



Annual Report 2019 – 2020

Measure M

Your Sales Tax In Action

Cloverdale
Cotati
Healdsburg
Petaluma
Rohnert Park
Santa Rosa
Sebastopol
Sonoma
Windsor
Sonoma County



Caminitos
program
encourages
a love of
nature.

**Measure M Citizens
Oversight Committee**

*“To provide transparency
and ensure fiscal
accountability.”*

John Mills, Chair
Karen Collins
Rhonda M. Ahanotu
Meredith Rennie
Maria Membrila
Dan Condrón
Carol Eber



Thank You, Sonoma County, for Supporting Your Parks

In November 2018, Sonoma County voters resoundingly passed Measure M “Parks for All.” Not only does the measure provide a one-eighth-cent sales tax, or roughly \$12 million annually, to improve and expand local parks, it creates a foundation for new and robust collaborations among the county and its nine cities.

Together, we are working to deliver benefits to all of you who depend on city and county parks for your health, your well-being and your connections to the natural world.

The first fiscal year of Measure M — July 2019 through June 2020 — occurred during a time of immense upheaval in our community. Repeated fires, power outages, extreme heat events and a global pandemic challenged park agencies to maintain basic services while the demand for parks and outdoor activities increased rapidly.

Out of crisis, however, comes opportunity.

Foothill Regional Park burned entirely during the Kincadee wildfire and bore the brunt of the fight that kept the fire from entering Windsor. This prompted Sonoma County Regional Parks to adopt a “climate durable” approach to rebuilding burned parks. Wildfires are no longer once-in-a-lifetime experiences and this new infrastructure will better withstand future fires.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, local park agencies have innovated programming to serve youth remotely or in small, stable groups. We created new camps, interpretive programs and ways to support children and families through distance learning. We also have seen more people than ever visiting our parks, with many people trying new outdoor activities such as hiking, kayaking and camping.

What follows is a report on the first-year expenditures from Measure M. Thank you for supporting your local and regional parks. We are striving to maintain trust and transparency on how your park agencies used these funds to benefit parks in Sonoma County. Also, and just as importantly, we want to use this report to celebrate our collective successes working towards Parks for All.

We think you will agree that, even against the backdrop of so many dramatic events in our community, your park agencies are giving you what you were promised in the form of better maintained parks, new and expanded parks and trails and programs that serve Sonoma County residents now and for generations to come.

In gratitude,

Bert Whitaker, Director
Melanie Parker, Deputy Director
Sonoma County Regional Parks

Revenue & Expenditures

About Measure M

Sonoma County voters in 2018 overwhelmingly approved Measure M, a one-eighth-cent sales tax to support county and city parks for 10 years. Two-thirds of the funds go to Sonoma County for its regional parks and one-third is divided among the cities, according to population size.

The measure's expenditure plan outlines appropriate uses for the revenue. The county and cities each determines how best to prioritize the allocated funding, and a citizen oversight committee ensures the funding is spent as intended.

In fiscal year 2019-20, the total tax revenue was \$12.3 million.

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SONOMA COUNTY REGIONAL PARKS					
	Maintenance, Safety, Recreation	Improve Access	Natural Resources	CITY PARKS	Total
REVENUE	25%	23.4%	18.3%	33.3%	
Sales Tax Revenue	3,084,786	2,887,359	2,258,063	4,109,075	12,339,283
Interest Income	3,844	10,584	7,213	21,011	42,651
Total	3,088,630	2,897,943	2,265,276	4,130,086	12,381,934
EXPENDITURES					
Salaries & Benefits	287,922	798,548	575,800	398,015	2,060,285
Services & Supplies:					
Road & Trail Management	90,096			84,394	174,490
Vegetation Management & Fire Fuel Reduction			380,271	26,960	407,231
Parks Grounds & Facilities	187,161			294,807	481,968
Public Engagement & Equity		122,228		39,967	162,195
Equipment	191,389	339,516	148,415	25,021	704,342
Administration & Miscellaneous	66,205	161,708	214,689		442,602
Capital Projects	1,971,156	12,500		205,002	2,188,658
Total	2,793,930	1,434,500	1,319,175	1,074,165	6,621,771

