



Edwin M. Lee, Mayor
Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager

Date: June 4, 2015
To: Recreation and Park Commission
Operations Committee
Through: Philip A. Ginsburg, General Manager
From: Taylor Emerson
Subject: Proposed Five Year Strategic Plan, FY16-20

Agenda Wording

Discussion and possible action to approve the Recreation and Park Department's FY2016-2020 Strategic Plan

Background

In compliance with Charter Section 16.107(g) and the implementation requirements of Park Code Section 13.01, the Department is pleased to submit for your consideration the Five Year Strategic Plan, covering FY16 through FY20. Specifically, the Charter and Park Code language states, “...*the Department shall prepare, for Commission consideration and approval, a five-year Strategic Plan, to be updated annually, that establishes or reaffirms the mission, vision, goals, and objectives for the Department.*”

The department’s executive management team led the planning process, which began in September 2013.

Executive Team

Philip A. Ginsburg	General Manager
Sarah Ballard	Policy and Public Affairs
Lisa Bransten	Partnerships
Dawn Kamalanathan	Capital and Planning
Denny Kern	Director of Operations
Dana Ketchum	Property & Permits
Katharine Petrucione	Administration and Finance



It is worth noting that while the Department has not formally revised the Strategic Plan in many years, it does set goals and objectives in the Department-wide performance management plan and through its annual budget process¹.

Further in Section 13.02 of the Park Code states, “*The Department shall consider using an independent planning consultant to assist with preparation of the Strategic Plan.*” In October 2013, the Department was accepted into the Community Partners program of the Harvard Business School (HBS). This program matches local alumni of HBS to a pro bono consulting project “to make a positive social impact in their community.” The HBS team was eight people who brought experience, knowledge, and commitment to guide and inform the department’s planning process. See Exhibit A for a detailed list of HBS team members.

Executive staff and HBS collaboratively scoped the HBS project to include the following elements:

- 1) Analysis and understanding of RPD strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; the existing set of strategic goals (included in the budget); the revenue and expenditure context; prior strategic planning efforts; and management views of future challenges
- 2) Conduct and synthesize internal stakeholder interviews
- 3) Conduct and synthesize external stakeholder interviews
- 4) Facilitate strategy sessions with RPD management team to review current mission, values, strategic initiatives and determine the implications for the draft Strategic Plan
- 5) Design, distribute, and analyze results of staff survey and interdisciplinary focus groups
- 6) Analysis of the Strategic Plans of sample peer organizations (comparable city Recreation and Park departments, as well as other San Francisco departments)
- 7) Collection and evaluation of peer agency performance management processes and metrics, and benchmarking of best practices in the Recreation and Parks industry

After conducting interviews with 15 internal staff and 20 external stakeholders, the team set about to synthesize the observations and insights into a preliminary set of about 20 strategic goals and values. Then, they developed a survey instrument to test the resonance and prioritize the issues on which there was the most agreement across the Department. The survey was issued to approximately 300 staff members, and 134 responded, showing an exceptionally high rate of response and engagement.

The survey results were collated and prioritized, then focus groups were arranged to further define the values staff share, examine the vision staff had for where the department should go in the next five years, and agreement on the strategies most needed to achieve the vision. The methodology for the focus groups was to mix classifications and seniority, reflecting balance across the department, into each of eight focus groups. The groups were led by one member of the Executive Team (one member conducted two groups), and no one in the group was in the reporting line of the leader. The groups engaged in a guided discussion to work through, for example, a set of values and provided feedback on the meaning and importance of those values. By mixing gardeners, accounting clerks, and planners, with a custodian and a member of the volunteer team, for example, lively discussion ensued and every group emerged with more knowledge of, and empathy for, the challenges and needs across this complex department. In

total, more than 100 employees representing more than 35 different classifications participated in the focus groups.

Simultaneously, HBS conducted peer research on strategic planning processes and products in comparable jurisdictions, as well as the work of other departments in the City. Then, the Strategic Planning team convened two significant planning workshops together, along with many smaller, informal group efforts, to process and prioritize the results into the first working draft of the Vision, Values, Strategies, Objectives, Metrics, and Initiatives.

After a year-long focused and productive collaboration, HBS concluded their project, and Mariposa Leadership joined the team. Sue Bethanis, founder of Mariposa Leadership, facilitated executive staff meetings and guided the team to consensus on process and outcomes. With her help, a first draft was issued in January 2015.

