

From: [Rob Romanek](#)
To: [CityRecorder](#)
Cc: [Keith Norris](#); dylan.d.mcdowell@gmail.com; [Scott Archer](#); [Jennifer Kellar](#)
Subject: SPRAB Comment on FY 2024 City of Salem Budget
Date: Friday, May 31, 2024 9:59:42 AM
Attachments: [SPRAB Letter on Parks and Rec Budget May 2024.pdf](#)

Good morning,

On behalf of the Chair of the Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, I am submitting the attached comment letter for the City Council Public Hearing scheduled on June 10 regarding the FY 2024 City of Salem Budget.

Thank you,

Rob Romanek

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Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

(SPRAB)

May 31, 2024

Mayor and City Council, City of Salem
555 Liberty St. SE, Room 220
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Mayor Hoy and City Council,

I'm writing on behalf of the Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, expressing our support for the Budget Committee's recommendation to restore funding to parks and recreation services in the FY25 budget. We encourage you to enact those measures as you move the budget forward.

We recognize that the City faces difficult budget decisions in the coming year. However, our Board strongly believes that the benefits of park access, recreation programs, and robust green space vastly outweigh the relatively low cost needed to provide these services to our entire community.

Prior to the recent action taken by the Budget Committee, Salem's Parks and Recreation services were facing a total of \$1,100,000 in cuts, \$700,000 in reductions from Parks and \$400,000 from Recreation. These cuts would have reduced services, closed many splash pads and restrooms, and cut popular programs like Movies in the Park and Kids Relays. We are grateful that the Budget Committee chose to restore a portion of the total funding to ensure some of these programs and services can continue.

However, the \$422,000 of the proposed cuts restored for parks and the \$96,000 restored for recreation still leave a 40% gap from Parks current operating level. The budget's partial restoration is an important step but will not fully restore what the City has typically provided. Without the partial restoration, however, Salem residents will experience drastically diminished services in their parks.

Parks, green space, and recreation programming provide proven benefits for mental and physical health, community engagement, and reducing climate impacts. These spaces also provide accessible opportunities for residents of all income levels and backgrounds. We have heard from community members concerned about these cuts and their ability to enjoy and engage in our community. SPRAB is proud of what our City's parks and recreational opportunities offer our community, and we encourage you to do what you can to ensure it is something our community can remain proud of.

We appreciate your attention to these issues and the tough decisions ahead. We encourage you to enact the Budget Committee's recommendation to restore funding to parks and recreation services in the coming year and ensure benefits are available to our entire community.

Sincerely,



Keith Norris
Chair
Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board