

# Meeting Summary

## INTERNAL STAFF WORKSHOP

4/4/19

### Introduction

The staff workshop convened nine leaders in the City of Renton's Community Services Department to discuss how the City can evolve its services to meet the changing community needs in Renton. The meeting opened with a brief introduction to the City's staffing data and National Recreation and Parks Association data related to parks and recreation staffing levels nationally.

Most of the meeting focused on discussing two imaginary scenarios and ways the Department could respond to each situation.

### Participants

- Kelly Beymer, Community Services Administrator
- Leslie Betlach, Community Services, Parks Planning and Natural Resources Director
- Terry Flatley, Community Services, Urban Forestry and Natural Resources Manager
- Ian Gray, Community Services, Urban Forestry and Natural Resources Manager
- Cailín Hunsaker, Community Services, Parks and Trails Director
- Jeff Minisci, Community Services, Facilities Director
- Carrie Nass, Community Services, Recreation and Neighborhoods Manager
- Erica Schmitz, Community Services, Capital Improvement Project Coordinator
- Maryjane Van Cleave, Community Services, Recreation and Neighborhoods Director
- Lauren Schmitt, MIG
- Ryan Mottau, MIG

Alan Wyatt, Community Services, Capital Improvement Project Coordinator was unable to attend and provided initial comments via email.

### Discussion Themes

Discussion themes drawn from staff dialogue during the workshop are summarized below, representing overarching take-aways from the staff's perspective.

- Staffing has been nearly flat over the past 20 years; belied by the reorganization of existing Community Services staff, transfer of staff and programs and the addition of Human Services Division.



- Flexibility in terms of job descriptions and scope of duties is important. This would allow the Department to adapt more easily to future conditions and be more agile and efficient in providing services.
- Different service provision strategies may be needed, such as contracting out some services or formalizing partnerships with other entities to provide services.
- Expanded expertise or staffing may be needed in some areas, such as natural resource management, contract management, grant administration and volunteer recruitment and management.
- Cross-department coordination is beneficial, especially when evaluating long-term service provision impacts.

## Workshop Results

The participants were provided discussion prompts a week in advance of the meeting for two imaginary scenarios designed to allow staff members to think outside of the box about how the department provides services to generate innovative ideas:

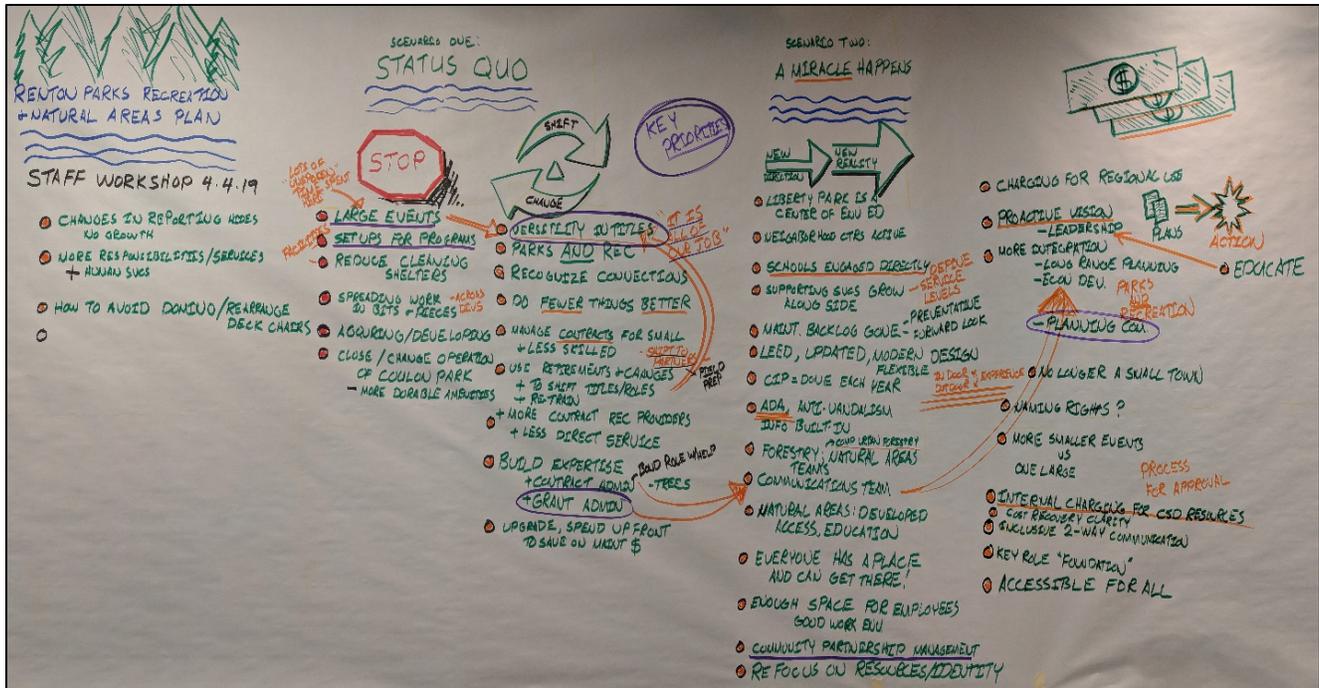
### *Scenario 1: The Status Quo Continues*