This first draft was shared with the SF Parks Alliance, and included in two public budget meetings, a second round of eight employee focus groups (with returning and new participants), external stakeholders, two staff Open Houses, Local 261, and the Parks, Recreation, Open Space Advisory Committee (PROSAC). This extensive outreach effort and far-reaching feedback loop generated an iterative revision process for the executive staff and smaller working groups to yield the second draft, formally agendized with PROSAC on May 5, 2015.

As of May 29, 2015, PROSAC has provided 62 proposed changes, of which 90% were either incorporated or partially incorporated. Their special knowledge of, and devotion to, the well being of the department and the public served by the many programs, parks, and events delivered has yielded a far improved strategic planning document.

See below for a detailed list of the milestones of this process.

¹The Mayor's Budget Book, issued annually, contains the department's mission, vision, goals, and objectives, along with performance metrics and data to show challenges and success in achieving those goals.

Milestones of Strategic Plan development	
Oct-13	HBS joins RPD team
Nov-14	Internal management interviews
Jan-14	Interviews of 20 external stakeholders completed
Jan-14	Peer research and benchmarking completed - Chicago, Minneapolis, New York, Philadelphia, Portland, San Jose, Seattle
Feb-14	Survey of 300 RPD staff, with 134 returned
Mar-14	First facilitated workshop w senior management to define strategic goals
May-14	Focus groups with interdisciplinary staff representing 35+ classifications and 100+ participants
May-14	Second senior management workshop to draft Vision and Values
Jul-14	Third senior management workshop focused on understanding employee feedback
Oct-14	Working draft of the Plan completed, Mariposa Leadership joins RPD team
Nov-14	First draft of Initiatives completed by senior staff
Dec-14	HBS partnership concludes
Jan-15	First draft of the Strategic Plan released , second round of focus groups with 75+ interdisciplinary staff
Feb-15	Public meeting/discussion of draft Strategic Plan at two evening meetings, Boeddeker Park and Hamilton Rec
Feb-14	Presentation and discussion of draft with SF Parks Alliance
Feb-14	Presentation and guided discussion of draft at RPD Staff Open House #1, four division manager meetings
Mar-14	Presentation and guided discussion at RPD Staff Open House #2, L261 meeting, External Stakeholders
Mar-15	Multiple revisions, metrics drafted, distributed internally for comment
Apr-15	Second draft released , received 21 comments from PROSAC on draft plan, incorporated 19 of them
May-15	PROSAC meeting, followed by 41 second round comments, incorporated 36
Jun-15	Final draft released at PROSAC meeting, agendaized at Commission subcommittees and full Commission

Staff Recommendation: Approve the Five Year Strategic Plan FY16-20

Supported By: PROSAC, SF Parks Alliance, Executive Staff

Opposed By: none known

Attachments: Proposed Five Year Strategic Plan

EXHIBIT A

Harvard Business School, Community Partners

Mari Becker, Manager, Corporate Finance, PG&E
Andrew Brown, Managing Director, Muir Equity
Josh Callahan, Vice-President for Asset Management, Jamestown
Vivek Khuller, President and CEO, Clearly Communications
Hsiang-Yi Lin, Principal, Four Bridges Advisory
Elaine MacDonald, Executive Director, Harvard Business School Community Partners
Roslyn Payne, President, Jackson Street Partners
Adelyn Zhou, Senior Marketing Manager, Nextdoor

External Stakeholders Who Participated in Strategic Planning

Phil Arnold, SF Parks Alliance
Adrian Benepe, Trust for Public Land
Robert Brust, Dolores Park Works
Mark Buell, Commissioner
Rosemary Cameron, SF Parks Alliance
Tan Chow, Chinatown CDC
Chuck Collins, YMCA
Vince Courtney, Laborers Local 261
Oumar Fall, SEIU L 1021
Dan Flanigan, Friends of the Urban Forest
Tom Harrison, Commissioner
Susan Hirsch, Cityfields Foundation
Jennifer Isacoff, Trust for Public Land
Laborers Local 261
Jim Lazarus, Chamber of Commerce
Richard Magary, Friends Group
Eric McDonald, Commissioner
Gabriel Metcalf, SPUR
Jay Nath, Mayor's Office of Innovation
Rachel Norton, SF Parks Alliance/SFUSD Board of Education
Mohammed Nuru, Department of Public Works
Matt O'Grady, SF Parks Alliance
PROSAC members
Will Rogers, Trust for Public Land
Peg Stevenson, City Controller's Office
Ken Weber, Zynga Foundation
Scott Weiner, Board of Supervisors
David P. Wessel, Principal, ARG