Fiscal Overview

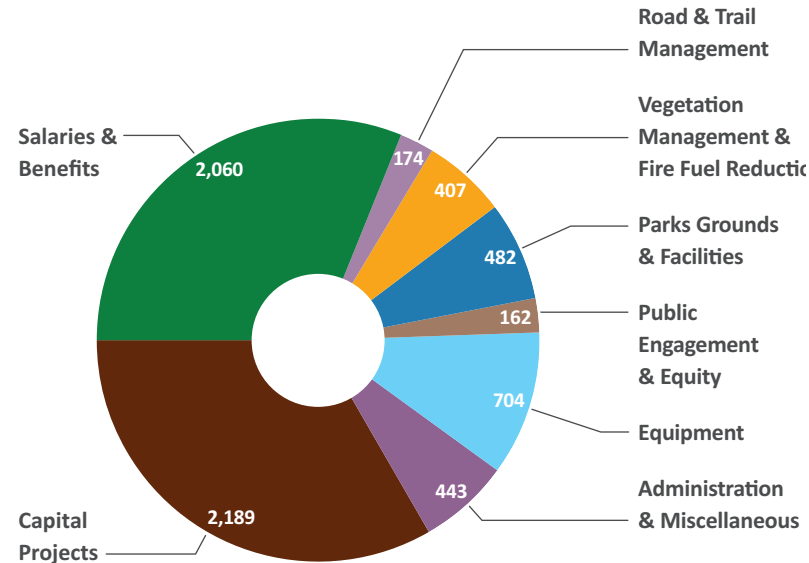
The cities and county can use Measure M revenue to:

- Invest in maintenance of parks, trails, signs, buildings and other infrastructure
- Improve playgrounds, sports fields, restrooms, picnic areas and visitor centers
- Improve park access by extending or building trails, bike paths, coastal trails and river trails
- Reduce wildfire risks through vegetation management
- Open new parkland to the public
- Protect natural resources, including waterways and wildlife habitat
- Offer recreation, education and health programs in parks

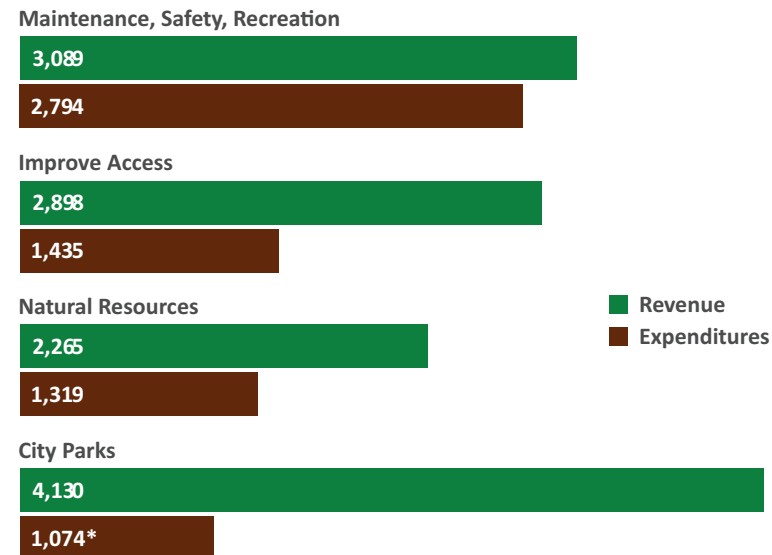
This report offers an accounting of how the county and cities spent these dollars and where they are accruing savings for future projects.



TOTAL EXPENDITURES
In Thousands of Dollars



REVENUE & EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY
In Thousands of Dollars



*Fund balances stay with each jurisdiction and will be invested in park projects in future years.

Revenue & Expenditures by Category & City

At a Glance

Your city and regional parks protect and maintain a variety of landscapes and facilities and connect communities to services and programs.

Miles of Trails 276

Campsites 200

Regional Parks Acres 15,506

Regional Parks 58

City Parks 242

Playgrounds 204

Programs 3,432

Participants 371,311

Volunteers 4,628

Community Gardens 20



SONOMA COUNTY REGIONAL PARKS

Expenditure Plan Category	Maintenance, Safety, Recreation	Improve Access	Natural Resources	CITY PARKS
Beginning Balance	118,846	111,240	86,995	158,303
Revenue	3,088,630	2,897,943	2,265,276	4,130,086
Expenditures	2,793,930	1,434,500	1,319,175	1,074,165
Available Balance for Future Years	413,546	1,574,683	1,033,096	3,214,223

City Parks and Recreation	Cloverdale	Cotati	Healdsburg
Beginning Balance	4,083	3,493	5,514
Revenue	106,114	90,717	143,189
Expenditures	71,641	15,000	142,843
Available Balance for Future Years	38,555	79,210	5,860

