

# **COSTA MESA ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

## **ANNUAL REPORT**



MARCH 21, 2023



# COMMITTEE FORMATION AND CURRENT MEMBERS

Formed by the City Council on April 7, 2015 as the **Bikeway and Walkability Committee**.

In March of 2022, committee name changed to the **Active Transportation Committee (ATC)**

## Current Members

**Andrew Barnes**  
**Bryan Estrada**  
**Bridget Gleason – Vice Chair**  
**Richard Huffman II**  
**Flo Martin**  
**David Martinez**

**Robert Morse - Alternate**  
**Ralph Taboada – Chair**  
**Jennifer Vavra**  
**Jimmy Vivar**  
**Trace Yulie**  
**Open - Member**  
**Open - Alternate**

## City Council Liaisons

**Council Member Arlis Reynolds**  
**Council Member Loren Gameros**  
**Mayor Pro Tem Jeffrey Harlan**

**Newport-Mesa Unified School District Liaison**

**Chamber of Commerce Liaison**

**Open**

**Brent Stoll**



# ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION VISION

## City Council Goals/Objectives 2021 thru 2024

- Create a safer place to walk and ride a bicycle.
- Advance environmental sustainability and climate resiliency.
- Approve a Pedestrian Master Plan for inclusion in the City's General Plan Circulation Element.
- Approve a plan to mitigate collisions and injuries on roadways.

## Goals of the Active Transportation Plan (ATP)

- Promote a user-friendly and welcoming Active Transportation System in Costa Mesa.
- Create a safer place to walk and ride a bicycle.
- Integrate Active Transportation Elements into the Circulation System and Land Use Planning.
- Promote an Active Transportation culture.
- Promote the positive air quality, health, and economic benefits of Active Transportation.
- Monitor, evaluate, and pursue funding for implementation of the Active Transportation Plan.

# SUBCOMMITTEES

- In January 2023, at direction of City Attorney, the existing subcommittees were discontinued.
- New Ad Hoc Subcommittees have been formed.
  - Open Streets
  - Economic Growth
  - Active Transportation Plan
  - Pedestrian Master Plan
  - Education and Safety Training





# ACTIVITIES

- **Legislation Watch:** Efforts continued from 2021 to identify and support state-level bills that would dramatically enhance safety, efficiency, and benefit active transportation. Bills ATC supported that were successfully passed included AB 1909 - OmniBike Bill and AB 2147 - The Freedom To Walk Act.
- **Easement and Right-of-Way Vacations:** Committee occasionally reviews easement and right-of-way vacations to identify potential bike and pedestrian impacts.
- **Bike Racks:** Continues to work with staff on installation of racks in parks, city facilities and public rights-of-way. In cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce, a commercial bike rack program remains a goal.





# ACTIVITIES

- **Walk to School Day and Bike to School Day:** Both events were a great success!

## Participation:

- Schools - 13 walk 9 bike
- About 1800 students
- 9 committee members





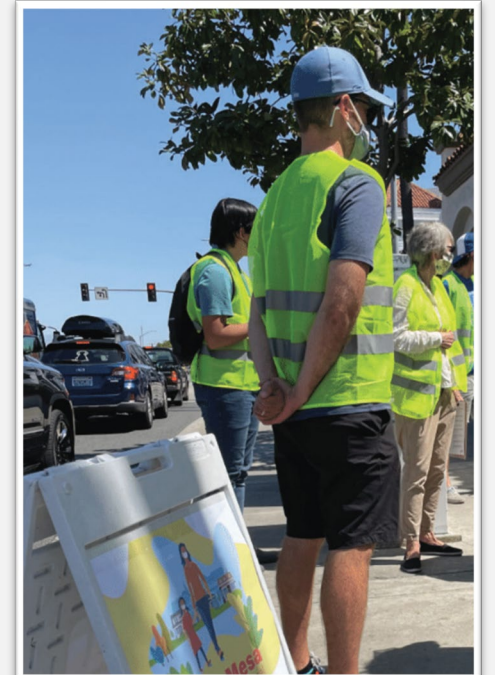
# ACTIVITIES

- **Concerts in the Park, Fish Fry, and Earth Day:** Committee members engaged with community members and hosted a booth promoting the committee and Active Transportation in the City.
- **TEAM SoCalCross Cyclocross Race:** Committee members have volunteered at this two-day event in Balearic-Estancia Park organized by SoCalCross. The event features races for all ages and skill levels.
- **Various Community Bike Rides:**
  - Council Member Reynolds community rides
  - Lillördag Wednesday Night Bike Rides
  - Some members participated in various bike ride and open streets events hosted outside of the City for ideas to implement in CM.



# ACTIVITIES

- **Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP):** Consultant, KOA, completed the report in June 2022.
  - Committee members, staff, and members of the public assisted by performing walk audits and providing comments and recommendations during the report writing phase.
  - ATC approved the report at our June 2022 meeting. However, several members commented that the report could be improved. To follow-up, the Committee approved a letter to the Planning Commission recommending their approval subject to certain provisions.
    - Develop a PMP Implementation Plan within 12 months of approval
    - Provide wording to allow for expanding the PMP to include additional sections of the City.



## ACTIVITIES

- **Wayfinding Bicycle Signage Project:** Design is underway, and the committee is in the process of recommending sign locations, as consultant, Alta Planning + Design, develops the program. Signage benefits both residents and visitors alike.
- **Economic Growth:** Identified and vetted the Bicycle Benefits program, a community-based discount and customer loyalty program, in which participating businesses give a discount to customers that arrive via bicycle. The program will be rolled out to Costa Mesa through private citizen initiative.





