



Memorandum

TO: BUILDING STRONG
NEIGHBORHOODS COMMITTEE

FROM: Sara L. Hensley

SUBJECT: FACILITY RE-USE UPDATE

DATE: 03-10-06

APPROVED:

DATE:

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the status report on the implementation of the Facility Re-Use Strategy for the period November 2005 through February 2006.

BACKGROUND

In November 2005, staff submitted an informational memo to Council regarding the selection of a Facility Re-Use Community Advisory Task Force and the timeline for the community input process. This process has now been completed. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the Committee with a summary of the process and to communicate next steps in the implementation process.

ANALYSIS

The community input process consisted of the following elements:

1. Creation of the Facility Re-Use Community Advisory Task Force;
2. Community input meetings;
3. Meetings with representatives from affected School Districts;
4. Written Surveys;
5. Distribution of materials via email and the Department's website; and
6. Survey of Park, Recreation and Neighborhoods (PRNS) staff.

The following report provides an overview of each of these elements.

Facility Re-Use Community Advisory Task Force

The Task Force held its first meeting on October 17, 2006. Since then, the Task Force held four meetings to provide input on the approach to be used in conducting the community input process. The interaction of the Task Force has been extremely positive and their input invaluable. As a result of their feedback, the following actions were taken:

- An additional input opportunity for those who might have missed the regional meetings and those who might have been unable to attend an evening meeting due to transportation issues was scheduled on the Saturday following the regional meetings. At this session, participants were able to provide input on any of the 34 re-use sites city-wide.
- Community Task Force members participated at all regional meetings either as small group facilitators, scribes or event monitors.
- A written survey instrument was developed and distributed to each community center to obtain input from direct users. It was also posted on the PRNS website.
- The power-point presentation used for the community meetings was reviewed by the Task Force and information about square footage before and after re-use by hub area was included to demonstrate the potential impact on service areas. This information illustrated that in the majority of Council Districts, the total square footage of each hub area will remain approximately the same or even increase, despite the fact that the number of sites will decrease.
- Re-use information was posted on the PRNS website.

The Facility Re-Use Community Advisory Task Force has also provided preliminary input into the development of the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to select site operators. The Task Force has expressed the following sentiments:

- The City should assume responsibility for major capital improvements that may be needed to facilitate use by outside operators (ADA improvements, major heating & cooling systems, roof repairs, etc).
- In the event that the initial response to the RFQ is limited, the City should actively recruit partners and negotiate agreements with service providers before making any final decisions regarding closure.
- The final Operator Selection Review should be conducted in public meetings to afford residents the opportunity to listen to the presentations of the final group of potential operators. This review committee should include residents from the affected neighborhoods.
- The City should explore opportunities for sale of property as a means of generating revenue to support other programming sites.

The Facility Re-Use Community Task Force will continue to meet on a monthly basis until the completion of the initial implementation of the Re-Use Strategy.

Community Input Meetings

A total of seven meetings (6 regional meetings and 1 City-wide) were held during the months of January and February, 2006. Approximately 310 people attended these meetings. A general overview of the re-use strategy was presented to the audience and participants were given the opportunity to provide input via focus groups. A focus group was held for each re-use site. Participants were asked to respond to the following four questions:

- What services do you believe should be delivered at this site?
- How would you rate (in priority order) the existing programs and the proposed services that have been identified today?
- Do you have any issues and/or concerns regarding the proposed facility re-use? What can be done to address those issues?
- Are there any particular organizations, service providers or other entities in this area who should be specifically invited to submit a proposal?

The input was then reported out, collected by staff and is now being tabulated. Two additional community meetings have been scheduled for March 11 and March 15. The purpose of these meetings will be to present the summary of input collected and validate the findings. Once validated, this input will be used to shape the scope of services to be included in the Request for Qualifications to be issued for each site in the coming month.