	Petaluma	Rohnert Park	Santa Rosa
Beginning Balance	27,456	19,116	77,465
Revenue	714,519	498,057	2,028,377
Expenditures	519,000	250,968	496
Available Balance for Future Years	222,975	266,205	2,105,346

	Sebastopol	Sonoma	Windsor
Beginning Balance	3,478	5,097	12,600
Revenue	90,218	131,795	327,101
Expenditures	11,733	33,380	29,103
Available Balance for Future Years	83,582	103,512	310,597

Regional Parks Funding & Supporting Organizations

Regional Parks achieves its Measure M goals by leveraging partnerships with a variety of organizations, including the following:

Sonoma County Regional Parks Foundation, Ag + Open Space, Sonoma Land Trust, California Coastal Conservancy, California State Parks, California Department of Boating & Waterways, Habitat Conservation Fund, Redwood Empire Mountain Bike Alliance, Sonoma County Trails Council, Sonoma Mountain Institute, Cal Fire, California Conservation Corps, Sonoma Valley Wildlands Collaborative, H & L Mohring & Sons, Corben Glazier, Ron and Thomas Crane, Ward Ranch Livestock, Falk Land and Livestock, Marin Sonoma Weed Management Area, Sonoma County Ag Commissioner, Community Action Partnership, Redwood Empire Food Bank, Laguna Foundation, Sonoma Ecology Center, Landpaths, UC Davis Marine Lab, Kashia Band of Pomo, Catholic Charities, Sonoma County Library, NOAA, Santa Rosa City School District, Roseland School District, Sonoma County Office of Education, Pepperwood Preserve, Sonoma Valley Athletic Corps



Sonoma County Regional Parks

Sonoma County Regional Parks provides recreation opportunities and protects the natural resources and public safety on more than 15,500 acres across 58 parks, trails and marinas. Here are some examples of how Measure M funds are used to fund priority park projects, deferred maintenance and other activities.

New Lawson Trail at Hood Mountain

Hikers, cyclists and equestrians have new access to a section of wilderness in Sonoma Valley's Mayacamas Mountains, thanks to a recently constructed trail at Hood Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve. The Lawson Trail provides the first public access to the 247-acre "Lawson Expansion" on the western flank of Hood Mountain.

Renovated Boat Launch at Doran Park

Recreational boaters and sport fishers are enjoying an entirely renovated boat launch area at Doran Beach. Additional improvements, made possible with Measure M funds, include the renovated parking lots, fish-cleaning station, boat-wash station and a fully ADA-accessible kayak launch.



Boaters enjoy a renovated launch ramp.



Locating a campsite is easier with a new camping reservation system.

Energy Efficient Lighting at Arnold Field

New LED athletic field lights were installed at Arnold Field in Sonoma. The LED technology requires less energy, decreases light pollution and creates safer nighttime playing conditions for athletes.

Cooper Creek Expansion to Taylor Mountain

Regional Parks assumed ownership and maintenance responsibilities for the 54-acre Cooper Creek addition to Taylor Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve. This new parkland connects with more southeast Santa Rosa neighborhoods. It also creates the long-term option for connecting Taylor Mountain to Spring Lake via the Southeast Greenway in Santa Rosa.

New Online Camping Reservation System

Staff launched a new online reservation system for booking a campground stay. This new system offers mobile-friendly technology and improved functionality, making it easier to locate and reserve a campsite.

Improved Habitats for Wildlife

Crews completed the first phase of wildlife-friendly fencing at Taylor Mountain along an important wildlife corridor adjacent to neighborhoods. They also removed 2 miles of derelict fencing to reduce hazards to wildlife.

Enhanced Communication and Radio Equipment for Public Safety

Regional Parks invested in a dedicated radio frequency, portable radios and other equipment to enhance communications in remote areas. This equipment also enables park rangers to communicate with other public safety professionals — including Sonoma County Sheriff's deputies, California Department of Fish and Wildlife wardens and California State Parks rangers — during emergencies. Rangers can now provide an improved public safety response throughout Sonoma County.



Trying out new radio equipment.



Ongoing Prescribed Fires in Sonoma Valley

Regional Parks successfully implemented its second prescribed fire on 25 acres at Sonoma Valley Regional Park. This prescribed fire reduces the risk of wildfire ignition along Highway 12 in Sonoma Valley, helps control invasive grasses and furthered a strong working relationship with Cal Fire. Additionally, 55 park employees received training in basic wildland firefighting skills to support prescribed fires and wildfire recovery within the parks.

