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AGENDA REPORT

TO: Sabrina B. Landreth
City Administrator

FROM: J. Nicholas Williams
Director, OPR

SUBJECT: Parks, Recreation & Youth
Development Mission and Vision

DATE: April 4, 2018

City Administrator Approval

Date:

4/12/18

RECOMMENDATION

Staff Recommends That The City Council Committee Receive An Informational Report On Oakland Parks And Recreation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Oakland Parks and Recreation (OPR) submits this informational report to the Life Enrichment Committee that provides an overview of the department, including its new mission, vision and direction, and to introduce OPR's new summer camp initiative, Town Camp.

BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

At its meeting on March 29, 2018, the Rules Committee, at the request of Councilmember McElhaney, scheduled this informational report on the department's new vision and efforts to improve services for Oakland's youth.

ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES

OPR, the largest out-of-school time service provider in Oakland, is uniquely positioned to engage youth around healthy lifestyles, connect them with positive, mentoring adults, and keep them safe and productive by providing transformative experiences and life enhancing skills. Given this unique position, OPR is re-aligning its mission and services using an equity framework toward improving services for Oakland's youth.

Mission:

With an emphasis on Oakland's youth, Oakland Parks, Recreation and Youth Development and its partners will provide best in class, relevant and equitable programs and services, while meeting the specific needs of people and communities both at the neighborhood level and throughout the City of Oakland. We achieve this mission through intentional engagement and by removing the barriers that prohibit equitable opportunities for all.

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To support the new direction and goals of the department, OPR intends to seek approval from the City Council to officially change its name to Oakland Parks, Recreation & Youth Development.

Vision:

OPR will be the nation's leading parks, recreation and youth development agency, providing transformational experiences, and multi-cultural awareness. OPR will create empowering park and recreational opportunities, and increase equitable services to Oaklanders.

Tag Line:

IMAGINE. INSPIRE. INVEST. Experience Oakland With Us!

In addition to creating a new direction through the new mission, vision and tag line, OPR has begun to focus its energy into specific areas of needs. It was critical to focus the extremely limited resources in the department to be intentional and to have a greater impact on Oakland's Youth.

OPR's new focus includes five transformational experiences:

1. Reintroduction to nature (camping, hiking, animal identification).
2. Cultural and artistic experience (poetry, acting, art making).
3. Technological groundwork (coding, graphic design, web-making).
4. "Excel After the Bell" out of school education (certified teacher-led homework assistance).
5. Physical fitness, sports activities, and swimming (every child by grade five will have had swimming lessons).

In addition, OPR has introduced Town Camp starting in the summer of 2018. Town Camp provides equitable programming by offering a consistent curriculum at each recreation center camp regardless of the geographic location. The curriculum is dynamic and innovative focused on helping all youth grow up fully prepared, healthy, able to reach their highest potential, and discovering the "hero" within. Morning activities focus on community building and creative activities that reinforce math and reading principles. Afternoon themes rotate weekly and are presented in collaboration with private industry partners.

Why Has OPR Shifted To Include Youth Development As Its Focus?

OPR is changing the way it conducts business to improve the landscape of communities, and improve the odds of success for Oakland's children and youth. Through research and evaluation of best industry practices, the department is aligning its programming consistent with national trends and progress in youth development.

OPR's new direction embraces the concept of positive youth development as articulated by these passages:

When young people get involved in the community, they are shaped by those experiences. Scientists tell us that adolescence is another of the great building moments in the development of the brain's architecture. The parts of the brain that control judgement, foresee consequences and see complex interactions are all in play during this phase of growth. The opportunity to lead a discussion, to work with a group of seniors on a project, to mentor or to be mentored in playing a musical instrument or performing in a play help make positive connections in the brain. The experiences children have in recreation and youth development programs literally build a foundation in the brain that transforms a young person into an engaged member of our community. --Adapted from www.frameworkinstitute.org

Positive youth development is an intentional, prosocial approach that engages youth within their communities, schools, organizations, peer groups, and families in a manner that is productive and constructive. Positive youth development recognizes, utilizes, and enhances young people's strengths, and promotes efficacious outcomes for young people by providing opportunities, fostering positive relationships, and furnishing the support needed to build on their leadership strengths. --Adapted from Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs

The shift and focus to youth development will position OPR to further engage to create partnerships and collaborations with community organizations, business and other Oakland-based, youth-tide rising groups.

The focus on youth development does not negate OPR's continued efforts to create sustainable and relevant programming for adults and seniors.

FISCAL IMPACT

This is an informational report and does not have any direct fiscal impact. OPR does not anticipate negative fiscal impacts due to changing its Mission and Vision. However, as OPR implements its new vision and strategies for success, it hopes to garner financial support to enhance its services and increase scholarship opportunities for Oakland's youth.

PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST

The outreach conducted was with current Oakland Parks and Recreation staff. The Mission and Vision are a direct result of two collaborative exercises with OPR staff. Additionally, staff attends Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) and other community meetings to share updates and hear from community as to their needs and desires.

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OPR continues to outreach and engage with all Oakland communities. As a part of OPR's ongoing efforts to reach deeper into the communities it serves, staff is coordinating community outreach days at every recreation center in Oakland.

COORDINATION

No additional outreach was necessary other than posting on the City's website.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: OPR does not anticipate a negative economic impact due to changing the Mission and Vision.

Environmental: OPR does not anticipate a negative environmental impact due to changing the Mission and Vision.

Social Equity: The highlight of the new summer initiative, Town Camp, embodies social equity in that OPR intends to provide all participating Oakland children and youth with a quality 8-week summer camp experience including those children without the financial resources to pay. OPR is working with partners to provide scholarships to deliver a quality summer experience.

Through the Town Camp model, all recreation and cultural arts sites will provide the same quality camps, and all enrollees will share in the same equitable experiences. The Town Camp model focus will be an equity and quality experience for all Oakland's children and youth.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

Staff Recommends That The City Council Committee Receive An Informational Report On Oakland Parks And Recreation.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Nicholas Williams, Director, at (510) 238-7532.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Nicholas Williams,
Director, Oakland Parks and Recreation

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