



## SECTION 6.1 | Process

The Operational Assessment includes an analysis of the internal business practices of the City of Sunrise Leisure Services Department. The assessment evaluated the following areas of focus:

- Office, field and facility operations
- Logistics
- Methods and use of technology
- Approach to the business of parks and recreation management
- Staff training
- Customer service delivery
- Maintenance services
- Contractor management
- Public relations, marketing and communications

The intent of the Operational Assessment is to provide feedback and recommendations about the Department's operations and to provide suggestions about continuously improving and strengthening internal operations. Having good internal controls and practices in place provide the Department with an opportunity to efficiently and effectively deploy excellent customer service and maximize the use of City resources.

Recognizing the importance of staff involvement in a planning process, the Assessment significantly relies on thoughts and perspectives from staff members. The operational review included group and individual staff meetings with the consulting team. In addition to staff discussions, the PROS/Glatting Jackson (now AECOM) team reviewed existing internal documents, and incorporated review from the citizen survey and comments from other City departments' staffs on the overall operational practices of the Leisure Services Department.

Following is a discussion of each area of focus; Section 6.2 contains a summary of recommendations.

## SECTION 6.2 | Individual Areas of Focus

### Office, Field, and Facility Operations

The recreation program staff indicates there is good communication between the program staff and facility management staff in coordinating the maintenance of parks and recreation buildings. The Facility Manager indicates that Park and Recreation staff does a good job with inspections on their buildings and there are no hazards to contend with. The Facility Manager indicates that staff needs to do a better job on their safety inspections in parks and on playground surfaces to minimize liability claims to the City. Many of the parks and building infrastructure in the system is almost 20 years old and is in need of some major infrastructure improvements.

Specific facilities needing improvement include restrooms in the parks; roofs on buildings; keeping facilities painted; preventative maintenance of pools; and irrigation related elements in parks and sports fields. Staffing levels in parks is a staff concern, especially if they are to keep up with the needs of users before 2pm. The Department does efficiently utilize its work order system to document and track maintenance standards required and how well the staff is addressing meeting those standards. Mowing is contracted out with the exception of game fields. Staff feels that contractors don't do as good of job as they do even though it is less costly to the City.

Currently, the Department maintains 26 game fields and the staff feel they have adequate resources to maintain them if they can keep people off the fields during inclement weather. The community has high expectations of game field care and the Department staff feels they are doing better but still lag behind expectations. The maintenance staff does not have performance measures in place for managing facilities and field operations. They do not track the costs to maintain a field and therefore are unable to share these costs with the users or educate them on what it costs to maintain a sports field in the city. Recreation program and facility staff indicates there is excess capacity of space available in the theatre, pools and recreation facilities due to a lack of marketing and promotional dollars available to promote what the City provides in services. This should be addressed in the Service Delivery Study process.

## Logistics

The Department works well with the Purchasing Division, Fleet Division and Central Services Divisions. Staff in these divisions indicate that there is good coordination between Department needs and how these divisions serve their needs. Leisure Services staff are trained by these divisions on risk management issues. Sometimes staff in the Leisure Services Department need resources in a hurry-up manner due to a lack of planning and these support divisions feels they do their best in getting supplies to them and repairs made for their vehicles and equipment requirements. These divisions manage the specifications for new equipment for the Department as well. They also manage liability claims against the Department. Staff in these divisions indicate there is a need for better planning on communications and expectations so they have time to find the right vendors to support their needs.

Leisure Services Department communicates well with the Fleet Division on equipment requirements. Some allocation of costs for these services provided by other divisions is passed on to the Department based on allocation of time and resources needed to meet their needs. Having a \$2,500 purchasing limitation is very time sensitive and is set too low if the Department wants to operate in a more fiscal sustainable manner. The Department has discussed Purchasing-Cards but nothing has been done with this to eliminate the bureaucracy associated with purchasing.

