

CITY OF OAKLAND
AGENDA REPORT

2007 MAR 29 PM 5:42

TO: Office of the City Administrator
ATTN: Deborah A. Edgerly
FROM: Office of Parks and Recreation
DATE: March 27, 2007

RE: **Supplemental Report Regarding Performance Measures for the Office of Parks and Recreation**

SUMMARY

This report responds to requests expressed by Life Enrichment Committee members at the February 27, 2007 meeting regarding Performance Measures and program information for the Office of Parks and Recreation (OPR). Committee members were interested in learning more about the delivery of service at OPR's recreation sites including drop-in participation and geographic distribution of participation. The committee also requested information about partnership and resource leveraging opportunities pursued by the department in the last year and information regarding the challenges the department faces in its delivery of services. Other items requested include information about low participation numbers for San Antonio Recreation Center, recommendations from staff regarding the use of natural versus artificial turf at fields, vandalizing prevention, and staffing issues.

In this report, most of the Life Enrichment Committee's questions are addressed to the level of detail requested by Committee members. Technical difficulties in pulling data from the department's system (RecWare) in a meaningful way prevented staff from being able to return with new data analyses and so drop-in numbers and the geographic distribution of participation are not included. Over the next year OPR will correct the technical limitations of its reporting by building custom reports for its system so that more thorough data analysis can be presented as part of the department's performance measures reporting.

FISCAL IMPACT

This report is informational only and therefore has no fiscal impact.

BACKGROUND

The Office of Parks and Recreation (OPR) offers recreation programs, sports, cultural and performing arts, boating, community gardening, and other leisure activities for adults, youth, and children. OPR operates 27 recreation sites, 140 parks and playgrounds, 54 ball fields, 50 tennis courts, 9 community gardens, 5 outdoor swimming pools, 3 public golf courses, and a host of other public facilities. OPR also offers a calendar of special events that include Play Day in the

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Plaza, the Fun Zone at the Art & Soul Festival, the Winter Festival, Sundays in the Redwoods, and others. The breadth and geographic reach of OPR's programs and services make it challenging to find meaningful and useful measures that really "tell the story" of OPR's impact on the community.

The Office of Parks and Recreation acknowledges the challenge of changing as the Oakland community changes. Traditionally the emphasis for OPR has been in offering recreation programs for children. To be meaningful for today's children, there is now a need to integrate developmental and educational programming with recreation activities. Youth violence has become alarmingly common in Oakland. If OPR is to remain vital and relevant, recreation programming must offer real alternatives to Oakland's alienated youth. At the same time, the Baby Boomer generation is rapidly aging and their needs are different than those of previous generations. Senior activities are in greater demand across the City. And finally, OPR has previously offered very few adult programs and activities, but there is clearly a market for high quality cultural arts, learning, exercise, and special interest classes. All of these new or renewed programming areas are part of OPR's plans for expansion. Efforts are currently underway and some new programs are already in place to address the needs of a changing community.

OPR's track record for the last budget cycle demonstrates the department's capacity to expand programming and improve responsiveness to Oakland residents. OPR opened or reopened sites in the last two years in the Fruitvale district, West Oakland, and the Central/San Antonio district. Full programming began at *Carmen Flores Community Center* (formerly known as Sanborn Recreation Center) at Josie de la Cruz Park when the new facility opened. This beautiful new community center has become the hub of Fruitvale neighborhood activities. OPR also opened the *Campbell Village Recreation Center* in West Oakland. This partnership with Oakland Housing Authority allowed OPR to offer deeply needed programs in a community that is crime-ridden and struggling. Lastly, the *San Antonio Community Center* was re-opened using existing OPR staffing and by partnering with East Bay Asian Youth Center.

