

Oakland Parks & Recreation 2002-03 Evaluation Report



Allendale Recreation Center

Prepared by Gibson and Associates
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Executive Summary

The services provided by Oakland Parks and Recreation (OPR) are delivered at twenty-four recreation centers and seven pools throughout Oakland. These recreational facilities offered programs to 13,709 individual Oakland citizens in organized programs from September 1, 2002 – August 31, 2003 (and thousands more who drop-in or use the facilities through sponsored activities delivered by OPR collaborative partners). Survey results indicate that the vast majority of customers are extremely pleased with OPR services and are looking to the City to expand those services.

Unfortunately, paralleling trends in business, declining resources are forcing parks and recreation agencies throughout the state to downsize staff and reduce program offerings.¹ Driving this trend is a public mood that has been hostile to tax hikes or other revenue enhancements. Of course agencies have the option of raising user fees, but the revenues generated from user fees represent only a fraction of the OPR's total budget. Moreover, there are diminishing returns if the fees become too high, which may be happening now within OPR (i.e., only 67% of those surveyed rated the programs as affordable). In this context, it is important that this evaluation focus on maximizing the use of existing resources.

In meetings with OPR leadership, G&A was asked to focus upon searching for opportunities to meet the increasing demand for services while working with ever shrinking budgets. Thus, the OPR administrators focused the evaluation to examine:

- ❑ Existing staffing patterns and facility use,
- ❑ Recruitment and use of volunteers, and
- ❑ Collaborative relationships that can expand services to OPR customers and/or improve facilities without substantially increasing operational costs.

¹ California Park & Recreation Society, "A Profile of California's Park and Recreation Agencies", 12/7/2001.

To address these issues, Gibson & Associates (G&A) interviewed all 20 Recreation Center Directors and the Director of the Aquatics Program. In addition OPR administered a client satisfaction survey with 1528 customers. Finally, as part of its Interim Report, G&A researchers conducted several site visits to each of eight OPR program sites, observing program operations, interviewing customers, parents, and staff, and compiling these findings in a separate report (see Interim Report).

This report identified a number of recommendations related to physical repairs to facilities and expansion of staffing that would be best addressed with an infusion of resources. While we have noted these needs, we recognize the fiscal climate in which this report is being developed and realize that extremely scarce resources make it unlikely that the City Council will be looking for new opportunities to spend funds. Hence, to a significant degree, the report focuses on the numerous promising practices unearthed through this investigation that offer the City ways to maximize the use of its own resources and the skills and resources of others in the City.

The City Council will be pleased to know that:

- ❑ OPR facilities not only provide a range of program services directed and staffed by OPR staff, but many other services are delivered through partnerships with Oakland Unified School District, Boys & Girls Scouts, YMCA, and many other community organizations;
- ❑ While collaborative partnerships are common at most Centers, there is a core group of Center Directors who are especially adept at forging new partnerships and who provide a model for how OPR-partner relationships can generate more services without appreciable increases in staffing or other fiscal resources;

- There are also many sites that do not take maximum advantage of partnership possibilities and hence, there is an opportunity for Directors skilled in forming partnerships to ‘coach’ others who have not been as successful;
 - With the exception of the highly successful Passport Program partnership with OUSD developed by leadership from OUSD and OPR, Center Directors are largely responsible for assessing program gaps, identifying ideal partners and cultivating sustainable relationships;
 - OPR Administration is developing a system to easily gauge how each site uses all of its facilities throughout the day. With continued research and planning in this direction, OPR administration could identify under-utilized facilities, match them with unmet community needs, and then explore community organizations to meet those needs through sustainable partnerships;
 - Together the first five observations reveal a timely opportunity for a structured process through which OPR Leadership and Center Directors work more closely together, sharing resources and knowledge to identify opportunities to expand services by maximizing the potential of collaborative partnerships;
 - In particular, the opportunity exists to expand partnerships with OUSD and the Oakland Fund for Children & Youth, co-locating services at OPR sites that are delivered by OUSD and OFCY-funded programs;
 - Other ongoing local funding sources that could be tapped to extend the use of OPR facilities include Community Development Block Grant and Social Services Block Grant funding, either of which could prioritize funding to projects that utilize OPR or other city facilities;
 - OPR staff also utilize volunteers to a very significant degree again maximizing the use of OPR sites and affording a far broader range of services as a result;
 - As with the use of partnerships to expand program offerings, the use of volunteers is also uneven across sites. There is the opportunity for establishing an inventory of volunteer organizations, developing uniform procedures for cultivating volunteer partnerships, screening volunteers, coordinating their involvement and providing ‘coaching’ and administrative leadership to sites to foster volunteerism;
 - Partnerships with neighborhood organizations and local businesses are addressing facility improvement needs at a relatively small number of sites and provides the City with a model for seeking support to address other infrastructure needs;
 - In a related finding, Center Directors indicated that bureaucratic barriers frequently impede utilizing neighborhood groups to address facility improvement need. Therefore, an opportunity exists to reduce these barriers and encourage community-City partnerships that improve OPR facilities; and
 - While progress is being made in using RecWARE to accurately capture services offered by OPR, there is clearly a significant amount of service that is still not captured, specifically, services delivered by partners or through organizations sub-letting facility space and ‘drop-in’ services offered informally.
- While these are important observations and should provide some comfort to the City Council as it faces staggering fiscal challenges, these findings should not mask over staffing and physical plant needs that no level of volunteerism, community involvement, and collaboration with other agencies can address. OPR pools and many sites need significant repairs, some sites are seriously under-staffed, and while adding volunteers and collaborative partnerships to expand services

is possible, there are limits to how far such partnerships can develop without strengthening staffing to oversee these activities. Further, to take maximum advantage of these opportunities may require an investment in technical support, training and increased administrative support to help advance partnerships, screen volunteers, and remove administrative barriers impeding facility upgrades done by community groups.

The dominant theme to this report is that the evaluation has identified a significant number of opportunities for the City to invest very modestly in training, support, and planning that can result in the development of enduring partnerships that significantly expand the impact of City investments in its network of parks and recreation facilities. In a time of declining resources it is imperative that the City remove barriers to collaboration and community involvement and develop streamlined procedures that take maximum advantage of every opportunity. In times of declining resources it is incumbent upon City leadership to ensure that all existing resources are used efficiently, effectively, and in a manner that synergizes other resources. No- or low-cost use of OPR facilities can reduce operating costs for community organizations, maximizing funding received from OFCY, OUSD, CDBG and SSBG. Further, by co-locating services at OPR Centers throughout the City, a sustainable network of affordable, accessible community services can be generated and sustained.

The full report provides analysis and discussion amplifying upon the summary of Findings and Recommendations that follow. In addition to these findings, the report includes:

- A breakdown of Center Director estimates of staffing time expended on program versus administrative functions (see Table I, page 22).
- A comprehensive inventory of how all sites maximize the use of collaborative partnerships (see Table II, pages 30-32).
- A comprehensive inventory of strategies for maximizing facility space at every OPR Center (See Table III, page 37-40); and
- Appendices with more detailed summaries of survey results, an overview to program offerings, enrollment data for each recreation center, and an inventory of the number of program offerings by site.

SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE

Finding #1: Safety and maintenance were rated as good or very good by 83% of respondents, although safety seemed compromised at three facilities and problems with maintenance and cleanliness were noted at several more Centers. Specific recommendations made by respondents are discussed in the body of the report.

Finding #2: 82% of the respondents rate the parks as well maintained and clean.

Finding #3: 87% of those surveyed see the OPR Centers as comfortable and well equipped.

RECOMMENDATION # I: *Address and continue to monitor the safety and maintenance issues at those Centers identified by survey respondents as "of concern." Lions Pool, Community Gardens, Tassafaronga were the sites of safety concerns and Lions Pool, Studio One and Discovery Center were the sites of maintenance concerns. Review and discuss the customer recommendations for making improvements at specific centers. Consider the use of volunteer organizations to make minor improvements identified as needed by customers.*

ACCESS TO CENTERS AND SERVICES

Finding #4: 86% of those surveyed reported ease of accessing recreation activities.

Finding #5: 67% those surveyed reported that the programs are affordable.

RECOMMENDATION # II: *Explore alternatives to charging higher or more fees for services at Centers where respondents reported affordability problems. (deFremery, Dimond, Center).*

QUALITY OF STAFF-CUSTOMER INTERACTIONS

Finding # 6: 87% of respondents rated the friendliness and attitude of OPR staff as very good or excellent.

OVERALL QUALITY OF PROGRAM SERVICES

Finding # 7: 85% of OPR customers rated the overall quality of programs as excellent or very good with the majority of Centers/program (52%) receiving "excellent" ratings.

Finding # 8: Overall 86% of those surveyed rated OPR programs as "interesting and fun." Excellent ratings were given to 58% of the Centers/programs on this item.

MEETING CUSTOMER NEEDS

Finding # 9: While ninety-one percent of respondents indicated that OPR programs were meeting their needs, comments from program users indicated that several sites and programs should be expanded, most notably pools serving low-income communities;

RECOMMENDATION # III: *OPR should continue developing an accurate inventory of Center facility use to identify times when rooms, gyms, pools, and other site resources are not in use. OPR Leadership should explore ways to extend operation, especially at the pools located in low-income neighborhoods.*

STAFFING AND SUPERVISION

Finding # 10: The average percentage of staff time spent on programming is 78% vs. 22% for administration. Mostly, administrative duties are performed by Center Directors with occasional support from other staff.

Finding # 11: While the majority of Center Directors report that reasonable supervision of all critical functions occurs, over a third of the Center Directors reported a need for more staff or increased hours for existing staff in order to provide the type of supervision they see as necessary.

RECOMMENDATION # IV: *The level of OPR Center staffing needs to be re-examined based on the reports by a third of the Center Directors that reasonable supervision for all critical functions is barely adequate or not adequate (e.g., Allendale, Arroyo Viejo, deFremery, Golden Gate, Lincoln, Manzanita, Franklin, Poplar).*

USE OF VOLUNTEERS & COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Finding # 12: Center Directors expressed that individual volunteers could be helpful in providing programming, administrative support, upkeep and some very limited supervision, but no Center Director felt that volunteers could replace staff in providing core program services.

Finding # 13: Centers vary considerably in their current use of individual volunteers and the Center Directors have a high degree of flexibility and responsibility for recruiting, training and supervising volunteers.

Finding # 14: Center Directors who were most satisfied with their use of volunteers and who had the most volunteers, work with a variety of other organizations that recruit and screen the volunteers.

RECOMMENDATION # V: *OPR should recognize Center Directors who effectively use volunteers and should afford time to these Directors to 'coach' directors who are less successful in utilizing volunteers.*

RECOMMENDATION # VI: *OPR leadership should compile an inventory of all local volunteer and community service organizations like the Youth Employment Program, Volunteer Bureau, Community Impact, the University of California and*

other institutions of higher learning, Oakland Unified School District and other organizations encouraging community service. Resources should be committed to generating a consistent approach to cultivating these potential resources.

RECOMMENDATION # VII: *Written standards should be established defining the kinds of roles for which volunteers should be utilized and the expected level of volunteerism that should be found at each Center.*

Finding # 15: Though all Center Directors mentioned requirements that volunteers need to meet before they can offer their services, Center Directors did not share a consistent understanding of what those requirements were.

RECOMMENDATION # VIII: *OPR should facilitate the recruitment and deployment of individual volunteers by: articulating uniform policies on “requirements volunteers must minimally meet;” developing processes to expedite clearances (e.g., centralized fingerprinting); and helping more Center Directors formalize collaborative relationships with a number of agencies from which to recruit volunteers.*

Finding # 16: All Centers have forged collaborative relationships with neighborhood schools, community groups, faith or service organizations to increase the services provided at the Centers. The depth and number of collaborative relationships vary considerably from Center to Center.