# ACTIVITIES

- **Education & Safety Training:** Committee members working with Walk-n-Rollers, community organizations, and Councilwoman Reynolds to host bike safety events.
- **Street Beat Festival – Walk ‘n’ Rollers Edition**  
May 27 10am – 2pm at Estancia High School. The ACT in collaboration with the City, NMUSD, Walk ‘n’ Rollers and community stakeholders will hold a bicycle and eBike festival to promote bicycle and eBike road skills and safety. Music, food, raffles, and giveaways will create a wonderful experience for all.
- **SOY Bike Safety Event sponsored by CMPD** – Committee members will participate and support CMPD in this bike safety event March 25<sup>th</sup> 10am – 2pm.
- **Bright Lights of Costa Mesa** – Committee members joined with CMABS for bike light give-a-ways at select intersections in the City.





## ACTIVITIES

- **Open Street Event:** Subcommittee has created an information flyer and questionnaire for the purpose of outreach to businesses and residents to help gauge support for an Open Street event. Committee will report to Staff and Council results of the survey to help determine future action. Event will require significant planning but will pay dividends by helping to distinguish Costa Mesa as a city supporting Active Transportation.
- **AT Project Recommendations:** Using the Active Transportation Plan and the Proposed PMP, the Committee coordinated with staff and has recommended a list of projects for next year's budget.
  - Will formally submit the project list to City Council for your review/approval.

# PROJECT PROGRESS – ACTIVE & COMPLETED

## The Committee has reviewed and/or recommended improvements to the following City projects:

- West 19th Street Bicycle Improvements Project - Design Complete, Awarded for Construction
- Placentia Avenue Active Transportation Improvements – Design Complete, Awarded for Construction: Committee members participated in project walk audits along the corridor to provide input during the design phase
- West 19th Street at Wallace Pedestrian Signal, Wilson Street HAWK Signal at Wilson Park/Fordham, W 18th Street HAWK Signal at Lions Park – Design complete, awarded for construction
- West Wilson Street Improvements – Construction underway
- Fairview Road Class IV (Fair Drive to Newport Boulevard) - Design underway
- Randolph Avenue Improvements - Construction Complete



# PROJECT PROGRESS – ACTIVE & COMPLETED

## The Committee has reviewed and/or recommended improvements to the following City projects:

- Newport Blvd. & Industrial Way Crosswalk - Construction Complete
- Adams Avenue at Pinecreek Improvements – Design complete
- Adams Avenue Bicycle Improvements Project (Harbor to Fairview) – Design near completion
- Baker-Placentia-Victoria 19th Street Traffic Signal Synchronization Project – Design complete and Signal Timing for Leading Pedestrian Intervals developed for 26 intersections
- Local Road Safety Plan - Complete
- 15 bike racks installed over the past year and “Request a Bike Rack” webpage launched with link on Committee webpage
- Draft Pedestrian Master Plan – Draft complete and ready to be presented to Planning Commission and City Council



## LOCAL ROAD SAFETY PLAN – APRIL 2022

- Analyzed 5 years of collision data (2015 – 2019).
  - #1 Cause of collisions: Unsafe Speed, #2 DUI
  - 287 pedestrian collisions - 8 fatal and 38 severe injuries
  - 306 bicycle collisions - 0 fatal and 17 severe injuries
- Majority of collisions occurred at or near intersections
- Majority of pedestrian and bicycle collisions occurred on the same streets/intersections



## NEXT STEPS

- **AT Project Recommendations:** Will submit our list of recommended projects, for next year's budget, to City Council. Significant projects include:
  - Fairview Road Class IV Construction - Fair to Newport Blvd. includes midblock crosswalk
  - Adams Ave Class II Construction - Harbor to Fairview, connects with Fairview Rd. bike lanes
  - 19<sup>th</sup> St. Pedestrian Improvements - as outlined in the proposed PMP
- **ATP Implementation Plan:** Last year the ATC submitted a letter to City Council calculating it would take 21 years to complete the ATP and recommended an implementation plan be created.
  - Establishes goal to complete ATP in a set number of years.
  - Helps assure success by measuring progress as projects are completed.
  - Integrate bike and pedestrian projects
  - Advances City Council Goal to Strengthen Public Safety and Improve Quality of Life.



## NEXT STEPS

- **Pedestrian Master Plan:** As applicable coordinate with the Planning Commission, City Council, and Staff to obtain approval of the PMP.
  - When appropriate recommend additional sections of the City to be added to the PMP
  - Assist with developing an Implementation Plan
- **City Ordinances:** Review City ordinances related to Active Transportation for recommended updates or elimination.
- **Open Streets:** Conduct outreach survey and report to Council/Staff to determine future action.
- **Wayfinding Signage:** Continue to recommend locations and destinations to include on signage.



# NEXT STEPS

- **Safe Routes to School:** Assist Staff in development of a comprehensive safety action plan with specific implementable projects to enhance safety on streets and sidewalks used to access schools – funding provided by \$630k federal grant.
- **Multi-Modal Safety Improvements:** Recommend intersections to upgrade with countdown timers, Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPI), and other improvements. Staff estimates 40+ intersections can be upgraded. Funding provided by State's Office of Traffic Safety - \$3.9M.
- **AT CIP Projects:** Review and provide design recommendations to Staff on newly funded projects.
- **Project 529 Bicycle Registration:** Potentially assist Police Dept. in rolling out this bike registration program.

## CHALLENGES

### INCREASED USE OF BICYCLES, E-BIKES IN PARTICULAR

Places a higher demand on the City's Active Transportation infrastructure, police, and staff.