In general, the public has expressed an appreciation for community center services and the difficult budget challenges facing the City. As such, while the overriding preference would be to continue City operations of re-use sites, the community has expressed a willingness to accept outside operators provided that agreements include clear, measurable outcomes, performance standards, and provisions that would guarantee a certain percentage of public access to all re-use sites. A concern that was consistently expressed was the need to balance long-term economic development activities with current service funding priorities. Staff explained that current funding challenges for community center operations require a long-term funding solution due to escalating staffing and maintenance costs. While capital dollars exist to construct facilities, the General Fund cannot continue to support the on-going operational costs. Consequently, new revenues are needed to support these programs and the economic development activities are intended to support that effort.

Staff also made presentations on the Re-Use Strategy at the District 4 Conference on Priorities and the District 8 Community Roundtable at the request of those Council Offices. Approximately 100 individuals attended those meetings.

To facilitate participation, translation and transportation services were made available to residents. In addition, media coverage on the meetings has been on-going. The Mercury News published a story on the front page of the local section in January that provided the complete meeting schedule and neighborhood newspapers have also printed follow-up stories on the actual meetings themselves (Willow Glen Residents, Almaden Times, etc).

While the community meeting process was labor-intensive, it provided an excellent vehicle to educate residents about the re-use strategy as well as to obtain valuable input from residents. These meetings would not have taken place without the support of the Facility Re-Use Community Advisory Task Force and the numerous staff from General Services, the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative and Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services who helped to facilitate, scribe and organize these meetings. However, special recognition should be given to John Nguyen. Mr. Nguyen is active in the Tully/Senter Neighborhood Advisory Council. While not a member of the Facility Re-Use Community Task Force, Mr. Nguyen rode his bike to almost every re-use meeting to volunteer his time. He arrived early and made himself available to set up the meetings, assist with audio/visual presentations and provide translation assistance for Vietnamese-speaking residents. Mr. Nguyen was the ultimate volunteer and his efforts are truly appreciated.

Meetings with Representatives from Affected School Districts

A number of the proposed re-use sites are located on school property. As such, any re-use of those facilities will require the support of the local school district. Staff met with representatives of affected school districts (Franklin-McKinley, Alum Rock, Campbell, etc) to provide an overview of the effort. These meetings were productive and the school districts are open to working with the City.

Written Surveys

As a complement to the community meeting process, a written survey was developed. This survey was translated into Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese. Surveys were distributed to every community center. In addition, the surveys were sent out via the Neighborhood Development Center's email distribution list, the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative staff and posted on the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services website.

As of March 8, 2006, approximately 375 written responses have been received. As with the input received via the community meetings, these responses are being tabulated and a summary of these results will be presented as part of the staff report that will go to Council in April on the Request for Qualifications process.

Information on the Web

The Facility Re-Use process is intended to be informative, dynamic and participatory. To that end, information on the re-use process is being posted on the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services website (www.sanjoseca.gov/prns/) as a means of keeping residents apprised of the on-going process. The posted information includes: previous Council memos, meeting notices, the community meeting power-point presentation, surveys, square footage data for re-use sites and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document. The website is being updated as information becomes available.

Survey of PRNS Employees

A survey is also being conducted of PRNS employees. This survey is an opportunity for staff responsible for current operations to express their views on operational issues, evaluation criteria for outside operators and any concerns they may have regarding the overall process. The summary of this input will also be included in the April staff report to Council.

NEXT STEPS

As this phase of the community input process comes to a close, efforts will now turn to the final development of the RFQ. The April staff report will include an overview of the facility conditions assessment, recommendations for the disposition of the initial 34 re-use sites (whether to sell the property, convert to parkland, proceed with re-use or retain as a City operation), and the RFQ for final Council approval. Once Council approval is obtained, staff will proceed with issuing the RFQ and conduct a media release to advise the public of the next phase of implementation.

NORTHSIDE

As directed by Council, a separate expedited process is being conducted for re-use of the Northside Community Center. A community input meeting was held on February 9. The RFQ was released on March 6 and will be due on March 24, 2006. There will be two review panels and it is anticipated that final recommendations will be determined by the end of May for action by the City Council in June.

SARA L. HENSLEY
Director of Parks, Recreation
and Neighborhood Services