Conservation Grazing on Parklands

Regional Parks expanded grazing to 10 parks, totaling more than 4,500 acres. Grazing on public lands is an effective and efficient way to manage grasslands, enhance biodiversity, reduce fire risks and support local agriculture. Regional Parks continues to expand sheep, goat and cattle grazing to meet conservation and vegetation management goals.



Grazing helps with conservation.

Detection and Removal of Invasive Plants

Regional Parks identified a “watch list” of more than 60 invasive plant species through an early detection and rapid response program. Natural resource staff treated a highly invasive weed that encroached after the Kincade Fire at Foothill Regional Park and would have outcompeted native plants as the park recovered.

Career Pathways for Youth

Regional Parks works with cross sector partners to develop the work-readiness skills in teens and young adults. In 2019–20, nine youth crew interns performed more than 3,200 hours of project work. This included creating firebreaks, building and restoring trails, removing old barbed wire fencing to enhance wildlife corridors and eliminating invasive exotic plants.

Welcoming Latinx Communities to Parks

The Caminitos program introduces Spanish-speaking families with preschool-age children to the wonders of parks and nature. Through innovative partnerships, these guided bilingual field trips promote park literacy and healthy outdoor recreation. This year the program has engaged 138 community members at five regional parks.



Youth volunteers remove a barbed-wire fence.

Youth Exploring Sonoma Coast (YES Coast)

Youth Exploring Sonoma Coast is a yearlong program that connects underserved youth, 13–18 years old, to the natural wonders of the Sonoma Coast. For many, it is their first experience walking on a beach and spending a night outdoors. Last year, 27 participants visited coastal parks, exploring outdoor careers, conducting stewardship projects, learning about natural resources and trying out recreational activities. The program builds on research showing that multiple experiences in nature at a young age increase environmental advocacy and promote lifelong health.

Expanded Recreation Programs

Regional Parks' recreation programs introduce participants to new ways to experience their parks and support healthy lifestyles with environmentally aware attitudes. New and expanded offerings allowed more than 300 participants to enjoy low-cost aquatic programs on lakes, the Russian River and the Sonoma Coast. New recreation classes included introduction to kayaking and stand-up paddle boarding, moonlight paddles, surf and kayak camps and boat rentals at Spring Lake.