Increased safety issues.

### PACE OF PROGRESS

Mode shift to biking and walking is good, but need to make more progress to meet ATP goals of 10% bicycle and 20% walking.

### STAFFING & HIRING

6 open positions in the City's Public Service - Engineering Division

"It is estimated that the supply of engineering professionals will fall short of demand by nearly 200,000 workers through 2030" - *U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*

### VEHICLES & ROAD HAZARDS

Prioritize and implement projects/programs that contribute to the reduction of collisions to the ZERO fatality/severe injury level



## RECOMMENDATIONS & CALLS TO ACTION

### PRIORITIZE

Prioritize cyclist and pedestrian safety, and improved connectivity in CIP projects.

### INCREASE

Increase spending and outreach efforts for Active Transportation projects and programs.

### PROVIDE

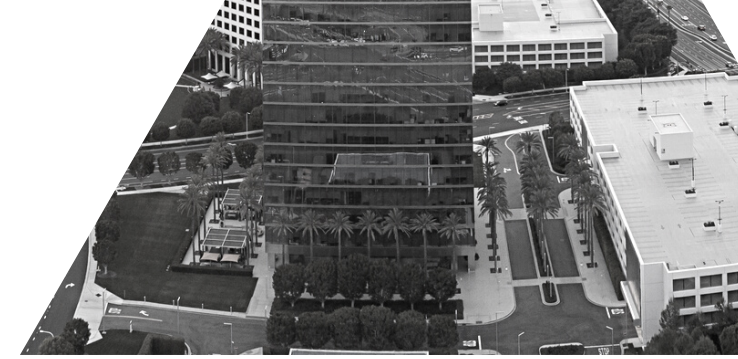
Provide funding to work on update of ordinances to accommodate mobility share, achieve “Silver Level Bike Friendly Community,” and eliminate ordinances that encourage inequity.

### PROMOTE

Promote awareness and utilization of active transportation modes and facilities through community outreach, Costa Mesa Minute, and social media.

### ACT

Increase your own use of active transportation. Commit to walking or riding to a small business in your district on a weekly basis. Encourage your constituents and neighbors to do the same.







