

Attachment B
Community and Cultural Investment Subcommittee



City of Phoenix

Report

Agenda Date: 10/5/2022, Item No. 10

*****REQUEST TO WITHDRAW (SEE ATTACHED MEMO)*** Phoenix Park Ranger Update**

This report provides the Community and Cultural Investment Subcommittee information on the Phoenix Park Ranger Program and proposed expansion of security services in parks.

THIS ITEM IS FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION.

Summary

The Parks and Recreation Department Natural Resources Division houses the City's Park Ranger program. The work Park Rangers perform are divided into two related yet distinct assignments: (1) rangers assigned to the mountain preserves and (2) rangers assigned to urban parks. There are 88 full-time Park Rangers, and 11 part-time Park Rangers throughout the park system. At the time of this report, there are currently 25 Park Ranger vacancies, 12 on the urban team and 13 on the mountain preserve ranger team.

Park Rangers assigned to the mountain preserves cover three areas: North (Sonoran Preserve, Deem Hills, North Mountain Park, etc.), East (Camelback Mountain, Piestewa Peak, Papago Park, etc.) and South (South Mountain Park and Rio Salado Habitat Restoration Area). These rangers protect the City's mountain preserves, including animal habitats, hiking trails, trail heads, restrooms and physical facilities. Rangers educate the public on how to safely enjoy the Sonoran Desert and enforce park rules, regulations and ordinances related to park usage in desert parks and preserves. When necessary, rangers issue criminal citations for violations of City Code ordinances. Rangers also facilitate programs and provide a wide variety of information about park and recreation facilities to the public. Additionally, rangers work closely with other first responders to interact safely and communicate effectively with park users in emergency situations.

Each area consists of a standardized reporting structure and includes one Park Supervisor, one Park Manager, two Park Ranger III supervisors and varying combinations of full-time and part-time Park Ranger IIs. There are 64 full-time and 11

part-time positions throughout the mountain park and preserve areas, which manage the patrol, security and maintenance of all trailheads and facilities which are open seven days a week, year-round from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Park Rangers assigned to urban parks support the City's urban park system, which consist of 185 parks and designated bike paths and pedestrian tunnels throughout the City. Rangers assist in the proactive education and enforcement of the public on a daily basis, addressing the Code of Conduct Policy as well as other common issues such as loitering in the park after hours, illegal vending, shopping carts, dogs off-leash, smoking, drugs and paraphernalia, and unattended belongings. Rangers monitor and enforce park rules, regulations and ordinances related to City park use and educate park patrons not complying with these rules. Criminal citations for violation of City Code ordinances or trespass notices through the Parks and Recreation Department's Code of Conduct are issued, when necessary. Ranger patrol coverage is seven days a week from 4 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Park Rangers assigned to the urban parks include one Park Supervisor, one Park Manager, four Park Ranger III supervisors and 24 full-time Park Ranger IIs. A total of eight of the 24 Park Ranger II positions were added during the Fiscal Year 2022-23 budget process. The Parks and Recreation department is in the process of recruiting and onboarding these eight new positions. Once these positions are filled and when fully staffed, six Park Ranger IIs will cover the morning shift from 4 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and six Ranger IIs will cover the afternoon shift from 12:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. With current challenges in recruiting Park Rangers, there are between two and four Park Ranger IIs working at any one time.

The Parks Rangers are an integral part of the PHX Community Action Response Engagement Services (C.A.R.E.S.) initiative, which focuses on efforts to reduce the impact of homelessness in the City and addresses resident concerns related to unsheltered individuals in neighborhoods. Rangers work with police and Community Bridges, Inc. (CBI) staff on targeted outreach opportunities. A strategic approach identifies priority patrols via input from Parks and Recreation Department staff throughout the City and Phoenix Police Department service calls. Ranger patrols afford the opportunity to increase direct contact with individuals requiring services and the ability to immediately provide information directly to the PHX C.A.R.E.S. program and other City departments, including Police, Human Services, Neighborhood Services and Street Transportation.

The presence of Park Rangers helps improve guest satisfaction, as well as park safety, attractiveness and usability. Objectives include maintaining safe and welcoming parks for all residents and visitors.

The rangers assigned to urban parks implemented a new database in June of 2022 that electronically captures the daily ranger logs. A query of this database from June through August 2022 returned information on the most common Code of Conduct violations and the actions taken to address them.

Top Three Code of Conduct Violations

- After hours park use/entry(PCCC 23-8B)
- Vending or charging for services without approval (PCC 24-40)
- Shopping carts in parks (PCC 24-43)

Top Three Actions Taken

- Verbal warning
- Order to leave (Trespass for the remainder of the day)
- Upon arrival of the rangers, park user left; therefore, no contact was made

During the time frame identified above, rangers made a total of 7,174 public contacts, of which 1,698 were Code of Conduct related. A total of 58 Trespass Notices were issued.

With Phoenix encompassing over 500 square miles and 185 urban parks, it continues to be challenging for Park Rangers to frequent parks in a consistent manner. To further support efforts to maintain clean, safe and accessible parks the Parks and Recreation Department has conducted preliminary research into the use of security services in parks. Of the studied communities, three cities utilize security services on a consistent basis in their parks. Security services are used in a variety of ways, such as monitoring parks during and after park hours, educating the public on park rules, opening and closing gates and restrooms and contacting the Police Department regarding any criminal issues in the park. Additionally, security services are utilized in three Phoenix parks including Civic Space, Margaret T. Hance and Heritage Square Parks.

Staff is recommending implementation of a pilot program expanding the use of security services in the following eight parks:

- Cortez
- Washington
- Pierce
- Cielito
- El Oso
- Perry

- Desert West
- Maryvale

These parks have a combination of the highest number of Park Ranger visits, Code of Conduct violations and trespass notices issued.

As part of the pilot program, security services would be provided seven days a week at the eight identified parks between the hours of 8 p.m. and 10 a.m. Security guards would be assigned to rove between two to three park locations and would perform duties such as educating the public about park rules, addressing Code of Conduct violations, contacting PHX C.A.R.E.S. for those in need of services, patrolling the park, opening and closing restroom facilities and/or park gates where applicable, ensuring the park is clear upon park closure, contacting Park Rangers for assistance and calling Phoenix Police for emergency purposes or crimes occurring within the park.

The projected cost of the proposed security service expansion based on the current security contract is \$400,000 annually.

Responsible Department

This item is submitted by Deputy City Manager Inger Erickson and the Parks and Recreation Department.



City of Phoenix

To: Inger Erickson
Deputy City Manager

Date: October 3, 2022

From: Cynthia Aguilar
Parks and Recreation Department Director

Subject: REQUEST TO WITHDRAW ITEM 10, PHOENIX PARK RANGER UPDATE,
FROM THE OCT. 5, 2022, COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL INVESTMENT
SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDA

The Parks and Recreation Department requests approval to withdraw Item 10, Phoenix Park Ranger Update, from the Oct. 5, 2022, Community and Cultural Investment Subcommittee agenda to allow staff to perform further research and analysis as requested by subcommittee members.

Approved by:

Inger Erickson
Deputy City Manager

Date

