

City of Carmel-by-the-Sea
FY22-23
Budget Questions and Responses

1. **Question/Comment:** Did we include funding for the pedestrian and bike improvements (design and build) for Ocean Avenue in the budget estimate for the concrete streets work?

Response: The project funding amount is based on the City's required Maintenance of Effort (minimum City funds) plus all anticipated external funding sources. Bicycle and pedestrian pathway options along Ocean are being explored. If we do install said pathway, there would be less funds to repair San Carlos Street, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues; however, all of the funds would qualify to install the bike improvements.

2. **Question/Comment:** Where are the fees for the Norton Garage, and why aren't they included in the fee table?

Response: In the upcoming year staff intend to refresh the cost of services study in line with City fiscal policy. That will be an opportune time to also bring, independent of the attached User Fee schedules, other fees the City charges, such as facility rental fees, and parking (contractor parking permits, tour bus parking, and Norton Garage rental). Regarding the Norton Garage, fees were increased various times in recent years, in 2019 to \$375/Qtr, in 2020 to \$400/qtr and most recently in June 2021 to \$500/Qtr. At the present time all parking spots are full and a waiting list of eleven (11) interested parties is on file.

3. **Question/Comment:** Why aren't the CC priorities included as part of the Council Priorities narrative for 2022-23?

Response: The FY22-23 Recommended Budget book will be updated for the June 7 budget hearings, inclusive of including the sixteen CC strategic priorities.

4. **Question/Comment:** Is the new continuance fee only based on an applicant's request? What's the difference between a continuance fee and a time extension fee?

Response: As documented in the Cost of services Study performed by the City in 2015 and updated in 2020, a time extension fee has to do with the review of a time extension request by an applicant to extend the life of a permit at the Planning Commission or City Council. A continuance fee deals with the additional processing of a public hearing that is continued to a future date at the request of the applicant.

5. **Question/Comment:** What happened to the Director of Contracts and Budgets?

Response: The position was replaced with the revised Finance Manager position as approved at the City Council meeting on April 4, 2022. The Finance Department will be restructured with the following positions: Finance Manager, Accountant, Finance Analyst, Finance Specialist.

6. **Question/Comment:** Our latest Pine Cone (May 6-12, 2022) reported the following information about the need for repairs in our village: "*Windows are falling out of an old city-owned building that also has lead paint and asbestos. Drainage pipes are broken.*"

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Part of the street sweeper was fixed by welding a piece of old street sign to it. Spiders are living in electrical panels that are so old they can't support electric car chargers. City hall's 40 year old roof leaks all the time. The list goes on and on, public works director Bob Harary told the city council."

A. First of all, this an outrageous and embarrassing situation/condition for our city to be in. How on earth, have these needed repairs and projects been ignored and passed over in the budgeting process for such a long time that they have resulted in such dire need of repairs.

B. Has there been no attention paid to ongoing capital improvements, maintenance of city owned properties and necessary infrastructure repairs?

C. Does the General Plan and Strategic Plan not address and require planning for ongoing maintenance of city owned properties through a designated reserve fund?

D. And, of course, this list does not even address the dilapidated Scout House and Flanders Mansion that are continuing to deteriorate daily.

Response:

A) Comment noted.

B) Please see response to Question #7 below.

C) Every year the City issues the budget but also its audited financial report known as the ACFR (Annual Comprehensive Financial Report). Much like private companies, the audit quantifies the capital asset holdings of the City. For this past year that number totalled \$65 million for the infrastructure required to make the City function. It also reports annual depreciation, the one year useful life cost, of capital as \$2.1 million. In essence this number represents the dollars needed to just maintain underlying assets. It is significant to note that this dollar amount falls well below the cost of the City's identified improvement needs considering current replacement costs, identified upgrades and new initiatives. The FY 22-23 budget alone identifies \$5 million in capital expenditures and another \$4 million to be carried forward from the existing budget. A view of the five-year CIP beyond FY22-23 reveals average annual capital needs of \$3.5 million. In a nutshell, limited funding requires balancing and prioritizing conflicting projects.

D) Flander's Mansion has a long history of efforts by the City to renovate the property. Several years ago, the City made a strong effort to enter into a curatorship with a private family to renovate Flanders Mansion, at their expense, and then enjoy rent-free living in the Mansion for a number of years after the renovation. Unfortunately, negotiations fell through due to the costs involved. The City does maintain the building and grounds, using limited available resources, to prevent further decay of the facility. However, the City has not identified funding at this time to conduct a major renovation which would allow the facility to be used regularly.

