

Response to Questions on the FY 2015 Budget

Request By: Supervisor Herrity

Question: The Budget Consideration Item reduction “*Reduce Parktakes mailings*” has been requested. Provide a summary of the reduction including the impact it would have.

Response: The General Fund no longer supports funding for the mailing of the Parktakes Magazine. General Fund support was completely eliminated in FY 2010. Since FY 2010, funding to support mailing of Parktakes has been fully supported by Fund 80000, the Park Revenue Fund. In FY 2013, the actual cost for mailing Parktakes was \$124,752. In addition, the cost to print the publication also paid for in Fund 80000, Park Revenue Fund was \$486,494 in FY 2013. Parktakes magazine is distributed to subscribers only. The magazine is distributed on a quarterly basis to correspond with the park class calendar. Mass distribution to every household in the county was eliminated in the mid-1990s, allowing substantial savings in both printing and mailing costs. Only those who want to receive the magazine now receive it. Park Authority staff continues to be vigilant with subscriber roles, regularly deleting those who no longer want to receive the publication. In addition, an electronic version of Parktakes was introduced with the winter 2010 issue. Currently, 42,824 subscribers receive the electronic version, representing cost savings of nearly \$166,000 annually. Advertising sales help to defer 23 percent of Parktakes printing and mailing costs annually and over the last several years, the Park Authority has lowered production costs by reducing the size of the average issue by 10 pages.

Parktakes is the Park Authority’s most important marketing vehicle. Since the winter 2010 issue, Parktakes subscribers have had the option of receiving the publication in either print or digital format. Digital Parktakes was originally offered purely as a cost saving strategy, with the hopes that most subscribers would switch to that format once it was offered. While the digital subscriber base has grown rapidly, more than three-fourths of subscribers prefer the printed version of the publication. Throughout this period of economic stagnation, when many households have cut back on discretionary spending, the Park Authority has been able to increase enrollment in Park Revenue Fund programs by 27 percent while at the same time reducing Parktakes costs by 17 percent.