For More Information

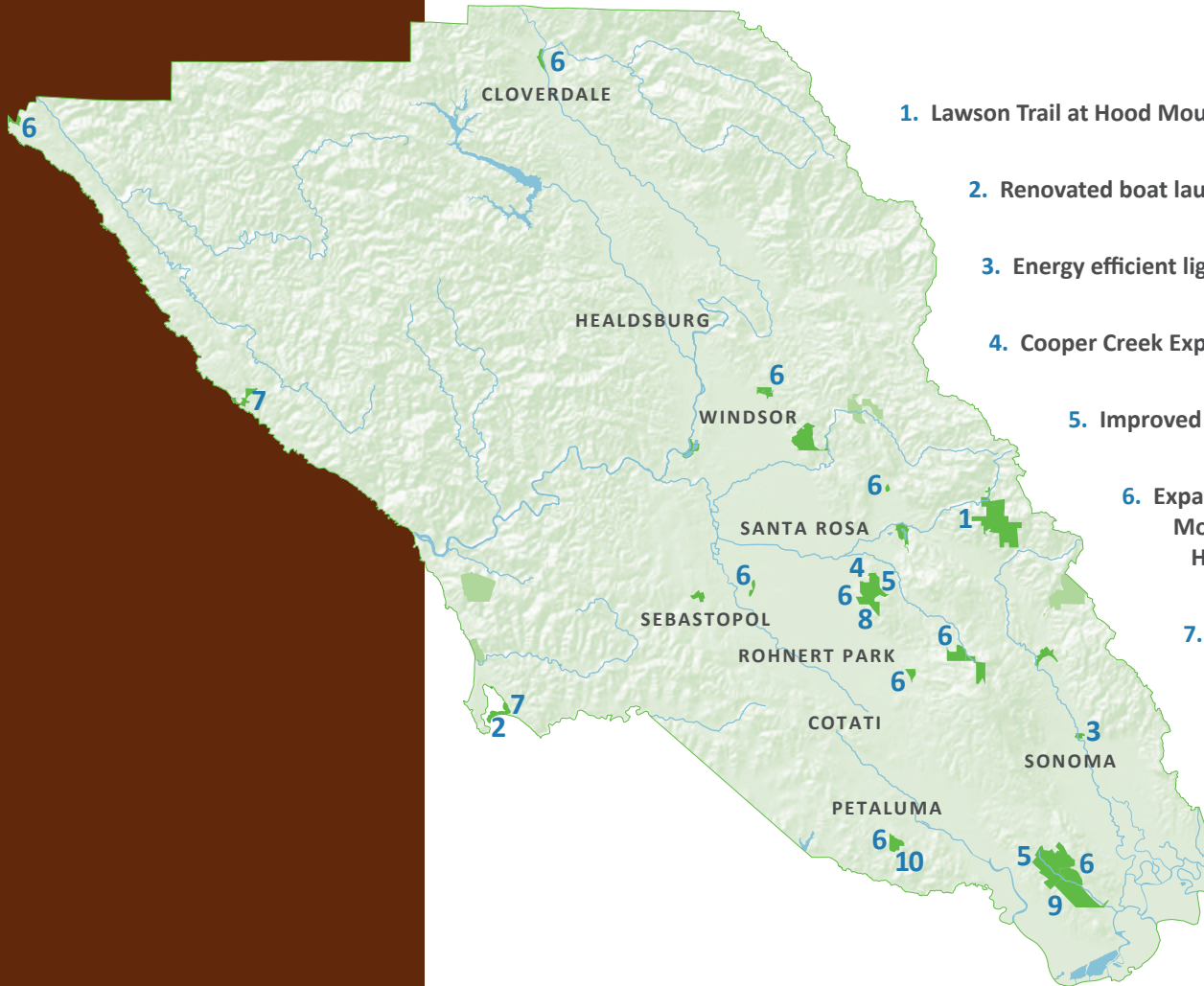
Please visit parks.sonomacounty.ca.gov



YES Coast participants get a surfing lesson.



Regional Parks Measure M Project Highlights



1. Lawson Trail at Hood Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve
2. Renovated boat launch facility at Doran Beach
3. Energy efficient lighting at Arnold Field
4. Cooper Creek Expansion at Taylor Mountain Regional Park & Open Space Preserve
5. Improved wildlife habitat projects: Taylor Mountain, Tolay Lake
6. Expanded grazing in Regional Parks: Foothill, Gualala, Tolay, Taylor Mountain, North Sonoma Mountain, Crane Creek, Laguna Trail, Helen Putnam, Mark West, Cloverdale
7. Youth Exploring the Sonoma Coast: Doran, Stillwater Cove
8. Taylor Mountain Red Tail Play Area
9. New maintenance shop at Tolay Lake Regional Park
10. Trail renovations at Helen Putnam Regional Park



City Parks Across Sonoma County

The nine incorporated cities in Sonoma County share one-third of the monies raised by Measure M, more than \$4.1 million in fiscal year 2019–20. Measure M funds are being used to fund park projects, deferred maintenance and other activities.



New play equipment refreshed
Cloverdale's Vintage Meadows Park.

Cloverdale

Cloverdale worked on deferred projects with Measure M funds. At City Park, Vintage Meadows Park, Clark Park and Furber Park, crews removed more than 1,000 cubic yards of rubber mulch from playgrounds and installed new wood chips.

Showing wear and tear, the large spiral slide and two climbing structures at Vintage Meadows Park were also replaced with new equipment. Additionally, Measure M funds supported two staff members who worked to reduce wildfire risks by clearing brush and debris along trails and residential areas.

cloverdale.net



Cotati

Cotati plans to use all Measure M funding received in 2019–20 toward revitalizing the city's oldest playgrounds at Kotate Park.

The city plans to construct two play areas for children 2 to 5 years old and 5 to 12 years old and to build Cotati's first outdoor fitness area to promote active lifestyles for adults. The city is in the final design phase of this project and expects to begin construction in the spring of 2021.

cotaticity.org



Cotati plans
to revitalize
Kotate Park.



Healdsburg

Healdsburg invested Measure M funds to steward Fitch Mountain Park and Open Space Preserve and Healdsburg Ridge Open Space Preserve.

The city contracted with LandPaths to lead invasive species control, maintain and improve public access, coordinate volunteer work opportunities and teach people of all ages about the importance of protecting the area's ecology. In addition, the city collaborated with Cal Fire to manage vegetation in order to help defend the city from future wildfires.