**FentanylSolution.org is a non-profit  
located in Newport Beach, California**

# **FentanylSolution.org's mission**

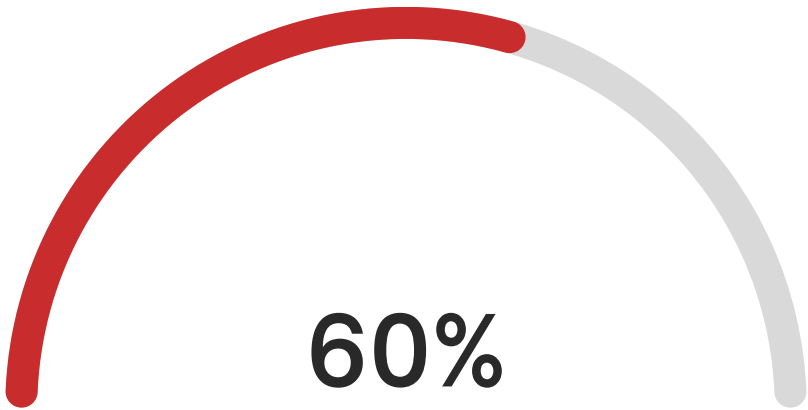


**Fentanyl is 50xs  
stronger than  
heroin& 100xs  
stronger than  
morphine**



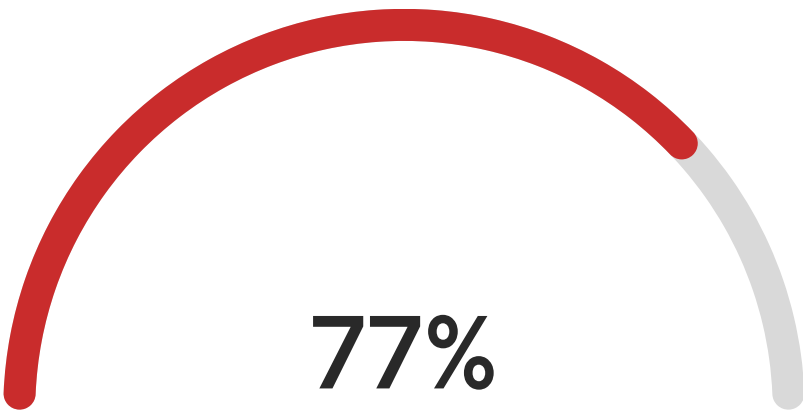
# Nationwide

Illicit pills laced with fentanyl in 2021



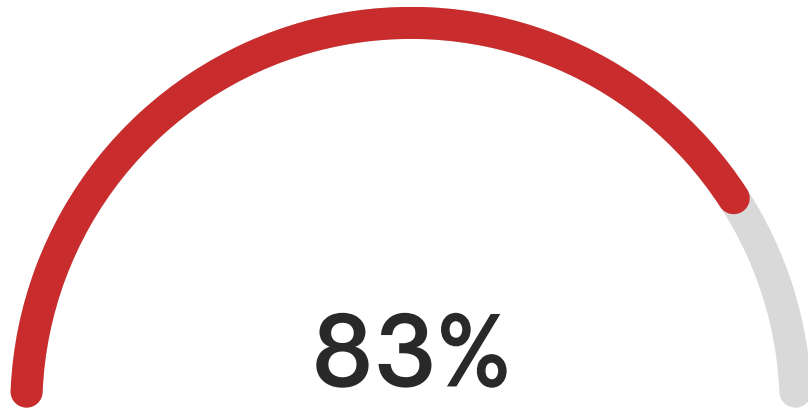
Source: DEA

Adolescent deaths due to fentanyl in 2021



Source: CDC

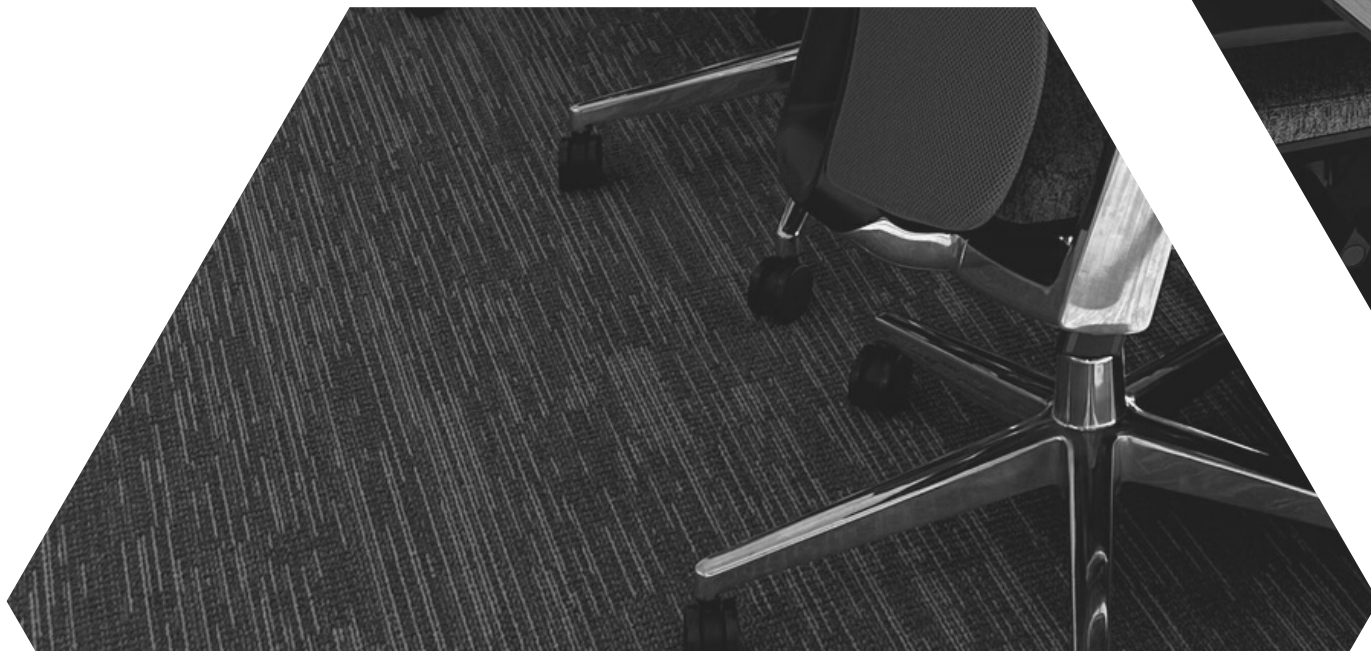
Deaths due to fentanyl in 2020



Source: CDC



## BOARD MEMBERS





# +Community Impact

- Educational programs online and in-person
- Advocating for policy change
- Providing community support
- Collaborating with other organizations to maximize their impact and reach





**We  
want  
to  
work  
with  
you**



## Let's Collaborate

We have ideas that we'd like to share with you.

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## Our Expertise

Planning, advise, quotes, and possible endorsements.

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**FentanylSolution.org**

# **COSTA MESA'S BUS STOP SHELTERS**

**ARE IN DISREPAIR AND NEED  
SOME SERIOUS TLC!**



# Benches, structures and trash receptable need paint.





# Graffiti needs to be removed.



# **EXPOSED HUMAN FECES ARE DANGEROUS!**









# FISCAL YEAR 2022-23 MID-YEAR PRESENTATION

Finance Department  
March 21, 2023





# OVERVIEW

- Fiscal Year 2021-22 Year-End Highlights
- Fiscal Year 2022-23 General Fund Mid-Year Overview
- Mid-Year Adjustments
- General Fund Balance
- Budget Calendar





# FISCAL YEAR ENDING 6/30/2022 HIGHLIGHTS



# FY 2021-22 HIGHLIGHTS

- City achieved strong financial performance last fiscal year, ending with a positive balance of \$4.3 million for the \$163.6 million General Fund Adopted Budget;
- Allocated \$1.5 million of fiscal year-end General Fund surplus into the Section 115 (Pension) Fund;
- Fully funded the CAN (CIP) and IT Strategic Plan; and
- Represents City's 24<sup>th</sup> consecutive year of award winning Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) with an “unqualified (clean) opinion”.





# FISCAL YEAR 2022-23 GENERAL FUND HIGHLIGHTS



# FY 2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS

- City Council approved the All Funds FY 2022-23 budget of \$206.2 million on June 7, 2022, with a General Fund budget of \$163.6 million;
- Public Safety spending for Police and Fire and Rescue Services comprises 53% of the total General Fund Budget;
- City Council approved 11 full-time custody staff for the Costa Mesa Police Jail Operation Services; and
- The Amended Budget supports 561 full-time employees and 114.8 (FTE) part-time positions citywide.

