



Lori Droste
Vice Mayor District 8

Consent Calendar
May 25, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Vice Mayor Lori Droste (Author), Mayor Arreguin (Co-Sponsor), Councilmember Robinson (Co-Sponsor), and Councilmember Bartlett (Co-Sponsor)
Subject: Budget Referral: Willard Park Ambassador

Recommendation: Refer to the Budget and Finance Committee a request for \$100,000 in funding for a Park Ambassador at Willard Park for 1 year.

Background:

The City of Berkeley strives to be compassionate with all residents, including those in our unhoused community. The City is also committed to ensuring all residents can safely utilize our open spaces and recreation areas. Unfortunately, over the past months Willard Park has experienced an increase in problematic and sometimes dangerous behavior and an increase in unsanitary conditions endangering the health of all those utilizing the park.

With the increasingly unsafe conditions in close proximity to children’s recreational areas and outdoor spaces, numerous parents have expressed deep concern for their children’s health and wellbeing, or have stopped using the park altogether. Porta potties are currently located in the park, for example, yet campers continue to relieve themselves in public areas. Residents have reported open fires at the park and harassment of park visitors, including children. Neighbors to the park have reported an increase in rat populations drawn to the area because of the ongoing trash accumulation at the park. Because of these ongoing issues, the City of Berkeley will not be hosting summer programming at Willard Park.

Rationale for Recommendation

To address these issues, the City has increased HOTT team presence, patrols in the park and enforcement of the existing park rules, but the concerns about safety persist. A Park Ambassador’s presence would amplify these services around the clock, ensuring that the park felt safe and open throughout the day. With the planned closure of People’s Park in the future, Willard Park will likely see an increase in campers given its proximity to People’s Park. The City’s Park’s Department has utilized similar staffing at the waterfront and has seen great success with this model.

Fiscal Impacts

Estimated pricing for 2 park ambassadors would be \$22/hour. We would like to have staff at the park, seven days a week, for 12 hours a day. \$100,000 would cover 2-3 part time positions for one year.

Contact info

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