

Stockton Recreation Division

Strategic Plan

Includes

Mission

Vision

Values

Goals

Strategies



**November
2015**



S CITY OF
STOCKTON

Prepared for the City of Stockton Recreation Division by Management Partners



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	ii
Methodology and Project Context	1
Strategic Planning Process.....	1
Environmental Scan.....	2
Stockton Recreation Mission	5
Stockton Recreation Vision	6
Organizational Values	7
Goal A. Ensure Programs are Designed to Meet Customer Needs	8
Goal B. Strengthen Communication	9
Goal C. Keep Programs Affordable and Ensure Financial Stability	11
Goal D. Strengthen and Streamline Collaboration with Partners	12
Goal E. Strengthen Facilities Management	14
Goal F. Support Staff Collaboration and Development	15
Conclusion	17

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Methodology and Project Context



*The process of developing this strategic plan involved **internal and external stakeholder outreach**, as well as **the creation of an environmental scan**.*

This strategic plan presents the vision, mission and organizational values that will be used to guide future decision making for the City of Stockton Recreation Division. It also contains a set of goals and strategies to be implemented during the next three years to fulfill the mission of the division and work towards achieving its vision.

Strategic Planning Process

The Department of Community Services initiated this strategic planning process for the Recreation Division because it desired to engage recreation users and staff to articulate a vision and mission for the division. As a result of the strategic planning process, a number of opportunities for improvement were identified that will position the division to better serve the Stockton community.

A wide range of interested stakeholders were invited to participate in the development of this strategic plan. The process involved internal and external stakeholder outreach, including employee and stakeholder interviews, a staff questionnaire and an online survey sent to Stockton Recreation customers. City staff also prepared an environmental scan to inform the strategic planning process, which includes data on demographic trends, customer profiles, service demand drivers, and productivity and workforce issues.

Employee and Stakeholder Interviews

Management Partners began the strategic planning process by conducting ten group interviews to give staff and key stakeholders an opportunity to provide information about the strengths and weaknesses of the Recreation Division, as well as the opportunities and threats it is likely to face in the future.

This strategic plan was developed based on feedback provided through:

- *Employee and stakeholder interviews*
- *Staff questionnaire*
- *Online survey*

10 group interviews conducted with recreation staff and key stakeholders.

Staff Questionnaire

All employees in the Community Services Department were given an opportunity to respond to a short questionnaire designed to solicit information about strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, as well as existing and potential community partnerships.

Online Survey

City staff also collected information from 224 recreation program users and stakeholders through an online survey. The survey inquired about the use of programs and facilities, preferred hours of operation, communication preferences, and ideal characteristics of the Recreation Division.

Environmental Scan

The Environmental Scan was used to identify internal and external factors to be considered during the development of this strategic plan. Considering these factors throughout the decision making process gave the strategic plan a realistic context and ultimately provided increased opportunity for making positive changes in the organization and the community.

Organizational History and Department Leadership

The City of Stockton Recreation Division was reduced in size dramatically in the last several years due to financial hardship. Although the division is poised to rebuild going forward, there are factors that affect future service delivery and overall employee morale.

In 2009, the Recreation Department merged with the Library to form the Community Services Department. Leadership has changed in the last year with both a new Community Services director and deputy director for recreation joining the department. A few years prior, the division's middle management structure was eliminated. Roles and duties were combined and not clear. As a result, employees are uncertain about the future and worry about the stability of the Division.

Although the services provided by recreation and library have a natural pairing and similar service delivery models, the transition continues to be a challenge for employees in accepting and seeing themselves as a part of a larger group. There needs to be an emphasis placed on working collaboratively while still maintaining the unique characteristics of each division to help define the brand and the service model.

In addition to changes in leadership, the Division must respond to a predominantly new City Council that is tasked with maintaining the City's fiscal sustainability over the long term through a specific Long Range Financial Plan. A flexible approach is needed to balance these factors while focusing on the values and direction of the division.

224 recreation program users participated in online survey.

In 2009, the Recreation Department merged with the Library to form the Community Services Department.

Bankruptcy and Aftermath

The City's financial problems and subsequent bankruptcy were the most negatively defining moment, not just for the division, but the City as a whole. Reduction of funding and human resources resulted in lower morale and increased organizational stress. Table 1 demonstrates the extreme effect that the financial decline had on staffing levels during the last several years.

Table 1. Department Staffing from Fiscal Year 2007 to 2015

	07-08	08-09	09-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15
Staffing Levels	49	49	33	29	28	25	24	24

The effect on Recreation was a 51% decrease in staff.

Demographics

Demographics show that the City of Stockton is growing and is highly multi-cultural. According to the US Census, the City's population increased by approximately 10,600 residents between 2010 and 2014.

Ethnic makeup of the City's 90,372 households was 37% White, 40% Hispanic or Latino, 21.5% Asian, 12.2% African American, 1.1% Native American, and 0.6% Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. In Stockton, children in 46% of households are also raised with a language other than English in the home. This demographic make-up demonstrates the vast diversity in the population of the City. Programs and services need to be flexible and diverse to meet the needs of many cultures and languages.

