintain (2) SolarBee Units which will increase dissolved oxygen levels, reduce fecal coliform levels, and reduce cyanobacteria dominance. This strategy was based off a report conducted in 2010. A 10% increase in price was added to the cost for inflation and a \$6,000 maintenance fee was added for ongoing expenses. **This approach will increase water quality; however, this will not result in water quality that is acceptable for swimming or recreational activities.***

Providing more background on the need for much larger corrections to make the lake usable for recreation activities again in the future, staff make clear that the man-made current design of the lake is at fault, and would need to be corrected to make the lake usable again:

While it is true that fecal matter from water fowl enter the lake, and a lack of water flow and aeration have all contributed to the decline in quality, negative water quality in the lake is caused from nutrient loads, which should not be confused with chemical runoff. Nutrients in the lake aren't able to cycle through like they do in natural systems, and because of this, issues with cyanobacteria dominance are encountered. The lake does not have tributaries flowing in or out and does not drain into the Lower Silver Creek Watershed area unless there is a peak storm event which floods the adjacent park and enters through storm drains. The Silver Creek Watershed is not directly connected to the lake. There has not been any research to determine the lake's potential to harm ground water.

Staff make clear that a bigger action is needed, however this is a clear and needed first step, and one we must take. Dedicated funding in the Lake Cunningham Fund is an appropriate source for this step, but environmental funding sources will be needed to coordinate the much larger environmental improvement project that we will clearly need at this site.

Funding Source

Essential Services Reserve (\$4 million):

Other (Program/Project/Fund):

Lake Cunningham Fund:

Ending Fund Balance: \$100,000

Lake Cunningham Future Water Quality Improvements Reserve: \$40,000

Department or Organization:

Department or Organization Contact (list contact information for the individual that certified cost estimates contained within your recommendation):

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