



Memorandum

TO: PARKS AND RECREATION
COMMISSION

FROM: Albert Balagso

SUBJECT: 2008 Summer Aquatics Report

DATE: November 24, 2008

Approved

Date

COUNCIL DISTRICT: City-Wide

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the report on the 2008 Summer Aquatics Program.

OUTCOME

This report will provide the Commission with an overview of the revenue, programming and project highlights of the 2008 Summer Aquatics Program. In addition, the report will address Year-1 implementation of the Aquatics Master Plan and highlight Year 2 projects.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City's Summer Aquatics program offers both recreational swim and swimming lessons for eight weeks during the summer months. The 2008 Summer Aquatics Program opened on June 23, 2008 and closed on August 16, 2008. In all, nine sites were operated by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department (PRNS) this summer: five City-owned pools (Alviso, Biebrach, Camden, Fair and Ryland) and four leased school sites (James Lick High School, Santa Teresa High School, Silver Creek High School, and Willow Glen Middle School). In addition, a pilot program of extended swim lessons was offered for the first time from Memorial Day to Labor Day at Camden Pool and the Fair Swim Center.

Several significant program enhancements were made in 2008 in accordance with the Aquatics Master Plan. Three city-owned facilities (Alviso, Biebrach and Ryland) were renovated and reopened. A new pricing structure including group passes, family discounts, scholarships and market adjustments was implemented in an effort to attract new users and improve cost recovery.

In addition, concerted effort was made this year to explore new sources of funding to leverage resources. Successful efforts in this area included: 1) The support of local "friends" groups that raised funds to increase Saturday hours; 2) An alliance with the Santa Clara Family Health Plan

whereby the organization paid the cost of participation for their members in the City's Aquatics program; 3) a grant from Bringing Everyone's Strength Together (BEST) to support the implementation of a new lifeguard cadet program whereby neighborhood youth were given the opportunity to train and work for the City as lifeguards; 4) funds from the Safe Summer Initiative that were used to extend recreational swim hours on nights and weekends; 5) the lease of swim time at Camden Pool by the Angelfish Synchronized Swim Team; and 6) the implementation of a pilot pre and post season of swim lessons at Camden and Fair Swim Center.

Each of these efforts not only generated additional revenue, but more importantly, provided a vehicle to expand programming and create a better customer experience. Over ninety percent (90%) of those who completed customer satisfaction surveys rated the program as excellent or very good.

In all, over 35,000 visits were made in this year's program. The new discount program proved to be successful with approximately 6,000 individual and family passes sold. In addition, full or partial scholarships for swim lessons were provided to all those who applied. A total of 25 full scholarships and 225 partial scholarships (\$10 off) were provided this season.

The revenue target for the 2008 Summer Program was \$313,000. PRNS is pleased to report that actual revenue generated was \$373,181—nineteen percent (19%) higher than the original revenue estimate. This success can be attributed, in large part, to the significant increase in community support that was generated by the Aquatics Master Plan. The energy and commitment of residents has empowered the staff to think more creatively about service delivery and to actively seek out new partnerships. 2008 was Year 1 in the implementation of the Aquatics Master Plan. With the opening of the Mayfair Pool and Spray Park as well as the advent of on-line registration in Year 2, staff is confident that we will continue on our path to create a quality Aquatics program for our residents in 2009.

BACKGROUND

In August, 2007, the City Council approved a fifteen-year Aquatics Master Plan. The purpose of this memorandum is to present the report on the 2008 summer program results and to provide the Parks and Recreation Commission with an overview of the accomplishments that have been achieved in Year 1 of implementation.

ANALYSIS

The Citywide Summer Aquatics Program is an eight week program that includes recreation swimming and swim lessons. Swim lessons are offered in 4, two-week sessions and recreational swim is offered in the afternoon, evening and weekend hours. The 2008 Summer Swim Program opened June 23, 2008 and closed August 16, 2008.

For the 2008 Summer Aquatics Program, PRNS provided services at nine sites. These nine sites were chosen based on geographic distribution, proximity to other service providers, and

availability. The nine sites that were operated in 2008 included five city-owned pools (Alviso, Biebrach, Camden, Fair and Ryland) and four leased school sites (James Lick High School, Santa Teresa High School, Silver Creek High School, and Willow Glen Middle School).