In Stockton, the median household income is \$46,831 and 24.3% of people live below the poverty line. These statistics also determine how programming and services should be developed and provided.

Stockton's High School graduation rate is 74.4%, in comparison to national (86%) and state (81.2%) averages. Bachelor's degree or higher educational attainment level is 17.7% in comparison to the national average of 28.8%, and the state average of 31.7%. These statistics reflect the need for improved community access to resources and opportunities.

Existing collaborations

Collaborative Partners – Recreation Division has many ad hoc collaborative partnerships throughout the community that help alleviate the burden of running all services by City employees. However, these relationships have not been fully evaluated recently and conducting an assessment to match the community need with the services being provided would better align the product and service delivery of the division.

Commission Relationships – The Parks & Recreation Commission and Stockton Arts Commission serve as advisory bodies or are supported through the division. Both staff and Commissioners desire a more project-based approach to division

The Recreation Division has faced a 51% decrease in staffing since 2007.

Children in **46%** of Stockton households are raised with a language other than English in the home.

Stockton households are:

- **40%** Hispanic or Latino
- **37%** White
- **21.5%** Asian
- **12.2%** African American
- **1.1%** Native American
- **0.6%** Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander

initiatives so that the proper public input and assistance can be gained by staff while providing a high level of 'job satisfaction' to Commissioners.

Changing trends in the profession (including technology)

The Recreation profession of today is oriented toward more than just traditional leisure activities, encompassing emotional and mental well-being as well as social equity. Programs are aimed at improving overall quality of life. Recreation facilities serve as main hubs for family activity that cover a wider array of programs and services compared to earlier times. Community centers have evolved into much more diverse and rich facilities that provide something for everyone.

Public Safety

The City of Stockton continues to deal with significant public safety issues. These issues have an impact on the public's desire to travel to and utilize facilities in particular areas or at particular times of the day or evening. At the same time, recreation activities have a proven benefit in helping to reduce crime and provide opportunities for youth.



Stockton Recreation **Mission**



The mission statement describes what the Recreation Division stands for and what it will do.

We inspire a healthy and active community by providing high-quality, fun recreation programs for all.

Stockton Recreation Vision



A vision is a statement of the desired future and describes what the Recreation Division hopes to accomplish, what kind of organization it hopes to become and what kind of impact it will have on the community.

We envision a future where...
all Stockton residents
lead healthy lives,
feel connected to one another, and
celebrate diversity.

Organizational Values



Organizational values provide the basis for how an organization and its members will work to achieve the mission and vision. They describe what we stand for.

Integrity

We are honest, ethical, and transparent in all interactions with community members and fellow staff. We strive for equity and fairness in all decisions we make. We treat people with respect and dignity. We are responsible stewards of public funds and committed advocates for the environment.

Quality

We hold ourselves accountable to the highest performance standards and continually look for ways to improve the recreation programs in Stockton. For us, quality service means having fun and bringing joy to the lives of Stockton residents each and every day.

Accessibility

Our recreation programs are designed to include people from all age groups and ability levels. We strive to provide a wide range of programs and services with a goal of being affordable for all. We celebrate Stockton's diversity and value all individuals for their different approaches, ideas and backgrounds.

Leadership

We expect our staff and volunteers to be community role models. We believe that everyone can be a leader if they show a commitment to health and wellness and inspire a sense of excitement about the future in others.

Growth

We are committed to ongoing professional growth and development. We are always looking to expand our recreation programs by reaching new audiences, forming new partnerships and being innovative. We continually seek feedback from the community to improve the programs and services we offer.

Goal A. Ensure Programs are Designed to Meet Customer Needs



Enhance understanding of recreation customers and design programs to meet their needs.

Strategies

1. Conduct an environmental scan of each neighborhood to better understand recreation needs for existing and potential customers and identify programmatic changes that meet those needs.
2. Inventory existing programs across the division to fully understand the range of services being offered and provide informed decision-making about program changes.
3. Develop a survey tool to gather customer demographic information and communication preferences.
4. Develop program evaluation tools such as a participant survey to assess perceptions of program quality, impact, and gaps in services.
5. Establish a mechanism to routinely collect data about program participation and use the data to guide programmatic offerings.

Goal B. Strengthen Communication

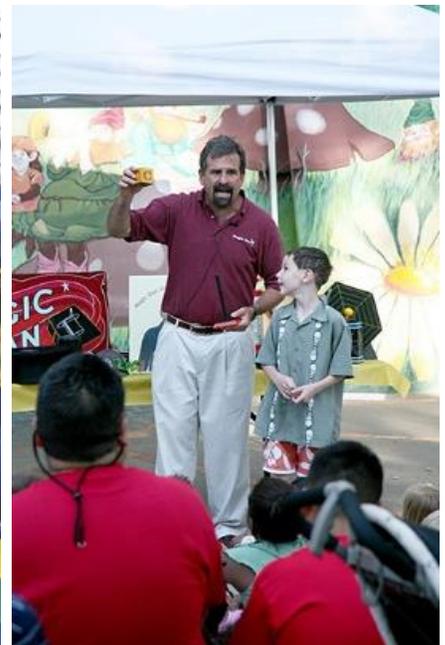


Strengthen communication with the Stockton community and existing recreation customers to expand awareness of recreation programs and provide better customer service.