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The City is currently in the process of soliciting private entities to renovate the Scout House, and the private entity's expense, and then continue to use the Scout House to manage programs and events, and to maintain the facility for a number of years following the renovation. A Request for Proposals, and proposed Maintenance of Operations Agreement, are currently being prepared for this effort.

7. **Question/Comment:** You boast a huge budget of over \$30 million dollars and appear to be looking for new ways to spend the money versus strategically scheduling the necessary and ongoing expenditure needs of these deteriorating properties, replacement of equipment and setting aside reserves for future necessary expenditures such as these. What is your plan to remedy this outrageous situation?

Response: The City has developed a five-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that communicates the many infrastructure needs of the City. It is a forward looking projection of improvements needed to address both core maintenance as well as desired enhancements to infrastructure and city facilities. The scope of the CIP is quite extensive covering streets, sidewalks, buildings, drainage, public open spaces, vehicles, equipment and public safety (both police & fire) needs. It also addresses the important emerging issues of climate change and environmental stewardship. The plan purposefully presents needs first, followed by the important consideration of how so many needs can be funded.

This year's budget message, and the CIP section of the document, make it clear that there are more capital needs than available funding. This quandary gives the rise to difficult choices in addressing what we can complete in any one year. The past three years have been particularly challenging given the unprecedented COVID event. FY19-20 saw a decline in revenues of over \$2 million leading to a significant reduction in staffing and resources. In fact, capital project funding was eliminated in the early days of the pandemic.

It is only now, with the presentation of the FY 22-23 budget, that staffing has been restored and a pattern of operational normalcy can be anticipated. It is also in the FY22-23 budget that capital projects, that were necessarily deferred, have been proposed to be attended to. They have been introduced at accelerated levels to "catch-up" for the unavoidable interruptions COVID has presented us with. Particularly, the budget proposes the use of \$2.1 million in available fund balance, beyond the amount that could be funded with new-year revenue only, to specifically address the deferred maintenance needs noted in your question.

Our City's challenges are not unlike those shared by many others, and we cannot underscore more the importance of the tremendous and timely support our community afforded the City in the passage of Measure C in 2020. This funding source, along with difficult cost control measures taken, is and will continue to be fiscally foundational.

8. **Question/Comment:** I am a full time resident of Carmel and I cannot understand why we now have a 30 million dollar budget but cannot open our libraries full time. 20 years ago we had a 10 million dollar budget, according to the article. Both libraries were open 6 days a week providing services for all ages. Both libraries are so important to the locals that live here. Our grandchildren come and say can we go to the library for story

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hour? Well, no and let me see what time and day it might be open. We are library patrons and we are having a hard time figuring out why libraries are not a top priority.

Response: At the beginning of the pandemic there were retirements and layoffs of Library staff. This is not a matter of funds, as the City Council approved the full restoration of funding for pre-pandemic levels of Library staff in November 2021. The City has been actively recruiting for additional Library staff. As with many other sectors of the job market at the present, recruiting new staff is competitive, and this compounded with the high cost of living makes recruitments City-wide increasingly challenging.

As of the writing of this response, the Library just began the first in what will be a series of expansion of hours made possible by the fact that there is a new full-time staff member now on our team. Expansions of hours will continue to be done incrementally as additional staff are onboarded.

Libraries are of the utmost importance and we hope that the full-restoration of hours will go as quickly as possible. Despite the restricted hours we continue to strive to provide excellent service to our community. However, understanding the challenges of the job market and cost of living on the peninsula, we are prepared to observe patience as a part of this process and hope that the community will join us in this observation.

- 9. Question/Comment:** We love to have a beach fire and we accept the fire pits but where are they?

Response: Per Coastal Development Permit CDP 18-231, five (5) wood-burning fire pits will be put out on Monday, May 16th, south of Tenth Avenue. They will be removed on September 15th or sooner if the tides are high.

- 10. Questions/Comment:** And now parklets are a thing of the past. Did you ever think about maybe allowing parklets for only those restaurants that didn't have an outside capability? That's a moot point now.

Response: No. When the parklet program was implemented, it was done as a level playing field for anyone who wanted to take advantage of it. This included restaurants with and without existing outdoor space. When the decision was made to remove the parklets, it was treated the same way, so that the opportunity remained equal. When development of a permanent program begins, the analysis will involve looking at site conditions, which includes existing outdoor seating.

- 11. Questions/Comment:** For the budget I would like to see the city spend on fire prevention, cleaning up overgrowth and cutting dead wood from trees and dead trees. It's been a year since dead trees here were designated for removal and they are still here. If the city could have more equipment and staff to do this rather than contract it all out. Urban fire is very scary and the drought continues.

