
THE COSTA MESA PARKS & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMISSION

MARCH 12, 2026
6:00 P.M. – UNOFFICIAL MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER by Chair Brown at 6:00 PM.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE by Commissioner Dorn Parker.

ROLL CALL

☒ = Present ☐ = Absent

Commissioners

- ☒ Cristian Garcia Arcos*
- ☒ Jake Husen
- ☒ Jason Komala
- ☒ Brandine Leger
- ☒ Elizabeth Dorn Parker
- ☒ Shyanne Wright, Vice Chair
- ☒ Kelly Brown, Chair

City Staff

- ☒ Brian Gruner, Parks and Community Services Director
- ☒ Monique Villasenor, Recreation Manager
- ☒ Kevin Stoddart, Sr. Recreation Supervisor
- ☒ Raja Sethuraman, Public Works Director
- ☒ Robert Ryan, Maintenance Services Manager
- ☒ Bryan Wadkins, Police Captain
- ☒ Laura Fautua, Executive Assistant
- ☒ Kathia Vitier, Recreation Specialist

*Commissioner Garcia Arcos arrived as Chair Brown opened up for public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – [Correspondence Received](#)

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS

Commissioner Komala: Thanked attendees of the senior transportation sessions for sharing feedback, noting it was well received and helpful in identifying next steps.

Commissioner Leger: Thanked community members for attending and providing feedback regarding Moon Park and transportation issues.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos: Shared excitement regarding an upcoming conference in and encouraged anyone interested in becoming an arborist or learning about trees to reach out.

Vice Chair Wright: Shared that visiting and evaluating parks outside of her usual neighborhood was a meaningful and enjoyable experience and stated she looked forward to sharing her analysis and professional perspective.

Chair Brown: Thanked commissioners for their comments, expressed interest in updates regarding the Lions Park café opening, shared observations from Costa Mesa United meetings regarding business impacts on park events, suggested revisiting a community Picnic Day, and noted supplemental meeting materials were available on the City website.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Minutes – February 12, 2026 and February 26, 2026 PACS Draft Minutes
2. Department Report – February 2026

Public Comment: None.

MOTION: To approve consent calendar items

MOVED/SECOND: Commissioner Dorn Parker / Commissioner Leger

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Commissioner Dorn Parker, Commissioner Garcia Arcos, Commissioner Husen, Commissioner Komala, Commissioner Leger, Vice Chair Wright, Chair Brown

Nays: None

Absent: None

Motion Carried: 7 – 0

MONTHLY REPORTS

1. PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Mr. Brian Gruner, Parks and Community Services Director presented.

Public Comment: None.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos thanked City staff for their outreach efforts with Bright Youth and the Shalimar Park community and expressed interest in continued collaboration.

Commissioner Dorn Parker thanked the City for hosting the Ability League baseball program at the park and acknowledged the effort involved in relocating the program and supporting its growth.

Vice Chair Wright inquired about the City's perspective regarding the Newport-Mesa Unified School District's recent e-bike and bicycle restrictions and asked whether there were approaches the City could learn from or improve upon regarding e-bike issues in parks.

Commissioner Dorn Parker stated that e-bike and electric motorcycle concerns were occurring statewide and noted that legislators, school districts, and law enforcement agencies were working to address safety concerns while still encouraging biking and walking among students.

Vice Chair Wright noted the Newport-Mesa Unified School District recently discussed e-bike issues at a school board meeting and suggested the City could evaluate the district's approach regarding illegal bike activity in parks, particularly at Fairview Park.

Chair Brown asked about trends discussed at the California Park & Recreation Society conference, including parks funding, budget challenges, and whether other cities were utilizing values-based assessment frameworks similar to Costa Mesa's approach.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. SENIOR TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

Mr. Brian Gruner, Parks and Community Services Director, and Mr. Kevin Stoddart, Sr. Recreation Supervisor presented.

Staff proposed the following variations:

Variation One (1)	Variation Two (2)
Rides within City Limited to: • Senior Center • Seven Major Shopping Centers • Hoag Urgent Care • Four rides per person per month (two round trip) • \$4.00 Copay Medical Rides to: • Newport Beach • Fountain Valley • Santa Ana • Long Beach VA • Hoag and Kaiser Medical Centers in Irvine • Hoag Urgent Care and Optum Clinic in Huntington Beach • Four rides per month (two round trip) • \$8.00 Copay Total Rides Allowed: 7,201	Rides within City Limited to: • Senior Center • Seven Major Shopping Centers • Hoag Urgent Care • Six rides per person per month (three round trip) • \$4.00 Copay Medical Rides to: • Newport Beach • Fountain Valley • VA Clinic, Kaiser, and Wave Imaging in Santa Ana • Long Beach VA • Hoag and Kaiser Medical Centers in Irvine • Hoag Urgent Care and Optum Clinic in Huntington Beach • Six rides per month (three round trip) • \$8.00 Copay Total Rides Allowed: 8,056

Public Comment:

Jean: Expressed appreciation for the senior transportation program, noted the importance of including Kaiser medical offices in transportation options, inquired about how transportation models would be selected, and shared that the service had been helpful due to not being able to drive.

