



# Memorandum

**TO:** NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES AND  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Albert Balagso

**SUBJECT:** CITYWIDE SPORTS PROGRAM  
UPDATE

**DATE:** March 25, 2008

Approved

Date

3-26-08

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** City Wide

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee accept this report on the Citywide Sports Program.

## OUTCOME

This report provides an opportunity for the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee to review the status of the Citywide Sports Program.

## BACKGROUND

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) offers a wide variety of athletic programs through its Citywide Sports Program. In recent years, this program has been heavily impacted by reductions in program staffing as well as in field maintenance support. As a result, staff has re-examined its operations and is looking to implement new strategies to ensure a quality program. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide an overview of the challenges and opportunities affecting the Citywide Sports Program as well as to seek input from the Committee on future direction on a potential public/private partnership for the operation of the Roosevelt Roller Hockey Rink.

## ANALYSIS

The Citywide Sports Program consists of five major program elements: 1) organized sports leagues for adults; 2) special athletic events for both youth and adults; 3) program support of the Roosevelt Roller Hockey Rink; 4) contract negotiation and oversight of field use agreements; and 5) the coordination of community sports field reservations.

Staffing for the program includes: 1.0 FTE Recreation Supervisor, 1.0 FTE Recreation Specialist, 1.0 Sr. Recreation Leader, .75 FTE Sr. Recreation Leader, .25 Sr. Recreation Leader, a .50 Office Specialist II and 1,456 part-time Recreation Leader hours.

### ***Organized Sports Leagues***

The Citywide Sports Program sponsors organized leagues for adults in three sports: softball, basketball and soccer.<sup>1</sup> These leagues are offered on a cost-recovery basis. The leagues are described below.

#### Softball

The softball program consists of recreational and competitive leagues for women, men and co-ed teams. Leagues are offered in three seasons (spring, summer and fall) with approximately 70-90 teams participating each season. Currently, there are two corporate leagues - the Apple League and the Accountants' League (Price Waterhouse Cooper, Deloitte & Touche, Mohler, Nixon & Williams). In addition, the San Jose Women's Softball group participates in a league sponsored by Citywide Sports.

#### Basketball

The basketball program is one of the largest in the area, with approximately 30-40 teams participating each season. The leagues are offered year round at six city-owned or operated basketball gyms throughout San Jose, covering the east (Alum Rock), west (Moreland), north (Alviso and Berryessa) and the south (Almaden and Camden). Recreational and competitive leagues are offered for both women and men.

#### Soccer

Two seasons of soccer leagues are offered through the Citywide Sports soccer program. There are generally 10-20 teams participating each season. Offered in the spring and summer, leagues include competitive, recreational, and 35 and older.

### **Special Athletic Events**

There are two major special event activities coordinated through the Citywide Sports Office: the Mayor's Basketball Tournaments for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and the Citywide Youth Track Meets.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that organized sports leagues for youth are run through the Community Services Division of PRNS as either as part of their youth center operations or as a fee activity.

### Mayor's Basketball Tournament

The City has sponsored a Mayor's Basketball Tournament for 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys and girls since the early 1990's. The girls' tournament is held each December and the boys' in February. Sixteen teams from throughout the County are invited to participate in each tournament, which is held over two weekends. The most recent tournament was the 15<sup>th</sup> annual tournament. The tournament was very successful receiving a great deal of praise from schools, coaches, players and parents as a positive tournament experience for middle school basketball teams.

### Citywide Youth Track Meet

The Citywide Sports Office coordinates the annual Citywide Youth Track Meet. This year, the event will take place on May 18, 2008, at Evergreen Valley High School as a qualifier for the Hershey State Meet to be held on June 14, 2008, at Oak Grove High School. The event is free and open to both male and female athletes. Events include the standing long jump, softball throw, 50, 100, 200, 400, 800 and 1600 meter runs and the 4 x 100 relay. Top qualifiers from the Citywide Youth Track Meet move on to the state competition with 40 Northern California cities for the opportunity to advance to the Hershey National Track and Field Meet in Hershey, Pennsylvania, that will be held on August 2, 2008.

### Roosevelt Roller Hockey Rink

The Roosevelt Roller Hockey Rink is an outdoor regulation 180' x 80' sized roller hockey rink with a Mate-flex tile surface and boards. The rink is located in Roosevelt Park in downtown San José. Roller hockey equipment is available for check out at no cost to the participants. Leagues are available for youth of various abilities and skill levels. Games are played on Saturdays with practice times during the week.

### Field Use Agreements

Over the years, the City has negotiated various joint use or operational agreements with local school districts and sports groups. There are approximately 15 agreements in place that provide for either the joint use of a school recreational facility for City programs or for the use of a City field by an outside provider. Little League is an example of an outside provider for which there are these types of agreements. Each of these agreements has been negotiated separately in the past, but are now consolidated under Citywide Sports. This will improve and standardize the terms of the agreements developed.

### Field Reservations

Thirty-eight (38) sports fields are available for reservation by the community. Reservations are accepted twice a year on a first-come, first-served basis. The Citywide Sports Office accepts the reservation requests, assigns the fields, collects the fees and finds alternative locations when there are multiple requests.

### **Opportunities and Challenges**

As noted in this report, the responsibilities of the Citywide Sports Office are substantial and the resources are limited. In recent years, the program has been impacted by the loss of two .75 FTE Recreation Leaders as well as budget cuts in park maintenance.

As a cost recovery program, one of the key elements for success is the ability to attract and retain program participants. This is largely dependent upon the City's ability to provide a quality customer experience. However, the declining conditions of sports fields have been a major source of customer dissatisfaction in recent years. The Citywide Sports Office has experienced a loss of several long-standing teams who have chosen to play in other cities due to declining field conditions. As a result, meeting revenue targets for both softball and soccer has become an increasingly more difficult challenge.