Response: City staff has removed dead, diseased, and hazardous trees, as well as pruned trees, for many years. In fact, over the past few years, staff has progressed from only removing and pruning small trees to now being able to perform tree work on

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mid-sized trees. The City must continue to rely on tree service contractors for the very large tree removals and for removals and pruning in the vicinity of electric power lines, for which there are many, as the contractors must have a specialty license to perform this work.

Over the past few years, the City has also made significant progress in removing dead trees, weeds, dead wood, fire fuel, and invasive species in the Mission Trail Nature Preserve and in the North Dunes area. A moderate amount of work has also been done in the Forest Hill Park and around Pescadero Canyon.

In terms of budgeting, the proposed budget for FY 2022/23 recommends \$497,500 for contractual tree care and landscape maintenance services, a 50% increase from the \$330,000 allocated in the current fiscal year budget.

The increased potential for wildfires and extended drought as a result of climate change are of concern and have been incorporated into the City's draft Climate Action and Climate Adaptation Plans. Considerable information on these issues can be found on the City's website at: [Climate Committee - City of Carmel](#)

12. Questions/Comment: Is there at least \$50,000 for the Scenic Pathway in the budget? If so, where?

Response: Yes. The \$50,000 is a FY 2021/22 Capital Improvement Project which will be carried-forward into the new FY 2022/23 Capital Improvement Program. No funds have been expended to date.

13. Questions/Comment: Why are the radios for the PD in the CIP?

Response: The Capital Improvement Plan for Fiscal Year 2021/22 included the purchase of 22 new radios for the Police Department so that these radios could be tied into the regional radio communications network. To qualify as a capital purchase, the item must have a value over \$10,000 and a useful life of at least ten years.

Because of the large total cost of the 22 radios, \$180,000, the project is based on making payments over a six year time frame at \$30,000 per year. The FY 2022/23 CIP represents the second of those payments.

14. Questions/Comment: Is the outside funding for the footbridge in Mission Trails Nature Preserve guaranteed?

Response: No. Carmel Cares initiated the work. The footbridge design work is in progress on a pro-bono basis. The City's consultant is folding in the environmental permitting for this proposed bridge with three other City and grant-funded projects in the MTNP. While the volunteers are anticipated to see this project through construction, there is no guarantee at this time.

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15. Questions/Comment: Please explain the “leveraging” of additional funds for the City’s required investment in the libraries (i.e. painting and carpeting).

Response: Per the Memorandum of Agreement between the City Council and the Harrison Memorial Library Board of Trustees the City will fund the interior painting and carpeting of the Harrison Memorial Library and Park Branch Library every ten years, in addition to exterior painting. The City is currently overdue for funding the interior painting and carpeting project at the Harrison Library.

The Carmel Public Library Foundation(CPLF) raises funds to support the Library’s operating budget. In addition they have raised funds for additional projects, such as the Park Branch Lobby renovation, and more recently the Gathering Place project at the Harrison Library. These projects are above and beyond the City’s required basic maintenance of the Library facilities (painting and carpeting, etc.) and may have never been funded by the City.

The Library Master Plan project included in the recommended Capital Improvement Plan is proposed to be funded by the City. This Master Plan will provide a blueprint for continued improvements to both Library buildings that will be funded through donations to the Carmel Public Library Foundation. It is important in order to instill confidence in donors and potential donors that the City not only uphold its part of the Memorandum of Agreement - scary pandemics notwithstanding, but that the community feels that the City has some “skin in the game” when it comes to supporting the Library.

16. Questions/Comment: Does the repaving of a portion of Ocean Avenue (the concrete portion) facilitate the opportunity for additional tree planting?

Response: Possibly.

17. Questions/Comment: What has been done to explore the opportunity for additional surveillance cameras in the City’s downtown to further protect against crime?

Response: While not budgeted, we do have plans to explore expanded camera infrastructure in the downtown area. An initial cost estimate for cameras and installation is about \$70,000, but the actual parameters of such a project has not been defined, so budgeting funds is not appropriate at this early stage. In the upcoming year, staff will review available technology, further specify project parameters, and obtain more accurate quotes. If appropriate at that point, we would proceed with a separate action item for the City Council to consider incorporating this additional project into the Capital Improvement Plan.

