

**CITY OF OAKLAND**  
**AGENDA REPORT**

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OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK  
OAKLAND

2004 MAY 13 PM 4:14

TO: Office of the City Manager  
ATTN: Deborah Ederly  
FROM: Office of Parks and Recreation  
DATE: May 25, 2004

RE: Follow-up Report on the Evaluation by Gibson & Associates on Oakland Parks and Recreation for 2002-03

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**SUMMARY**

The Life Enrichment Committee on February 10, 2004 requested that staff provide a follow-up report to the Gibson & Associates final report on Oakland Parks and Recreation for 2002-03. The Committee requested that staff and Gibson review the findings based on all of the evaluation measures and report back, prior to the mid-cycle budget discussion, on the five lowest rated recreation centers, actions taken in the past year, the most urgent priorities, and recommendations for improvement; and the five highest rated recreation centers and what makes them work well.

This follow-up report acknowledges the constraints of the evaluation scope and data, requests clarification from the Committee for further analysis of recreation centers and programs, and reviews the outcome of programs that were implemented in the past year to increase the level of after-school and/or school-linked services to youth.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

There is no fiscal impact on the General Fund.

**BACKGROUND**

Gibson & Associates was hired as a consultant to provide an objective evaluation of OPR's recreation programming based upon actual field observations, staff and patron interviews and analysis of existing data sets. A report and recommendations from the Gibson & Associates first evaluation report, for the period October 2001 – September 2002, was presented to the Life Enrichment Committee on January 28, 2003 with a follow-up report on February 25, 2003. The final report was presented on February 10, 2004.

The Committee accepted the final report and requested additional information from staff including:

- The five highest rated and five lowest recreation centers and what is working or not.
- Staff's action plan during the past year to improve program quality.
- Identify the most urgent priorities and include observations from the consultant's interim report.
- Staff's recommendations for improvements.

**KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS**

Rating the Recreation Centers: When Gibson and Associates was retained to conduct a needs assessment and evaluation of the recreation and parks programs for the Office of Parks and Recreation (OPR), the original scope was that 22 recreation centers, 5 special facilities and city wide recreation

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programs would be evaluated. The evaluation of these programs would result in a plan for improving the delivery of OPR services. Due to the significant decrease of funding (from \$250,000 to \$97,000) available for the evaluation, the department elected to use a representative sample involving nine sites for more in-depth observation and qualitative assessment. The criteria for the representative sample were:

- Geographic location
- Demographics
- Size and scope of the center's programs
- Diversity of programming
- Fee-based and free programs represented
- Council District

OPR recommended choosing one center from each Council District, one specialized center, and one swimming pool. The resulting nine sites were Arroyo Viejo, Brookdale, Bushrod, F.M. Smith, Ira Jinkins, Mosswood, Redwood Heights, Rotary Nature Center, and Temescal Pool.

Taking that approach in effect precluded our ability to arrive at facility wide ratings of the five highest and five lowest recreation centers in terms of what is working and what is not. We also found in the evaluation, for example, that Redwood Heights was rated in both the top and low categories for "overall quality of programs," thereby making the information inconclusive. The Committee asked what actions were taken to make improvements. The department did not pursue a plan of action to improve the program quality for OPR that was directly in response to the Gibson findings, or identify specific priorities that stood out above others as being "urgent." Therefore, it would be misleading and inappropriate to cite urgent priorities that were not identified, rate facilities where the criteria were not structured to do so, and to speak on an action plan that was never implemented.

To provide Council with the original request to rate facility programs, identify urgent needs and to provide key recommendations, OPR will solicit input from users and non-users through community focus groups in each Council District in addition to using in-house expertise to define areas for improving the quantity and quality of programming.

Staff seeks further guidance from the Council on the analysis desired and the key factors important to the Council in any comparisons of recreation centers and programs. In this way, staff can compare "apples to apples" and also focus on the elements important to the Council in any further assessments of recreation.