RECOMMENDATION # IX: *OPR Leadership should recognize Center Directors who effectively forge collaborative relationships resulting in an expansion of programs and services. Furthermore, effective Center Directors should be encouraged to provide ‘coaching’ to directors who have been unable to form successful partnerships.*

Finding # 17: OPR’s most extensive collaborative relationship is with the Oakland Unified School District providing a full range of after-school programming at eight Centers through the Passport Program, a pilot project that warrants being expanded.

RECOMMENDATION # X: *OPR should explore extending and forming other strategic partnerships with local youth-serving or funding organizations for youth programs. In particular, OPR should continue working with OUSD and initiate dialogue with OFCY to explore ways to extend the Passport Program and other programs to other Centers where after-school programming is limited.*

Finding # 18: Over fifty percent of Center Directors have collaborative relationships operating at their centers while thirty percent of the Center Directors are developing new collaborative relationships to further expand the use of the facilities.

RECOMMENDATION # XI: *Explore ways to facilitate neighborhood groups and civic organizations willing to raise funds for capital improvement projects to the Centers. At minimum OPR could help those groups negotiate the bureaucratic requirements for construction or maintenance work on the grounds and at facilities.*

FACILITY USE AND ENHANCEMENT OF PROGRAMMING

Finding # 19: While the Center Directors have concrete ideas about increasing facility use, including times when there could be more programming, they all mention that additional staffing would be required to do so. Some Center/programs would require facility upgrades as well.

While certainly there is the need to expand core staffing as new partners are added and volunteers are engaged, there are also ways that modest expansion can occur through these partnerships without staffing increases, especially if collaborative partners provide a structured program with staffing that requires little to no supervision or coordinating support from OPR staff.

Finding # 20: During the school year there are only two pools open (e.g., Lions and Temescal). Many of the neighborhoods where people in lower socio-economic groups live do not have pools available to them most of the

year, because the five other OPR supported pools shut down.

RECOMMENDATION # XII: *OPR should continue to explore partnerships such as the one underway with YMCA to generate adequate funds to support at least one of the five pools that are currently closed during the school year, and perhaps through partnership with local businesses.*

Finding # 21: A capital improvement campaign to renovate the pools seems warranted to maintain existing capacity.

Finding # 22: Lincoln Center hours of operation begin late in the afternoon. Lincoln Center also offers fewer programs than other Centers and the facility hours of operation and staffing could be enhanced to allow it to remain open full days and to bring it to parity with other Centers of its classification (i.e., large Center with a gymnasium).

RECOMMENDATION # XIII: *In the interest of equity, enhance Lincoln Center staffing and hours of operation to allow for the Center to remain open and offer programming for a full day.*

RECOMMENDATION # XIV: *The City should also explore a local bond measure that focuses upon improving equitable access to community resources in low-income neighborhoods, with a focus on OPR, library and OUSD facilities. Capital improvements in the pools seem especially warranted to maintain existing capacity. If such a bond measure were to be considered, funds should be included to support ongoing maintenance to ensure that more pools and Centers in low-income neighborhoods are open year-round and with hours of operation that match community needs.*

Finding # 23: The Centers differ remarkably in size and availability of space for programming. Three of the Center Directors report that the facility is too small for additional programming.

Finding # 24: All the Centers have customers who drop-in daily to use the facility, fields or pools. However there is no uniformity in the way drop-in use is recorded. The absence of a

system for recording the number of customers using OPR sites on a drop-in basis, results in a lack of clarity in relation to site use.

RECOMMENDATION # XV: *With input from Center Directors, OPR Leadership should establish clear guidelines and definitions for what constitutes drop-in use. For greater accuracy, G&A recommends that these definitions distinguish between use through facility rentals, partner collaboration, use by leagues, and more traditional 'drop-in' use.*

CONCLUSION

Over the two years G&A has performed evaluations, OPR customers consistently rated these services as meeting their needs. While this year's evaluation activities uncovered some areas for improvement in safety and maintenance, overall the quality of programming and staff-customer interactions were exemplary throughout the system.

The current challenge is maintaining the facilities and augmenting staffing and services in a time of extremely limited resources. By expanding the innovative use of community partnerships and by accessing other local funding streams (CDBG, OFCY, SSBG, OUSD), it may be possible to address a number of program and facility needs. Center Directors have identified opportunities to expand programming and facility use at almost all the Centers (Table II and III) and with structured support and guidance from OPR leadership, these partnerships can extend the range of OPR services available to Oakland residents.

Our discussions with Center Directors reveal that much is already being done at the Center level to recruit and deploy volunteers, but staff reports that they are straining to provide critical supervision. Staff are not especially bogged down by administrative duties, and they appreciate the need for accurate accounting (through RecWare). To add significantly more administrative and supervision tasks, though would impact their ability to address other responsibilities. It will be critical to balance the

desire to take advantage of new volunteer and collaborative opportunities with recognition that these relationships require staffing support. The leadership and support of OPR administration can be critical in simplifying and supporting reporting, partnership formation, and facility improvement efforts.

However, there are issues that require more than volunteers and community partnerships can address. There are some questions about the equitable access to some services, as lower-income communities lack the range of services available in other neighborhoods, particularly in relation to the pools. There are also significant maintenance and facility improvement needs identified in this report and while partnerships with community organizations and volunteer groups may be utilized to address some of these issues, larger improvement efforts will ultimately involve significant fiscal resources, particularly with the pools and in addressing larger structural issues.

Ultimately resources will be needed to maintain existing services, expand programming and continue to improve facilities. Hopefully this evaluation will be useful in clarifying the status of OPR facility use and in generating ideas for continued improvement.

Parks and recreation programs benefit the community in many ways. Not only do they create opportunities for play, social gathering, and positive recreational experiences, they also play a huge role in maintaining public safety and providing places for neighbors to meet and plan.

We hope that the City utilizes this report to galvanize volunteer, business, and community organization support to shore up facilities, expand program services and advocate for bond measures and other revenue enhancements to support a vibrant parks and recreation system that equitably serves the entire Oakland community.

Oakland has demonstrated a willingness to invest in services for youth through Measure K and most recently through a bond measure supporting the Chabot Space Center, Oakland Museum and other youth-serving institutions. By assembling a comprehensive inventory of facility use, maintenance and improvement needs, and site facility expansion plans, OPR could demonstrate a clear need for another such investment. By maximizing the use of existing facilities and community organizations and volunteers, OPR will both develop a core of community support for such an initiative among its partners and volunteers while demonstrating to voters that OPR is maximizing the use of the resources it has.

I.

Introduction

This evaluation is year two of a three-year inquiry. In the first year, the major function of the evaluation was to analyze client satisfaction with OPR services. The first report described a geographically dispersed, widely ranging array of services enjoyed by over 20,000 individuals. We documented the types of programs offered at each center, and the individual center's summer and fall-spring enrollment. We discussed the mission of OPR and challenges faced by all Parks and Recreation Departments.

After reviewing the Year I evaluation, OPR administrators recognized that the system was not accurately capturing the use of its facilities, given that drop-in use and facility use by collaborative partners was not being recorded uniformly. Leadership also sought a review of current use of staffing and facilities, with an eye to identifying opportunities to expand programs and facility use. There was also an agreement between G&A and OPR that the second year evaluation should entail field research and visits to program sites to assess the quality of programming, by interviewing staff, customers, and parents and by observing programming.

OPR leadership also asked G&A to focus research activities upon finding ways to sustain and/or expand current program offerings and maintain program and facility quality **without the need for significant new resources**. As a result, G&A focused on identifying opportunities for maximizing facility use through development of strategic partnerships with community organizations, repairing and improving facilities through partnerships with neighborhood and business groups, and expanding the use of volunteers to provide administrative and program support to OPR site staff. While the majority of findings and recommendations reflect this perspective, we would be remiss not to acknowledge the limits to how far partnerships can be developed without increases in staffing to coordinate those

activities. While neighborhood and business partnerships may address certain types of facility improvements, others require more expensive work. Hence, G&A identified specific safety and maintenance needs that should be addressed as resources are available.

Another component of this year's evaluation is an Interim Report completed in August 2003 that summarized spring 2003 survey data and field research conducted during the summer at eight Centers selected by OPR (Arroyo Viejo, Brookdale, Bushrod, F.M. Smith, Ira Jenkins, Mosswood, Redwood Heights, Rotary Nature Center and Temescal Pool). Field research included site visits to each Center, interviews with staff, youth customers and parents, and structured observations of program operations. Based upon this research, case studies were developed for each of the eight Centers in which we examined the range and quality of programs offered, safety and maintenance, and the quality of interactions between staff and customers. Please see the Interim Report for these findings.

While this report draws upon findings from the Interim Report, it primarily reflects analysis of the summer 2003 client satisfaction survey and our interviews with all 20 OPR Center Director and the Director of the Aquatics Program. This report is organized as follows:

The Executive Summary summarizes the major findings and recommendations, **Section I** introduces the purpose of the evaluation and describes the research methods, **Section II** includes discussion of survey results related to safety, access, the quality of staff-customer interactions, and various aspects of program quality; **Section III** presents our findings related to staffing, use of facilities and use of volunteers as derived from the interviews with Center Directors.

G&A and OPR staff collaborated on the design of the client survey, which OPR administered this quarter to 1528 people. The sample size for the survey has been large (well over 1000 people each of four times it has been administered) and, while survey samples and administration techniques can always be improved, this survey accurately represents the opinions of clients of OPR. Because there is so much internal consistency in the findings, survey to survey, we believe this survey could be administered once per year.

In addition to analyzing the survey data G&A interviewed twenty Directors of OPR Centers and the Aquatics Program asking them to describe their staffing patterns, the responsibilities of each staff and volunteer, and the average number of hours per week expended on administration and program activities. We asked Directors if the Center is providing reasonable supervision for all critical functions and activities and if there is a way to increase volunteers so as to increase services. Directors often talked about their current use of volunteers and strategies that have worked for recruiting and retaining volunteers.

Our interview explored the current facility use, and we toured all the Centers and mapped out the facility use for the summer. This enabled us to verify what the Center Directors said when asked if there are hours when productive use of the facility might be enhanced. We recommend conducting these reviews for the fall/winter/spring use of facilities as well.

We discussed the potential impact of expanded facility use on maintenance and staff resources. Center Directors discussed their current collaborative partners, and history of collaborating with other groups to offer more services.

Finally we reviewed enrollment data for each Center/city-wide program including demographic data on customers.

For this report and the study conducted last year, G&A did not conduct program observations or interviews with customers, hence comments on program quality are entirely derived from satisfaction surveys. This summer, G&A did conduct site visits that included customer interviews and structured observation of programs at eight OPR facilities and this field research was used to develop case studies of each Center. These case studies contained a qualitative assessment of the facility and program services. Such research provides an invaluable perspective as to how OPR Centers operate, the customers they serve, and the programs offered. We recommend that this kind of field research be conducted on all Centers, perhaps conducting eight in next year's evaluation and eight more the following year. The case studies add immeasurably to the depth of understanding of program operations, their impact upon customers, and the role OPR Centers play in the neighborhoods in which they are located. For this reason, we strongly recommend that reviewers of this document revisit the Interim Report.

II

Summer Survey Results 2003

Section II contains analysis of the results of a customer satisfaction survey administered to a total of 1528 OPR customers. From this survey, researchers were able to:

- ❑ Determine certain characteristics of the client users;
- ❑ Gauge the degree to which OPR Centers are meeting the needs of the current client/users;
- ❑ Assess areas of program operation in specific Centers.

Researchers used data from a representative selection of questions asked in the survey to develop findings relating to the characteristics of OPR customers, customer perceptions of the condition of OPR facilities, the extent to which customers felt safe using the facilities, and the quality of program offerings and staff-customer interactions.

Readers should turn to Appendix A if they wish to examine summaries of responses to all the questions or if they wish to compare the responses of customers from different Centers. Appendix A contains charts for responses to each survey question, Center by Center. This allows for a comparison between Centers on any given question.