Measure M proceeds also supported maintenance activities throughout the city's park and open space system. Work included athletic field maintenance, landscaping, special projects, special event support and general park upkeep.

cityofhealdsburg.org



Healdsburg's open spaces invite exploration.



Repurposed benches enhance Petaluma's city parks.

Petaluma

Petaluma committed funds toward community outreach and public engagement efforts that led to prioritizing park and service improvements. Park maintenance is essential to healthy parks and, through Measure M funding, Petaluma added one full-time and two seasonal maintenance workers. This amplified park and trail maintenance, mowing and mulching, irrigation repairs, playground improvements and tree care.

Improvement projects also included removing deteriorating fencing in several parks and increasing vegetation management. Park crews planted five trees in Lucchesi Park and replaced two large tube slides in Leghorns Park, the city's most active community park. The city collaborated with the Petaluma Girls Softball Association to renovate three softball infields at Prince Park. Crews removed and repurposed 20 park benches in the Theater District to replace failing benches throughout city parks. The city completed a pathway replacement project at McNear Park and enhanced trail maintenance at Shollenberger Park and along Lynch Creek Trail.

Petaluma invested Measure M funds in capital improvement projects currently in the design phase, including reconstructing six deteriorating tennis courts, repurposing one of them into four designated pickleball courts; restoring a multi-use path along Lynch Creek Trail; replacing a playground at Bond Park; and initiating design work for replacing the all-weather turf field and lighting at Lucchesi Park.

cityofpetaluma.org



SonomaCountyParks.org/ParksForAll



Rohnert Park adds new swings at Dorotea Park.

Rohnert Park

Rohnert Park used Measure M funds to add a full-time parks maintenance worker, boosting the city's ability to ensure timely and high-quality landscape and maintenance services across its 28 parks. This includes sports turf enhancements, weed abatement and other services.

Also, the city hired a full-time community services supervisor to add and enhance recreation programs and special events. Funds were used for events such as the indoor Halloween Trick or Treat, which was offered to residents in place of outdoor trick or treating toward the end of the Kincadee fire evacuations. The city has committed the remaining 2019–20 Measure M funds for capital improvements, including upgrading the popular swings at Dorotea Park.

rpcity.org



Santa Rosa

Santa Rosa has dedicated the first two years of Measure M revenue to fire recovery, assessing park conditions and conducting community outreach. The 2017 fires damaged seven parks, and Measure M funds will support recovery efforts to restore these parks. Newly rebuilt Coffey Park reopened in October 2020, and construction of the remaining parks is anticipated in 2021.

Santa Rosa is engaged in outreach, requesting citizens offer feedback on spending priorities for the remainder of Measure M funds. The city held an initial meeting in spring of 2020 prior to the COVID-19 restrictions and plans future outreach via virtual community meetings.

Citizen input, combined with an assessment of parks and amenities, will show residents, city staff and the city council the highest priorities and best uses for Measure M funds.

srcity.org



Santa Rosa's newly rebuilt Coffey Park is a hit.



Sebastopol

Sebastopol has initiated several capital improvement projects with the help of Measure M. The city designed a replacement pathway at Ives Park, the city's "central" park, with construction anticipated in the spring of 2021.

The city is leveraging Measure M funds with a state grant that will result in a net reduction of asphalt while renovating a badly damaged path with a new and accessible path. Additionally, Measure M funded significant tree work in 2019–20, allowing the city to maintain, remove and replace hazardous trees at Ives and Libby parks.

ci.sebastopol.ca.us



Sebastopol will replace the pathway in Ives Park.

Sonoma

Sonoma allocated 75 percent of its first-year Measure M funds for future park improvements. The city will work with the community to prioritize future projects.

The city invested the remaining funds in the Montini Preserve, contracting with the Sonoma Ecology Center to manage the preserve. Projects included maintaining trails, assessing hazardous trees, managing vegetation to reduce wildfire risk and controlling invasive plants.

sonomacity.org



A crew works on a trail in Sonoma's Montini Preserve.

Windsor

Windsor used Measure M funds to purchase inclusive play equipment for the Town Green and to increase the recreation scholarship fund for low-income residents.

The town is also negotiating to acquire land for the expansion of Keiser Community Park and has reserved the remaining fund balances for future projects and park initiatives.

townofwindsor.com



Windsor expanded its scholarship program for activities.



SonomaCountyParks.org/ParksForAll



Measure M

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Couple walking
at Helen Putnam.

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