



STAFF REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL

DATE: Regular Meeting of January 28, 2025

TO: Mayor and Members of the City Council

VIA: Dante Hall, City Manager

SUBMITTED BY: Christopher Roke, Parks and Recreation Director

SUBJECT: Fourth of July Fireworks Discussion

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

Staff recommends that the City Council receive this report, discuss, and provide direction to staff.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

As directed by the City Council, staff has begun planning this year's Fourth of July fireworks celebration on Bayfront Boulevard, at the intersection of John Muir Parkway and Bayfront Blvd. Since 2022, the fireworks show in Hercules has drawn thousands of spectators in Hercules and surrounding cities to the Bayfront. This has resulted in increased traffic congestion on city streets before and after the event and concerns about managing a growing crowd in an area of the City with limited ingress and egress.

This staff report seeks feedback from the City Council on whether to proceed with the fireworks show this year on July 4th or consider working with the Rotary to co-sponsor a Fourth of July Parade, 5K Fun Run, and Fair at Refugio Valley Park.

BACKGROUND:

In 2021-22FY, the Hercules City Council budgeted \$75,000 for a fireworks show to be launched from the Hercules Bayfront. The 20-minute show was enjoyed by a few thousand spectators. In 2022-23FY, the City Council allocated \$50,000 for a fireworks show in the same location, and the number of spectators attending the event doubled from the previous year.

In 2023-24FY, the Council again allocated \$50,000 for a fireworks show on the Bayfront. To address the preceding year's pedestrian safety and emergency access issues, the City closed Bayfront Boulevard. While the event was a success, concerns about crowd control remained challenging. This year, the City Council allocated \$50,000 for a fireworks show in 2024-25.

ANALYSIS:

The City's fireworks shows have been very successful over the past three years. Should the Council wish to continue with fireworks this year, staff anticipates that the event will be similar to those in the past few years. However, spectators traveling to the site may increase. Managing the steadily increasing crowd near the launch site with limited ingress and egress would require an enhanced strategy and additional resources.

As an alternative for consideration, the Council could co-sponsor a Fourth of July Celebration with the Rotary Club. Before the pandemic, Rotary and Celebrate Hercules hosted a parade from Redwood to Refugio Valley Park, a 5K fun run, and a Fair at Refugio Valley Park featuring local entertainment, vendors, games, and live animals. Rotary has approached staff with the desire to bring these events back to Refugio Valley Park for Fourth of July. Rotary has been holding a 5K run on the Bayfront since 2021 but would prefer the run to return to the park. In this scenario, the Council could repurpose a portion of the funding allocated for a fireworks show to help Rotary re-establish this Fourth of July tradition at Refugio Valley Park. Should the Council desire to explore this alternative further, staff will work with the Rotary Club to re-establish and co-sponsor the Fourth of July events at Refugio Valley Park and return to the City Council with refined details and costs.

With the remaining redirected funds, the Council could consider an expanded holiday celebration in December 2025 to celebrate the City's 125th Anniversary, including an ice skating rink at City Hall for the month. Should the Council desire to explore this option further, staff will return to provide refined details and estimated costs for review and approval.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Since the City Council allocated \$50,000 for fireworks in the FY 2024-25 Budget, there is no fiscal impact if staff moves forward with the fireworks show as planned. If the City Council chooses to repurpose these funds to co-sponsor a Fourth of July Celebration with the Rotary Club and/or an expanded holiday celebration in December, staff will return at a later date with refined details and costs for consideration.

Financial Impact

Description: Fireworks \$50,000 FY 2024-25 Budget

Funding Source: General Fund 100-5510-611.90-00

Budget Recap:

Total Estimated cost:	\$50,000	New Revenue:	\$0
Amount Budgeted:	\$50,000	Lost Revenue:	\$0
New funding required:	\$0	New Personnel:	\$0
Council Policy Change:	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ATTACHMENTS:

1. None