18. Question/Comment: Please define the viewshed corridor over Vista Lobos (Block 37, Lots 3 and 5).

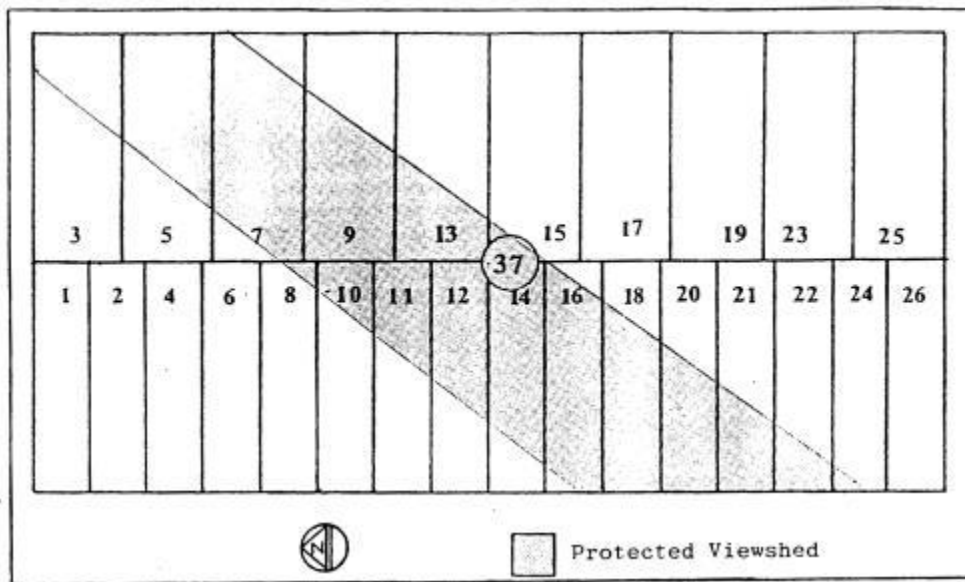
Response: The viewshed is defined in the Zoning Code. “Block 37” is the block that contains Vista Lobos, the gas station, the public parking lot, etc.:

17.12.050 Preservation of Public Viewshed.

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The significant coastal view across Block 37, Lots 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, and 24 within this district shall be preserved for public benefit. All site improvements or buildings approved within the R-4 district shall be studied by the Planning Commission for their effect on this viewshed. Existing views from the intersection of Torres Street and Third Avenue and from Lots 3, 5, and 7 in Block 37 zoned as district P-Z and shown on the following illustration (Figure II-7) shall be preserved. No structure shall be approved for construction and no vegetation shall be planted or maintained within the viewshed at a height that exceeds the 350-foot contour elevation as referenced on the topographic survey dated June 1983 by Clayton B. Neill Jr. (W.O. #6415).

Figure II-7: Public Viewshed



19. Question/Comment: Does the Vista Lobos parking lot provide parking for development that has paid 'parking in lieu' fees?

Response: After researching this matter, staff was unable to find a connection between the public parking spaces at Vista Lobos and any previous development that paid in lieu parking fees. If a project was proposed for Vista Lobos or the parking lot in the future, additional research would be conducted.

20. Question/Comment: Please explain the purpose of the funding for Vista Lobos design services. Why can't the City use volunteer services for this endeavor?

Response: The design of the Vista Lobos community room to be converted for modular office space and possible small conference room, could be performed by volunteers so long as the agency providing the volunteers is a 501(c)(3) corporation. The Labor Code defines a

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“Volunteer” as “an individual who performs work for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, for a public agency or corporation qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as a tax-exempt organization, without promise, expectation, or receipt of any compensation for work performed.” (Labor Code § 1720.4(a)(1).)

It may be challenging to identify a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that has access to volunteers with the required qualifications to perform design services for the Vista Lobos project. For example, in order to obtain required building permits, the project must have a state licensed architect, mechanical engineer, electrical engineer, structural engineer, and CAsp (ADA) professional to prepare and provide sealed design plans, specifications, and calculations as necessary. The design would also need to be in compliance with all Building Codes, federal, state, regional, and City requirements and standards, and be prepared in conformance with the requirements of a Public Works project suitable for public bidding.

Since there is already a need for suitable office space for City staff, volunteers willing to provide these services should also be willing to commit to a reasonable schedule. Renovations are slated for FY 2023/24. If we are successful in obtaining these pro bono services, the \$25,000 allocated in the CIP for design in the FY 2022/23 CIP budget should be rolled over for the construction phase.

21. Question/Comment: Please explain the City’s obligations under public contracting code and our obligations to pay prevailing wages.

Response: Public Contract Code Section 1101 defines a public works contract as “an agreement for the erection, construction, alteration, repair, or improvement of any public structure, building, road, or other public improvement of any kind.” For example, because the Scout House renovations project will be a public improvement built on public land, the construction contract will be a “public works contract” under the Public Contract Code.

The expenditure of public funds for project construction typically dictates that public agencies award contracts only after having engaged in an open and fair bidding process. The requirements of competitive bidding are intended to guard against favoritism, fraud or corruption in the award of public contracts. Thus, with some exceptions, public works contracts may be awarded only after having engaged in the competitive bidding process. Statutory exceptions to competitive bidding requirements are generally available only if the dollar value of the work involved is relatively small or where the nature of the work is not suited to competitive bidding, such as professional services contracts.