The survey represents one critical source of data for assessing how sites are maintained



Franklin Art Class

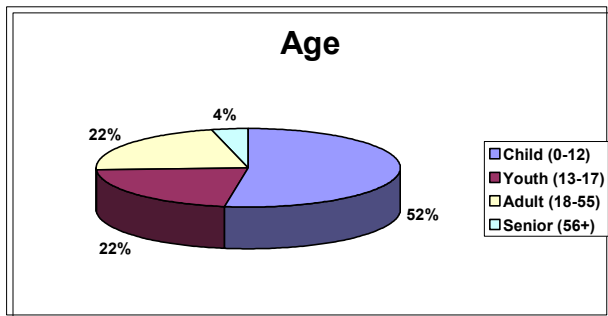
and utilized to ensure a broad range of services are available to Oakland residents. Section III presents analysis of a second source of data, interviews with Center Directors.

Generally, survey respondents found facilities, parks and grounds to be safe, well-maintained, and well-equipped with services that were responsive to customer needs. However, respondents did identify a few centers and pools especially in need of repairs and also identified a number of areas in which programs could be expanded or improved. A more detailed discussion follows.

II.i

Summer Client Satisfaction Survey Characteristics

This section offers a brief description of the characteristics of the respondents to the survey.



Age of respondents - The majority of survey respondents were children up to age 12. This mirrors the age of the majority of the center users as derived from enrollment data. Surveying children this young, however, raises questions about how well the children understand the questions in the questionnaire. The parents of thirty-five percent of the respondents also completed the questionnaire.

Only 4% of OPR customers responding to the survey are seniors, a customer base that could likely be further developed as seniors could utilize facilities while students are in school and therefore not using the Centers.

The ethnicity of the clients surveyed also reflects the demographics of the clients at Oakland Park and Recreation, the majority of whom are African American.

Income of OPR Customers-- G&A looked closely at income data collected through the survey. The survey instrument had clearly indicated that only parents and guardians should complete this question, yet there were over 900 responses to this question and parents and guardians comprised only 448 of the respondents. Of these respondents, only 368 responded to the question. Thus from a customer base of approximately 20,000 families (including estimated number of drop-ins), we were left with a sampling of less than 400 respondents. This is not a large enough sampling to base projections for the total customer population. If OPR wants to have accurate income estimates for its customer base, we recommend that it undertake more systematic methods of collecting this information through studies or requiring income disclosure as part of the registration process as is done with the public schools.



Poplar Recreation Center youth

II.ii

Safety and Maintenance

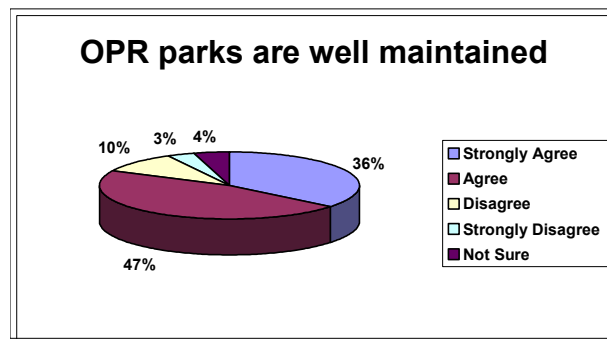
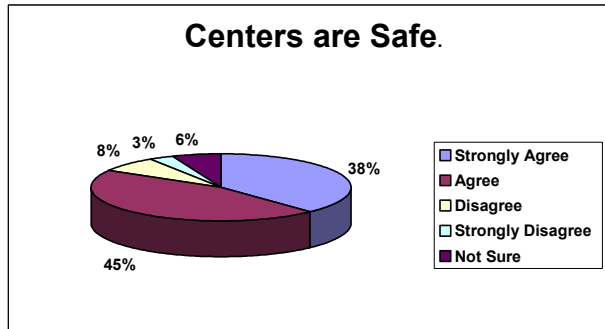
Finding # 1: Safety and maintenance were rated as good or very good by 83% of respondents, although safety seemed compromised at three facilities and problems with maintenance and cleanliness were noted at several more Centers.

The Interim Report provides discussion of specific safety issues identified in site visits.

Finding #2: 82% of the respondents rate the parks as well maintained and clean.

Overall the OPR Centers are seen as safe and well – maintained. The only places where survey respondents did not substantially agree that the facilities were safe were at Lions Pool (where 43% disagreed), the Community Gardens (where 38% disagreed), Tassafaronga (where 23% disagreed) and deFremery (where 20% disagreed). Indeed, across sites, only 3% of respondents strongly disagreed and only 7% disagreed with the statement that OPR facilities were safe.

Across all sites, virtually the same proportion of customers agreed or strongly agreed that facilities were well-maintained and clean. This was also confirmed by site visits conducted during the summer.



Site visits conducted in the summer verified that the vast majority of Centers visited were safe and did not have equipment or other conditions that posed a threat to customers. In a small number of instances, researchers identified a safety or security issue. These issues ranged from potentially dangerous creeks that were too easily accessible to children playing at the Center to comments from children indicating that ‘scary’ people entered the Center, frequently scaring the children. Again, as the survey results suggest and as confirmed by site visits, safety issues were very rare.

As with safety, however, there were some sites where a significant proportion of customers disagreed or disagreed strongly, indicating that these facilities would benefit from improvements. Customers identified Lions Pool (where 44% disagreed), Studio One (where 39% disagreed) and the Discovery Center where 26% disagreed) as sites where improvements were needed. The interview with the Aquatics director (in next section) revealed that the pools are all very old, built from 1920-1950. They need to be renovated. Customers writing in comments to the survey corroborate the suggestion that the pools generally could be cleaner (e.g., Temescal and Lions). A list of specific site improvements identified by customers in their surveys is provided on the following page.

The photo at right depicts the typical well-maintained structure, facility and grounds of the Oakland Parks and Recreation Centers and overall the survey findings reflect the customer view that the facilities, parks and grounds are safe, well maintained, comfortable and well-equipped.

Finding #3: 87% of those surveyed see the OPR Centers as comfortable and well equipped.

Again, as with safety and maintenance, customers were extremely satisfied with equipment and overall comfort of the facilities.

As noted above, there were a number of write-in comments expressing specific concerns about the maintenance and equipment.

- ❑ "...need to renovate and paint the gym (Montclair)."
- ❑ "Please replace the windscreens at the firehouse tennis court in Montclair Park."
- ❑ "The place is not clean, and the ping-pong table is very torn apart (Lincoln, where the Center Director also pointed to problems with maintenance)."
- ❑ "Supplies could use an upgrade in some activities and more restrooms open (Studio One)."
- ❑ "Some of the parks are in such poor shape I don't want to take my kids there."
- ❑ "The building needs updating and the grounds need sprucing up (Temescal Pool)."
- ❑ "There is no access to the bathrooms (Mosswood)."
- ❑ "Add bike ramps (Discovery Center)."
- ❑ "deFremery needs work on the inside in the locker rooms."



deFremery Recreation Center

- ❑ "The restroom stays dirty (Allendale)."
- ❑ "Cleaner and safer parks are needed specifically around the 55th Avenue and Seminary areas."

RECOMMENDATION # I: Address and continue to monitor the safety and maintenance issues at those Centers identified by survey respondents as "of concern." Lions Pool, Community Gardens, Tassafaronga were the sites of safety concerns and Lions Pool, Studio One and Discovery Center were the sites of maintenance concerns. Review and discuss the customer recommendations for making improvements at specific centers. Consider the use of volunteer organizations to make minor improvements identified as needed by customers.

II.i

Access

Enrollment Process and Affordability - Access includes the ease of enrolling for activities, classes and programs, the geographic accessibility of the site itself and affordability. As the survey responses suggest, OPR customers are very satisfied in all regards, except in relation to affordability where there is a significant group of customers at a small number of sites who feel costs are not affordable.

Finding #4: 86% those surveyed reported ease of accessing recreation activities.

This is virtually the same proportion of customers (88%) who reported ease of access in the spring 2003 survey. There were a few exceptions: Inclusive Recreation, (41% disagree) and Studio One (23% disagree). Customers rated all other sites as easily accessible.

Interestingly, only 53% take public transportation to Centers, however, this is likely due to the close proximity of Centers to most customers. Again this year, customers indicated that enrolling for OPR programs was very easy with 82% of those surveyed agreeing or strongly agreeing that it easy sign up for an activity, class or program.

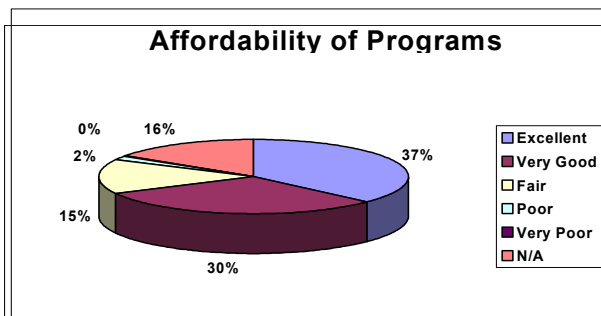


Signage Directing Customers to Diamond Recreation Center

Finding #5: 67% those surveyed reported that the programs are affordable.

Affordability is another dimension of access and 67% rated the Centers as affordable (i.e., exactly the same percent from the spring survey). However, over a quarter of the respondents at deFremery, Dimond Centers reported that the affordability was fair to poor.

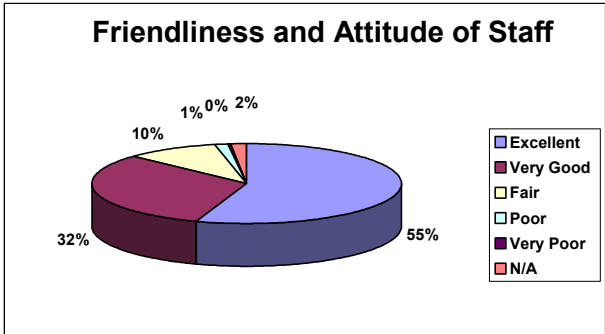
RECOMMENDATION # II: Explore alternatives to charging higher or more fees for services at Centers where respondents reported affordability problems. (deFremery, Dimond,)



II.iii

Quality of Staff-Customer Interactions

Finding #6: 87% of respondents rated the friendliness and attitude of OPR staff as very good or excellent.



Staff friendliness--

The overwhelming majority of OPR customers found staff both courteous and helpful. As important as the exceedingly high proportion of customers giving high marks to the staff, is the almost entire absence of customers rating staff as poor or very poor. The only program where over a quarter of respondents rated the staff friendliness lower was the Sea Odyssey program.



Art Instruction at Franklin Recreation Center

2.4

Programs

Finding #7: 85% of OPR customers rated the overall quality of programs as excellent or very good with the majority of Centers/program (52%) receiving “excellent” ratings.

The overall quality of programs –

Responses were virtually identical with results from the spring survey, with a very slightly higher percentage of participants in summer programs rating programs excellent or very good. The Centers receiving the highest percentage of “excellent” ratings were:

- ❑ Ira Jinkins (90%)
- ❑ Discovery Center (82%)
- ❑ Community Gardening (77%)
- ❑ Redwood Heights (65%)
- ❑ Lions Pool (62%)
- ❑ F.M. Smith (61%)
- ❑ Technology Literacy (60%)
- ❑ Sea Odyssey (57%)
- ❑ Arroyo Viejo (57%)
- ❑ Brookdale (56%)
- ❑ Poplar (55%)
- ❑ Temescal Pool (55%)
- ❑ LMBC (52%)
- ❑ Franklin (51%)
- ❑ Sheffield Village (50%)

Ratings of poor or very poor were virtually non-existent, however, over 20% of customers at the following programs rated programs fair, indicating opportunities for improvement and areas to be explored:

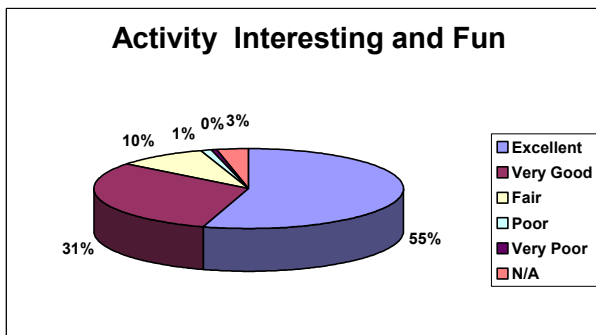
- ❑ Redwood Heights (20%)
- ❑ Discovery Center (21%)
- ❑ Inclusive Recreation (23%)
- ❑ deFremery Pool (25%)
- ❑ Sheffield Village (30%)
- ❑ Golden Gate (39%)



Child in deFremery Science Class

Programs are Interesting and Fun –

Finding #8. Overall 86% of those surveyed rated OPR programs as “interesting and fun.” Excellent ratings were given to 58% of the Centers/programs on this item.