KEY ISSUES AND IMPACTS

Counting Participation (Data Collection and Analysis)

1. *Under-Reporting Participation* – The reports presented to the Life Enrichment Committee on February 27, 2007 contained information regarding enrollments in structured programs only. Not presented were drop-in participation, facility use by non-OPR entities, and special events at Recreation Centers. The department's automation system collects all of that information as well, but extracting it from the system and collating it in a meaningful way is under development. Staff are working to build specialized reports structured from the RecWare data tables that will allow OPR to provide reports in the future that paint a more comprehensive view of the participation at a given center.

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2. *Participation Numbers by Geographic Area* – The department’s data system, RecWare, captures detailed information about OPR’s participant enrollments, facility reservations, accounting transactions, and drop-in participation. As with any data system, the information in RecWare has to be entered correctly to be meaningful. In preparing for this report, staff extracted participation data sorted by zip code. During that process, it became clear that field staff entered some of the information needed either incorrectly or incompletely and so the output was not useful. It will take some time to “clean” the data (update customer records) to make the records more accurate and complete. Also, existing RecWare reports do not present geographic participation data in a useful way. OPR will have to build a new report using either Microsoft Access or Crystal Reports. Both the cleaning of the data and building new reports will take some time. In the future, OPR will be able to report on the geographic distribution of participants for its Performance Measures reporting.

Opportunities

1. *Community Outreach* – In order to solicit community feedback regarding programming needs and preferences, OPR will be conducting considerable community outreach. This spring, OPR will host a number of Community Focus Groups, one in each Council District and one focusing on each of the following program areas: cultural arts, sports, and boating and aquatics. The Community Focus Group meetings will be staffed by OPR’s Director, City Council members and staff, Public Works staff, and program staff. When Community Focus Groups were conducted two years ago, OPR used the feedback received to shape future programming and citywide events. In addition to soliciting direct community feedback, OPR hired a Special Events and Marketing Coordinator this year to promote OPR’s activities and coordinate OPR’s participation in citywide events. Cultivating community awareness about the department’s activities and program offerings is a key component of the department’s plan to increase community use of recreation facilities and to meet community needs for programs.
2. *Programming Innovations* – Addressing new kinds of needs requires a new kind of approach. OPR has introduced new programs that are aimed at strengthening families and empowering otherwise disempowered youth.
 - **Radical Roving Recreation:** This is a program in which OPR provides targeted, creative programs to young people who have traditionally not been served. These participants are between the ages of 13 and 19, have most likely been engaged with the juvenile justice system at one time or another, and have difficulty participating in society in healthy ways. Campbell Village Recreation Center, in partnership with the Oakland Housing Authority, provides these youngsters with a home base, supportive staff, and opportunities to learn about how to be a healthy person in the world.
 - **Family Days:** Each month, on the second Saturday of the month, OPR hosts Family Days at each of its recreation sites. Research has shown that lack of family involvement, more than any other single factor, is the best predictor of youth violence, teen pregnancy,

dropping out of school, and drug use. By engaging families together in health-promoting activities, OPR seeks to strengthen Oakland families and help build greater resistance to some of the problems facing our youth. Programs offered on Family Days are geared toward engaging the whole family. Games, sports, and art projects offer family members an opportunity to play together and, hopefully, grow together. As the program grows in popularity, OPR looks forward to partnering with other agencies such as the Library, Human Services, and the Museum to build a citywide program that promotes family closeness.