# CURRENT YEAR 2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS

- Fully balanced General Fund budget without the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) or reserves;
- Dedicated 53% of the General Fund to public safety
- Negotiated legally required labor contracts;
- Fully funded Year 3 of the Information Technology Strategic Plan (ITSP);
- Continue to maintain a strong credit rating;
- Implemented an additional \$2.8 million in ongoing funding for the City's Equipment Replacement Fund; and
- Prefunded CalPERS Unfunded Accrued Liability (UAL), saving the General Fund approximately \$855,500.



# FY 2022-23

## GENERAL FUND REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES

(IN MILLIONS)

Category	Adopted FY 22-23	Amended FY 22-23*	Difference
Property Taxes	\$52.0	\$52.8	\$0.8
Sales Tax	72.6	77.2	4.6
TOT (hotel tax)	7.3	8.4	1.1
Other Revenues	31.7	29.1	(2.6)
<b>Revenues</b>	<b>\$163.6</b>	<b>\$167.5</b>	<b>\$3.9</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>(\$163.6)</b>	<b>(\$165.0)</b>	<b>(\$1.4)</b>
<b>Net Gain / (Loss)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>\$2.5</b>	<b>\$2.5</b>

\*Estimates only, subject to change





# THREE-YEAR COUNCIL GOALS AND PRIORITIES



# THREE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

- Strengthen the Public's Safety and Improve the Quality of Life
- Achieve Long-Term Fiscal Sustainability
- Recruit and Retain High Quality Staff
- Diversify, Stabilize and Increase Housing to Reflect Community Needs
- Advance Environmental Sustainability and Climate Resiliency
- Maintain and Enhance the City's Infrastructure, Facilities, Equipment, and Technology



# RECRUIT AND RETAIN HIGH QUALITY STAFF





# Parks and Community Services

- Title change requests to align the positions' duties to the appropriate title and industry standard:
  - One (1) Assistant Recreation Supervisor to Recreation Supervisor, and
  - One (1) Recreation Supervisor to Senior Recreation Supervisor.
- There are no costs with the above title change requests.

# Parks and Community Services

- Convert some part-time to full-time positions as shown below;
- Positions will assist with retention of these hard-to-fill and retain positions and allow for consistent staffing and supervision of recreation programs and activities.

Description	Net FTE	Current Year Prorated Impact	Annual Impact
Convert 2.25 part-time Recreation Specialists to 3.00 full time Recreation Specialists	0.75	\$20,391	\$122,346
Convert 0.75 part-time Recreation Specialists and 0.46 part-time Community Outreach Worker to 1.0 full-time Community Outreach Worker	(0.21)	6,797	40,782
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.54</b>	<b>\$27,188</b>	<b>\$163,128</b>

# Information Technology

- Oversees network administration, software development and installation, and maintenance of hardware and software; which includes upgrades, replacements and database management.
- Adds an Office Specialist to assist the administrative staff; which includes tracking of annual maintenance contracts with software and hardware vendors, and archiving and converting files to e-format.

Description	Net FTE	Current Year Prorated Impact	Annual Impact
Office Specialist II	1.0	\$18,099	\$108,594



# City Manager's Office

- Is the hub and nucleus of the City organization requiring strong administrative support and engaging personnel.
- To continue providing enhanced services to the community the following realignments are requested:

Description	Net FTE	Current Year Prorated Impact	Annual Impact
Reallocate 1.0 Assistant City Manager to 1.0 Deputy City Manager	0	(\$2,573)	(\$15,438)
Convert 0.50 part-time Management Aide (Confidential) to 1.0 full-time Management Aide (Confidential)	0.5	7,900	47,400
Convert 1.13 part-time Office Specialist IIs to 1.0 full-time Administrative Assistant (Confidential)	(0.13)	3,842	23,052
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.37</b>	<b>\$9,169</b>	<b>\$55,014</b>



# DIVERSIFY, STABILIZE AND INCREASE HOUSING TO REFLECT COMMUNITY NEEDS



# Development Services Planning Division

- Implements community development programs and functions which include implementation of the Zoning Code and the goals, policies and objectives of the General Plan.
- Add a Planning and Sustainable Development Manager and a Senior Planner to support multiple complex programs, including inclusionary housing ordinance, community visioning and rezoning, maintaining State mandates regarding housing and sustainability programs.

Description	Net FTE	Current Year Prorated Impact	Annual Impact
Senior Planner	1.0	\$25,098	\$150,588
Planning and Sustainable Development Manager	1.0	28,349	170,094
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>\$53,447</b>	<b>\$320,682</b>





# ADVANCE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE RESILIENCY



# Public Works

- Proposing to create a new division that will focus on:
  - Planning, designing, implementing and maintaining City facilities;
  - Fleet management; and
  - Sustainability.
- Proposing a title change from Principal Engineer to Assistant City Engineer to better reflect the duties of the position. There is no cost with the title change request.



# MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE CITY'S INFRASTRUCTURE, FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND TECHNOLOGY





# Public Works

- Addition of two (2) positions to support the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to upgrade city facilities that were built several decades ago and are in dire need of refurbishment, such as Fire Station 2 reconstructions, Fire Station 4 Training Tower, and Westside Police Sub-Station improvements.

Description	Net FTE	Current Year Prorated Impact	Annual Impact
Deputy Director of Public Works	1.00	\$40,300	\$241,800
Senior Engineer	1.00	36,430	218,580
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>\$76,730</b>	<b>\$460,380</b>



# STRENGTHEN THE PUBLIC'S SAFETY AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE



# Police Department

- Tasked with protecting life and property while preserving peace.
- Add one (1) Deputy Police Chief position to augment day-to-day operational quality control and provide increased oversight for internal audits, personnel matters and safety operations.

