

DATE ISSUED: February 23, 2005

REPORT NO. 05-050

ATTENTION: Natural Culture and Resources Committee
Agenda of March 2, 2005

SUBJECT: Power Beach Wheelchair Program

SUMMARY

Issues:

1. Should the City Council direct the City Manager to establish an Ad Hoc Committee made up of members of the business, tourism and disability communities to review and provide input on program options included in this report?
2. Should the City Council direct the City Manager to take the necessary actions to continue the Power Beach Wheelchair Program in the most efficient and effective manner after receiving input from the Committee?

Manager's Recommendations:

1. Direct the City Manager to establish an Ad Hoc Committee made up of members of the business, tourism and disability communities to review and provide input on program options included in this report
2. Direct the City Manager to take the necessary actions to continue the Power Beach Wheelchair Program in the most efficient and effective manner after receiving input from the Committee.

Fiscal Impact – The fiscal impact of this action will be determined by the option selected. The maximum amount proposed for operating cost is \$25,000. Funding sources could be cost savings from Human Care Fund, or CDBG allocation. Costs associated with the purchase of chairs and other equipment will be paid with Coastal Conservancy grant funds once awarded.

BACKGROUND

The City's Power Beach Chair Program was first established as a pilot program at Mission Beach. After six months of testing, two power beach chairs were purchased in Fiscal Year 2001 with a Council District 2 CDBG funds. Operation costs were funded for \$30,000 in Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003 with Council District 2 reserves. Fiscal Year 2004 was funded at \$34,000 (\$30,000 Human Care Fund savings; \$4,000 Council District 2 reserves limited toward maintenance and repair costs). This fiscal year (2005), operation costs were funded for a total of \$21,000 (\$5,000 Council District 3 reserves; \$2,000 Council District 5 reserves; \$7,000 Council District 7 reserves; and \$7,000 Human Care Fund savings).

During the October 6, 2004 Natural Resources & Culture meeting, the issue of the City's Power Beach Chair Program was presented by Mr. Wes Johnson, President, Accessible San Diego and the current program operator. This fiscal year the Power Beach Chair Program was not successful in obtaining funding in competitive process, however, it continued to operate due to contributions from Council District reserves and Human Care Fund savings mentioned above. Mr. Johnson submitted a 5 Year Plan proposal and requested the Program be elevated to the non-competitive Basic Services Program. The proposed 5 Year Plan expands the program to 5 days per week 52 weeks per year 12 hrs per day, expands the program to other beach locations in year two and requests a total of \$1,145,000 for such things as staffing, office/storage space, new power beach chairs, a service program, pick-up truck, developing a business to build power beach chairs, and holding beach training/events. Attachment 1 is a copy of a letter from Mr. Johnson dated August 25, 2004 to NR&C and the proposed 5 Year Plan.

DISCUSSION

During the discussion of the item, staff was requested to return to Committee with an update of the results of our Coastal Conservancy grant fund application, additional information regarding the Fiscal Year 2005 Social Services Program allocation process and cost effective options for program operations given the current budget situation. The following responds to those requests:

Coastal Conservancy Grant Application Update

Staff met with Ms. Prentiss Williams, Coastal Conservancy Project Manager October 13, 2004. Ms. Williams reviewed and personally experienced the power beach chairs at Mission Beach. She advised that the Coastal Conservancy grant funds were limited to capital expenditures for beach and trail accessibility rather than ongoing operation costs. Staff inquired whether or not the Conservancy would consider other additional items (i.e., electronic devices for the visually impaired, beach ramps, etc.) for funding and were advised that the Conservancy would in fact consider funding these additional items. We prepared and submitted a more detailed grant document that included ramps and electronic signal devices. Our request was heard and approved at the January 27, 2005 Coastal Conservancy meeting.

Fiscal Year 2005 Social Service Allocation

Staff was requested to provide: a list of all applicants in the competitive category of the Social Services Program; a list of the Basic Services programs funded outside of the competitive process; a description of the criteria for Basic Service projects; and a list of the Basic Service projects by service category. Funding recommendations for Fiscal Year 2005 Social Services Programs were presented and adopted by City Council at the May 24, 2004 City Council meeting. Manager's Report 04-103 provides details of the recommendations.