- **Adult Fitness & Cultural Enrichment:** Adult programs are offered at a number of OPR's sites, but there is an increased demand for fitness and cultural programs for adults. Beginning this spring (2007), OPR is offering a fitness "bootcamp" for adults with early morning and evening meeting times as its first Citywide adult fitness class, offered at the Lake Merritt Sailboat House. Plans for the fall include more fitness classes, dog training, Italian cooking, salsa dancing, and a cardio workout class.
 - **Programs for Active Seniors:** In addition to its existing senior programs at recreation centers (Ballroom Dancing, Senior Lunch Social, Bridge for Seniors, and others), over the next two years OPR will be expanding its senior programs to more sites and will include day trips to points of interest and a senior fitness class. As OPR builds its senior participation audience, more programs can be offered.
3. *Leveraging Community Partnerships* – OPR welcomes opportunities to partner with community organizations as a way of leveraging limited resources and maximizing service delivery. Although partnerships have long been a key element to OPR's programming success, there have been some new opportunities that have greatly enhanced the breadth and depth of OPR's offerings. The following represents a partial list of OPR's newest partners.
- **100 Families:** In partnership with the California College of the Arts' (CCA) Center for Art and Public Life, this spring OPR will present the "100 Families: Oakland" Project at Arroyo Viejo and Lincoln Square Recreation Centers. The mission of *100 Families: Oakland* is to enliven the creative spirit and celebrate the power of families and neighborhoods in Oakland through the transformative process of making art.
 - **African American 5 a Day Campaign:** OPR is in partnership with the *African American 5 a Day Campaign* in an effort to revitalize and restore Rainbow and Arroyo Recreation Centers as wellness centers for the community. The *African American 5 a Day Campaign* is designed to improve the overall health of the low-income African American community by providing education, advocacy, and policy development about healthy eating and physical activity.
 - **Exile Alternative Diversion Program EADP:** OPR is partnering with the Exile Alternative Diversion Program to offer teens and young adults mentoring as education, structure, technology and therapy through the introduction of music. This tool is a way of overcoming obstacles that have typically deterred or challenged the community.

- **Film Arts in the Hood:** Also known as 'FAITH', is a collaborative effort with Derrick Mann, Creative Arts Production Company that focuses on violence prevention through the visual and performing arts. The program is designed to introduce teens and young adults to the art of film making.
 - **Niroga Institute:** Offered as part of Radical Roving Recreation, the Niroga Institute teaches yoga as a deterrent and alternative to violence. Through carefully planned and designed programs teens, and young adults learn how to breathe, quiet the body and quiet the mind, through self discipline and self discovery.
 - **YTA and USTA:** OPR has teamed up with YTA (Youth Tennis Advantage) and USTA (United States Tennis Association) to form a tennis league for Oakland youth ages 7 to 11 years. The goal is to have 8 teams and 70 new tennis players at Davie Tennis Stadium this spring.
 - **Youth Uprising and OUSD's Alternative High Schools:** OPR's Sports Unit is working with these two organizations to form two basketball leagues for boys and girls. The leagues have a total of 12 teams and games are played at Ira Jinkins Recreation Center in East Oakland. Approximately 130 youth are served by this collaboration.
3. *After School Programming at School Sites* – The Office of Parks and Recreation is working to position itself to serve as the lead agency to provide services at elementary and middle schools in Oakland through Proposition 49 funding. Programs can be located at schools or approved alternate locations that are accessible to program participants. OPR has 18 recreation centers that are adjacent to schools or are within walking distance. These sites could be alternative sites to meet the overflow needs of the schools, in addition to providing extended programming to the benefit of parents and children. OPR continues to work on obtaining funding through Proposition 49 to be recognized as an after school program provider and to work with schools to provide comprehensive after school programs.

Challenges OPR Faces in the Delivery of Services

1. *Safety of Staff and Residents* – Fostering healthy communities is at the heart of OPR's mission. At the same time, the threat and the occurrence of violence in Oakland impacts every neighborhood. Because of their location and involvement in the community, OPR Recreation Centers encounter crime, violence, homelessness, poverty, and neglected children every day. Last year, one of OPR's staff was attacked by a recreation center participant, a murder victim was found by children in one of our community gardens, the body of an adult woman was found in a park next to a recreation center. Not only are these incidents deeply disturbing for staff and the public, they are indications of issues that need to be addressed in a comprehensive way. OPR recommends increasing the number of Park Rangers, adding more lighting to parks where there are known problems, and changing the type of fencing that is used in parks.