Labor Code §1771 requires that workers employed on public works be paid not less than the general prevailing rate of per diem wages for work of a similar character in the locality in which the public work is performed. The overall purpose of the prevailing wage law is to protect and benefit employees on public works projects.

Although California’s prevailing wage laws set specific wage and hour requirements for employees working on “public works” projects defined by Labor Code §1720(a) to include construction, alteration, demolition, installation, or repair work performed under contract and paid for in whole or in part out of public funds, these wage and hour requirements do not

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apply to specified work performed by a volunteer, volunteer coordinator, or a member of the California Conservation Corps or a community conservation corps. Assembly Bill 327 extended these provisions to January 1, 2024.

Specifically, Labor Code § 1720.4 provides that the prevailing wage laws do not apply to work performed by a “volunteer.” However, there are additional details to these provisions which require close adherence to avoid an unintentional loss of volunteer status.

“Volunteer” is defined as “an individual who performs work for civic, charitable, or humanitarian reasons, for a public agency or corporation qualified under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as a tax-exempt organization, without promise, expectation, or receipt of any compensation for work performed.” (Labor Code § 1720.4(a)(1).) The exclusion does not apply to work performed by anyone other than those persons specifically falling within the definition.

The obligation to pay prevailing wages also does not apply to private works in which no public monies are expended. Using the example above, even if the Boy Scouts pay for some of the renovations to the Scout House, and do not perform all renovations using volunteer labor, so long as no public monies are expended on the renovations, the project will not be subject to the payment of prevailing wages since the Labor Code obligation only applies to projects on which more than \$1,000 of public funds are spent.

22. Question/Comment: Is there funding for the Scenic Road Pathway and what is for?

Response: Yes, there is limited City funding, but there are several upgrades planned along the Scenic Road Pathway for FY 2022/23.

First, Public Works is currently in the process of hiring a contractor to repair the irrigation system controller and clock for \$4,959 using operating budget remaining for FY 2021/22.

Second, \$50,000 of unspent Capital Improvement Program funds from FY 2021/22 will be carried forward into FY 2022/23 to fund a portion of the Scenic Road Pathway Barrier Rail Project. Carmel Cares has also expressed interest in replacing portions of the deteriorated Barrier Rails, and, in fact, has already installed a few, temporary post and cable railings at a few locations for public safety purposes. As noted in Question 22, if City funds are commingled with private donations, a combined single barrier rail replacement project would be subject to all State of California requirements for a Public Works Project including payment of prevailing wages to the selected contractor(s).

In addition, Carmel Cares, under guidance by the Public Works Department, has done an incredible job renovating nearly all aspects of the Scenic Road Pathway over the past two years. Work has included removal of weeds and invasive plants, pruning overgrowth, watering, raking, sweeping, fine grading, exposing the wooden pathway borders, repairing

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stonework and stairs, raising some stone walls, cleaning out trash enclosures, removing graffiti and illegal stickers, cleaning up the signage, and much more.

Active and upcoming projects along the Pathway by Carmel Cares include installing upgraded signage at each trash enclosure in wooden frames, and upgrading edging along the planted islands adjacent to the Pathway with larger stones, subject to approval by the Forest and Beach Commission. Plans are also in the works to work with staff on changing the signage along the Pathway that may be more effective in increasing compliance with beach fires only in the fire pits restrictions.

23. Question/Comment: Please explain the City's philosophy regarding opportunities for traffic calming and tree planting when road resurfacing occurs. Also, how does the City address pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements when resurfacing roadways?

Response: Since the City's asphalt and concrete street pavements are among the most valuable public infrastructure assets, the majority of our annual road resurfacing funding has been allocated for rehabilitation of the pavements based on optimizing public funds by the Pavement Management System. That said, over the past five years, the following issues have been considered during implementation of these projects:

- Traffic Calming Improvements. As often discussed by the Traffic Safety Committee, perceptions of speeding around the City do not match actual radar speed studies that find that the 85 percentile of traffic speeds falls below the (typical) 25 mph speed limits. However, based on accident data and sight visibility concerns, over the past five years, we added new STOP signs where approved by Council, including at Mission and Ninth, Mission and Fourth, and upcoming Junipero at Seventh). Also, new SLOW signs were installed on Santa Lucia and Monte Verde, fog lines were placed along Junipero, and pedestrian crosswalk ahead signs were installed on Rio Road.

Another traffic calming measure could be to add curb bulb outs at arterial intersections, especially where there are crosswalks. However, bulb outs are costly, and most of Carmel's streets are too narrow to include bulb outs. Also, the Police and Public Works Departments do not recommend installing other traffic calming devices such as speed humps or speed bumps anywhere in Carmel.