### Recommendations:

- Train staff on how to do the functions required by support service Departments.
- Seek to increase the use of Purchasing-Cards to improve efficiency on purchasing of goods.
- Increase the \$2,500 purchasing limitation to \$5000 for staff and the Director.
- Teach staff on what a sustainable system looks like and how to manage within it.

## Methods and Use of Technology

A weakness in the Department has been the use of technology in managing the Department. Email was just added to the Department over the last year and this technology has been in place for 15 years. The Department has use of a program and facility management software called RecTrac which is a good system but only a few staff are well trained in how it works. More staff training in use of this software would take a lot of stress off administrators who manage the system now. Additionally, the Department needs to acquire a better ticketing system for the theatre using up-to-date technology.

The Department needs to do a better job collecting data from the RecTrac system. Information that can be obtained includes participant information, memberships, revenue to expense for programs and facilities, demographics, where users come from, how far do they drive etc. and this can be tied into a GIS geocoding element so staff can see who they are really serving. All data needs to be located in one area so staff can access it in a consistent basis. By tracking data, the program staff can develop and customize programs to an area of the city and the specific demographic of residents that live there, which will result in higher usage by the community. The Department does track budget data but the staff does not know what their budgets are so they can stay within them. The Director is the only person who knows the full budget for each division within the Department and staff knows just what program supplies they have to work with. The Department does track cost per participant, riders on transportation program for seniors, or participants in programs and box-office numbers at the Theatre.

Tracking of performance indicators requires data input and assessment for the Department to move from an effort based culture to an outcome based culture. Tracking capacity of use of facilities is not being done now to demonstrate to staff how underutilized facilities are and how to develop programs to maximize these facilities to their highest and best use.

Staff would like to put more information online but have not been able to use the system to its highest capability. Staff indicates the lack of training money is the key impediment to increasing the use of technology in the

system.

### Recommendations:

- Establish a technology plan for the Department.
- Establish greater training for staff on how to use technology including RecTrac and in collecting data.
- Establish performance indicators and track them to achieve the highest levels of efficiency.
- Enhance the Department's web-site and capability to do on-line registration.

### Approach to the Business of Parks and Recreation Management

The Leisure Services staff in Sunrise is a very dedicated group of individuals but the Department operates in a social management model with little accountability versus a sustainable management model with total accountability. This social management culture is an acceptable management culture if accountability for city resources such as money, people, time, equipment use and facility use is not important. Additionally, the staff appears to operate out of an effort based culture rather than an outcome based culture and is very personality driven based in their approach to each element of the Department.

The Department lacks good policies and procedures for managing the system in a proactive manner. These include appropriate policies such as a pricing policy, partnership policy, field use policy, and earned income policy. Staff described the organization as very reactive and they lack good planning processes and documents to drive their overall management approach to Leisure Services in the City. A needs assessment study and Service Delivery Report hasn't been completed for the Department in over 15 years. Fees have been kept constant in many programs for a long period of time and this creates high entitlement among users. Part of the problem is that fees have been set by the City Commission based on perception, not based on a philosophy.

Performance measures to track efficiency and effectiveness is only done in a few areas of the system and needs to be developed in all areas of the system to help staff move to a new level of service delivery and efficiency. Cost of service which includes direct and indirect costs for programs and facilities is only captured in a few areas of the system. A philosophy of pricing services based on individual value a person receives over a general taxpayer is not in place. Every staff person interviewed indicated that fees were significantly low for the market and the City was subsidizing programs and facilities at a very high level for residents and non-residents and at a higher level than surrounding communities. Staff feels that led to the issues related to the golf course when managed by the City.

There is little customer feedback associated with programs and services from users to determine how well users feel about the programs and services provided. Staff indicates they are a trial and error type of organization. Based on the citizen survey the number of users who use the City program services is low at 22 percent compared to 30 percent in most communities. Residents that use the City services feel good about the services but more opportunities need to be put into place and a more diverse approach to programs is needed.