- **Park Rangers:** The City of Oakland has at least 140 parks. Currently there are two full-time Park Rangers to provide surveillance and rules enforcement at all of the City's parks and recreation centers. The availability and presence of more Park Rangers would help deter criminal activity in parks, support staff in their assertion of City policies and Ordinances, and provide for immediate response if violence erupts at a Recreation Center. OPR recommends having Park Rangers stationed at key sites throughout the City to have a stronger presence in the community, especially during the evening hours of 6-9 p.m. when staff begins to lock up and programs shut down.
- **Lights in Parks:** OPR is working with PWA on issues related to lighting in parks.

Brightness: There are different needs with regard to the brightness of the lighting in parks. Increased criminal activity has raised concerns that existing lighting is not bright enough. In November 2002, City Council passed Resolution No. 77571 which provides guidelines for lighting in public places. At the time, Oakland residents were concerned about excessive ambient light. The resolution outlines outdoor lighting practices to limit up-light and light pollution. These initiatives include the following actions (among others):

- Forbids the installation of luminaries with open bulbs.
- Use of Light Emitting Diode (LED) up-lights because they are not as powerful as other sources of light.

A new policy regarding park lighting would have to be developed if Council wanted to institute the use of brighter lights at facilities. Security lights with a higher wattage than are currently being used would also incur new costs. Many existing fixtures would have to be replaced, the higher wattage bulbs have a shorter lifespan and would need to be replaced more often; and use of the higher wattage bulbs would increase electricity costs. A full analysis of the issue is beyond the scope of this report, but OPR is willing to continue to work with PWA to develop recommendations for Council to consider.

Replacement of Burnt Out Lights: For the last few years, it has been very difficult to get burnt out lights replaced at ballfields and parks. Changing the lights requires that staff from PWA's electrical crew go out to the sites using a truck that has a boom long enough to reach the lights. The City does not own enough boom trucks to accommodate both the Tree Division needs and the electrical crew, so there is rarely a truck available to change out the lights at parks and fields. Many of the burnt out lights have not been fixed in more than a year. OPR is working with PWA to resolve this issue.

- **Fencing:** Galvanized chain link fencing is used in parks throughout the City. In many neighborhoods, no sooner is a fence repaired then someone comes along and cuts through it. Field maintenance crews spend an inordinate amount of time repairing and replacing

cut fences. There are also a number of fences in parks that need to be replaced altogether, but there is neither a budget for fence replacements nor a plan for systematic replacement of fencing. Using wrought iron fences instead of chain link fences could cut down on complaints from residents and the destruction of fences. Unfortunately, the cost of wrought iron fencing is significantly higher than the cost of chain link fencing and requires a more costly installation method. PWA is repairing existing fencing as necessary, but without funds allocated specifically to fencing replacements, the problem is likely to continue. OPR recommends setting aside funds within PWA specifically for fencing repairs to ensure adequate funds are available each year.

- **Part Time Recreation Staff:** Each Recreation Center has at least one full time person on staff, but often this is not enough. OPR has made considerable effort in the last few years in working with staff schedules to make sure that no one person is left to lock up alone at night. Because part time staff are limited to working 1,000 hours each fiscal year, the department often has difficulty meeting its staffing needs in late spring. OPR recommends that each recreation center have at least one permanent part time staff person in addition to the existing full time staff to support expanded programming as well as to promote greater safety for recreation staff.
2. *Facility Issues* – Many of OPR’s Recreation Centers are aging and in need of significant maintenance. Some of those needs, such as some roof replacements, will be completed over the next year, but many other needs remain. Attracting new customers and retaining existing customers is made more difficult because the buildings have so long been neglected. OPR has successfully partnered with the business community – Home Depot donated supplies and volunteer hours to spruce up Tassafaronga Recreation Center, and the Oakland A’s sponsored the renovation of the Bambino Field baseball diamond – but those partnerships only go so far. Routine painting, walkway repair, bathroom upgrades, etc. are often delayed past a tolerable point. OPR has submitted many capital improvement projects for OPR facilities. While we are aware that most of those needs will not be addressed immediately, OPR recommends that priority be given to the enterprise facilities (Joaquin Miller Community Center, Lake Merritt Sailboat House, Lakeside Park Garden Center, Leona Lodge, Sequoia Lodge, and the Morcom Rose Garden) to make the facilities more attractive to users and increase revenue.
- **Misuse of Fields:** Another issue related to facilities is the misuse of playing fields. It often happens that groups use City-operated fields when they do not have permission to play on them. In particular, many groups do not respect the seasonal closure of fields. OPR is working with PWA to create signage that is clearly visible to notify users when fields are closed for the rainy season or for renovations.
 - **Natural vs. Artificial Turf:** Staff are in the process of researching whether it is more effective to continue to use natural turf for fields or to recommend the use of artificial turf more widely. Artificial turf is much easier and less expensive to maintain, but is