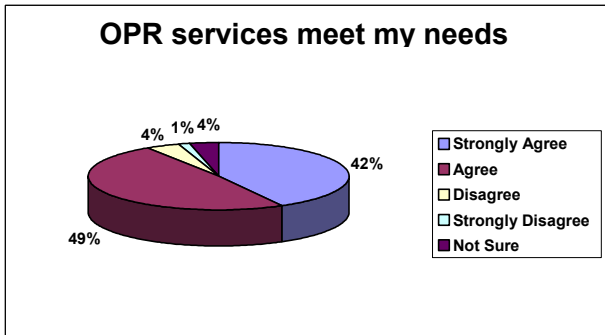
Again, virtually all customers found OPR activities fun or interesting, with 58% of Centers receiving “excellent” ratings on this item:

- ❑ Ira Jenkins (90%)
- ❑ Bushrod (76%)
- ❑ deFremery Pool (75%)
- ❑ Redwood Heights (73%)
- ❑ Lincoln Square (64%)
- ❑ Lions Pool (64%)
- ❑ Technology Literacy Program (63%)
- ❑ FM Smith (66%)
- ❑ Sea Odyssey Program (62%)
- ❑ deFremery Center (58%)
- ❑ LMBC (57%)
- ❑ Poplar (57%)
- ❑ Montclair (53%)
- ❑ Mosswood (52%)
- ❑ Franklin (52%)
- ❑ Rainbow (50%)



Meeting the Community Needs for Recreation Services –

Finding # 9: While ninety-one percent of respondents indicated that OPR programs were meeting their needs, comments from program users indicated that several sites and programs should be expanded, most notably pools serving low-income communities.

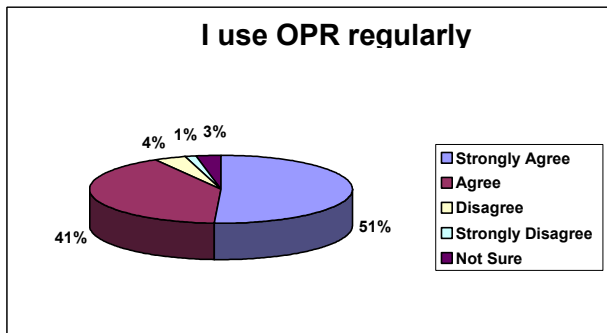


Notably the majority of the write-in comments from the survey gave expression to the need

for more services. In particular, many customers indicated the desire for pools to be open longer hours.

- ❑ “lap swim needs to stay open all year round.” (deFremery Pool)
- ❑ “Need more lunches” (Allendale)
- ❑ “more computers” (Discovery Center)
- ❑ “We need more activities an more parent help.” (Franklin)
- ❑ “more equipment” (Lincoln Square)
- ❑ “they need more activities for seniors” (Manzanita)
- ❑ “more classes for toddlers.” (Montclair)
- ❑ “it would be nice to offer classes for infant/toddlers – music “gymboree” type stuff.” (Montclair)
- ❑ “not enough play activities.” (Mosswood)
- ❑ “there needs to be more programs like Redwood Heights Day Camp.”
- ❑ “would like to see adult classes but the club house is too small for large groups.” (Sheffield Village)
- ❑ “not enough soccer fields” (Studio One)
- ❑ “more public swim times at Temescal Pool.” (3 people)
- ❑ “more computers” (Inclusive Recreation)
- ❑ “need more staff and programs” (Earn Your Bike Program)

Not surprisingly, almost all OPR customers use OPR facilities regularly.



The analysis of satisfaction survey data should provide comfort to the City that the vast majority of OPR customers are more than satisfied with the level, scope and quality of services, with the staff who provide those services and the facilities where they are delivered. Survey data also identified a relatively small number of areas where Centers needed physical improvements and where customers were looking for expanded program offerings.

It would have been facile to take these observations and translate them into recommendations to devote more fiscal resources to expand program offerings and address physical plant improvement needs. However, the charge to this evaluation has been to consider the fiscal context facing the City in the immediate and foreseeable future, and to seek solutions that did not require significant investments of resources.

Customer satisfaction surveys identified areas of satisfaction and/or areas for improvement. This information and the insights of Center Directors obtained through structured interviews together informed the recommendations made throughout this report. So, while Section II described conditions identified by customers and a list of very specific recommendations, Section III summarizes the perceptions of Center Directors who wrestle with these conditions on a daily basis. Out of these discussions arose a number of potential ‘high-leverage’ strategies that could enable OPR to sustain and perhaps expand and improve the quality of operations and the condition of its facilities without an infusion of a significant level of new resources.

RECOMMENDATION # III: OPR should continue developing an accurate inventory of Center facility use to identify times when rooms, gyms, pools, and other site resources are not in use. OPR Leadership should explore ways to extend hours of operation, especially the pools located in low-income neighborhoods.

Again, G&A is cognizant of the fiscal realities faced by the City of Oakland, however, as the following sections describe, OPR Leadership and Center Directors have identified numerous strategies that take maximum advantage of OPR facilities to better meet the needs of its residents.

III

Findings and Recommendations Derived from Center Director Interviews

Our interviews were structured to try to identify innovative uses of volunteers to provide administrative and program support; to examine how sites used community organizations, neighborhood associations, and the business community to address facility needs; and to explore how partnerships with community-based organizations, schools, and other partners could extend the scope and range of program offerings by relying upon partner resources and staffing to deliver program services while utilizing OPR facilities. Additionally OPR wanted a record of the relative percentage of staff time spent on administrative vs. program duties.

We hoped that this form of inquiry would yield more practical solutions to OPR challenges, solutions that were realistic given the fiscal challenges ahead and that took advantage of existing and potential resources found outside OPR. This section outlines what was found in interviews with 20 Center Directors. Interviews focused upon staffing functions, program activities, collaborative partnerships, use of volunteers, and opportunities for program and site expansion.

III.i

Staffing and Program Functions

OPR Leadership wanted to understand whether administrative reporting and data collection procedures were unduly onerous, preventing Center Directors from other important program responsibilities. Interviews revealed that Center directors understood the value of these administrative responsibilities and that they did not require a disproportionate amount of time.

Finding # 10: The average percentage of staff time spent on programming is 78% vs. 22% for administration. Mostly, administrative duties are performed by Center Directors with occasional support from other staff.

In relation to staffing and roles and responsibilities, Center Directors were asked to describe their responsibilities and the duties of their staff. They estimated the number of hours each week that each paid staff spends devoted to direct service (programming) and to administrative duties.

Clearly, across all Centers, the majority of the staff time is devoted to programming. Based upon interviews, typically it is the Center Director who performs all the administrative duties.

Center Directors are responsible for supervising and scheduling staff, planning and organizing the programs at the Center, performing community outreach and sometimes conducting the programming as well. There is some variation in the roles played by the Center Directors, however. At Allendale, for instance, the Director is also a facilitator of the Neighborhood Crime Prevention Council, which meets at the Center. Several Directors transact facility rentals as well (e.g., deFremery, Montclair) and others are sports coordinators for leagues (e.g., Tassafaronga, Manzanita, Allendale).

Table I on the following page summarizes the estimated time devoted to administration and programming.

Table 1. Center Staff Time on Administration vs. Programming

Center	FTE	FTE Admin	% Staff Time - Program	% Paid Staff Time -Admin	Facility Budget
Allendale	2.4	1.05	68%	32%	92,292
Aquatics	26	0.81	97%	3%	\$1,000,000
Arroyo Viejo	6.1	1.5	76%	24%	\$233,364
Brookdale	2.2	0.95	80%	20%	\$95,976
Bushrod	5	0.09	81%	19%	\$212,010
deFremery	3.1	0.5	78%	18%	\$151,054
Dimond	3.3	1.8	88%	12%	\$132,468
F.M. Smith	2.2	0.3	86%	14%	\$72,852
Franklin	2.2	0.5	86%	14%	\$105,884
Golden Gate	1.8	1	74%	26%	\$87,464
Ira Jenkins	5.3	0.74	86%	14%	\$184,188
Lincoln	2.1	0.55	89%	11%	\$94,412
Manzanita	3	0.8	74%	26%	\$179,544
Montclair	6.6	1.25	74%	26%	\$276,204
Mosswood	3.8	0.83	78.50%	22%	\$145,858
Poplar	3.3	0.49	85%	15%	\$155,650
Rainbow	3.3	1.22	63%	37%	\$155,100
Redwood Heights	14	3.43	75%	25%	\$517,836
Sheffield Village	2.2	0.7	85.50%	15%	\$93,648
Studio One	7.7	1	86%	14%	\$295,686
Tassafaronga	3.7	1.14	69%	31%	\$166,152
Averages			78%	22%	

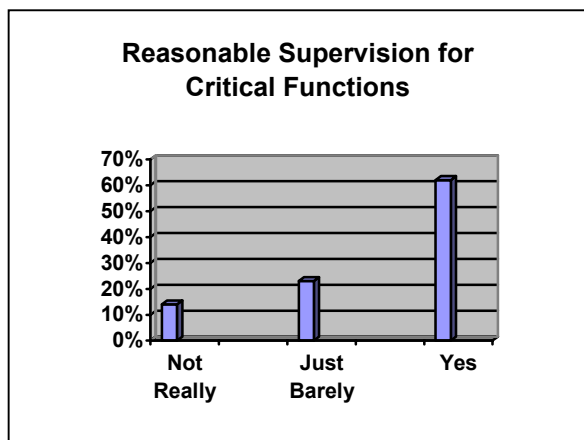
III.i

Staffing and Supervision

Center Directors and OPR staff are responsible for supervision of children and coordination of all programming, with Center Directors coordinating support staff. While most of the Centers engage volunteers, the Directors report that volunteers are rarely used to provide supervision.

Finding #11: While the majority of Center Directors report that reasonable supervision of all critical functions occurs, over a third of the Center Directors reported a need for more staff or increased hours for existing staff in order to provide the type of supervision they see as necessary.

When asked if the Center staff are providing reasonable supervision for all critical functions and activities most of the staff said yes. But even those indicating “yes” had qualifications.



Of the Centers where directors stated the supervision is currently **reasonable**:

- ❑ Aquatics Director expressed a need for a pool manager throughout the year at each facility employed for more than 1000 hours a year.

- ❑ Brookdale Director felt that, though supervision was currently reasonable, increased money for staff would provide more/greater supervision.
- ❑ Montclair Director suggested adequate supervision is possible only because of the additional staffing made possible by the high level of fees generated by the Center.
- ❑ Tassafaronga Director reported that supervision is currently reasonable but that staff need to be working more hours.

