



## ***CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT***

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MEETING DATE: JANUARY 17, 2017

ITEM NUMBER: NB-1

**SUBJECT: MOBILE RECREATION PROGRAM**

**DATE: DECEMBER 22, 2016**

**FROM: JUSTIN MARTIN, RECREATION MANAGER**

**PRESENTATION BY: JUSTIN MARTIN, RECREATION MANAGER**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff requests that City Council provide direction regarding the return of the Mobile Recreation program.

### **BACKGROUND**

The concept of a Mobile Recreation Program was first presented in Costa Mesa in 1999 when the Recreation Division proposed a new use for the City's soon-to-be-retired police department S.W.A.T. van. The intent of the program was to provide a quality, drop-in, recreational, after-school and school-break playground program on wheels. The mobile component of the program allowed for it to travel to various locations around Costa Mesa. The program was provided to youth in neighborhoods that were unable to take advantage of other after-school programs available in Costa Mesa due to program location, transportation issues, participation fees, etc. It was also recognized that since only three of Costa Mesa's parks had buildings or community centers from which recreation staff could provide programs and supervision, this self-contained mobile recreation program could visit City neighborhoods and parks and provide supervised recreational activities to youth.

A second component to the Mobile Recreation program was its presence at a large number of both City-sponsored and community-provided special events. The program's staff provided supervised activity at events that included: Concerts in the Park, National Night Out, and the Costa Mesa Community Run. In FY 2008-09 the Mobile Recreation program was eliminated because of budget constraints.

## **ANALYSIS**

The Mobile Recreation program was supervised under the direction of part-time Recreation Leader staff and ultimately under the umbrella of responsibility of a full-time Recreation Division team member. In its prime, the program generally operated Monday-Friday, September through June from 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm and July through August from 10:00 am – 3:00 pm. The program served Costa Mesa youth, ages 5-12 years, to provide for neighborhood recreational needs.

The following information describes the Mobile Recreation program in more detail:

- The Mobile Recreation Program is a drop-in, non-custodial, self-contained mobile playground program on wheels, bringing recreation activities into neighborhoods and City parks in the community, providing recreation opportunities to those children who stay close to their homes to recreate and may not attend other recreational after-school or school-vacation programs.
- The program is a drop-in, non-custodial recreation program, meaning children are not required to remain in the program at all times nor to be signed in or out by parents or guardians. Minimum safety and program implementation standards call for a ratio of one (1) part-time staff to twenty (20) youth participants whenever possible; with a minimum of two part-time staff at all times.

The structure of the program includes three key components:

- **RECREATION:** Staff-planned and organized recreational activities & programs (games, arts & crafts, sports, nature, theatre, miscellaneous, etc.).
- **FREE PLAY:** Supervised “free play” activities &/or activities chosen by the children and implemented &/or supervised by staff.
- **EDUCATION:** Homework assistance, reading, implementing character building and/or fundamental assets associated with becoming a successful youth, etc.

While this program may seem little more than a vehicle that stores games, miscellaneous recreation equipment, and staff who disperse this equipment out to participants, the program also provided for positive role models, influential leadership, social engagement, and opportunities to learn how to use leisure time in a positive way.

## **FISCAL REVIEW**

Past Expense:

- Past total direct costs for the Mobile Recreation program range from a low of approximately \$50,000 to a high of approximately \$95,000. Approximately 75% of total program expenditures were allocated to part-time staffing costs. The remaining expenses were associated with recreational materials, equipment, healthy snacks, safety equipment, office supplies, uniforms and staff trainings. A portion of a full-time Department staff was also designated to this program and that time was reflected in the budget as spent supervising the program and its part-time staff.

Past Revenue:

- The program was previously identified as a “Fully Supported” program within the Council-approved “Cost Recovery Guidelines for Recreation Activities” and was therefore free to all participants.

If City Council supports the return of this program offering, staff will develop a funding plan to be reviewed as part of the FY 16/17 mid-year budget report. The budget will include the purchase of a vehicle, staff time and supplies. In a potential means to offset costs related to the operation of this program, staff and/or the community may explore the idea of sponsorship and scholarship opportunities from local foundations, non-profit groups, etc.

**LEGAL REVIEW**

No legal review is required for this item.

**ALTERNATIVES**

The Council could direct staff to not move forward with the return of the Mobile Recreation Program.

**CONCLUSION**

Staff requests that the City Council provide direction regarding the potential return of the Mobile Recreation Program.

  
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