significantly more expensive to install and has a life expectancy of less than 10 years. Further analysis will need to be done to evaluate what the City's practices should be.

- **Vandalism:** OPR's main approach to preventing vandalism is to engage youth in healthy, productive, structured activities. OPR also works with PWA on park design and facility improvements to incorporate CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) practices that discourage vandalism such as the use of stainless steel, graffiti-resistant surfaces, and clean sight lines.
3. *Staffing* – Much of OPR's work has traditionally been staffed by part time Recreation Leaders, Recreation Aides and Recreation Specialists. For part time staff, the allocation of 1,000 hours per fiscal year limits the number of hours they can work and therefore limits their effectiveness. OPR recommends additional permanent part-time (PPT) staff at recreation centers to provide for greater program continuity, staffing stability, and safety for staff (by providing enough coverage so staff are working alone less when the centers are open).
- **Vacancies:** There are currently a number of full time and part time vacancies in OPR. We have been working closely with the City's Personnel office to streamline the hiring of seasonal part time workers and to generate new eligibility lists for full time positions. Although the system is cumbersome and lengthy, a number of staff people within Personnel have been striving to help meet OPR's unique hiring needs. We look forward to a more expedient process so that eligibility lists are more quickly available and critical vacant positions can be filled more expeditiously.

San Antonio Recreation Center Enrollment Numbers

San Antonio Recreation Center is a very small center that was closed for a number of years. Most of the programs on the site are provided through partnerships with local nonprofit groups such as the East Bay Asian Youth Center and participation is not tracked as enrollments through the RecWare system. The soccer field is used extensively both by drop-in groups and scheduled leagues. Staff estimate that 300 people use the park daily. OPR recently hired a Program Director to work with the community and to develop more programs at San Antonio Recreation Center and therefore participation is likely to increase significantly.

SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES

Economic: Improved parks and recreation services contribute to the beauty and viability of our neighborhoods thereby making a positive impact on property values.

Environmental: Improved parks contribute to a healthier environment.

Social Equity: OPR makes every effort to recruit and hire Oakland youth to give them the opportunity to be gainfully employed and serve the Oakland community. Many OPR recreation programs are targeted directly to the least served and most needy Oakland residents.

DISABILITY AND SENIOR CITIZEN ACCESS

OPR is fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and makes every effort to provide inclusive, accessible, and affordable programs to seniors and people with disabilities.

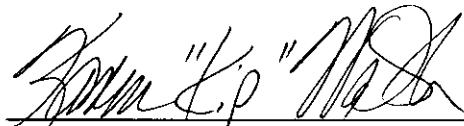
RECOMMENDATION(S) AND RATIONALE

Staff recommends that Council accept this informational report regarding Performance Measures for the Office of Parks and Recreation.

ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL

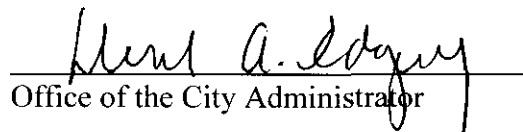
Staff requests that Council accept this informational report regarding Performance Measures for the Office of Parks and Recreation.

Respectfully submitted,



Andree V. Jones-Taylor, Director
Office of Parks and Recreation

APPROVED AND FORWARDED TO THE
LIFE ENRICHMENT COMMITTEE:



Henry A. Edgerly
Office of the City Administrator

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