

Council Meeting Staff Report

August 8, 2017

Agenda No.:	A.
Indexes (Council Goals):	2018 Council Goal – Economic Vitality – Build the Local Tourism Economy, 2018 Council Goal – Quality of Life – Quality Cultural and Recreational Amenities – Implement a Comprehensive Range of Recreational and Cultural Amenities that Enhance the Los Alamos Community
Presenters:	Susan O'Leary; James T. Chrobocinski
Legislative File:	9560-17

Title

Discussion and Possible Action Relating to Proposed Changes to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Fund

Recommended Action

I move that the County Council approve \$13.928 million of capital improvement funds for the Splash Pad, Golf Course, and Multi-generational Pool and direct County Staff to begin work on these projects.

I move that the softball field project be assigned to the Parks and Recreation Board for further evaluation and public input, and the Parks and Recreation Board provide the County Council with a recommendation by February, 2018 that addresses softball and baseball capacity issues.

I move that the County Council defer discussion of funding for the recreation center until the Laboratory contract has been awarded in April, 2018.

I further move that County Staff be directed to explore additional ways to increase the number of gymnasiums, to include evaluation with the Los Alamos Public School District of possible gyms located on school campuses.

I further move that staff return to Council with a budget revision that implements these changes to the CIP.

Body

The Los Alamos Community and County government have evaluated the need for improved recreation facilities over the past two years with extensive public input, project scoping and cost analyses. In December, 2016, the County Council voted to prioritize five projects for funding consideration; and in February, 2017, the County Council voted to forward these five projects in a general obligation bond election that would raise funds to pay for them. The bond election would have raised \$20 million and if it was approved, the County Council would allocate an additional \$13.4 million in capital improvement funds to fully fund the five projects. In May, 2017, the community voted against the bond election: 3,446 FOR and 3,932 AGAINST.

While the election result showed that a property tax increase to pay for these facilities was not supported, the election fostered a robust discussion in the community about the need for these facilities. A great many citizens commenting publicly during the election encouraged the County Council to find alternative funding sources for some or all of these projects. Almost 47% of the voters supported these projects strongly enough to approve an increase to their property taxes to fund all five facilities.

At the August 8 Council Meeting, the Council is asked to determine next steps for these five projects.

There is \$10.8 million of capital improvement funds available now; and \$1.2 million added to the capital improvement fund each year that could be allocated to pay for some of these projects.

The first Motion supports \$13.928 million of capital improvement funding for the Splash Pad, Golf Course and Multi-Generational Pool. This would allocate capital improvement fund annual allotments for 2018 and 2019. Given the multi-year timeframe of the Golf Course and Multi-Generational Pool projects, this multi-year funding approach would allow the County to meet its obligations.

The second Motion supports deferral of the Softball Field and Recreation Center projects.

The Softball Field Project is recommended for deferral to the Parks and Recreation Board for further evaluation and public input. During the election, it became apparent that there is a lack of agreement between high school softball and adult softball players on the best way to address capacity issues. The Parks and Recreation Board is asked to evaluate the capacity issues for high school softball, adult softball and other users of the softball fields; and return to the Council with a recommendation to address the capacity issues that includes a plan with funding implications and a timeline for completion.

The Recreation Center is a large investment that can't be covered by existing capital improvement funds. It has been suggested that the Recreation Center could be funded through a Gross Receipts Tax increase. Until the Laboratory contract is awarded in April, 2018, the County Council can't have a meaningful discussion about the merits of funding a Recreation Center with a Gross Receipts Tax increase. Therefore, the second Motion recommends deferral of discussion about the Recreation Center until after the Laboratory contract is awarded. Included in the agenda package is information about the County's GRT situation. This information is provided as background information only.

Recently, the County and the LAPS district have had preliminary and informal discussion about the possibility of siting a stand-alone gymnasium on the Barranca campus. The concept is to build a gymnasium that the schools could use during the day and the community could use during peak times to address current gymnasium capacity issues. It is not clear whether this concept has merit; however it behooves the County to explore this and other potential options now so we can be informed about this option when further discussion about the Recreation Center occurs next year.

Additionally, the County might commission further conceptual design and cost estimation of the Recreation Center now so that the community can be better informed about likely financial impact of this project when it is reconsidered.

Alternatives

Council could consider proceeding with a variety of combinations of projects.

Fiscal and Staff Impact/Planned Item

The fiscal impact of the motions as suggested are reflected in a projected CIP fund statement in Attachment A. The fiscal and staff impact will vary, depending upon the approved actions.

Attachments

A - Projected CIP Fund Statement

B - Project Summaries

C - GRT Information

D - LAPS Gym Usage Chart