Of the Centers where directors stated supervision is **barely adequate**:

- ❑ Allendale Director noted that more teens and older youth are coming to the facility over the past year and that another full-time person would be needed to provide supervision and programming. Currently he is trying to hire high school recreation aides through the Youth Employment Program (YEP) to be available during the summer.
- ❑ Arroyo Viejo Director mentioned that the surrounding neighborhood has a high profile for drug use and violence, which suggests a need for more staff supervision during program time.
- ❑ deFremery recorded a need for staff to rove inside and outside while classes were ongoing, given that there is a multi-acre park surrounding the facility and it has many sports fields, play structures and a pool which community members book or drop-in and use year round. These activities, she feels, could be better supervised.
- ❑ Lincoln Director mentioned that there are 100-200 children from the adjacent school playing on the center playground every

day. The playground is asphalt and the children can and do fall. This facility has the lowest FTE, even though it is a large facility. He feels that more staff is needed.

- Manzanita Director stated a need for two more staff for middle school children who want to join, but are waitlisted for the Passport Program. She is currently trying to recruit a Mien -speaking staff person to meet the needs of the growing Mien -speaking customers.

Of the Centers where directors stated supervision is ***not really adequate***:

- Franklin Director stated a need for another full-time person or two part-time people.

- Golden Gate Director said that there is a need for greater supervision for special events like Halloween, when the center can only operate if volunteers are available.
- Poplar Director stated a need for more people and a larger budget. He suggests the greatest need is for summer and fall operation.

RECOMMENDATION # IV: The level of OPR Center staffing needs to be re-examined based on the reports by a third of the Center Directors that reasonable supervision for all critical functions is barely adequate or not adequate (e.g., Allendale, Arroyo Viejo, deFremery, Golden Gate, Lincoln, Manzanita, Franklin, Poplar).

III.iii

Use of Volunteers and Collaborative Relationships

During interviews with Center Directors, G&A explored the current use of volunteers, the use of volunteers for supervision and for other functions, Center Director plans to increase the use of volunteers and about the impact such increased use of volunteers would have on programming and on their own workload.

Finding #12: Center Directors indicated that individual volunteers could be helpful in providing programming, administrative support, upkeep and some very limited supervision, but no Center Director felt that volunteers could replace staff in providing core program services.

Based upon interview data, the experience of Center Directors with volunteers was mixed. Though they all felt that ideally volunteers could assist in programming, it is often difficult for Directors to recruit a large number of volunteers who are reliable and willing to commit to a regular schedule. While Directors wanted volunteers to help with supervision, especially of playground activities, many also expressed frustrations with volunteers who don't show up as planned. This is one reason why volunteers can't replace staff in providing needed supervision.

The majority of the centers have between two and 15 volunteers who devote services (teaching class, coaching, tutoring, working with children, supervising games). However, thirty percent of the Centers have minimal or no use of volunteers. They include Arroyo Viejo, Bushrod, Dimond, FM Smith, Ira Jinkins, Mosswood, Redwood Heights, Rotary Nature Center.

Finding #13: Centers vary considerably in their current use of individual volunteers and the Center Directors have a high degree of flexibility and responsibility for recruiting, training and supervising volunteers.

RECOMMENDATION # V: OPR should recognize Center Directors who effectively use volunteers and should afford time to these Directors to 'coach' directors who are less successful in utilizing volunteers.

A third of the Center Directors reported that use of more volunteers would mean that paid staff would have to spend time training and monitoring volunteers instead of providing direct services. Center Directors feel that adequately trained volunteers would have a great deal to contribute and in the long run would have a positive impact on staffing, by enhancing it.

While some Center Directors lamented how infrequently volunteers could be relied upon, there were notable exceptions to this. There are Centers where volunteers contribute substantially to programs, consistently and reliably performing key roles (e.g., mentor program at Brookdale; Passport Program tutoring at Lincoln; "shadow life guarding" at the pools). Center Directors who were most satisfied with their use of volunteers worked through collaborative arrangements with other agencies to recruit and train the volunteers.

Several Directors reported that they used to get volunteers from the Volunteer Bureau and those were successful arrangements, but that the Volunteer Bureau was not being used currently. Center Directors weren't sure if the agency was still operating and G&A efforts to locate it were unsuccessful, suggesting that the agency had closed. Nonetheless, an important lesson can be learned from Center

relationships with the Volunteer Bureau—that while unaffiliated individuals who volunteer may prove unreliable, volunteers affiliated with organizations can provide invaluable support.

A few examples of how partnerships with volunteer organizations can result in effective use of volunteers include:

- ❑ The Aquatics program and Lincoln Center have the largest number of volunteers and they organize most of their volunteer activities through collaborative relationships with existing organizations. For example the Aquatics Director works with the Junior Lifeguard Program to engage 10 youth for each of seven pools every summer to teach swimming and be “shadow lifeguards.”
- ❑ The Lincoln Center Director works with the Oakland Asian Student Services, from the UC Berkeley campus, to recruit 30 volunteers collectively offering 75 hours a week of individual tutorial support through the Passport Program offered at Lincoln.
- ❑ Several other Centers work with the Youth Employment Program to gain the services of volunteers (i.e. deFremery, Franklin, Tassafaronga).

Finding #14: Center Directors who were most satisfied with their use of volunteers and who had the most volunteers, work with organizations that recruit and screen the volunteers.

RECOMMENDATION # VI: OPR leadership should compile an inventory of all local volunteer and community service organizations like the Youth Employment Program, Volunteer Bureau, Community Impact, the University of California and other institutions of higher learning, Oakland Unified School District and other organizations encouraging community service. Resources should be committed to generating a consistent approach to cultivating these potential resources.

RECOMMENDATION # VII: Written standards should be established defining the kinds of roles for which volunteers should be utilized and the expected level of volunteerism that should be found at each Center.

“You get what you measure,” is a common observation made by evaluators. If OPR Leadership articulates a clear, specific expectation as to the type and level of volunteerism that it expects at every Center and develops a way to measure this, Center Directors will make it a priority to cultivate the necessary relationships. But in the interest of efficiency, compiling the inventory of possible volunteer organizations should be a central OPR function. It would be inefficient to have 20 Directors each contacting the same organizations, seeking the same information, to compile 20 different lists.

Finding # 15: Though all Center Directors mentioned requirements that volunteers need to meet before they can offer their services, Center Directors did not share a consistent understanding of what those requirements were.

The following is the range of requirements listed:

- ❑ Clearance by Oakland Parks and Recreation Department
- ❑ Have a history of working with kids
- ❑ Demonstrate the ability to work with the community
- ❑ Be a member of the community
- ❑ Get Fingerprint clearance
- ❑ Have a Tuberculosis test clearance
- ❑ Be trained or certified in as a lifeguard (Aquatics program)

These “steps” are often reported as “obstacles” to increasing the number of volunteers.

Recommendation # VIII: OPR should facilitate the recruitment and deployment of individual volunteers by: articulating uniform policies on “requirements volunteers must minimally

meet;” developing processes to expedite clearances (e.g., centralized fingerprinting); and helping more Center Directors formalize collaborative relationships with a number of agencies from which to recruit volunteers.

In addition to using volunteers to extend services, all Centers have collaborative relationships with community organizations through which these organizations provide direct services to OPR customers using OPR facilities.

Finding #16: All Centers have forged collaborative relationships with neighborhood schools, community groups, faith or service organizations to increase the services provided at the Centers. The depth and number of collaborative relationships vary considerably from Center to Center.

As with the use of volunteers, the differences in the extent to which Centers utilize collaborative partnerships to extend program services, represents an opportunity for information sharing, coaching, and leadership support and guidance to extend ‘best practices’ in collaboration.

RECOMMENDATION # IX: OPR Leadership should recognize Center Directors who effectively forge collaborative relationships resulting in an expansion of programs and services. Furthermore, effective Center Directors should be encouraged to provide ‘coaching’ to directors who have been unable to form successful partnerships.

Finding #17: OPR’s most extensive collaborative relationship is with the Oakland Unified School District providing a full range of after-school programming at eight Centers through the Passport Program, a pilot project that warrants being expanded.

The Passport Program provides full, comprehensive, daily after-school programming for elementary – aged youth each school day Monday through Friday from 3 – 6 PM, plus extended hours on minimum days. Programs are held both at the recreation center and at the adjacent school site with supervised transportation provided between the sites. Depending on the site, after-school program elements include: homework support, tutoring, recreation and sports instruction, art, dance, drama, life-skills building (i.e., cooking, sewing, crafts), and computer education.

Thus far the Passport Program is being piloted in eight Centers in close proximity to partner schools. All the Passport Program Centers are located within one mile of Elementary and Middle Schools. While there would still be a need to facilitate the transportation to the Center after school, the Passport Program could conceivably be extended to the other Centers. As importantly, the OUSD-OPR partnership represents a model that could be replicated by other local youth-serving organizations.

RECOMMENDATION # X: OPR should explore extending and forming other strategic partnerships with local youth-serving organizations or funding organizations for youth programs. In particular, OPR should continue working with OUSD and initiate dialogue with OFCY to explore ways to extend the Passport Program to other Centers where after-school programming is limited.

It is precisely when fiscal resources shrink that the integration of existing resources is most critical. Like most urban communities, Oakland receives annual block grants from the Federal government, e.g. Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and Social Services Block Grants (SSBG). Annually, Oakland also provides almost \$10 million in funds to dozens of youth-serving agencies through its Oakland Fund for Children & Youth (OFCY). All three of these funding sources award grants to programs serving youth, and some to OPR programs. It could be possible to integrate pools of funds from each of these sources and perhaps other local funding

sources to create a stable funding stream to fund a system of OPR and OUSD-based services. In this way, these block grants and local funds would be used to maximize the use of local public facilities and create an infrastructure of services supporting broadly held community goals for youth. Currently, funds from these sources often support programs operating in isolation, especially CDBG and SSBG. OFCY has placed a priority on funding programs that collaborate with other youth-serving organizations. However, this level of fostering collaboration falls short of pooling a significant level of funding and working with OUSD, OPR and other community-based agencies to create more programs like the Passport Program.

Beyond maximizing the use of facilities, programs like the Passport Program offer programs that are more strongly aligned. All youth-serving organizations are interested in contributing to improving student success in school. There is significant research that shows that student support programs that are strongly aligned with the actual curriculum and school standards achieve more positive results than do programs that simply offer unaligned support. 'Alignment' here means that student support programs utilize curriculum and tutoring strategies that precisely reinforce methods and content being introduced in the schools. The kind of planning required to create strong alignment only makes sense if the programs enjoy a sustainable funding base ensuring program continuity.

There are certainly political and practical barriers to such collaboration. Local district boards for CDBG and SSBG and the OFCY Planning and Oversight Committee all have historic roles in distributing their funds. Any centralized effort to dedicate significant levels of their funds would have to do so in a way that honored this historic role. However, the potential impact from creating a sustainable network of youth programs might be worth the effort involved in finding a way to make the development of such a funding pool possible.

Finding # 18: Over fifty percent of Center Directors have collaborative relationships operating at their centers while thirty percent of the Center Directors are developing new collaborative relationships to further expand the use of the facilities.

There is a great opportunity for having Center Directors who are effectively pursuing new partnerships to 'coach' other directors as to how they could do the same thing. Examples of good plans for new forms of collaboration include:

- ❑ The Aquatics Program Director is currently collaborating with YMCA who will provide support to keep more pools open for several more months into the school year.
- ❑ At deFremery the Center Director is trying to facilitate a partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs to increase their use of the Center.
- ❑ Frankin's Center Director is negotiating with the Friday Night Live program to expand programming to older teens, specifically to mix their music and cut CD's.
- ❑ Currently the Golden Gate Director is starting a Junior High School group in the evenings on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights from 6 – 8 PM.
- ❑ Lincoln Center Director is negotiating with Lincoln School to use the Center's gymnasium for school's PE classes.
- ❑ Plans are being laid by Poplar Center Director to collaborate with OUSD to use Poplar as a site for services to special education students.
- ❑ Studio One Director is also collaborating with OUSD to increase the daytime use of Studio One facilities.