However, with the acquisition of the Smythe soccer field from the Boys and Girls Club, the opening of the Leland sports complex, and the recent agreement with the Police Athletic League (PAL), the City's inventory of quality fields is growing. Moreover, the Community Sports Field Study has generated renewed community support for the program and has highlighted the significance of maintenance in the City's overall strategy to provide a quality program.

New synthetic turf fields combined with on-going negotiations with San Jose State University regarding the development of sport fields in the South Campus area and with local school districts for access to school sports fields, represent a significant opportunity to leverage resources and enhance the City's sports program.

However, physical plant investments are only part of the solution. On the operational side, implementation of the on-line registration system (RECS) will greatly improve the scheduling and permitting process. It is also anticipated that the RECS system will enable the Citywide Sports Program to benefit from targeted marketing and ease of registration. The Citywide Sports Program will be working very hard over the next several months with the RECS implementation team to ensure that residents can sign-up on line for fall 2008 leagues.

One operational issue that does require discussion is the operation of the Roosevelt Roller Hockey Rink. The Rink was relocated two years ago in order to make way for the renovated Roosevelt Community Center. The rink re-opened last year, but it has not generated the level of participation it experienced prior to the relocation. Meanwhile, the City has been approached by several different outside agencies who have expressed some interest in a public/private partnership. Given the low participation rate as well as the on-going reconstruction of the Roosevelt Community Center, staff will be exploring the feasibility of an alternative service delivery model for the rink. In particular, staff would like to issue a Request For Proposal (RFP) for the operation of the rink to determine whether a public/private partnership might be a viable option.

Staff believes that an outside operator might be the most efficient method for operating the rink. If a partner can be identified, it would allow Citywide Sports to redirect resources currently allocated to the rink to support other needs within the Citywide Sports Program. It is anticipated that this RFP process could be completed by late fall of 2008.

A second operational issue to be noted is the coordination and oversight of joint use facility agreements. The lack of consistent guidelines and negotiating principles makes these agreements time intensive. It is proposed that this issue be addressed in two ways: 1) through the School/City Collaborative and 2) as part of the Community Sports Field Study. The School/City Collaborative has agreed to establish a working committee to develop guiding principles for joint use agreements. Given that there are 19 different school districts, it is unlikely that a single template can be developed; however, guiding principles will be a major improvement and will help to establish a high-level of consistency across the various school districts. The issue of consistency and parameters for public/private partnerships are two issues that have also been discussed as part of the Community Sports Field Study. As such, recommendations for guidelines and partnership expectations will be included in the Community Sports Field Study final report to Council.

### **Community Support**

The Citywide Sports Program enjoys broad community support. As part of the Community Sports Field Study, a random telephone survey of 600 residents was conducted. The following is a summary of key findings from the survey:

- 86% agree or strongly agree that sports programs and facilities are important to the community.
- 52% of residents would like more sports fields and agree that the fields are congested. (There are 35 diamond and 39 rectangle fields available for reservation; however, most overlap and consequently, availability is reduced).
- There is strong community desire for an improved level of maintenance for sports fields due to the amount of play each season.
- Residents support the concept of shared development. In particular, partnerships with outside organizations to build and expand facilities in exchange for priority bookings of upgraded fields were well-received.

Residents are generally satisfied with the current efforts of the City to provide sports fields and recreational facilities. The City received a rating of “good” regarding the condition of facilities, quality of programs, affordability, availability and safety<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Residents were asked to rate each of these areas as either “excellent, good, fair, poor or very poor.”

## **CONCLUSION**

The Citywide Sports Program has had to grapple with reconciling divergent realities: (1) increased public demand and expectation for quality sport fields; (2) a doubling of the number and size of groups requesting access to sports fields as a result of increases in the number of year-round and select teams over the past five years; (3) the limited number of quality, playable fields; (4) an increase in the number of joint-use agreements for facilities; and (5) a decline in Citywide Sports staffing levels. Inherent in these challenging realities is the opportunity for PRNS to re-examine its Citywide Sports delivery model with the aim of pursuing new and creative solutions.

As demographics change, so is the demand for new facilities and programming. The Citywide Sports Program will work to develop new opportunities and work with partner agencies for emerging sports such as cricket and futsal<sup>3</sup>. In addition, the City will work with schools to identify strategies for reducing maintenance costs such as the installation of synthetic turf where appropriate. Classes such as walking groups on trails and weekend tournament opportunities for residents to remain active will be offered on a cost-recovery basis. An underutilized market that has been identified is the approximately 5,000 City employees who are looking for opportunities to enjoy recreational sports. Consequently, the Citywide Sports Program has launched a concerted effort to promote sports leagues to City employees. Preliminary results indicated strong interest and staff is encouraged by the response. Successful outreach to this group will not only result in greater participation, but also provide additional benefits in terms of employee wellness and morale.

Overall, staff is cautiously optimistic about the future direction of the program. Acquisition of new fields, a renewed level of community support and the opportunities to explore public/private partnerships are all exciting developments. The Citywide Sports Program looks forward to the results of the Community Sports Field Study and to providing more exciting programs and partnerships in the future.

## **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

Additional follow-up on issues affecting the Citywide Sports Program will be addressed as part of the Community Sports Field Study that is currently scheduled to be presented to the City Council in June 2008.

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<sup>3</sup> A soccer-type sport played indoors.

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### **PUBLIC OUTREACH/INTEREST**

- 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)**

None of the above public outreach criteria applies, as this memorandum provides only a status update on the program.

### **COORDINATION**

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

### **CEQA**

Not a project.



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and Neighborhood Services