- Pedestrian Improvements. Some roadway projects have included new crosswalks and restriping of existing crosswalks, Americans with Disabilities Act ramps at intersection corners, repairs to adjacent uneven sidewalks, and some new speed limit and stop signs to enhance pedestrian safety. These improvements are noteworthy from the Ocean Avenue Paving Project completed a few years ago. However, many other roadway resurfacing projects are completed along narrow, residential streets that do not abut sidewalks or defined pedestrian paths of travel.
- Bicycle Safety Improvements. The City's General Plan Circulation Element includes Figure 2.2 (attached) which identifies those streets which are slated for bicycle improvements. None of these streets were resurfaced over the past five years, with three notable exceptions.

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First, both San Antonio, from Second to Fourth, as well as Camino del Monte, from Fourth to Junipero, are included in the Bicycle Routes included in the General Plan's Circulation Element. These street segments were resurfaced several years ago by PG&E as mitigation for their new gas line installation. The City successfully pushed PG&E to pave both sides of these streets to mitigate impacts. While the pavement was new, PG&E was not receptive to including bike route improvements since they were not existing at the time of their project.

Second, we are about to advertise for bids for the FY 21 Annual Pavement Resurfacing Project which includes resurfacing San Carlos Street from Eighth to Thirteenth Avenues. This project will include the City's first bicycle route along this road segment. This location is also ideal as it is the City's "center hub" for future bike route extensions.

Third, the upcoming FY 2022/23 Annual Street Project will focus on concrete street repairs, including along Ocean Avenue, between Monte Verde and San Antonio. Preliminary sketches indicate that bike and pedestrian improvements can be included along this road segment - not within the vehicle lanes but along the sidewalk(s). During the design phase, upgrading pedestrian and bicycle improvements along this segment may require an Amendment to the Circulation Element, modifications at the intersections with residential streets, and the possible loss of parking spaces.

- Tree Plantings. Please see Question #26 below.

24. Question/Comment: Please identify the specific amounts of funding earmarked for fire fuel load reduction, and where it will be spent. Also, please identify the specific amounts of funding earmarked for downtown beautification, weeding, and invasives removal.

Response: The Public Works/Forestry operations budget for FY 2022/23 includes the following funding allocations for fire fuel reduction, weeding, invasives removal, and downtown beautification:

- \$150,000 for removal of dead, hazardous, and diseased trees and stumps by tree contractors, City-wide. Dead and hazardous trees can burn quickly or fall onto power lines during high winds potentially sparking flames.
- \$150,000 for pruning by contractors, City-wide. While pruning is associated with the health and structural shape of the tree, pruning is also considered a fire fuel reduction method as well as a beautification method.
- \$125,000 for contracted landscape services at multiple parks, around City buildings, and in open space areas. These services include weed abatement, mowing, minor pruning, and clearing of dead brush.
- \$20,000 for contracted weed abatement, typically spent for Forest Hill Park, MTNP, Pescadero Canyon, upper and lower portions of Ocean Avenue, and/or other open space areas.
- \$25,000 for downtown beautification (Capital Improvement Project). This funding is intended to improve the aesthetics of downtown and could be used for tree planting, tree

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well upgrades, additional landscape and hardscape materials to supplement the Ocean Avenue Median Island Landscaping project, materials to provide to volunteer groups for them to help us beautify downtown parks and streetscapes, etc.

In addition to funds for contracted services and to support volunteers, we have a four member forestry crew who also perform dead tree removals and prunings, weeding, mowing, invasive removals, overgrowth/visibility pruning, and beautification projects throughout the City. Due to their flexibility in quickly addressing urgent needs and cost-effectiveness, it has been our practice to utilize in-house staff crews to the maximum extent prior to utilizing contracted services.

Carmel Cares has been performing a significant amount of weeding, pruning, invasive plant removals, and fire fuel reduction in their project areas, specifically along the Scenic Pathway and beach bluffs, in the Forest Theater, Devendorf Park, Fourth Avenue drainage way and boardwalk, and around the grounds at Sunset Center and the Park Branch Library. Their successful Median Minders community engagement program has also been instrumental in removal of weeds and invasive plants in many median islands.

The Friends of Mission Trails Nature Preserve, Master Gardeners, and their Weedies program have supplemented grant-funded invasive plant removals and fire fuel reduction in the MTNP for years. Additionally, several volunteer groups have removed weeds and invasive plants in the North Dunes Habitat Restoration Area, and the Garden Club keeps the gardens at the Harrison Memorial Library, City Hall, and Piccadilly Park free of weeds and invasive plants.

