



Department: Parks and Recreation
Cost Center: 7001
For Agenda of: 1/20/2026
Placement: Consent
Estimated Time: N/A

FROM: Greg Avakian, Parks & Recreation Director
Prepared By: Lily Honer-Hollstien, Business Analyst; Devin Hyfield, Recreation Manager

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION TO APPLY FOR THE 2025 COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS PLAYGROUND GRANT

RECOMMENDATION

1. Adopt a Draft Resolution affirming the submittal of a Community Champions Playground Grant application (Attachment A) requesting an award of grant funds toward the purchase of a new playground system for the Vista Lago Park, from GameTime, a PlayCore Company (GameTime); and
2. Authorize the Assistant City Manager to execute the necessary grant documents and appropriate the grant amount into the Vista Lago Playground Replacement project (CIP No. 2000033-02) budget to support the replacement of the playground equipment upon grant award.

POLICY CONTEXT

The City's Financial Management Manual, Section 740, requires City Council authorization to submit grant applications in excess of \$5,000. Section 3(d) states:

For grants in excess of \$5,000, prepare a Council Agenda Report requesting authorization to seek grant funding. This report should describe the grant program's conformance with this policy, including the results of the cost/benefit analysis.

The grant, if awarded, would be in the amount of \$55,448, exceeding the \$5,000 threshold.

DISCUSSION

Background

The City of San Luis Obispo (City) park system includes a diverse mix of 28 parks and recreation facilities covering approximately 206 acres. The City's parks include a broad range of recreational features, which necessitate continual maintenance and upgrades over time. As such, there are various park and facility improvements or enhancements scheduled in the City's 2027-28 Capital Improvements Program (CIP), including a project

to upgrade and replace playground equipment at Vista Lago Park. At this time, grant opportunities are available that can augment City funds for the purposes of developing and revitalizing City parks' recreational amenity offerings.

GameTime, a PlayCore Company, is an internationally recognized playground manufacturer that specializes in providing innovative play equipment for community and academic purposes. They specialize in equipment that is accessible and environmentally sustainable. GameTime equipment has been utilized in several City parks including DeVaul Ranch, French, Islay and new Avila Ranch parks. In addition, GameTime was identified by Oasis Associates, who are the contracted landscape design agency for the new playground projects, as the preferred design company for the new upgraded playground equipment for the DeVaul Park and Vista Lago Park projects.

Staff initially applied for the Community Champions Playground Grant and included both the DeVaul and the Vista Lago playground projects on the application (Attachment B). Due to an outstanding grant application related to DeVaul Park, it was determined not eligible. Staff and in discussion with GameTime representatives determined that the Vista Lago Park Playground Replacement project is eligible for grant support funding. The Community Champions Playground Grant is classified as a privately funded grant opportunity through GameTime, a PlayCore Company. If awarded, the grant will provide supplementary funding for the purchase of the playground equipment. The Vista Lago Park Playground CIP project (CIP No. 2000033-02) is currently fully designed for construction and funded within the 2027-28 CIP program. The project currently includes replacement and expansion of the nearly 20-year-old playground at Vista Lago Park with updated and modern equipment for ages 0-5 and 5-12, expansion of ADA pathways, and seating bordering the playground (Attachment C). If awarded, the Playground Grant would offset 50% of the playground equipment purchase costs. The financial savings offset would remain in the project fund to support the overall approved park project or provides an opportunity to allocate funds back to the general CIP Fund at the completion of the project.

Due to the timing of the Community Champions Playground Grant application due date of October 17, 2025 (extended to November 2025), staff applied for the grant on November 18, 2025, for the Vista Lago Playground Replacement Project subject to the subsequent authorization of the City Council. Staff is requesting that the City Council confirm authorization for the application. If Council does not authorize the submittal of the grant application, staff will withdraw the application from consideration and move forward with the current project plan of playground replacement. Staff anticipates receiving notification of grant award or rejection by Summer 2026, allowing adequate notification to support the scheduled project in 2027-28 CIP program.

Public Engagement

The Vista Lago Park playground replacement project was developed through multiple public engagement efforts. These included an on-site forum held in July 2023 at Vista Lago Park, outreach at Parks and Recreation Department events such as the Monday

Item 5c

Meet-Up booths during the summers of 2024 and 2025, and input received at several Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) meetings, including:

- [August 16, 2023](#) – Parks and Recreation Commission received a staff update on the Vista Lago Park playground replacement project, including community outreach efforts and project status.
- [October 11, 2023](#) – Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed proposed draft layout options for the Vista Lago Park playground replacement project and provided direction to staff on the preferred layout to advance.
- [January 10, 2024](#) – Parks and Recreation Commission conducted a final review of the proposed conceptual layout for the Vista Lago Park playground replacement project and provided direction to staff to proceed with preparation of construction documents.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act, will be conducted prior to project approval, and authorization to advertise and construct the proposed park improvements.

FISCAL IMPACT

Budgeted: Yes

Budget Year: 2027-28

Funding Identified: Yes

Fiscal Analysis:

Funding Sources	Total Budget Available	Current Funding Request	Remaining Balance	Annual Ongoing Cost
General Fund	\$629,000		\$629,000	\$0
State				
Federal				
Fees				
Other: Grant		\$55,448		
Total	\$629,000	\$55,448	\$629,000	\$0

The Vista Lago Playground Replacement project (CIP No. 2000033-02) is currently funded in the FY 2027–28 Capital Improvement Program with an appropriation of \$629,000 from the Capital Outlay Fund – LRM (401.9501.71006). The approved project scope includes replacement of the playground equipment (City estimated to cost \$157,378), and construction of ADA-accessible pathways and additional seating. The full scope of the project is fully budgeted and planned for construction, which accounts for the remainder of the appropriation.

The Community Champions Playground Grant provides an opportunity to supplement approximately 50% of the playground equipment purchase cost allocated within the CIP

Item 5c

Funds. Staff have applied for an award of up to 50% funds to support replacement of playground amenities, which would supplement the current appropriation from the City. The current estimated cost, by GameTime, a PlayCore Company, for the playground equipment is \$110,896 and this grant would supplement the cost at \$55,448, listed as “Other” in the Fiscal Analysis table above. If awarded, the grant would support the improvements at Vista Lago Park without increasing General Fund commitments. No additional City funds are anticipated at this time as the project funds are currently allocated in the 2027-28 CIP.

ALTERNATIVES

The City Council could deny the request to submit a grant application. Should City Council choose this option, the City will withdraw its application and proceed with the currently funded project scope consisting of the playground replacement and associated ADA improvements.

ATTACHMENTS

- A - Draft Resolution Approving the Application for the Community Champions Playground Grant
- B - Community Champions Playground Grant Application Form
- C - Concept Design Plans for Vista Lago Park Playground Replacement (CIP No. 2000033-02)