



Community Services Department

Critical Needs Presentation

Presented by:
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Community Services Department

Divisions / Units

Environmental Services

Household Hazardous Waste Facility – 18,000 users annually

Recycling Programs – Slash / Mulch Programs - County Offices

Noxious Weed Management – 800 citizen contacts annually

Environmental Compliance – County Buildings / Facilities

Natural Resource Management – Endangered species, conservation easements, clean air / water

Veteran Services

Veteran services / benefits – 9,000 office visits / \$382 million in benefits per year

Park Operations

County Park maintenance – 6,700 acre park system / 103 miles of trails / 8 regional parks

Reserved use / special events – 2,300 reservations / 160,000 participants

Landscape maintenance at County Buildings

Recreation / Cultural Services

Nature Center operations – 200,000 visitors / 900 programs annually

County Fair / Fairgrounds operations – 40,000 visitors / 170 events annually

Recreation / special event programs

Community Services Department

Divisions / Units

Planning

Long-range planning efforts – Parks Master Plan / Individual Park Master Plans

Water quality planning

Park capital projects management - \$3 million in 2013-14 projects

Land development reviews

Community Outreach / Grant Administration

Volunteer management – 26,000 volunteer hours per year

Third party fundraising - \$200,000 per year

Grant administration – \$1.5 million in 2013-14

CSU Extension

4-H – 500 participants

Horticulture Classes / Master Gardeners

Community Education Programs

Community Services Department Financial Overview

<u>Division / Funds</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Third Party Funding*</u>	<u>County GF Support</u>	<u>2003 County GF Support</u>
Veteran Services	\$ 362,253	\$ 17,500	\$ 344,753	\$ 233,710
Administration**	\$1,658,074	\$ 421,800	\$1,236,274	\$2,533,523
Park Operations	\$1,353,829	\$1,353,829	\$ 0	\$ 0
Environmental	\$ 362,692	\$ 0	\$ 362,692	\$1,224,348
Solid Waste Fund	\$ 978,351	\$ 978,351	\$ 0	\$ 0
CSU Extension	<u>\$ 170,782</u>	<u>\$ 0***</u>	<u>\$ 170,782</u>	<u>\$ 309,891</u>
Total	\$4,885,981	\$2,771,480	\$2,114,501	\$4,301,472

Percentage of Third Party Funding Support: 57%

Per Capita County Tax Support: \$3.27

* Program fees, rentals, lottery funds, tipping fees, fundraising, federal / state funding, and grants.

** Administration includes CSD administration, planning and project management, nature centers, recreation / cultural services programming, County Fair / Fairgrounds, community outreach / grant management / volunteer management, and County Buildings landscape services.

*** Our partnership with Colorado State University includes CSU providing approximately \$168,000 in direct support for our local office and our local office generates approximately \$45,000 in program fees and donations to support ongoing programming.

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2015 Additional Funding Proposals

Proposal #1 – Establish Dedicated Forest Management Funding

Approximately 2,800 acres of the County Park System is regarded as forested areas. Much of the forest areas are in need of thinning to enhance the forest health and help prevent wildfires. In 2013, the State of Colorado created the Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant Program to reduce the risk from wildfire in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). The program provides approximately \$5.8 million in grants each year and requires an equal local match. County Parks has been fortunate to receive three grants totaling \$76,000 that has / will allow us to treat 95 acres. **It is proposed to establish \$100,000 in dedicated forest management funding that can be used to more aggressively pursue forest management efforts on County property when coupled with the Wildfire Grant funding.** The funds will be used to contract with local tree service companies and / or the Mile High Youth Corps to complete the forest management efforts.

Proposal #2 - Restore Program Services Funding

El Paso County established and has managed the Bear Creek and Fountain Creek Nature Centers for over thirty years. The nature centers attract over 200,000 visitors per year. During the 2007 – 09 County financial crisis, nature center funding support was reduced by 40% resulting in the full-time staff (FTE) being reduced from six to three FTEs and nature center hours being reduced by 28%. In addition, staffing at the Fairgrounds, which attracts over 40,000 visitors annually, was reduced by one full-time staff member resulting in program and facility operation challenges. Finally, several Extension agent positions were eliminated that coordinated a variety of horticulture and family / consumer science programs. **It is proposed to restore \$100,000 to fund a full-time staff member at each nature center, expand the part-time Fairgrounds Office Manager to full-time, and provide County funding to restore two Extension agent positions.** The positive impacts of restoring this funding includes resuming regular nature center hours to previous levels, expanded programming at nature centers, fairgrounds and the CSU Extension Office, and expanding tourism opportunities that will generate additional sales tax.

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2015 Additional Funding Proposals

Proposal #3 – Establish a Dedicated Parks Trails Crew

County Parks currently maintains approximately 103 miles of trails throughout the park system. The trail system is rated as one of the most popular amenities by our residents. Currently, all trail maintenance / improvements are completed by existing park maintenance work crews. Due to work capacity issues, it is difficult to commit the necessary resources to provide a well-maintained trail system. A secondary issue is that when the trails are damaged due to flooding or other unforeseen emergencies, park maintenance personnel must forgo regular park maintenance duties to address the trail emergency. **It is proposed to provide \$120,000 to employ a dedicated full-time park maintenance staff member and two seasonal staff members and the purchase of a maintenance truck, all-terrain vehicle and needed maintenance attachments.**

Proposal #4 – County Parks – Major Maintenance

Prior to 2004, County Parks used a majority of ongoing Lottery Funds (approximately \$1 million) for major maintenance projects in the County park system. The funds were used for roof repairs, playground replacement, drainage repairs, irrigation improvements, athletic turf renovations, sidewalk / parking lot repairs and other projects. Over the past ten years, Lottery Funds were re-purposed to support park maintenance salaries when the General Fund support for the salaries was transferred to other General Fund needs. Currently, County Parks has approximately \$100,000 from various funds to support major maintenance needs. **It is proposed to restore \$150,000 to support major maintenance at County Parks.** During recent polling of our citizens regarding park needs, a major theme was to “take care of what we have” to preserve our award winning park system and prevent risk management issues. This restored funding will help address this citizen request.