Program development and management seems to be provided well for children's programs, summer camps and senior services. Staff indicates it is very difficult to discontinue a program in the Department when they know it is no longer needed in the community. Staff hopes that the needs assessment will help to indicate where the greatest amount of program needs are in the city. Stronger marketing efforts need to be made to entice and educate citizens about the programs provided and how to access them. Staff recognizes that currently their strength is in facility management rather than programming, and this needs to be addressed.

Staff accountability is low. Staff indicates the workload is not well managed and some staff indicated that 75 percent of the work is done by 25 percent of the staff which has caused resentment within the program team. The Department is not aligned correctly to job functions. Entry level positions are not properly trained in leisure services management which puts a lot of pressure on supervisors. This could be avoided if the Department hired people with degrees in parks and recreation

management at the entry level. The Department needs to upgrade job descriptions with appropriate titles and the true work that is required and expected based on the level of pay received. The Department is not using staff to their most appropriate levels which must be addressed in the future.

According to staff, communication needs improvement within the Department and between divisions in the Department. This requires cross training and allowing staff to work in more than one division at a time. Staff operates in a silo-driven system with limited interaction between divisions. Staff, however, did indicate that they operate well as a team and support each other well when asked. Overtime is not managed well in the system and people spend more because of poor scheduling practices. According to staff who were interviewed, accountability needs to be improved at the lower levels of staffing, and too many decisions are made at the top.

Budget accountability falls only on the director and not on the staff which needs to be addressed to create a sustainable system and build accountability. Staff does program budgets only. As money becomes more of an issue, fund management from all staff perspectives is needed. Moving from a spend mindset to an earned mindset is imperative to the future success of the Department. Staff indicates that there is no program that breaks even and all are subsidized. Additionally, the staff indicates that programs have not been expected to cover direct operational costs and residents do not know how much it costs to provide the service and how much they pay covers what level of the service. This has contributed to the sense of entitlement amongst program participants.

The Department has been getting support from some sponsorships in the city and they have started a foundation. Staff indicates that the Department is very customer focused but inefficient at the process. The Department does not require work plans of staff to demonstrate how well they use their time on work related projects or programs. They also do not do business plans for specific signature facilities such as the tennis center, aquatic center, sports complexes and core program areas to manage them in the most efficient and effective manner.

A partnership exists with the school board but poses a challenge as schools use the City facilities with little hassle but it is very difficult to

get access to school facilities on a consistent basis. Currently, the school district charges the Leisure Services Department for the use of its facilities but the City doesn't charge them for use of City facilities. This issue needs to be resolved as part of this study. The elected officials have discussed this issue but nothing has been resolved. The principals at the schools could be more open to sharing their facilities with the City, but most are resistant. The Department also has a working partnership at the County Swim Central which seems to be working well.

#### **Recommendations:**

- The Department needs to develop a Sustainability Plan.
- Policies need to be developed in pricing of services, partnerships, earned income and field usage.
- An updated organizational chart that is functionally based and aligned to maximize staff resources to the highest efficiency level is needed.
- New pricing of programs is needed based on cost of service to provide the program and should include cost recovery goals for each program and facility the City provides.
- Establish performance measures for all aspects of operations and maintenance in the Department.
- Develop a full cost of service component for each service task and facility in the system and communicate cost to users and elected officials.
- Develop a program plan that classifies programs based on "Essential", "Appropriate", and "Discretionary" to maximize how the program will be priced and delivered.
- Train staff on how to work in other divisions to eliminate overtime pay.
- Allow staff to be responsible for their own budgets and hold them accountable.
- Develop business plans for all attractions in the Department such as the tennis center, swim center, theatre, recreation centers and senior

center.

- Increase the entry level position requirements for the Department to require a college education in parks and recreation management or related field.

### **Staff Training**

Staff indicates that entry level positions have a high school education or maybe two years of college which limits their ability to develop and manage programs effectively. Too many decisions are pushed up to supervisors because staff is not properly trained. According to discussions with staff they lack training in data and technology management, RecTrac use, pricing of services, policy management, marketing and communications, partnership development, earned income development, developing and managing business plans for core programs and key recreation facilities in the system, budget development and management, program lifecycle management, managing conflict, safety inspections to minimize liability issues, social networking skills, setting and managing performance indicators, and cross training on how to do other duties in the Department.