There were a total of 115 applications received by the submittal deadline requesting \$3,281,426 of City funds. Due to the \$1,810,480 reduction in general funds (that had historically been allocated to assist with funding as many as 50 programs for various amounts), staff was only able to recommend the 20 highest scoring currently funded projects for \$15,000 each in the competitive category. Attachment 2 lists the programs recommended for funding and Attachment 3 list the programs not recommended for funding.

There are 13 "City" Basic Services Programs and 10 "Other Than City" Basic Services Programs. The Basic Service category came about as the result of City Council direction to develop a formal selection process for the allocation of social services funding. A process was developed and recommended by a Task Force consisting of representatives from non-profit organizations, community members and Mayor/City Council staff. City Council adopted the recommended selection process during the November 19, 2001 City Council meeting. The process included a dual category system to create a priority category of programs. These programs, referred to as Basic Services do not have to compete in the selection process. Programs recommended for this category must fit in to one of five groups: (1) City administered or sponsored programs; (2) Council directed programs; (3) programs designated to receive earmarked funding from another government agency; (4) programs funded by the City at no less than \$100,000 during each of the last five fiscal years; and (5) other programs approved by the City Council. Basic Services projects in the Other than City Programs category were afforded three year contracts (FY03 to FY05) subject to annual renewal. In Fiscal Year 2006, some programs may be removed from the Basic Services category. It is also possible for new programs to be added subject to funding availability. Attachment 4 lists the Basic Service Projects broken down by service category. It should be noted that there will not be a competitive application process for Fiscal Year 2006 as a result of the reduction in general funds. Only basic service programs will be funded.

Power Beach Chair Program Options

The Power Beach Chair Program operated year round in Fiscal Years 2002, 2003 and 2004 for a

total of \$30,000 each year. This fiscal year, the program operated for 4 months (July – October) due to limited funding (\$21,000). Attachment 5 provides program activity for each fiscal year based on information provided by the operator. The cost per unduplicated client served is \$119 – FY02, \$107 – FY03, \$143 – FY04 and \$292 – FY05.

Options

All options are based on our understanding that Committee members support the program and would like it to continue to operate in the most efficient/effective manner. It is recommended that due to the current fiscal climate, the proposed program expansion, included in the 5 Year Plan, not be considered if it is solely dependent on City funds.

1. Designate the Program as a Basic Service project in the “Other than City Programs” with a maximum funding level of \$25,000. The program meets the criteria of being designated as a basic service as it is a City sponsored program.
2. Designate the Program as a Basic Service project in the “City Programs” category under Park & Recreation Department’s Disabled Services & Senior Citizens Program with a maximum funding level of \$25,000.
3. Request submission of proposals for operations similar to what was done with the Winter Shelter and Neil Good Day Center Basic Service Programs. The scope of work would be developed in accordance with the funding level.
4. Request volunteers through the City’s volunteer program to staff the program at no cost to the City. This option may be difficult to implement by the next fiscal year as volunteers would need to be recruited, trained and scheduled.

The recommended funding level was developed based on the program operating 6 days per week 8 hours per day during the high usage months (May-October) and 3 days per week, 4 hours per day during the low usage months (November-April) with no service in January.

CONCLUSION

The City was awarded \$100,000 for two power beach chairs with a maintenance agreement, beach ramps and electronic transmitting devices for visual and/or sensory impaired individuals.

We plan to continue our discussions with the Conservancy regarding potential unfunded/under funded capital expenditures that are either mandated or add value to making the City's beaches and trails more accessible for submittal in the future. Continuing the Power Beach Chair program at Mission Beach can be accomplished within the funding recommendation included above. Expansion of the program to other beaches would require additional operating costs that would have to come from other than City of San Diego funds (i.e. private business, other agency grants, etc.) with the program operator having the lead role in fund raising activities.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Do not direct the Manager to present the CRC and/or a designated subcommittee for input.
2. Do not continue the program.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Fischle-Faulk, Assistant Director
Community & Economic Development

Hank Cunningham, Director
Community & Economic Development

Approved: Patricia Frazier
Deputy City Manager

HERRING/DFP

Note: Attachments are not available in electronic format. A copy for review is available in the Office of the City Clerk.

- Attachments:
1. Letter and 5 Year Plan from Accessible San Diego
 2. Programs Recommended for Funding – Competitive Process
 3. Programs Not Recommend for Funding – Competitive Process
 4. Basic Service Projects by Service Category
 5. Power Beach Chair Program Activity