Chair Brown asked questions regarding the anticipated costs of the program options, how frequent riders would be accommodated, whether service hours could be expanded later into the day, and whether alternative transportation resources such as the City's shuttle service could be utilized to support rides to the Senior Center.

Commissioner Leger thanked staff for conducting extensive outreach efforts and asked whether the public was being informed that the 48-hour reservation requirement was necessary to maintain ADA compliance.

Commissioner Komala inquired whether extending service hours would increase program costs, asked about coordinating alternative transportation options such as Uber for seniors, and questioned how the program would address riders requiring frequent medical treatments beyond the proposed ride limits.

Chair Brown highlighted the Commission's role was to provide recommendations to City Council and noted that commissioners could recommend alternatives beyond the two (2) presented options.

Commissioner Dorn Parker shared personal experience assisting her mother with senior transportation needs and discussed concerns regarding seniors requiring frequent medical transportation, potential partnerships with outside providers, staffing needs to assist seniors with transportation coordination, affordability of co-pays, and the importance of evaluating and adjusting the program over time to balance financial constraints with community needs

Chair Brown inquired if the VA is covered in all three options.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos suggested exploring bus passes for seniors comfortable using public transit to help reduce program costs and increase access to destinations such as the Senior Center and medical facilities. He also inquired about the outreach conducted to approximately 1,300 residents and requested that informational materials, including Spanish-language resources are available.

Vice Chair Wright requested a side-by-side comparison of the transportation program options, discussed a potential hybrid model with free local rides and co-pay medical rides, questioned whether survey responses aligned with rider behavior, sought clarification regarding the proposed paid options, and expressed support for variation two (2) due to the increased number of rides and preservation of medical destinations while questioning the value of including Santa Ana as a service area.

Chair Brown emphasized the importance of maintaining seniors' sense of independence and flexibility when accessing transportation services and encouraged consideration of expanded service hours and creative partnerships with other transportation resources, including public transit and existing City shuttle services.

Commissioner Leger stated support for variation two (2), noting appreciation for the expanded medical trip options while maintaining free rides, and asked when the program could be revisited for expansion if sales tax revenue increased.

Commissioner Wright did not support additional program funding but supported funding a dedicated full-time staff member to assist seniors with navigating transportation and related services, and expressed interest in making the recommendation formal.

Commissioner Husen acknowledged the benefit of limited free rides but leaning toward a program structure without limited free rides in order to serve a broader range of users.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos emphasized the importance of supporting and giving back to elders, and encouraged further review and discussion due to the significance of the decision.

Commissioner Komala asked staff which option was considered the most sustainable long-term and confirmed that the City would not be locked into a long-term contract if adjustments were needed. He also raised concerns regarding seniors being stranded after delayed medical appointments and suggested including a provision to ensure seniors would still receive transportation home if appointments ran late.

Commissioner Leger asked whether the program could be revisited the following year to evaluate the selected option and determine whether adjustments or expansion would be needed.

Commissioner Dorn Parker made a motion to support the free option.

Commissioner Husen seconded the motion and stated appreciation for the public and staff feedback, noting the discussion helped provide perspective while weighing the benefits of both options.

Vice Chair Wright made a substitute motion to support variation two (2) and stated openness to including financial recommendations for staffing support during the program transition. She stated support for maintaining the greatest number of locations possible and noted that a small co-pay aligned with survey feedback while remaining fiscally responsible and accessible.

Commissioner Leger seconded Vice Chair Wright's motion and suggested the proposed staff support position be temporary in order to reduce City benefit costs.

Chair Brown proposed a friendly amendment requesting the City evaluate and project potential costs associated with expanded service hours without committing to implementation.

Vice Chair accepted the amendment to the motion.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos proposed staff position operate in a hybrid capacity to help ensure no seniors were left stranded after appointments, including the possibility of adjusted work hours to assist with transportation support.

Mr. Stoddart stated the staffing suggestion would be difficult to implement due to potential liability concerns.

