



October 19, 2009

TO: Board of Park Commissioners

FROM: Rebecca Salinas, Partnerships Manager
Charles Ng, Business Resources Manager

Subject: Partnership Development Policy Briefing

Requested Board Action

Staff is requesting the Board review and make a recommendation on the department's proposed new Partnership Development Policy, attached. The Board is scheduled to make its recommendation at the December 10 Board meeting.

Staff Recommendation

Staff is recommending that the Board approve the Partnership Development Policy at its December meeting.

Policy Description and Background

This is an update and follow-up to a briefing made to the Board on August 13th 2009 during which the Board was informed about the development of a new partnerships policy that will provide an expanded framework for the development of key partnerships with public and private entities. This policy will also provide general guidelines and procedures for department staff to use when considering and engaging in partnership development.

Responses to Board Questions

Following are responses to Board member questions and comments from the August meeting:

- The attachments provided at the August 13th meeting listing a number of contractual partners were simply a sampling of the department's active contracts. They were not meant to be a definitive list, nor addendums to the proposed policy. The Business Resources unit manages an extensive database containing information about all the department's contracts and agreements that is updated annually.
- An inventory of active contractual partners will be included in a new Partnership web page that should be available in the first quarter of 2010. This would include "Friends of" groups.

- The proposed policy was sent to current contractual partners for feedback in early October through November 4th.
- The proposed policy has been reviewed by the department's management team, the Race and Social Justice Change Team, and Recreation Division staff.

What is the project background?

In 2008, a Mayor's Office Fellow conducted best practice research and a survey of Parks staff to identify department strengths and areas of needed improvement in the development of partnerships and contract-based relationships. Some of the findings were as follows:

- Parks' partner organizations bring activity and vitality to the park system;
- Partnerships provide substantial public benefits and increase the capacity of Parks to maintain parks and facilities;
- Partnerships enable the department to offer a wider variety of programming;
- The department needs a more comprehensive, proactive and coordinated approach to partnership development to avoid confusion, duplicated efforts, and a lack of a uniform message to potential partners;
- Some informal oral agreements have led to unrealized expectations and unintended commitments that are inconsistent with Parks mission statement;
- The department must develop partnerships to increase programming and community-building opportunities for immigrant and refugee populations, and to accommodate diverse cultural, religious and language needs; the department must be able to sustain these services during good and bad economic times; and
- Staff are asking for clearer guidance that will assist them in seeking out and developing new partnerships.

Strategic Action Plan

One key goal in the department's Strategic Action Plan is Goal #6 (5) which states, the department will... "identify opportunities to partner with organizations that can more effectively provide services by leveraging skills and resources." The proposed Partnership Development Policy will help identify potential partners that have common goals and objectives with the department.

Public Involvement Process

The Park Board is holding a public hearing on the proposed policy on November 5 and welcoming feedback through December 10.

Issues

Staff anticipates that many of the issues will revolve around public concern over privatization or commercialization of parks and potential loss or limiting of access to park facilities. The proposed policy includes a set of criteria and filters that will ensure that any potential partnership will be consistent with department core values, be mutually beneficial and provide significant public benefits to Park users.

Environmental Sustainability

Potential new partners can provide services and programs that promote and advocate for environmental stewardship and will assist the department in implementing the city’s “green” and environment- friendly initiatives.

Budget

Current Department resources will be used to implement this process. No additional funding is requested at this time.

Additional Information

Attachment A: Proposed Partnership Policy

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