Finally, the possibility of using goats for fire fuel reduction and weed eradication has been considered multiple times in Pescadero Canyon and in the MTNP. Unfortunately, we have been unable to find a single vendor who would be willing to provide goats for the steep southerly slope of Pescadero Canyon.

While there are flatter areas in MTNP, there are a number of logistical obstacles including sensitive habitats and endangered species such Yadon's piperia and Hickman's onion. Our MTNP biologist recommended against using goats in any area of the MTNP with the exception of the meadow behind Flander's Mansion. However, the goat vendors stated that the meadow is too small to justify goats, so, instead, we mow the meadow at least annually to reduce fire fuel.

25. Question/Comment: Please identify the specific amounts of funding earmarked for tree planting.

Response:

- The FY 2022/23 operating budget for Forestry includes \$15,000 for new trees. The average cost for new trees in the right-of-way, with soil amendments, stakes, and watering for the first year of the 3 to 5 year tree establishment period, is \$150. This would allow for planting of up to 100 new trees.

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- The \$150k Cal Fire Grant, plus the City's \$20k match, for the Forest Management Plan (FMP) includes planting 108 new trees. It is unknown at this time if all, some, or none of those 108 trees will be planted during FY 2022/23, but it will certainly be part of community participation during development of the FMP. The FMP will also complete the much-needed, City-wide tree inventory, identify locations for new plantings in priority order, and recommend species most resilient for climate change in our area.
- Public Works/Forestry is currently growing about 80 seedlings of pine trees which will be ready for planting in FY 2023/24.
- In addition, several volunteer groups plant trees each year, but the quantity and locations are not well established in advance. For example, the Friends of Carmel Forest typically plant 6 to 12 trees per year in the downtown area and City parks, and they are in the process of funding \$10,000 for watering City trees. The Friends of the Mission Trail Nature Preserve recently planted 65 native trees where invasive trees were removed, as part of habitat restoration in the Preserve. In addition, the Tree Tenders community engagement program under the Carmel Cares umbrella organization, has witnessed an increasing number of volunteers eager to adopt and care for seedlings for future establishment in the urban forest.

Obviously, there is sufficient funding to plant plenty of new trees; however, there has not been aggressive tree planting since the start of the Pandemic. Below are some key concerns submitted by the City Forester that should be considered before planting many new trees at this time:

- 56% of Carmel is already under tree canopy, which is an exceedingly high percentage for any community. Natural ecosystems are usually in the 15 to 25% canopy cover range. We believe that our high canopy cover has contributed to the decline of the health of the forest by blocking access to sunlight for nearby trees. Excessive crowding of trees has also been considered on private properties as part of tree removal permit conditions.
- New trees should only be planted in strategic locations where there is access to sunlight and no longer planted directly below power lines which, unfortunately, has been the historical practice. For most of the locations where dead/hazardous/diseased trees have been removed under power lines, we should only plant relatively short, ornamental trees to prevent future hazards.
- New trees require a lot of watering, and while this is most cost-effectively performed by Forestry staff, ongoing vacancies in the forestry crews over the past few years, including staffing reduction during the Pandemic, have hampered new tree planting and watering efforts. We have; however, also utilized tree contractors and Carmel Cares to supplement watering efforts.

26. Question/Comment: Please describe the City's approach to address wildfire risks to include the wildfire assessment, Forest Management Plan, and the role of the Natural Resources Manager within this rubric.

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Response: In addition to the fire fuel reduction efforts described in Question 25 above, the following list identifies other measures that are being undertaken to address the risk of wildfires.

- First, each spring, the Monterey Fire Department conducts an annual defensible space inspections around each residential property at no charge. This project is currently underway.
- Second, the draft Climate Adaptation and Climate Action Plans contains significant information about the risk of wildfires in Carmel and a number of measures that will be taken during the implementation phase of the Climate Change program to mitigate this risk. For details, please visit [Climate Committee - City of Carmel](#)

References include:

- Action 1.1.1 – Maintain and Update Evacuation Plan
 - Action 1.1.3 – Collaborate with Monterey Fire
 - Action 2.1.2 – Increase Urban Forest Resilience
 - Action 2.1.3 – Increase Resilience of the MTNP
 - Action 3.1.1 – Underground Utilities in Fire Hazard Zones
 - Appendix B, Climate Vulnerability Assessment, Page 6, Wildfires
 - Appendix B, Climate Vulnerability Assessment, Page 22, Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan
 - Appendix B, Climate Vulnerability Assessment, Summary of Meeting of October 15, 2020, Community Wildfire Preparedness
- Third, the Fire Department operating budget includes \$20,000 for a Wildfire Risk Assessment which is intended to be prepared as a regional agency project. This funding is being rolled over into the new FY 2022/23 budget.
 - The job description for the proposed new position currently identified as “Natural Resources Manager” in the staffing plan in the FY 2022/23 budget has not been finalized at this time. While details are still being worked out, the purpose of such a position would be to provide greater emphasis on essential environmental and forestry components of the Public Works Department, as well as for opportunities to advance our environmental stewardship in our unique urban forest setting. Potential projects to be overseen by this position include:
 - Climate Adaptation Plan and Action Plan measures long term implementation
 - Coastal Engineering Report and subsequent beach armoring projects
 - Energy efficiency initiatives
 - Environmental permitting for CIP projects
 - Fire fuel reduction, weed abatement, and invasive removal preventative maintenance programs
 - Forest and Beach Commission agendas, reports, presentations, and action items
 - Forest Management Plan implementation
 - Forestry and stormwater/drainage plan reviews, encroachment permits, and conditioning improvement process
 - Garbage Franchise Agreement enforcement and SB1383 implementation
 - GIS applications and implementation

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- Grant applications related to natural resources
- Habitat restoration-oriented projects at MTNP and North Dunes (long range)
- Implementing green infrastructure projects
- MTNP stream stability projects
- Oversight of volunteer groups (Carmel Cares, FOMTNP, FOCF, Garden Club)
- Stormwater management program and compliance with state regulations
- Tree service and landscape maintenance service contracting process improvements

27. Question/Comment: How would staff describe the City's stance in this budget to placing a higher level of visibility on our natural resources.

Response: Please see responses to Questions 25, 26, and 27 above, and Questions 29 and 30 below.

28. Question/Comment: What is the job description for the Natural Resources Manager, what is the proposed salary, and how does it change the roles of the Environmental Compliance Manager and the City Forester?

Response: The Natural Resources Manager is a working title and placeholder in the upcoming FY 22/23 operating budget. Based on the increased workload, increase in staffing and City Council's goals and objectives, there is a greater need and priority placed on the natural resources in the Village. Per all newly established job descriptions citywide, HR will bring the newly created job description that will include job title and salary range to City Council for approval once it has been completed. The review and assessment of this newly created position is on-going and still in progress, however, the newly created position will not change the roles of the Environmental Compliance Manager and the City Forester.

29. Question/Comment: Given that new position being filled it seems that there will be 3 managers supervising about 4 people. Is that necessary given the limited staffing of people who are actually doing work in the field in those departments?

Response: As indicated above, based on the increased workload, increase in staffing and City Council's goals and objectives, there is a greater need and priority placed on the natural resources in the Village and a newly created position will be recommended, still pending City Council approval.

30. Question/Comment: Do you plan on promoting someone from within to fill that position? If so, will the vacated position be filled?

Response: Pursuant to the City's Municipal Code section 2.52.100, all recruitments that are funded in the operating budget must go through a recruitment selection procedure. This may include an internal promotional or open competitive process which is determined by Human Resources. All employees citywide are notified of all job opportunities once they have been posted as active recruitments. As with every vacancy citywide, it provides the City an opportunity to review, assess and determine if the classification and work are aligned properly.

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31. Question/Comment: What is the reasoning for the above organizational change and what process was conducted to make that decision?

Response: The organizational structure of the Public Works Department has been modified several times since the incumbent Public Works Director was hired in 2017. Prior examples include adding a second position for Facility Maintenance, increased cross training for Street Maintenance and Forestry crews, increasing capacity in the Environmental Compliance Division with an Administrative Technician, increasing capacity in the Forestry Division with an Administrative Analyst, downsizing at the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic, re-establishing staffing levels as part of the FY 2022/23 budget, and hiring Project Management consultants in lieu of having an incumbent project manager.

All changes made to the organizational structure of the Public Works Department are recommended by the Director and Assistant City Administrator, approved by the City Administrator, and if position allocations and any financial impacts to the operating budget are required, these changes are subject to authorization of the City Council.

32. Question/Comment: I noticed that there was \$25,000 allocated to design work for Vista Lobos. What is this for and, if Vista Lobos will be repurposed, should this go through a public process? It seems that there were public conversation sessions held regarding the Scout House and Vista Lobo a few years back, public discussion, and a decision was made to put money into the Scout House. I don't remember any other sessions being held regarding Vista Lobos.

Response: Please see Question 21 regarding the \$25,000 allocated to design for the Vista Lobos facility. The Public was welcome to provide comments when this tentative project was announced at three prior City Council meetings which included the Capital Improvement Program and FY 2022/23 Budget, as well as the upcoming City Council meeting of June 7th at which time the Budget is slated to be adopted.