Citywide-Enrichment and School-Linked Recreation Programs: Based on Council direction regarding increasing after school and school-linked programs, OPR staff developed and implemented a number of well attended and highly successful programs, the results of which are highlighted below.

#### Passport Program

The Passport Program embodies the description of a "comprehensive" after school program as defined by the Oakland After School Coordination Team (OASCT) by offering a full range of activities in 1)

academic support; 2) cultural/enrichment; and 3) recreation led by consistent, well-trained, caring adults in a safe and supportive environment. Students are engaged in 15 hours per week for 35 weeks, which equates to \$1.01/contact hour (134,925 contact hours per school year). The Passport Program is linked to 8 school sites serving youth grades K-5; 257 youth were served at a cost of \$135,826 for 2003-2004.

### Specialists Project

The Specialists Project embodies the youth development principles of providing challenging skills-building activities and developing ongoing relationships with key adults in order to build stronger supports for our youth. It is a citywide enrichment program for youth grades 1<sup>st</sup>–8<sup>th</sup>, held at 22 recreation centers for 7 hours per week per center throughout the year. The project brings highly skilled part-time specialists to each of the recreation centers on an ongoing basis to provide cultural arts and enrichment classes that augment general recreation programs. Programs include: martial arts, visual arts, photo journalism, blues singing, jazz singing and appreciation presentations, drumming, dance (jazz, African, hip-hop, modern), drama, poetry, Earn Your Bike, and Computer Technology Literacy. The Specialist program served 1,410 participants and provided 2,545 program hours at a cost of \$226,018.

### Middle School Sports Program

Overall, our experience shows that participation in Middle School sports programs improves school grades, attendance and fitness levels of youth participants. Additionally, the minimum requirement of a 2.0 GPA to participate provides incentive for "borderline students" to improve their grades. Our policy of referring any interested student who does not meet the minimum GPA to either the after school coordinator or the school counselor for monitoring and assistance has resulted in many of the borderline students raising their grades to or above a 2.0 GPA within the next marking period. For example, in this school year's second marking period, 54 students increased their GPA to a 2.0 or above and registered in our Middle School Sports program. School sites currently served by OPR Middle School Sports include Edna Brewer, Carter, Claremont, Elmhurst, Frick, Bret Harte, Havenscourt, King Estate, Lowell, Madison, Montera, Roosevelt, Calvin Simmons, and Westlake. Alternative Schools include Rudsdale Academy, Bunche Academy, and Village Academy.

The aforementioned programs are a sample of the programs and services that staff accomplished this past year. Council made a large part of these programs possible through the extended funding for middle school youth.

### SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

No sustainable opportunities were identified as part of this information report.

### DISABILITY AND SENIOR CITIZEN ACCESS

OPR has an Inclusive Recreation Coordinator who is responsible for ensuring that all patrons are accommodated in OPR's programs regardless of the patron's disabilities. At Arroyo Viejo Recreation Center, there are recreation programs for the deaf and hearing-impaired youth. In addition the Office of Parks and Recreation is looking into discounted fees for seniors and the disabled.

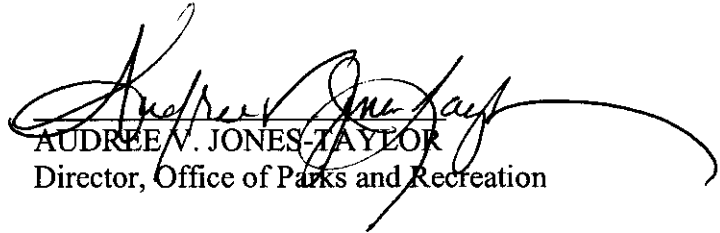
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**ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Staff recommends the City Council accept this informational report on Oakland Parks and Recreation programs and services.

Respectfully submitted,



AUDREE V. JONES-TAYLOR  
Director, Office of Parks and Recreation

APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO  
LIFE ENRICHMENT COMMITTEE:



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