Strategies

1. Evaluate the Recreation Division website to identify and prioritize improvements that will increase the usability of the website and visibility of programs.
2. Improve or replace the online registration system to enable online payments and improve usability.
3. Centralize administrative functions of the Recreation Division in one location that is easily accessible to the public.
4. Develop and communicate the mission and vision of the Community Services Department, incorporating feedback from both recreation and library staff.
5. Revise the governing document for the Parks and Recreation Commission and Arts Commission to reflect the agreed upon mission and vision for the Community Services Department.

6. Communicate the importance of recreation programs in achieving public health and safety outcomes.
7. Identify useful strategies to engage new participants and increase participation rates.
8. Develop standardized practices and templates for promotional materials for marketing recreation programs in all community centers, at the library, and through community partners.
9. Ensure that customers receive consistent service as they rent facilities, register for programs and volunteer their time.



Goal C. Keep Programs Affordable and Ensure Financial Stability



Establish a long-term financial plan that keeps programs affordable for the Stockton community and provides a sustainable future for the Recreation Division.

Strategies

1. Prepare a ten-year financial forecast for the Recreation Division, using the parameters of the City's 30-year spending plan as a guide, and review and update the forecast on a regular basis.
2. Solicit additional outside funding to support ongoing programs, special events and capital projects.
3. Establish a pricing policy for recreation programs that explains how program fees are set and what level of cost recovery is expected across different programs.
4. Implement a cost accounting system (including direct and indirect costs) that allows the City to assess cost recovery at the program level.
5. Reinvigorate the scholarship program that offers reduced fees for eligible program participants (*those who cannot afford program fees based on their household income or other factors*).

Goal D. Strengthen and Streamline Collaboration with Partners



Strengthen and streamline collaboration with Recreation Division partners to expand the reach and awareness of existing programs.

Strategies

1. Strengthen relationships with targeted partners and identify mutually beneficial promotional opportunities (especially with regard to facilities managed by non-City service providers).
2. Partner with the Stockton Police Department to develop ongoing youth programs that build community support and reduce crime.
3. Create a stable, consistent partnership with San Joaquin County, focused on supporting a healthy and active lifestyle for Stockton residents.
4. Revive the 501(c)3 non-profit foundation to advocate for and support the Recreation Division.

5. Develop contract templates for similar service providers that include standardized language, measurable performance expectations, and routine service evaluations.
6. Implement a contract management system or process.
7. Develop a policy framework to define how nonprofit organizations can partner with the Recreation Division and use available City facilities for educational or cultural events.



Goal E. Strengthen Facilities Management



Clarify facility maintenance expectations to ensure all swimming pools, facilities and recreation equipment are safe and accessible and reach their maximum life cycle.

Strategies

1. Identify and document the roles and responsibilities of the Recreation Division, Public Works Department, and private service providers with regard to the maintenance of all recreation assets.
2. Better structure and strengthen the division's working relationship with Public Works Department staff.
3. Develop an inventory of City of Stockton recreation assets, including pools, facilities and recreation equipment.
4. Assess current recreation assets and develop a comprehensive facility maintenance plan that clarifies roles and responsibilities of different service providers, clarifies service expectations and establishes a depreciation and replacement schedule for recreation assets.

Goal F. Support Staff Collaboration and Development



Create an environment that supports staff collaboration and identify ongoing staff training and professional development opportunities.

Strategies

1. Identify critical areas of need regarding staff training and professional development and establish a plan for addressing needs.
2. Create a culture where recreation staff and library staff collaborate on projects and develop a better understanding of one another's programs and services.
3. Create opportunities to increase recreation programs within libraries and library programs at recreation facilities.
4. Establish training budgets that support staff participation in professional organizations and training conferences.
5. Develop an employee recognition program to build morale.

6. Develop a long-term staffing plan that addresses the hiring, classification and development needs of full- and part-time employees.
7. Establish a process for regularly evaluating and documenting part-time employee performance.
8. Expand opportunities for volunteerism and community involvement in recreation programs and facility maintenance.



Conclusion



This Strategic Plan is designed to articulate the vision and mission of the City of Stockton Recreation Division and to establish a set of organizational values and goals and strategies to guide division staff in future decision making.

The strategic plan reflects the guidance and input of multiple stakeholders. It was developed using feedback from Recreation Division customers, the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Arts Commission, the Public Art Subcommittee, as well as City staff from the Department of Community Services, the Department of Public Works and the City Manager's Office.

The strategic planning process was facilitated by Management Partners, a consulting firm specializing in helping local governments.