Description	Net FTE	Current Year Prorated Impact	Annual Impact
Deputy Police Chief	1.00	\$64,026	\$384,156



# Fire and Rescue Department

- Currently under review



# RECRUIT AND RETAIN HIGH QUALITY STAFF



# Hard-To-Fill Adjustments

- Hard-to-fill positions include positions that are:
  - Currently Vacant;
  - Not currently vacant but are traditionally hard-to-fill;
  - Currently filled but are expected to be difficult to fill in the future or retain for long term due to their relative position in the market place as being well under compensated.



# Hard-To-Fill Adjustments

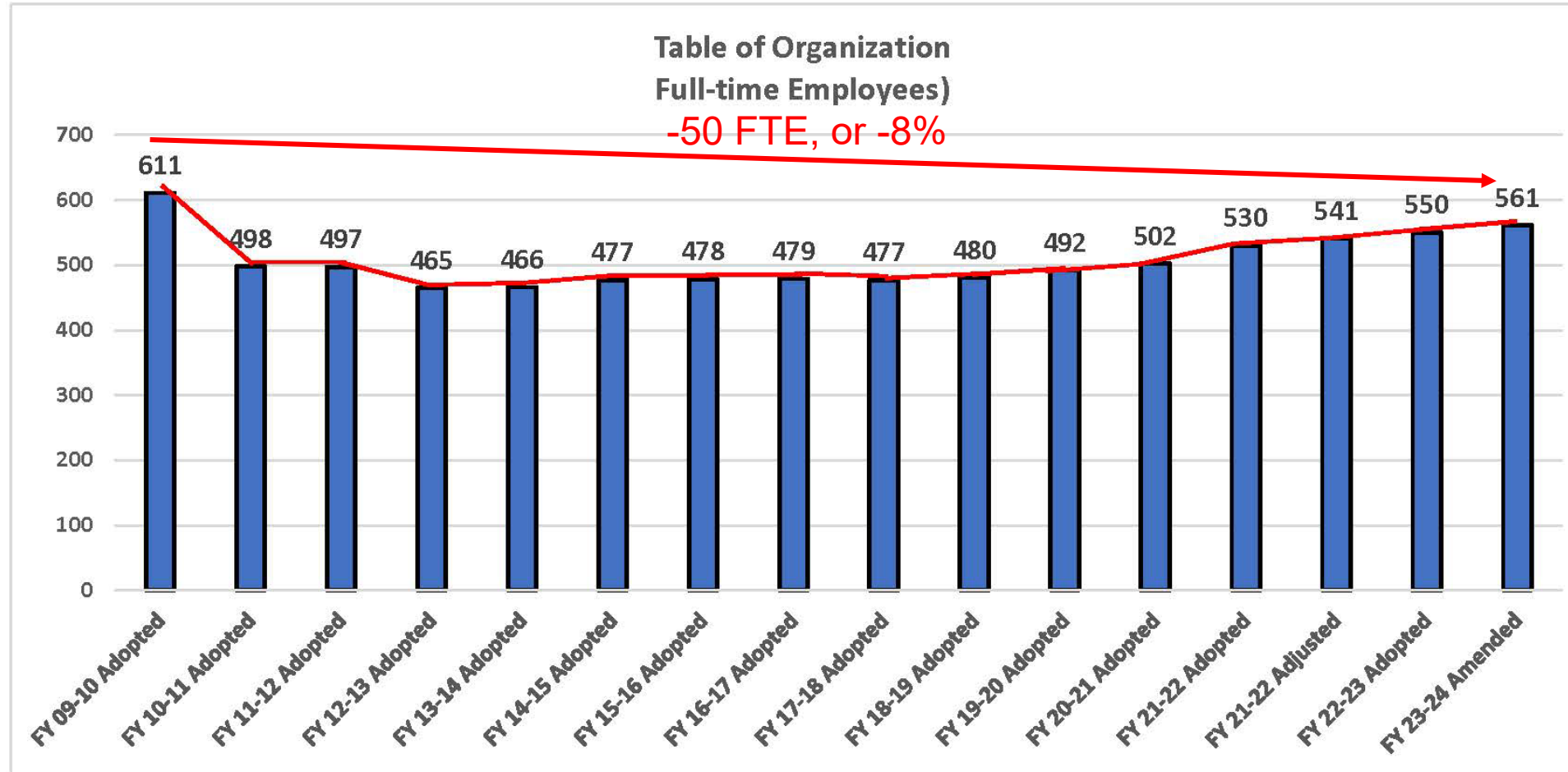
## Parks and Community Services Department

- Update the part-time positions to reflect current market:
  - Senior/Community Services Leader, II, II
  - Senior/Lifeguard
  - Instructor Guard
- The adjustments are estimated at \$98,337 for FY 2022-23, for an estimated annual cost of \$590,022.

## City Manager's Office

- Update the Assistant City Manager compensation for a market adjustment to address internal alignment among the executive staff.
- The current year's cost is approximately \$7,000 for an annual net cost of \$42,000.