### **Recommendations**

- Establish a staff training matrix on what areas each staff person in the Department needs.
- Develop on-going training in business management practices to build an outcome based organization and a sustainable system.

### **Customer Service Delivery**

Staff indicates that their best attribute is that they are customer focused and try to meet people's needs regardless of costs. Internal customer service is good as well, based on conversations with the other Departments in the City. There is good team work and staff gets along well. Sports groups feel the Department is not as customer focused as

they used to be but efforts to manage that over the last couple of years have improved. Reaching out to new demographics and minorities will require a different set of customer skills not necessarily in place now.

Traditional use of facilities versus the need to change the use of these facilities for a different culture and program needs to be addressed. A greater level of customer feedback processes are needed in the form of focus groups, pre and post evaluations, user surveys and trailer calls to ensure the Department is addressing the needs of customers. Based on conversations with full-time staff, more customer training is needed for seasonal staff.

### **Recommendations**

- Teach and train staff yearly on customer service for full-time, part-time and seasonal staff with at least four hours of training each year and more if the City can afford it.
- Establish customer service standards for sports clubs that the staff will follow.
- Increase the level of customer feedback methods used to include, pre and post evaluations, focus groups, online user surveys and trailer calls on how well the staff is meeting their needs.

### **Maintenance Services**

The Department does a good job maintaining its parks and facilities but staff is concerned about covering parks before 2pm during the week. The parks system does have set maintenance standards but they do not cost out these standards based on direct and indirect costs. There are high expectations by the City Commission and the community on the condition of parks, recreation facilities and sports fields which the staff says are difficult to achieve without the proper staffing and equipment. The sports groups get upset when staff closes fields due to inclement weather. An updated field use policy is needed and should be adopted by the Commission.

Consideration should be given to all-weather fields for the future as the pay-off in staff maintenance cost makes them a good value investment. Restroom cleanliness is an issue that is difficult to maintain in the parks because of the amount of use they get. When parks and facilities are unmanned, staff feels they will have more vandalism and it hurts the City's image. The Department does not charge groups for use of fields which is surprising, especially for groups who use City-owned facilities to generate revenue to support their select team costs. Currently, the City does not charge schools for use of fields.

### **Recommendations**

- Hire part-time and seasonal workers to cover before 2pm time in the parks.
- Incorporate more volunteers to help with specific maintenance activities (litter pick-up, park clean-up days etc.) at parks and facilities.
- Develop a cost of service assessment of what it takes to manage and maintain parks based on what the City Commission expects, and make sure the dollars are in place to meet that expectation.
- Establish maintenance standards that are written for all parks and recreation facilities.
- Consider the development of all-weather fields to keep maintenance costs down and have a higher return on investment than the City is getting now through their current maintenance practices.
- Consider charging groups for field use based on 50 percent of the cost to maintain the site a year.
- Charge groups full cost for using City owned fields for private income purposes.
- Charge schools the same rate the City pays for use of their facilities for park and recreation facilities they use or stop charging each other.

### **Contract Management**

Currently the Department uses contractors to help maintain parks, manage the golf course, and provide programs for citizens in City-owned facilities. The contractors get 70 percent to 80 percent of gross dollars for classes they teach for the City which is at or above what other benchmark systems are providing across the United States. Staff feels that the maintenance contractors do not do the level of work required but they are cheaper to provide the service than City employees are. The staff recognizes that they could contract for more services, but it takes time to manage contractors which they don't have now. A contractor policy is not in place that applies to cost the City puts into a program versus a contractor; as a result, the City historically subsidizes contractors for their work.