Imagine that Community Services will continue to see status quo staffing levels for the foreseeable future, especially the next ten years. The staffing level of service that the Department has today becomes the new normal, though you will have the authority to determine how to use those staff and which services to provide. What would you stop doing or direct your staff to stop doing? How would you change your group's role or the ways in which you deliver services?

### *Scenario Two: A Miracle Happens*

Discussion Prompt: Imagine that while you are at home tonight a miracle happens. When you come to work tomorrow, your ideal vision for how you serve the Renton community has already arrived. How are new directions and priorities represented in your Division? What is no longer a part of your Division's responsibilities? How will a typical day be different? Will you be striving for different outcomes?

Each scenario was discussed, and key points were captured on a wall graphic that is shown on the next page and transcribed.



### Imaginary Scenario 1: The Status Quo Continues

Re-evaluate...

- The current role with large events
  - Lots of “unspoken” time spent here
- The current model of setting up for programs
  - Facilities does the set up
- Reduce time spent cleaning shelters
  - Facilities cleans the shelters
- Spreading work in bits and pieces
  - Across divisions
- Acquiring/developing land without adequate staff to maintain it
- Consider changing how Coulon Park is operated in response to changing use patterns

Ideas for changes:

- Versatility in titles -- “it’s all of our job to do this”
- Merge parks and recreation
- Recognize connections
- Do fewer things better
- Manage contracts and agreements – shift smaller and less skilled tasks to others, such as field prep
- Use retirements and staff changes as an opportunity to:
  - Shift titles/roles
  - Re-train
  - Partner with more contract recreation providers

- Provide fewer direct services
- Build expertise
  - Contract administration
  - Trees and urban forestry
  - Grant administration
- Upgrade, spend up front on capital projects to save on maintenance money

*Imaginary Scenario Two: A Miracle Happens*

- Liberty Park is a center of environmental education
- Neighborhood centers are active
- Schools are engaged directly
- Supporting services grow along with the system
- The maintenance backlog is gone, and the focus is on preventative maintenance
- All buildings are LEED, updated with a modern design that is flexible and provides opportunities for an indoor/ outdoor experience
- CIP projects are done/complete each year
- There is a comprehensive urban forestry program and attention to natural area management.
- There is a communications team
- Natural areas have developed access and are used for education
- Everyone has a place and can get there! Or “Destinations are close and accessible.”
- There is enough space for employees and a good work environment
- Time is spent on community partnership management
- More attention is given to Renton’s identity and its expression in the park system
- Renton is charging fees for regional use
- There is a proactive vision with leadership, taking plans to action.
- More integration:
  - Long range planning
  - Economic development [parks and recreation]
  - Planning Commission
- Renton embraces that it is no longer a small town
- Naming rights is considered a revenue source
- Renton focused on more frequent smaller events rather than one large event
- Internal charging for Community Services Department resources through City budgeting procedures
  - Process for approval
- Cost recovery clarity
- Inclusive 2-way communication
- A park foundation helps expand resources
- Services are accessible for all