MOTION: To approve recommend variation (2) and exploring staffing to redirect seniors to other services that are available and complete a cost analysis for financial expansion of hours for future iterations.

MOVED/SECOND: Vice Chair Wright / Commissioner Leger

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Commissioner Garcia Arcos, Commissioner Husen, Commissioner Leger, Vice Chair Wright, Chair Brown

Nays: Commissioner Dorn Parker, Commissioner Komala

Absent: None

Motion Carried: 5 – 2

NEW BUSINESS:

1. PARK RANGER REPORT

Captain Bryan Wadkins presented.

Public Comment:

Jen Tanaka: Requested that monthly Park Ranger reports and statistics be made publicly available, stating the data would help highlight park-related issues and improve transparency. She provided background regarding the Harper Park ranger assignment, noting it was originally intended as a six-month pilot program, and asked for an update regarding potential use of drones or cameras in parks enforcement efforts.

Commenter 2: Requested clarification regarding the lack of reported patrol checks, calls for service, citations, arrests, and reports at Shalimar Park and asked how parks were prioritized for ranger patrols and when the park was last visited by a ranger.

Evan Carey (zoom): Requested additional transparency regarding the total cost and operational investment associated with assigning a park ranger to Harper Park, including salary, benefits, and future park improvements. He expressed concern regarding dedicating one of the City's limited park rangers to a single park while other parks also face ongoing safety issues.

Commissioner Husen thanked staff for the presentation, shared observations from a ranger ride-along, and requested clarification regarding ranger assignments at Harper Park and the adequacy of ranger vehicles and coverage.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos raised concerns regarding patrol coverage, surveillance cameras, lighting at Shalimar Park and Paris Park, encouraged greater collaboration on park safety and maintenance issues, and expressed concerns regarding ranger vehicles driving on wet grass areas near trees at Canyon Park.

Commissioner Leger discussed observing drone use during enforcement activity at Fairview Park, asked questions regarding enforcement coordination and drone operations near Talbert Regional Park, and requested additional detail in future ranger reports regarding enforcement activity and safety trends.

Commissioner Komala asked whether patrol checks were proactive or initiated by calls for service and requested clarification regarding how patrol frequency was determined. He also asked about the process for expanding surveillance camera installations at parks.

Commissioner Dorn Parker requested clarification regarding patrol activity at Harper Park and nearby schools, discussed concerns regarding off-leash dogs, supported exploring additional fenced dog areas, and encouraged residents to utilize the City's 311 App system to document recurring park concerns.

Vice Chair Wright thanked the Park Rangers for their work and relationships with the unhoused community, particularly at Lions Park, and supported reinstating monthly ranger reports to provide objective public safety data and trend tracking.

Chair Brown thanked staff for the presentation, supported more frequent ranger reporting, and stated additional citation and enforcement detail would help the Commission better evaluate park safety, equity concerns, and future Capital Improvement Project priorities.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos asked about Park Ranger coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding drone usage near Fairview Park and shared information regarding an upcoming bilingual wildlife protection workshop at Griffith Park.

Chair Brown called for a 15-minute recess to begin at 8:33 PM. Commissioner Leger made the motion and seconded by Commissioner Dorn Parker. Meeting was called back to order at 8:48 PM.

2. PROPOSED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (CIP) BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026-27 AND THE FIVE-YEAR CIP BUDGET THROUGH FISCAL YEAR 2030-31

Mr. Raja Sethuraman, Public Works Director, and Mr. Robert Ryan, Maintenance Services Manager presented.

Public Comment:

Jenn Tanaka: Thanked staff for including funding for Harper Park in the Capital Improvement Program and stated the park serves a high-density residential area with limited nearby park access. She highlighted ongoing maintenance and accessibility deficiencies at the park, including aging infrastructure, lack of signage, and ADA concerns, and encouraged simultaneous investment in Moon Park.

Commenter 2: Thanked staff for proposed funding related to Moon Park and emphasized the importance of investing in parks to support children, families, and community connection. The commenter encouraged the Commission to prioritize the park based on strong community support and outreach efforts.

Commenter 3: Requested improved transparency and communication regarding park updates and project progress on the City's website, specifically referencing Shalimar Park expansion efforts. The commenter also thanked City staff for supporting a youth entrepreneurship program and community outreach efforts related to neighborhood improvements.

Commenter 4: Advocated for continued investment in Moon Park, thanked staff for proposed outreach funding, and emphasized that the community would continue advocating for full project funding and implementation in future fiscal years.