These partnerships illustrate how OPR Center's can extend and expand their impact through linking their facility resources and neighborhood locations with community organizations having a shared interest in working with youth, but not having their own facilities. OPR Leadership should do all it can

to maximize the use of partnerships to extend program services.

Another form of collaboration is partnerships between OPR Centers and local neighborhood groups or businesses. These partnerships generally focus on making a variety of modest capital improvements in Center facilities. For example, five Center Directors reported collaborative relationships with the Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation, who perform fundraising events for the Centers. Montclair has perhaps the most extensive network of other neighborhood – based groups who raise funds for and often perform capital improvements to the site. For example, the Montclair Business Association conducts an annual fundraiser for the Center; a community group put up a play structure in the park, the Lions Club restored the picnic area and hosts annual events, and Pacific Union Real Estate raised \$30,000 for the Center.

However, the Montclair Center Director pointed to the escalation of OPR bureaucratic regulations pertaining to community groups

making improvements to the sites, hurdles, which prevent them from continuing to do so. OPR administration, he pointed out, could play a more encouraging role and help facilitate community group efforts at improvement projects. Montclair serves as a good example of how an Advisory Council can oversee the improvement projects initiated by community members, advising the Center Director on finance and other issues.

RECOMMENDATION # XI: Explore ways to facilitate neighborhood groups and civic organizations willing to raise funds for capital improvement projects to the Centers. At minimum OPR could help those groups negotiate the bureaucratic requirements for construction or maintenance work on the grounds and at facilities.

Beginning on the next page, Table 2 summarizes how sites us volunteers and collaboration to expand program offerings.



The following table depicts the range of responses by Center Directors to the interview questions about volunteers and collaborations.

Table 2. Use of Individual Volunteers/Collaborative Relationships			
Center	Current Use of Volunteers	Current Collaborative Relationships	Ideas for Increasing Volunteers/Collaborations
Allendale	Several teens assist with programming.	OUSD -Allendale School - Passport Program, noon recess use of Allendale Center, use of ping-pong and pool table during PE classes. Allendale is also a Polling Center and used for Town Hall Meetings, and by Neighborhood Crime Prevention Committee. Friends of Park and Recreation raise funds for facility upkeep. Local toy store donates arts and crafts supplies.	Partner with YMCA and Boys and Girls Club. Center Director would like to host truancy program, offer ESL classes.
Aquatics	Youth ages 12 - 15 are trained to provide swimming lessons and be "shadow" lifeguards. Average of 10 of these volunteers at each pool for the summer.	Junior Lifeguard Program; Castlemont and McClymonds Pools belong to OUSD but are staffed by OPR. Local non-profit agencies (Oakland Community Pools Project, Oakland Undercurrent Youth Swim Team, Oakland Barracuda Aquatics, Temescal Aquatic Masters, Special Olympics) use Temescal Pool, Live Oak Pool, and Lions Pool between 6 - 7 AM and between 4:30 - 8PM in the Summer.	Collaboration being fostered with YMCA to contribute resources and extend the months of operation of the three OPR pools currently closed all Fall/Winter/Spring. Volunteers for pools need certification or specialization in swimming or related training. People with specialized skills (e.g., personal trainers) make good volunteers. Community members will continue to organize annual swim-a-thons to raise money for the Aquatics program.
Arroyo Viejo	Minimal volunteer effort The Center Director indicated that local crime inhibits volunteerism.	OUSD - Passport Program.	Would like to offer Adult English/Spanish program during the daytime and computer programs in the evening through paid staff.
Brookdale	Two weekly volunteers (total of 9 hours a week) for Mentor Program and Band/Drill Team.	Discovery Center.	Would like to host pre-school program in mornings.
Bushrod	Volunteers have offered to teach computer class but have not shown up.	OUSD - Passport Program; American with Disabilities and Child Development Centers use the gym.	
Dimond	Minimal volunteer effort.	ARC, Oakland Schools, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Friends of Sausal Creek.	
deFremery	Four volunteers hold classes such as drama, hip hop, gardening, jewelry making, camping.	Friends of deFremery raise funds; Scotland Youth Center rents the upstairs and provides GED, Job Training daily; Discovery Center has an installation at deFremery; OUSD holds classes in the Art Room; Tool Works Organization provides cooking classes weekly; Youth Employment Program has staff person working at deFremery daily teaching computer skills	Efforts are underway to recruit more volunteers from West Oakland Senior Center, and by going to community meetings to get interested people to volunteer.
Franklin	Four students each working 19 hrs/wk.	OUSD-Passport Program; Youth Employment Program	Could use more volunteers for grounds maintenance and secretarial work.
FM Smith	One volunteer assists paid staff with programs.	Neighborhood Watch.	College and high school students would be ideal to have as volunteers to sweep the yard and help with maintenance.



Table 2. Use of Individual Volunteers/Collaborative Relationships			
Center	Current Use of Volunteers	Current Collaborative Relationships	Ideas for Increasing Volunteers/Collaborations
Golden Gate	Two weekly parent volunteers coach football.	OUSD-Passport Program. Center used for community meetings with Neighborhood Crime Prevention committee and other groups. Other partnerships with: Downs Memorial; Girl Scouts; Golden Gate Elementary; Golden Gate Child Care Center; Golden Gate Library; Emeryville Park and Recreation.	Anticipates getting 6 volunteers from National Holistic Institute and 4 - 5 volunteers from the Senior Center to help children with their homework. Would like volunteers for tutoring, sports and carpooling kids to sports events on weekends.
Ira Jinkins	Minimal volunteers- occasional parent volunteering.	OUSD-Passport Program. Groups using the center in the summer include: US Post Office, Federal Express, Dream League (Asian Basketball), Rebels Basketball Youth Organization, East Oakland Seniors, Church of the Living God, Boys & Girls Club, Brookfield School; Gregory Jones Karate School.	Volunteers would be most useful providing direct services to kids with smaller portion of their time allocated for administrative duties and answering phones. Possible partnerships are with local churches, any non-profit organization interested in youth.
Lincoln	30 college students work a total of 30 hrs/wk providing individual tutoring to 30 Center youth through Passport Program.	Oakland Asian Student Education Services (UC Berkeley) recruit, screen, train and supervise volunteers. Service Club uses facility annually; Neighborhood Child Development Centers use facility daily for out door recreation; OASES has students on playground daily.	Plans are underway with Lincoln School to schedule PE classes at facility's gymnasium; to have the Asian Youth Police Athletic Club hold classes on Fridays at the Center.
Manzanita	Several 6th and 7th grade students volunteer weekly to help children with their homework. Volunteers occasionally do community service by teaching a class, Studio One teachers occasionally teach dance or hip hop class, and read poetry.	OUSD- Passport Program; Studio One; Polling Place; "A's" Kids Program; Earn Your Bike Program; Y Camp; Girl Scouts; Head Start.	Continue existing collaborations.
Montclair	Five volunteers offer weekly programming in dance, volleyball, and hiking club with 100 members.	Lions Club (restored picnic area and hosts annual Halloween Parade, Easter Hunt and Family Flea Market); Pacific Union Real Estate raised \$30,000 for Center; Montclair Business Association puts on annual fundraiser for Center; community group put up a play structure; Friends of Parks and Recreation help with large projects; Montclair Advisory Council oversees improvement projects.	Continue existing collaboratives and to do so would require greater commitment from OPR to help groups negotiate regulations around improvement projects.
Mosswood	One volunteer works 25 hrs/wk and assists recreation staff with programming.		Outreach to colleges and other organizations are underway to get volunteers to assist with program supervision, to increase hours the center is open and to expand the number and type of programs offered. Volunteers could be useful in increasing the supervision in the park, to assist with cleaning buildings, and putting up bulletin boards.
Poplar	Two volunteers work an average of 16 hrs/wk providing sewing classes and being community liaisons.	OUSD special education department; One Nation Basketball League; West Oakland Neighbors (working to get vans for the Centers); Boy Scouts; Friday Night Live (help with programming for teens/preteens).	Currently working to establish collaborative program with OUSD to get special education students to use the center. Recruiting more parents and get the One Nation (AA) basketball league to join the advisory council. Volunteers could help enforce center policies and provide additional supervision.

Table 2. Use of Individual Volunteers/Collaborative Relationships			
Center	Current Use of Volunteers	Current Collaborative Relationships	Ideas for Increasing Volunteers/Collaborations
Rainbow	Three volunteers work an average of 17 hrs/wk helping with recreation programs, coaching, and working with students at the school sites.	Mohammed University; Melrose Elementary; Not Just Sports; Kevin Grant Anger Management Program; Running Rebels (basketball); Bulldogs (basketball).	Plans to continue recruiting volunteers to help with sports and academic tutoring.
Redwood Heights	Minimal use of volunteers.	Redwood Heights Elementary School; Redwood Heights Improvement Association; Muscular Dystrophy Association; Boy Scouts; Girl Scouts.	Center Director feels that increasing the number of volunteers would place too many demands on staff.
Rotary Nature Center	Minimal use of volunteers. Currently do not have enough staff to monitor volunteers.	East Bay Conservation Corps; Project YES; Point Reyes.	No current plans to recruit volunteers but if they were recruited the Center could use volunteers of different ages from teens to adults to work under staff supervision.
Sheffield Village	Two volunteers work an average of 15 hrs/wk to support programming. Occasionally the parents and children who attend activities volunteer their efforts.	Ira Jenkins for Saturday T-ball and with other park and recreation centers for trips; Bancroft Middle School-trying to coordinate services; CIT (Counselors in Training). Peralta Power Squadron and Girl Scouts use facility once or twice a month.	Would like to have volunteers serve on an advisory council for the center.
Studio One	Numerous volunteers called "monitors" work at the center.	OUSD; California Collection of Arts and Crafts (CCAC); Oakland Recreation Centers; Passport Drama and Arts & Crafts.	Outreach underway to OUSD schools and other recreation centers to collaborate in programming. When these plans are more concrete it would be possible to increase volunteer hours.
Tassafaronga	Parents volunteer 4 hrs/wk to supervise soccer games for kids. There are an additional 12-13 volunteers in the summer.	Youth Employment Program; Beacon School Basketball League; Citywide Basketball League; Cosmopolitan Church; Allen Temple; Acts 4 church; (over 54 churches send their children to the Center to play basketball); Mothers Against Murder; Peace Makers; UPRP group (works with youth in school); Highland School and Woodland School send their students to the center for recess and hold graduations and dances there.	Plans to continue existing collaborations. There are people who could be called to volunteer episodically. However, Center Director has found volunteers to be dependable for the most part.

III.iv

Facility Use and Enhancement of Programming

Facility Use

The interviews with Center Directors included questions about the use of various rooms, structures, playgrounds and pools at each facility, hours and times when the facility is not in use, nature of drop-in use and ideas for expanding the use of the facility for additional programming.

Finding #19: While the Center Directors have concrete ideas about increasing facility use, including times when there could be more programming, they all mention that additional staffing would be required to do so. Some Center/programs would require facility upgrades as well.

The Aquatics program and Lincoln Center Directors articulated the most detailed rationale and plans for increasing their facilities' capacities. The Aquatics summer program operates in seven pools throughout the city (two of which are owned by Oakland Unified School District and staffed by OPR).

Finding # 20: During the school year there are only two pools open (e.g., Lions and Temescal). Many of the neighborhoods where people in lower socio-economic groups live do not have pools available to them most of the year, because the five other OPR supported pools shut down.

Expanding the number of pools open throughout the year would, however, incur costs (i.e., heating and chemicals cost \$3,000 to \$4,000 per month per pool and additional staffing costs). The Aquatics Director has fostered a relationship with YMCA to work collaboratively to keep several pools open for additional weeks into the school year.

RECOMMENDATION # XII: OPR should continue to explore partnerships such as the one underway with YMCA to generate adequate funds to support at least one of the five pools that are currently closed during the school year, perhaps through a partnership with local businesses.

Finding #21: A capital improvement campaign to renovate the pools seems warranted to maintain existing capacity.