Revenue

The 2008 Summer Aquatics Program generated \$373,181 in revenue. This exceeded the set revenue target of \$313,000 by nineteen percent (19%). Participation at the pools increased by twelve percent (12%) this year for swim lessons and seven percent (7%) for recreational swim. A detail of revenue collected per site can be found in Attachment A. The cost recovery rate for the summer was targeted at 41% ($\$373,181/\$913,819$), and the revenue generated met this target. According to satisfaction surveys, the percentage of customers who rated the program as either very good or excellent also increased from 85% in 2007 to 90% in 2008.

On March 11, 2008, the City Council authorized a new pricing structure that not only adjusted fees but also included a series of program discounts and scholarships. This new structure proved to be attractive to users. The Family pass (4 participants x \$2.00 admission fee for a total of \$8.00) sold particularly well with twenty percent (20%) of recreation swim participants having purchased a pass. The Scholarship program also did well. The amount of funding allocated was sufficient to fund all requests for scholarships. In all, 25 full scholarships were awarded and 225 partial scholarships (\$10 off the cost of swim lessons) were awarded. A detail of the discounts and scholarships provided is included in Attachment B.

As part of the Aquatics Master Plan, residents expressed a strong desire to extend the summer season. As a result, a pre and post swim lesson season was piloted this year to extend swim lessons from Memorial Day to Labor Day. While there are some challenges associated with an extended season (the start of the new school year limits the number of program participants and reduces program staff significantly creating scheduling difficulties), an extended swim lesson season offers an important opportunity to generate revenue¹ while offering a valuable service for the community.

Approximately 320 participants took advantage of the pilot program which ran from June 3, through June 13, 2008, and from August 19, through August 29, 2008. With the success of this pilot, staff will be evaluating the feasibility of extending the pilot to additional City-owned sites in 2009.

Partnerships

The Santa Clara Family Health Plan (SCFHP) is a medical provider with an interest in trying to address the issue of childhood obesity. They have been successful in securing grants to underwrite the cost of wellness programs for their low-income family members. SCFHP approached the City with the idea of a partnership and the program proved to be successful. Approximately 189 individuals received scholarships from SCFHP to participate in the City's

¹ In general, fees for swim lessons support the direct cost of the service whereas recreational swim must be subsidized.

Aquatics program. SCFHP has indicated that they were pleased with the City's services and is interested in exploring on-going partnerships in the future.

A second partnership that has developed is with the Angelfish Synchronized Swim Team. The Angelfish Synchronized Swim team is a nationally-ranked team that took first place and nine individual gold medals at their national championships in June 2008. In addition, the Angelfish Team currently has two former U.S. Olympic Synchronized Swim Team members on their staff as coaches. Early this summer, the team was looking for a new facility and approached the City regarding the possibility of becoming a resident swim team at Camden Pool. The team would lease available swim time and share profits with the City for individuals who join their swim team. This is a win for the City not only in terms of additional revenue, but it also represents the City's first partnership for a resident swim team. These types of programming partnerships will help strengthen the City's efforts to attract new users and gain a reputation for quality programming.

A third partnership implemented this year was a partnership with the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force. One of the goals of the Aquatics Program has been to recruit, train and hire staff from the neighborhoods—particularly, at risk youth. With a small grant from BEST (Bringing Everyone's Strength Together), the Aquatics program was able to pilot a program to recruit youth from the Gardner community to become City of San Jose Lifeguards assigned to the Biebrach Pool. Participants submitted applications and participated in a ten-week training program to become a lifeguard. Six candidates were initially accepted into the program. Two of the participants successfully completed the training and were hired as official lifeguards for the re-opened Biebrach pool. Three more participants have completed the initial training and are continuing to work on obtaining their lifeguard certification. While only two candidates were successful in their efforts to obtain work as a lifeguard with the City of San Jose, the pilot demonstrated that it can work and that the City can make a difference in the lives of at-risk youth.

Building on the success of this partnership, the Aquatics program also pursued funding for additional night and weekend hours through the Safe Summer Initiative. Biebrach pool and the Fair Swim Center qualified for this funding to extend hours and provide safe places for youth during the critical out-of-school summer months. The use of intervention funds for the Aquatics program has been a tremendous asset to the program and Aquatics staff will continue to work with the Mayor's Gang Task Force to identify additional opportunities to make program enhancements.

Pool Renovation Projects

In June, 2008, three city-owned pools (Alviso, Biebrach, and Ryland) were successfully renovated and re-opened to the public. These pool renovation projects included the addition of a second main drain, plastering of the pool surface, replacement of existing pool circulation and chemical controls for each of the pools, compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, and repairing the pool deck. The pool renovations were completed in partnership with the Departments of Public Works, Department of General Services, contractors, Santa Clara Environmental Health Department, Alviso Community groups, Biebrach Community groups,

and Friends of Ryland Pool. A grand re-opening ceremony was held at each facility and well attended by the communities that supported them. PRNS would like to thank the countless community leaders who participated in the renovation projects and who volunteered their time to make the grand openings a success. In addition, PRNS would like to thank the students from San Jose State University who generously volunteered their time and energy to repaint the Ryland pool facility.