Ralph Taboada: Encouraged the Commission to align the proposed Capital Improvement Program budget with the Commission's previously developed park assessment priorities, including open space and community garden considerations. He also thanked Director Sethuraman for providing additional budget comparison details and noted the added transparency helped clarify changes between previously forecasted and currently proposed project funding.

Evan Carey (Zoom): Stated the proposed funding for Moon Park was appreciated but insufficient to address longstanding community concerns. He urged the City to accelerate meaningful park investment, citing ongoing issues related to safety, lighting, graffiti, and park conditions, and emphasized that delaying improvements would continue negatively impacting the surrounding neighborhood.

Chair Brown inquired how and if the Commission values by staff by staff for CIP project evaluation.

Mr. Sethuraman addressed inquiry and informed commission that value assessment is not applied for staff evaluation of CIP projects.

Chair Brown proposed future projects incorporate Commission's values.

Mr. Gruner stated that values were created for commission resource and not utilized within staff practices. Suggested values maybe incorporated in the future.

Vice Chair Wright shared findings from her review of park conditions and demographics, supported prioritizing projects based on safety, equity, and access, identified Harper Park as the most deficient playground reviewed, and raised concerns regarding park maintenance and cleanliness standards.

Commissioner Dorn Parker requested greater transparency regarding project prioritization, supported earlier Capital Improvement Program discussions, emphasized alignment with the Commission's values framework, prioritized improvements at Harper Park, and encouraged continued community engagement regarding Moon Park and Shalimar Park projects.

Commissioner Leger supported earlier Capital Improvement Program review timelines, emphasized the importance of community engagement and equity in park prioritization, stated parks serving apartment communities such as Gisler Park should not be overlooked, and noted that improvements in higher-crime areas could encourage greater park use and safety.

Commissioner Komala thanked Vice Chair Wright for incorporating demographic and values-based analysis into her review, acknowledged staff's community engagement efforts regarding Moon Park, and stated that park safety considerations should include both infrastructure conditions and broader public safety concerns impacting park use.

Commissioner Husen recommended exploring funding for an additional Park Ranger vehicle, stating it would support safety efforts and improve ranger effectiveness throughout the park system.

Commissioner Garcia Arcos requested earlier Capital Improvement Program discussions, asked questions regarding Fairview Park vernal pool restoration funding, supported community garden opportunities and dedicated funding for underserved neighborhoods, and encouraged evaluating local alternatives to the City's park maintenance contractor.

Chair Brown expressed concerns regarding delayed bike trail lighting improvements, emphasized prioritizing park-deficient Westside neighborhoods consistent with the General Plan and Commission values framework, and stated the Commission should consider the needs of underserved and less represented communities when making recommendations.

Commissioner Leger asked whether Moon Park funding had been considered prior to community outreach efforts and raised concerns regarding ground squirrel activity and related safety hazards at TeWinkle Park.

Chair Brown proposed reviewing recommendations individually to determine Commission consensus, similar to the prior Fairview Park recommendation process.

Vice Chair Wright supported prioritizing only C-rated parks within the five-year Capital Improvement Program, expressed concerns regarding funding projects outside identified safety priorities, questioned the timing of Moon Park community engagement funding, and supported pursuing alternative funding opportunities for the Fairview Park and TeWinkle Park Skatepark projects.

Attendees Present: Chair Brown, Vice Chair Wright, Commissioner Garcia Arcos, Commissioner Husen, Commissioner Komala, Commissioner Leger
Absent: Commissioner Dorn Parker*Left during item discussion, did not vote.

Commission moved staff recommendations and included the following additional recommendations in the following motions:

Motion to:	First	Second	Motion Carries	Nays
Add Marina View Park - sand and sidewalk in priorities to FY 26/27)	Chair Brown	Commissioner Husen	6-0	
Add Wilson - restrooms to FY 26/27	Vice Chair Wright	Chair Brown	5-1	Commissioner Komala
Add community gardens to five-year FY 27/28 (\$50,000) and potentially navigate Neth Park in a multi-faceted way	Chair Brown	Commissioner Garcia Arcos	6-0	
Add Westside Development to FY 27/28 (\$400,000)	Chair	Commissioner Leger	5-1	Commissioner Komala
Explore alternative funding sources to reduce City funding for Fairview Park and Skate Park projects	Vice Chair Wright	Chair Brown	4-2	Commissioner Husen, Commissioner Komala
Prioritize C-rated parks in the 5yr. plan	Commissioner Leger	Vice Chair Wright	5-1	Commissioner Husen

ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER MEMBER & STAFF COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT by Chair Brown at 10:51 PM.