A larger issue, from the Aquatics Director's point of view, is that the current facilities are badly in need of repair in order to maintain existing capacity. He pointed out that the City of Oakland, has provided aquatics programs to the public for 71 years. The first pool to open was Lions, in operation since 1932. In 1945 a bond funded the construction of deFremery, Fremont, and Temescal Pools. Live Oak, the newest pool, was built in 1954. While the staff provide safe, well-managed and well-maintained aquatics programs, as borne out by our own observation and by successive client satisfaction surveys, concerns about the physical condition of the facilities have been expressed by clients and the independent evaluators. For example, Gibson and Associates evaluated the Temescal Pool in Spring, 2003 and found it to be in a poor state of repair (i.e., condition of the paint, lighting in the bathroom) and maintenance (i.e., changing rooms and floors littered). Also 10% of those surveyed in the Spring did not agree that the Temescal Pool was well maintained or cleaned. The majority (58%) of survey respondents from the spring of 2002 did not think the aquatics facilities were comfortable or well equipped.

Finding # 22: Lincoln Center hours of operation begin late in the afternoon. Lincoln Center also offers fewer programs than other Centers and the facility hours of operation and staffing could be enhanced to allow it to remain open full days and to bring it to parity with other Centers of its classification (i.e., large Center with a gymnasium).

The hours of operation at Lincoln Center (and on some days Golden Gate Center) do not begin until 3 PM. At Lincoln, the focus of the programming is on the Passport Program, for after-school hours and there were only 19 program offerings last year (compared to 62 at Golden Gate and an average of 94 throughout the system). However the Center Director at Lincoln has developed a blueprint for full-day programming to meet the needs of the community. He reports that the neighborhood, has many seniors in need of programming, and there are a number of child - care centers that would like to use the Center. While this Center currently has the highest number of regular volunteers (30) it also has among the lowest staffing, considerably lower (2.12 FTE) than the staffing of the other large Centers with gymnasiums (See Table I above). To increase the use of this facility to full-day programming and operation would require staffing parity with the other Centers of its classification.

RECOMMENDATION # XIII: In the interest of equity, enhance Lincoln Center staffing and hours of operation to allow for the Center to remain open and offer programming for a full day.

While small-scale improvements to park facilities can be addressed through partnerships with neighborhood organizations and businesses (as described in the previous section), as the discussion of facilities underscores, not all facility improvements can be addressed through these kinds of partnerships.

RECOMMENDATION # XIV: The City should also explore a local bond measure that focuses upon improving equitable access to community resources in low-income neighborhoods, with a focus on OPR, library and OUSD facilities. Capital improvements in the pools seem especially warranted to maintain existing capacity. If such a bond measure were to be considered, funds should be included to support facility expansion where needed and a permanent fund for ongoing maintenance to ensure that more pools and Centers in low-income neighborhoods are open year-round and with hours of operation that match community needs.

Finding #23: The Centers differ remarkably in size and availability of space for programming. Three of the Center Directors report that the facility is too small for additional programming.

Directors at Montclair, Redwood Heights and Sheffield Village report that the size of the facility limits the available space for additional programming. Independent evaluator observations corroborate that these facilities have very little indoor space for organized activities. For these three Centers, it might be possible to include facility expansion plans in a local bond measure of the type just described.

Other Center Directors had ideas about expanding the use of the facilities without facility upgrades, ideas that they hadn't yet put into action. These ideas are summarized in Table II at the end of this section.

Measuring Facility Use

Finding # 24: All the Centers have customers who drop-in daily to use the facility, fields or pools. However there is no uniformity in the way drop-in use is recorded. The absence of a system for recording the number of customers using OPR sites on a drop-in basis, results in a lack of clarity in relation to site use.

While all Center Directors record drop-in use of the facilities in the RecWare system, directors raised questions about what constitutes a “drop-in”. Is a drop-in someone who actually uses the facility for recreation? Is someone who comes by to ask a question of the Center Director “dropping in”? Several Centers are used as a polling place and if the people voting are counted as Center drop-ins, the figures are tremendously inflated at those Centers. Some Center Directors count as drop-ins the number of people using facilities in programs of collaborative partners, while others do not. Some Directors count facility rentals as drop-in use while others do not. Clearly some guidelines need to be developed.

Recommendation # XV: With input from Center Directors, OPR Leadership should establish clear guidelines and definitions for what constitutes drop-in use. For greater accuracy, G&A recommends that these definitions distinguish between use through facility rentals, partner collaboration, use by leagues, and more traditional ‘drop-in’ use.

Currently, different Center Directors treat each of these kinds of facility use differently when entering data into RecWare. Clearly each of the following kinds of ‘users’ is utilizing the OPR facility and this use should be recorded in some manner. However, it is important to distinguish between these uses, as each type of use results in different types of demands upon site staffing and maintenance.

People using the facility as part of a structured program offered by a collaborative partner or an organization sub-leasing space are also presumably providing supervision of the people involved. This is an ideal use of the park that extends the impact of facility use without extending the existing staff. However, unstructured, drop-ins must be supervised by OPR staff (e.g. youth who come to play basketball on their own or to use the playground or to just hang out). In instances where there may be large numbers of unstructured drop-ins, OPR may have to find reliable volunteers or added staff to provide supervision or some kind of structure to the

activity. Recording these uses by developing different use codes for entry into RecWare will allow leadership and Center Directors to make adjustments in staffing and maintenance appropriate to the level and type of use. The following use of OPR sites should be entered into RecWare in some manner.

People using the Center through community groups and collaboratives - Clearly these individuals should be counted as customers as they are using the facility for the purpose in which it was intended, except that **sometimes** supervision is being provided by the hosting organization. Clearly, when OPR is not providing the program staffing, they should not be entered in the RecWare as OPR enrollees, but rather as participants in “partner-sponsored” activities. Since these are activities that are pre-scheduled, they are not what one would typically consider ‘drop-ins.’ Nonetheless, some Centers currently do count this use as drop-in use, precisely the reason that some uniformity of definitions is needed.

OPR Center Directors should be able to obtain a list or count of participants from the sponsoring and this number should be entered into RecWare under “partner-sponsored” activities.

People who rent the facility and fields—As with the “sponsored partners” customers using the facilities through a rental agreement should be counted as a separate category of use.

People who use the fields, playgrounds, tot lots, pools during unscheduled times – This is a classic “drop-in” situation and should be counted as drop-in customers. This kind of use is very difficult to tally accurately, as it is difficult for Center staff to have drop-in customers actually sign in, given that a large percentage of the drop-in use is for outdoor facilities. For example, Lincoln School, which is adjacent to Lincoln Recreation Center, uses the Center asphalt playground for recess and after school. The students number in the hundreds daily and there are not enough staff to “sign them in, given that staff are engaged in delivering the Passport Program. Directors do

not want to discourage outdoor facility drop-in use by requiring signing in. It would make sense to record these drop-in customers by doing an actual count at a typical peak, average, and low-use times during one typical week and then estimating the number weekly from that “time study.”

People who use the facility as a polling place – These individuals should not be counted as drop-in customers, as they are not using the Center per se, but the voting booth installed at the Center.

Parents who drop their children off and ask questions of staff – While the children should certainly be counted as either ‘drop-ins’ or OPR customers depending upon if they are being dropped off for an OPR program activity or just to use the facility informally, the parents should not be counted as drop-in customers as they are not actually using the facility. For that matter, individuals coming to the Center simply to ask questions, drop off paperwork, or other

non-recreational business should not be considered ‘drop-in’ customers.

The following table depicts the Center Director’s responses to the evaluator questions about facility use. The summary provides an idea of the many innovative uses of the various Centers. G&A recommends that this and the previous table be shared with Center Directors to provide a stimulus for discussion of ways in which all Centers can expand the use of their facilities.

In the table, Centers are designated as either A, B, C, or D centers. OPR designates its facilities in four categories:

- ❑ A Centers – large centers with gyms
- ❑ B Centers – large centers without gyms or medium centers with gyms
- ❑ C Centers – Small Centers without gyms or large parks
- ❑ D Centers – Substantial self - supporting programs, CBO partnerships or grant-based programs



Table 3. Facility Use and Enhancement of Programming

Center	Facility Capacity	Current Facility Use	Drop-in Use	Ideas for Expanding Facility Use	Hours when Facility Use Could be Enhanced
Allendale	C Center: Outdoor areas include lighted softball field, football, soccer fields, 2 baseball diamonds; 2 basketball courts; tot lot. Small building with kitchen facilities, large game room, another room for arts and crafts.	Hours of operation are Noon - 7 PM during the week and on Saturdays. In the summer the facility is open 10 AM - 8 PM.	Teens drop by after school from the afternoon till closing. They mostly use the fields and playgrounds.	Bring in programs such as truancy prevention and host ESL classes.	Between 9 AM and 1 PM
Aquatics	7 pools: Castlemont, deFremery; Lions; Live Oak; Temescal; McClymonds; Fremont.	Hours of operation are 6:30 AM - 8 PM for all pools in the Summer and for three pools during the rest of the year.	Public recreational drop-in swimming is available at all pools in the summer in the afternoon, usually for 2 hours during the week and for up to 4 hours on weekends. Community agencies organize swimming early in the morning and before closing.	During school year there are only two pools open. Current collaboration being fostered with YMCA to keep other pools open for several more months.	During summer when all pools are open they are filled all day into the evening.
Arroyo Viejo	B Center: Outdoor area includes baseball field, lighted softball field, football/soccer field and lighted basketball court, tennis courts, weight room, tot lot, patio, and barbeque picnic area. Social Hall; Game Room; Conference room, Clubroom, Tiny Tot room, Computer Room; Main kitchen, Senior Kitchen.	Hours of operation are 8:30 AM - 8:30 PM weekdays and Saturdays.	Drop-in hours 2 - 5 daily and children are welcome to join activities that are fee-based.	Adult English/Spanish in daytime and computer programs in evenings.	Saturdays and evenings.
Brookdale	C Center: Outdoor areas include baseball, softball, football, soccer fields, lighted basketball court, tennis courts, weight room, tot lot and lawn playground. rooms include social hall, kitchen, classroom.	Hours of operation 10:30 - 8 PM Tuesdays and Wednesdays; 2 PM - 8 PM Mon; 3PM - 7 PM Fridays. Summer: 7AM - 8 PM Mon/Tues; 7AM - 6 PM Wed/Fri. 8 - noon Saturdays.	Drop-in hours between 3 - closing. Typically elementary aged youth and teens drop-in and play games, billiards, and play double dutch, and basketball.	Possibly expanding facility use with partnerships.	Mornings from 10 AM - 1 PM.
Bushrod	A Center: Outdoor area includes baseball field, lighted softball field, football/soccer field, lighted basketball court, tennis courts, weight room, tot lot, gym, picnic area with barbeque. Craft room, kitchen and multipurpose room.	Hours of operation 10 AM - 9 PM Monday - Thursday; 10 AM - 6 PM Friday and 12 - 4 PM Saturdays and Sundays.	This is a drop-in facility. Adults drop-in to play basketball and other events regularly from noon - 9 PM. It is a meeting place for community members.		Mornings during the school year.