# HISTORICAL STAFFING LEVELS (FY09-FY23) FTE





# GENERAL FUND BALANCE





# FUND BALANCE IN THE GENERAL FUND

## (IN THOUSANDS)

Fund Balance Category	FY 18-19 Audited	FY 19-20 Audited	FY 20-21 Audited	FY 21-22 Audited
<b>Committed</b>				
Declared Disaster	\$ 14,125	\$ 14,125	\$ 14,125	\$ 14,125
Economic Reserves	7,500	9,000	9,000	9,000
Self Insurance	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
<b>Assigned</b>				
Compensated Absences	4,893	5,036	5,920	5,584
Police Retirement 1% Supp. Plan	2,297	2,365	2,275	1,885
Worker's Compensation	-	-	-	1,000
Facilities Reserve	-	-	-	2,000
Strategic Plan Projects	-	-	-	2,000
<b>Restricted</b>				
Pension and OPEB	-	-	1,778	3,061
<b>Non-Spendable</b>	280	362	965	604
<b>Unassigned</b>	20,451	18,825	17,429	16,517
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 51,546</b>	<b>\$ 53,463</b>	<b>\$ 53,492</b>	<b>\$ 57,776</b>



# BUDGET CALENDAR





# BUDGET CALENDAR

DATE	TOPIC
March 21	FY 22-23 Mid-Year Adjustment Request
April 25	FY 23-24 Proposed Budget (Operating and CIP) Study Session
June 6	FY 23-24 Budget Adoption (Operating and CIP) Public Hearing
June 20	FY 23-24 Budget Adoption Public Hearing (Alternative Date)





# QUESTIONS?







## FIRE STATION NO. 4

# TRAINING FACILITY RECONSTRUCTION ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN SERVICES AWARD

City Council Meeting  
Tuesday, March 21, 2023







# FIRE STATION NO. 4

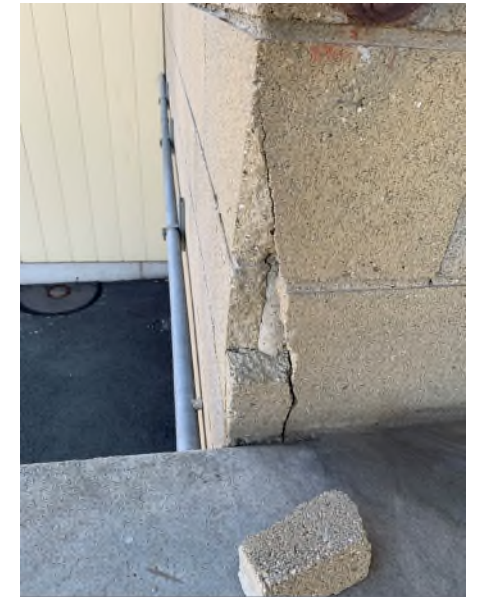
- Fire Station No. 4 is located in District 1 at 2300 Placentia Avenue.
- Provides fire protection and emergency response services to the surrounding Costa Mesa community.
- Fire Station 4 also houses the Training Tower and associated infrastructure that is used for critical training needs of the department.





# FIRE STATION NO. 4

- Training tower was built in 1966 within the Fire Station 4 complex of approximately 1.4-acres.
- The training tower has exceeded its useful life and is no longer compliant with current standards, modern building codes, personnel capacity and training schedule demands.
- The training tower is currently subject to periodic structural inspections and repairs.



# FIRE STATION NO. 4

# FUNDING

Assemblymember **Cottie Petrie-Norris** secured a \$2.5 million grant to the City to rebuild Fire Station No. 4 training tower into a state-of-the-art Regional Training Facility. Project includes:

- Reconstruction of the Training Tower.
- Enhanced water recovery through modern water reclamation elements to reduce water waste and utilized as part of training exercises.
- Upgrades to existing lighting to include energy efficient LED fixtures and incorporate solar-powered back-up energy.





# FIRE STATION NO. 4

## Training Tower Proposed Design

- Design a fully operational 5-story pre-fabricated training tower structure.
- Grounds improvements with cost efficient concrete pavement.
- Ingress and egress improvements.
- Remediation of water recovery through modern water reclamation.
- Solar panels to provide back-up energy when needed.







# Design Award for Fire Station No. 4

## Design Contract Award and Funding Summary

- Request for Proposals (RFP) advertised on December 8, 2022 and received proposals on January 6, 2023.
- Consultant to Award: *PBK Architects*
- Design Contract Amount: \$362,000
- Complete construction documents and project specifications
- In FY 2022-23, City Council approved \$3.6 million of Capital Facility Funds towards the design and construction of Fire Station No. 4 Training Tower and Grounds Reconstruction, which includes \$2.5 million in state grant funds received through the assistance of state Assemblymember Cottie Petrie-Norris.

# Questions?





# New Business Item 4

## Model Aircraft Flying Field at Fairview Park

March 21, 2023





# Background

- In September 2021, staff presented model aircraft activity proposals for City Council consideration
- Council direction included:
  - 1. Evaluate activity during Master Plan update
  - 2. Consider other sites, and
  - 3. Permit only gliders going forward
- Since then, staff engaged model flying community (HSS), stakeholders, wildlife agencies, and Steering Committee to fulfill City Council direction
- Model aircraft community, PACS Commission, City Council have requested an update of the status
- Staff has conducted an exhaustive review and synthesis, considering historical information, regulatory agency communication, Fairview Park Master Plan (currently underway) and environmental documentation



# History of Model Flying Activity at Fairview Park

- Early 1960s – Model soaring begins at the west bluffs
- 1980s – Winch launching and thermal flying grows
- 1993 – North Talbert development and restoration
- 1998 – City adopts Fairview Park Master Plan
- Late 1990s - early 2000s – Trees were planted at the base of the bluffs in Talbert Park; as they grew/matured, it affected glider flying for soaring aircraft