One of the greatest accomplishments of this year has been the increase in community support for the Aquatics program. Through the leadership of the Friends of Alviso, Biebrach and Ryland pools, funds were raised to increase Saturday hours. In addition, these groups encouraged their neighbors to attend the pools and buy season passes. One individual from the Gardner area made an anonymous donation to ensure access to swim lessons for his soccer team and another from the Ryland area made a significant donation to ensure that the funds for additional Saturday hours were raised. These are just two examples of how the community has come forward in support of the Aquatics program and it is truly appreciated.

Next Steps

While Year 1 of the Aquatics Master Plan has been successful in many ways, it is just the beginning. In 2009, a new facility will open at Mayfair Community Center. Consistent with the concepts outlined in the Aquatics Master Plan, this new facility will include a larger pool, with zero-depth entry, a larger pool deck with shade and an adjacent spray park. Staff is currently working with the local neighborhood to plan for the grand opening ceremony and to recruit neighborhood youth for a lifeguard cadet program. It is anticipated that the grand opening will take place in January with the facility becoming fully operational for the 2009 Summer Season.

Another exciting enhancement will be the implementation of an on-line registration system (RECS). Currently, participants must either mail, fax or walk-in to each facility to register. If a class is full, they must physically drive to another location to register. The new on-line system will enable users to register for all nine sites at any individual sites or from the comfort of their own home. The on-line capabilities will also allow for more tailored scheduling of programming. For example, if there appears to be an increased demand for a particular level at a given site, the on-line reporting will enable staff to add/delete classes much more efficiently. The on-line capabilities will also greatly enhance the program's ability to market to repeat users. Currently, generating statistical information is time-consuming and labor intensive. The new on-line capability will provide much needed data to improve service delivery.

Partnerships will continue to be an important emphasis for the program. Staff will continue to be aggressive in its efforts to be innovative and collaborative in the delivery of service. As part of its discussions with the East Side Union High School District, staff has approached the District with a proposal to evaluate Independence High School as a potential site for a future Large Family Aquatics Center. As part of the Aquatics Master Plan process, funds were set aside to conduct two feasibility studies for future sites: one to be located in the South San Jose/Edenvale area and a second in the Berryessa area.

The Independence site would be an ideal location for the Berryessa area given the availability of parking, the partnership opportunities with the resident West Coast Aquatics Swim program and the existing amenities. The feasibility study for the South San Jose/Edenvale facility is already underway and a recommended site is expected to be finalized in April, 2009.

In preparation for the 2009 Summer Season, staff will be evaluating the programs implemented in 2008 for expansion. In particular, staff will be looking to continue the lifeguard cadet program, the pre/post season at City-owned sites, and the discount/scholarship program. PRNS believes these programs show promise and will look for opportunities to build on their success.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The Citywide Aquatics Program will continue to track performance with customer satisfaction surveys. In addition, staff will be visiting other locations to obtain best practice information from the region. Yearly progress reports will be provided to the Parks and Recreation Commission on the outcomes of the Citywide Aquatics Summer Program.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST

The 2008 Summer Aquatics Program included extensive community outreach efforts. In addition, data from customer service surveys and recommendations from the Citywide Aquatics Master Plan were used in developing programs and enhancements.

- Criterion 1:** Requires Council action on the use of public funds equal to \$1 million or greater. **(Required: Website Posting)**
- Criterion 2:** Adoption of a new or revised policy that may have implications for public health, safety, quality of life, or financial/economic vitality of the City. **(Required: E-mail and Website Posting)**
- Criterion 3:** Consideration of proposed changes to service delivery, programs, staffing that may have impacts to community services and have been identified by staff, Council or a Community group that requires special outreach. **(Required: E-mail, Website Posting, Community Meetings, Notice in appropriate newspapers)**

This project does not meet any of the above criteria however the memo will be posted to the Parks and Recreation Commission website for the December 3, 2008 meeting.

COORDINATION

This memo has been coordinated with City Attorney's office and the City Manager's Budget Office.

CEQA

Not a Project.

Albert Balagso
Director of Parks, Recreation
and Neighborhood Services

For questions please contact Cynthia Bojorquez, Deputy Director, at 535-3581.