Table 3. Facility Use and Enhancement of Programming

Center	Facility Capacity	Current Facility Use	Drop-in Use	Ideas for Expanding Facility Use	Hours when Facility Use Could be Enhanced
Dimond	B Center: Outdoor area includes swimming pool, tot lot, lawn playground, large park with picnic and barbeque. Indoor craft room, multipurpose room, social hall, kitchen, classroom with computers.	Hours of operation 10 AM - 7 PM Monday - Friday, 10 AM - 2 PM Saturday. Summer: 7:30 - 7 PM Monday - Friday; 9 - 4 PM Saturday.	Drop-ins use pool and other table games and play basketball throughout the day.	Center is currently operating at 75% capacity. Fall is typically slower time of the year.	Fall.
deFremery	B Center: Outdoor area includes lighted softball field, swimming pool, lighted basketball court, lawn playground, tennis courts, weight room, tot lot, picnic area with barbeque. Indoors large social hall with small stage, kitchen, craft room, meeting room.	Hours of operation 7:30 AM till 9 PM (except Mondays and Wednesdays open till 6 PM).	Adult men use fields for soccer and football and young women use field for softball. There are three groups a week year round and they pay a fee to use facilities. Daily people drop-in to use computer room, pool table, Discovery Program and park, usually in late afternoon.	Trying to facilitate a partnership with Boys and Girls Clubs to increase use of facility.	Between 9 AM and 1 PM.
Franklin	C Center: Outdoor area includes lighted softball field, and basketball court, asphalt playground, tot lot and patio. Indoors: multipurpose room, craft room, kitchen, social hall, and game room.	Hours of operation 8:30 AM - 8 PM Monday-Friday; 10 AM - 4 PM Saturday.	People drop-in to try out the programs before they enroll or to attend an occasional movie day or special events such as carnivals and parents banquet.	Would like to increase programming for teens ages 16-18 year. Specifically want to offer space and help for them to mix their music, cut CDs and offer Friday Night Live programming to older teens.	Saturdays and evenings.
FM Smith	C Center: Outdoor areas include basketball court, lawn and asphalt playground, tot lot, picnic area with barbeque. Indoors: craft room, multipurpose room, social hall, kitchen.	Hours of operation 9 AM - 10 PM Monday - Friday; 1 PM - 5 PM Saturday and Sunday.	People drop-in to use playground, during week days from childcare facilities and neighborhood groups.	Expand programming.	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Fridays from 2 PM - 6 PM during the school year.
Golden Gate	C Center: Outdoor area includes lighted basketball court, football/soccer field, softball field, baseball diamond, asphalt playground, picnic area with barbeque. Indoors: craft room, game room, social hall, and kitchen.	Hours of operation 3 PM - 7 PM Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays. 1:15 - 7 PM Wednesdays. Summer: 8:30 - 6 PM.	People drop-in for cooking or computer classes held in the mornings three days a week.	Currently starting a Junior High school group on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 6 - 8 PM.	Evenings
Ira Jinkins	A Center: Outdoor area includes baseball field, football and soccer fields, a gym, lawn playground, tennis courts, tot lot, patio and picnic areas. Indoors: computer room, exercise room, game room, collegiate-size gym, meeting rooms, and commercial kitchen.	Hours of operation 9 AM - 8 PM weekdays and 10 AM - 1 Pm Saturdays.	People drop-in to use the weight room all day long. Young people drop-in from noon to 8 PM to play basketball, billiards, and ping pong play cards/dominos or socialize.	Expand programming.	Evening hours could be extended until 9 PM during regular year and extended further in the Summer.



Table 3. Facility Use and Enhancement of Programming

Center	Facility Capacity	Current Facility Use	Drop-in Use	Ideas for Expanding Facility Use	Hours when Facility Use Could be Enhanced
Lincoln	A Center: Outdoor equipped with lighted basketball court, asphalt playground, gymnasium, tot lot. Indoors: craft room, game room, computer class room, and kitchen.	Hours of operation 3 - 8 PM Monday - Friday; 3 hours on Saturdays.	Approximately 150 children a day use the play structure all day long and in addition the neighborhood child development centers bring their children over in the mornings. From 3 PM till closing young people use the basketball courts, as they are lit.	Tae Kwon Do, Tai Chi, Seniors Social hours (Mah Jong games); more senior programming daily. Gym used by school in morning for Soccer, Basketball, Volleyball daily. After school Academic Enrichment Activities and drop-in tutorial assistance. Evening sports events.	Current budget allows for center to be open in afternoon and evenings. With another 1.9 staff center could be open from 7 AM - 10 PM weekdays and 10 AM - 5 PM on Saturday and from 4 PM - 10 PM Sunday.
Manzanita	B Centers: Outdoors includes asphalt playground, lawn playground, tot lot, barbeque pit, and picnic area. Indoors: half gym, full gym, two kitchens, conference room, meeting rooms.	Hours of operation Monday (3 - 8 PM); Tues - Thurs (9 AM - 8 PM); Friday (9 AM - 7 PM); Sat (noon - 4 PM).	Approximately 20 - 30 people daily, teens, parents, Head Start participants, etc. Basketball playing occurs on drop-in basis on Saturdays.	Expand the Passport Program to the students on the waiting list.	Mornings
Montclair	D Center: Outdoor area includes basketball court, four tennis courts, volleyball court, softball field, asphalt and lawn playgrounds, tot lot, two picnic areas with barbeque pit. Indoors: craft room, game room, social hall, and kitchen.	Hours of operation 9 AM - 9 PM (MON); 9 AM - 10 PM (Tue); 8 AM - 9 PM (Wed); 9 AM - 10 PM (Thurs); 9 AM - 6 PM Friday. No weekends.	People use tennis courts on a drop-in basis. On Saturday people drop-in for tennis courts and basketball court.	Probably a larger facility would be needed to add more programming.	Wednesday afternoon. There is no neighborhood demand for the facility to be open on weekends.
Mosswood	B Center: Outdoor area includes lighted basketball court, tennis court, baseball field, lighted softball field, lawn playground, tot lot, picnic area with barbeque pit, patio area. Indoors: game room, social hall, preschool room, two classrooms, computer room, meeting room.	Hours of operation 7:30 AM - 8 PM Mondays - Fridays.	People drop-in the evenings to play video games, use the pool table, and basketball courts. They play ping-pong, tennis and have picnics in the park.	Increase the number of programs offered.	Mornings during the school year and 6 - 8 PM in the evenings.
Poplar	A Center: Outdoor area includes lighted basketball, volleyball court, lighted softball field, asphalt playground, tot lot, barbeque pit, picnic area. Indoors: game room gym, exercise room, kitchen multipurpose room 3 classrooms.	Hours of operation 2 PM - 6 PM (Monday - Thursday); 2 PM - 9 PM (Friday); and Saturday 9 AM - 5 PM.	The center is primarily a drop-in center. The summer saw approximately 150 people dropping in daily. They mostly take part in the free lunch program, basketball teams and flag football; all activities after noon into the evening.	Plans are underway to collaborate with OUSD to use center for special education students. Also exploring the possibility of getting preschool program at site.	Mornings from 8 AM - 2 PM.



Table 3. Facility Use and Enhancement of Programming

Center	Facility Capacity	Current Facility Use	Drop-in Use	Ideas for Expanding Facility Use	Hours when Facility Use Could be Enhanced
Rainbow	A Center: Outdoor area equipped with lighted basketball court, volleyball court, tennis court, gymnasium, asphalt playground, lawn playground, tot lot, patio area. Indoor area includes game room, kitchen, senior community room.	Hours of operation 10 AM - 8 PM (Monday - Friday) and 10 AM - 4 PM (Saturday).	Junior high school students drop-in daily at center to socialize. Other community members drop-in to play basketball. Drop-in activities also include arts and crafts and billiards.	Center Director states that facility is currently being used at 100% capacity.	None.
Redwood Heights	D Center: Outdoor area includes basketball court/gym, patio, picnic area, barbeque pit, tot lot and tennis court. Indoors: classroom, kitchen, senior community room.	Hours of operation 7:00 AM - 10 PM (Monday - Saturday).	Junior high school (15) and elementary school students (105) drop-in daily during school year between 3 - 6 PM. They typically help in the office, assist with programs and read to younger children.	Center Director states that facility is currently being used at 100% capacity. Parents and children are turned away because the demands for programming are much greater than space available.	None.
Sheffield Village	C Center: Outdoors area includes: t-ball, asphalt playground; lawn playground, basketball court and tot lot. Indoors: kitchen, 2 meeting rooms.	Hours of operation 9 AM - 6 PM (Monday, Wed, Fri) and 11 AM - 6 PM (Tuesday and Thursday). Summer: 9 AM - 3 PM (Monday - Friday) and 8:30 - 6 PM for trips and tours.	The Summer program "Trips and Tours" was 100% drop-in and additionally five spaces were available daily in each of the other summer camp programs.	Facility is being used during the hours of operation. Center Director reports that space is a limitation to increasing facility use.	Tuesday mornings, and weekends.
Studio One	Twelve rooms used as classrooms; drama unit with small theater.	9 AM - 10 PM (Monday - Thursday) and 9 AM - 5:30 PM Friday; 9 AM - 4:30 PM Saturday when classes are in session.	This is not a drop-in facility; participants are typically registered for classes.	Currently working to partner with OUSD to increase daytime use of facility in Fall.	Facility is used approximately 50% during daytime in Fall. Attic Theater free during day.
Tassafaronga	Outdoor areas include: softball field, baseball field; basketball court, volleyball court, gymnasium, tot lot, patio area. Indoors: craft room, game room three meeting rooms, weight room.	Hours of operation 10 AM - 9 PM (Monday - Friday) and 10 AM - 5 PM (Saturday - Sunday).	Community members drop-in to play basketball after school and in the evenings. 85 - 95 youth play soccer every evening.	No current plans for enhanced facility use.	Slower times are Saturday afternoons from 2 - 3 PM.

Conclusion

The two years G&A has performed evaluations, OPR customers consistently rated services as meeting their needs. While this year’s evaluation activities uncovered some areas for improvement in safety and maintenance, overall the quality of

programming and staff-customer interactions were exemplary throughout the system.

The current challenge is maintaining the facilities and augmenting staffing and services in a time of extremely limited resources. By expanding the innovative use of community partnerships and by accessing other local

funding streams (CDBG, OFCY, SSBG, OUSD), it may be possible to address a number of program and facility needs.

Our discussions with Center Directors reveal that much is already being done at the Center level to recruit and deploy volunteers, but staff reports that they are straining to provide critical supervision. Staff is not especially bogged down by administrative duties, and they appreciate the need for accurate accounting (through RecWare). To add significantly more administrative and supervision tasks, though would impact their ability to address other responsibilities. It will be critical to balance the desire to take advantage of new volunteer and collaborative opportunities with recognition that these relationships require staffing support. The leadership and support of OPR administration can be critical in simplifying and supporting reporting, partnership formation, and facility improvement efforts.

However, there are issues that require more than volunteers and community partnerships can address. There are some questions about the equitable access to some services, as lower-income communities lack the range of services available in other neighborhoods, particularly in relation to the pools. There are also significant maintenance and facility improvement needs identified in this report and while partnerships with community organizations and volunteer groups may be utilized to address some of these issues, larger improvement efforts will ultimately involve significant fiscal resources, particularly with the pools and in addressing larger structural issues.

Ultimately resources will be needed to maintain existing services, expand programming and continue to improve facilities. Hopefully this evaluation will be useful in clarifying the status of OPR facility use and in generating ideas for continued improvement.

Parks and recreation programs benefit the community in many ways. Not only do they create opportunities for play, social gathering, and positive recreational experiences, they also play a huge role in maintaining public safety and providing places for neighbors to meet and plan.

We hope that the City utilizes this report to galvanize volunteer, business, and community organization support to shore up facilities, expand program services and advocate for bond measures and other revenue enhancements to support a vibrant parks and recreation system that equitably serves the entire Oakland community.

Oakland has demonstrated a willingness to invest in services for youth through Measure K and most recently through a bond measure supporting the Chabot Space Center, Oakland Museum and other youth-serving institutions. By assembling a comprehensive inventory of facility use, maintenance and improvement needs, and site facility expansion plans, OPR could demonstrate a clear need for another such investment. By maximizing the use of existing facilities and community organizations and volunteers, OPR will both develop a core of community support for such an initiative among its partners and volunteers while demonstrating to voters that OPR is maximizing the use of the resources it has.

Appendices

- A Client Satisfaction Survey – Comparative Review**
- B Recreational Center Overview**
- C Recreation Center Enrollment Data**
- D Number of Programs offered by Site and Season**