# Glider Launch and Landing Sites

## Fairview Park Master Plan (1998)



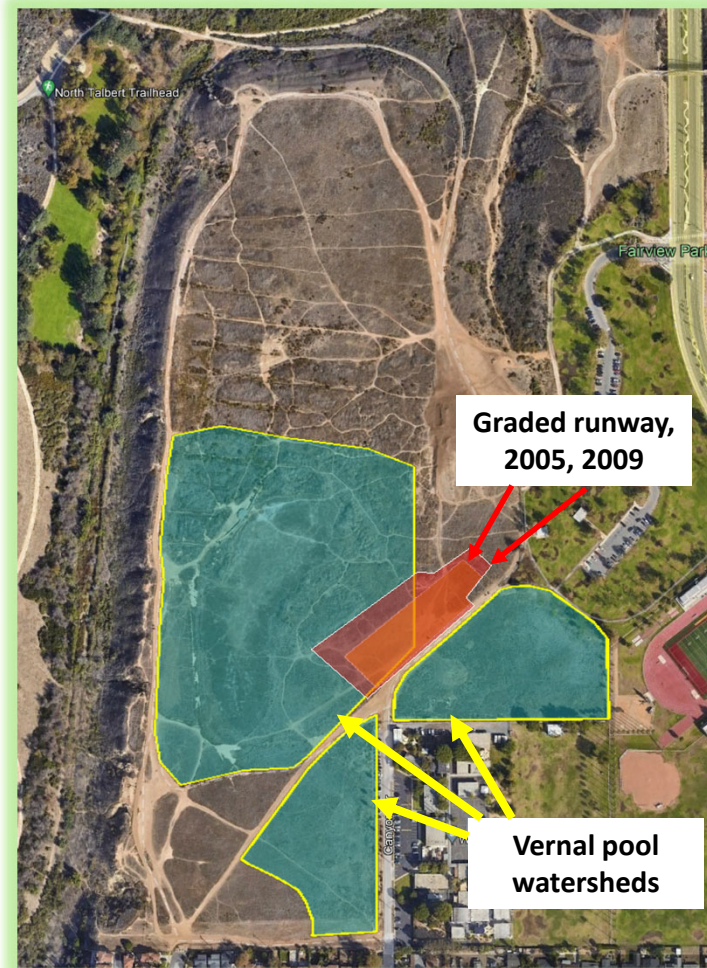


# History of Model Flying Activity at Fairview Park, continued

- Early 2000s – rise in larger, faster, more powerful propulsion aircraft → requiring more space for take-off and landing
- 2002 - 2005 – HSS plans and designs a runway to accommodate powered propulsion aircraft, shift away from restroom building
- 2005 – Runway of 150' by 470' graded to accommodate motorized aircraft take-off and landing
- 2009 – Runway expanded again, widened 70' further into vernal pool 1 watershed



# Expanded Aircraft Runway and Landing Area Fairview Park



# Analysis: Environmental Incompatibility Categories

- Vernal Pool Habitat and Wetland Impacts
- Threatened, Endangered and Protected Species Impacts
- Safety Concerns
- Lack of Environmental Documentation for Site Modifications





# Vernal Pools and Wetland Impacts

- Fairview Park & Randall Preserve represent the last coastal vernal pool complex in all of Orange County
- Highly sensitive to hydrologic disturbances
- Host of many protected and endangered species, rare and sensitive plants
- Provides critical foraging habitat for birds
- Degradation of vegetation, soil erosion
- Vernal pools have been the source of significant competitive restoration funds
- Model flying activities should not be performed in or over sensitive resources including vernal pools, native habitats



# Threatened, Endangered and Protected Species Impacts



Burrowing Owl



White-tailed Kite



Northern Harrier



California Gnatcatcher



# Threatened, Endangered and Protected Species Impacts

## Wildlife species

- Burrowing Owl – Species of Special Concern
- White-tailed Kite – CA fully protected species
- Northern Harrier – Species of Special Concern
- California Gnatcatcher – Federally listed under Endangered Species Act
- San Diego Fairy Shrimp – Federally listed under Endangered Species Act
- Riverside Fairy Shrimp – Federally listed under Endangered Species Act

## Plant species

- Orcutt's Grass – Federally listed under Endangered Species Act
- San Diego Button Celery – Federally listed under Endangered Species Act
- Mud Nama – Rare plant
- Little Mousetail – Rare plant
- Vernal Barley – Rare plant
- Prostrate Navarretia – Rare plant
- Small flowered microseris – Rare plant





# Safety Concerns

- Reports include:
  - Uncontrolled flying
  - Crashes in vegetated areas, vernal pools, bluffs, on trails near users
  - Fires due to crashes
  - Unpermitted retrieval on steep bluffs, erosion hazards
  - Close proximity to passive park users
- Model aircraft (i.e. gliders) can be as large as 10 feet long and can reach speeds of 100 miles per hour
- Increased park visitation/use since COVID-19 re-opening



# Lack of Environmental Documentation for Site Modifications

- Original Fairview Park Master Plan – gliders at bluffs, and small glider launch site near restrooms
- ‘Launch string’ clearing to be limited to 1-foot width
- Initial Study/Negative Declaration – no grading associated with the model flying activity area was identified
- Grading, soil compaction, and disturbance within sensitive vernal pool ecosystems without environmental impact assessment





# Lack of Environmental Documentation for Site Modifications





# Recommendation

Staff recommends the City Council provide direction regarding whether to permanently close the model aircraft flying field at Fairview Park, and terminate the model flyer permit system due to environmental incompatibility.

This recommendation is based on the following:

- Vernal Pool and Wetland Impacts
- Threatened, Endangered and Protected Species Impacts
- Safety Concerns
- Lack of Environmental Documentation for Site Modifications





# Questions?