### **Recommendations**

- Develop a cost of service assessment for each program area that involves a contract instructor and develop a percentage that is fair to the city and to the instructor without subsidizing the instructor.
- Establish and hold contractors to the same level of expectations in park maintenance as staff are held to, and manage accordingly.
- Consider contracting out facilities that are under-utilized.
- Develop a contractor policy on how the City will manage contractors in the future.

### **Public Relations, Marketing and Communications**

The Department recognizes that it lacks investment in marketing, communications and public relations. Lack of use of the theatre and some indoor recreation spaces in particular will require greater use of marketing and promotional strategies. The staff indicates their marketing division was moved to a different department which still supports them but makes it more difficult to publish their program guide, develop an

effective web-site, promote individual classes and events outside of the program guide. They recognize the need to develop an online approach to communication with users for accessing department services. Staff lacks training in marketing, pricing and promotions which causes even more problems to attract users and place a value on the experience. Having no marketing data to draw on to make good decisions also makes it difficult to reach out to existing and new users in the city.

The development of creative programs and themes is lacking as well as an adequate effort to encourage people to get involved and use the services provided. Under-valuing of services can also deter people from using the services. Setting program minimums for classes and cancelling classes that don't meet the minimum creates a sense of urgency for people to enroll in activities in advance. Creating more diverse programs targeted to new populations in the city is also needed. Creating good program space for these groups is also needed as none is in close proximity to where they reside. Better communication with existing clients on upcoming events and programs is also needed.

Consideration should be given to changing the name of the Department from Leisure Services to the Parks and Recreation Department. Brand development is needed as well. Marketing the benefits of programs versus features needs to be developed into program descriptions in the program guide.

### Recommendations

- A formal marketing plan is needed that addresses data collection and management, pricing of services, developing on-line services and communications, web-site development, social networking development, communicating effectively with various constituency groups and target marketing users to fill existing space at the theatre, tennis center, swim center, recreation centers and sports fields.
- Develop program standards for staff to follow when developing programs in the city.
- Teach and train staff on how to read and manage program data to build better programs and services.
- Improve customer service feedback methods.
- Re-establish the marketing and communications division.
- Consider a name change to the Department to better define what services they offer and facilities they manage.

## SECTION 6 | SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The description of the Leisure Services Department can best be characterized as a social managed department lacking in sustainable business management practices that would maximize efficiency. Currently the Department appears to operate in an effort-based culture versus an outcome-based culture, but there is desire to transition to a more sophisticated approach to managing parks and recreation.

The City of Sunrise's culture is shifting to an increased focus on goals and performance measures. The change has come from the City Manager and the leadership in the City. While this shift may be a difficult endeavor, the Leisure Services Department recognizes the importance of supporting this management approach for the future. Specific attention to the overall work culture, the deployment of mission, vision and values, and continuously improving processes are all important foundations to the implementation of this section's recommendations.

The implementation of the Service Delivery Plan should begin with attention given towards further refining and clarifying the work culture, mission and operational practices moving from a social management model to a sustainable management model. Without this clarification, the constancy of effort and discipline required for the implementation of planning initiatives will be difficult to achieve.

Historically, many sustainable business management practices have not been present in the operations of the Department as it applies to the following:

- Having effective policies on pricing of services and facilities.
- Having effective partnership policies on managing public/public



partnerships, public/not-for-profit partnership and public/private partnerships.

- Having a capacity management plan for recreation facilities and the theatre to maximize use.
- Use of technology to make decisions on programs and facility use.
- Lack of marketing principles and practices to drive energy and revenue into operations to offset operational costs.
- Little use of tracking of data on users to make program and facility changes.
- Limited creativity in program design to draw new users into the programs provided.
- The organizational work load of staff is not balanced in the Department.
- Lack of trained professional staff at the entry level for program development causing greater stress on supervisors at the management level.
- Lack of business plans for managing key attractions and facilities to maximize their use and return on investment for the taxpayer.
- Program lifecycle management not being managed.
- Brand and image needs a makeover, as there are elements of outdated practices as evidenced by the Departments web-site and use of technology.
- Customer service practices to seek and gain feedback.