

Denver Community Outreach Meetings – February 2009
Recreation Center Task Force Draft Recommendations for Community Input

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Denver is challenged to meet the expressed needs of Denver residents, as well as sustain the current service model for the recreation center system. Many of Denver's centers are smaller than needed to satisfy public desire and to provide the desired types of program spaces equitably across the City's system. There is a need to create capacity to increase the service level to all, by improving operations to meet changing needs.

The Recreation Center Task Force (Task Force) convened in June 2008 to create a strategic plan that would guide decision making for DPR recreation centers for the next 5-10 years. This group, comprised of community leaders, neighborhood activists, DPR recreation center staff and citizens:

- reviewed previous efforts regarding the system of recreation centers (including Game Time 2004, Center Needs Assessment 2006 and the DPR Game Plan)
- identified missing information needed to create a successful plan
- facilitated a series of eight (8) two-part community input meetings across the city, with a particular emphasis on areas underrepresented in previous outreach efforts, and
- formulated a recommendation based on the series of community input, then presenting the recommendations to the community for additional input.

GreenPlay and the National Civic League facilitated the public dialogues and executed a community relations strategy to generate participation in these efforts. Through these efforts, approximately 600 Denver citizens participated in the eight (8) two-part community meetings.

The Task Force focused on four key areas:

- Value of System
- Program, Opportunities
- Location/Transportation
- Fee Structure

With the initial community input, the following draft recommendations are being put forth to continue the community dialogue related to the four key areas. The RCTF may revise its recommendations based on this additional round of community input.

Denver Parks and Recreation –

The Value of the System

It is recommended that Denver Parks and Recreation:

- Embrace a Service Model that provides facilities and service by collaborating with others and that supports a local need through the development, training, and use of local community boards to guide service provision.
- Identify key community needs and opportunities by engaging community members in the identification process, developing strategic plans for youth and senior citizen programming, and establishing specific, tangible outcomes to be achieved.
- Develop collaborative partnerships to implement the Service Model by assuring partners are a good fit for the local community, providing training for management partners and holding the collaborations accountable.
- Establish a baseline of care for the **facilities system wide** by establishing a standard level of quality for maintenance of both operations and staffing, customer service and programs.
- Engage center staff by providing training (community outreach) to take on new roles in proactively reaching out to community members.

Programs and Opportunities

It is recommended that Denver Parks and Recreation:

- Establish a standard **Level of Service** for all centers by serving as “safe havens;” assuring quality standards for equipment, maintenance, and strong customer service; adjusting hours of centers as appropriate to accommodate shifting of services or programs among all sites; and; facilitating transportation options in order to improve service overall.
- Establish a standard **Level of Programming** for all centers by providing drop-in activities (game room, gym) at all centers; developing age group strategic plans for youth program offerings that assures that youth programming meet the needs of each community; and developing a strategic plan for Senior Citizen program offerings across the City, broadening the overall opportunities available to senior citizens at specific centers.
- Establish a programming focus for some centers (i.e. Youth, Teens, Seniors)

- Transition existing programs, which are not to be continued at a particular center, to other sites and address transportation options to them. This ensures continuity and access of programming.

The Physical System (Location and Transportation)

The following provides detail to supplement the *Recreation Center Tier Matrix* that translates the recommendations for the recreation center system into specific determinations for each center.

It is recommended that Denver Parks and Recreation:

- Establish a three tiered system of recreation centers including:
 - Regional centers with focused amenities (i.e. indoor aquatics, state of the art fitness area, gym), open 7 days a week.
 - Local facilities, open 6 days a week.
 - Neighborhood facilities, open 4-5 days a week with focus on youth programs.
- Seven centers will be transitioned which will entail developing quality partnership programming opportunities that best fit the community's needs. DPR programming will be continued through a consolidation of services to regional center, supplemented by local or neighborhood centers.
- Determine the viability of having the City of Denver own/build facilities but operate them through leases with other providers at some locations.
- Promote community "ownership" of facilities, while City continues to be an active partner with these other organizations by providing upgrades such as lighting and equipment improvements.

* Transition plan for centers to be forthcoming. Each affected community will be engaged to guide the transition plan.

Fee Structure

Response to Key Themes from the Community Outreach Effort

- #1 The Recreation Center system should be affordable.**
- #2 User should pay for value received at different types of centers.**
- #3 The fee structure should target certain population groups to encourage use.**

It is recommended that Denver Parks and Recreation:

- Establish a three tiered fee system based for *regional centers*, *local centers* and *neighborhood centers*.

- Offer population grouping-based fee system:
 - **Adults:** standard fee, annual fee would increase from current.
 - **Senior Citizens:** discount off of adult fee, annual fee would increase from current.
 - **People with Disabilities:** discount off of adult fee
 - **Youth:** encourage membership through a low fee (\$3-5 per year); continue “My Place” Program; consider free admission at specific times for Denver resident youth (during non-school periods - Christmas, spring break, summer vacation).
- Offer income-based discounts; offer scholarship/reduced fee based on need.
- Offer variety of payment options: daily, annual, family
- Offer additional incentives to use including free days/annual pass discounts and/or neighborhood discounts

Next Steps

The next series of community meetings for input on the draft recommendations will be held on:

2/3/2009	Martin Luther King	6:30 pm to 8:30 pm
2/4/2009	East high School (Lunchroom)	6:30 pm to 8:30 pm
2/5/2009	Swansea	6:30 pm to 8:30 pm
2/10/2009	Harvard Gulch	6:30 pm to 8:30 pm
2/11/2009	Barnum	6:30 pm to 8:30 pm

Denver Parks & Recreation will support GreenPlay and the National Civic League in their community relations strategy to generate attendance at these meetings. Attached is the DPR outreach model.