



Tennis Courts

Recommended Standard of 1.00 Court per 4,000 Residents

Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District

Master Plan for Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services

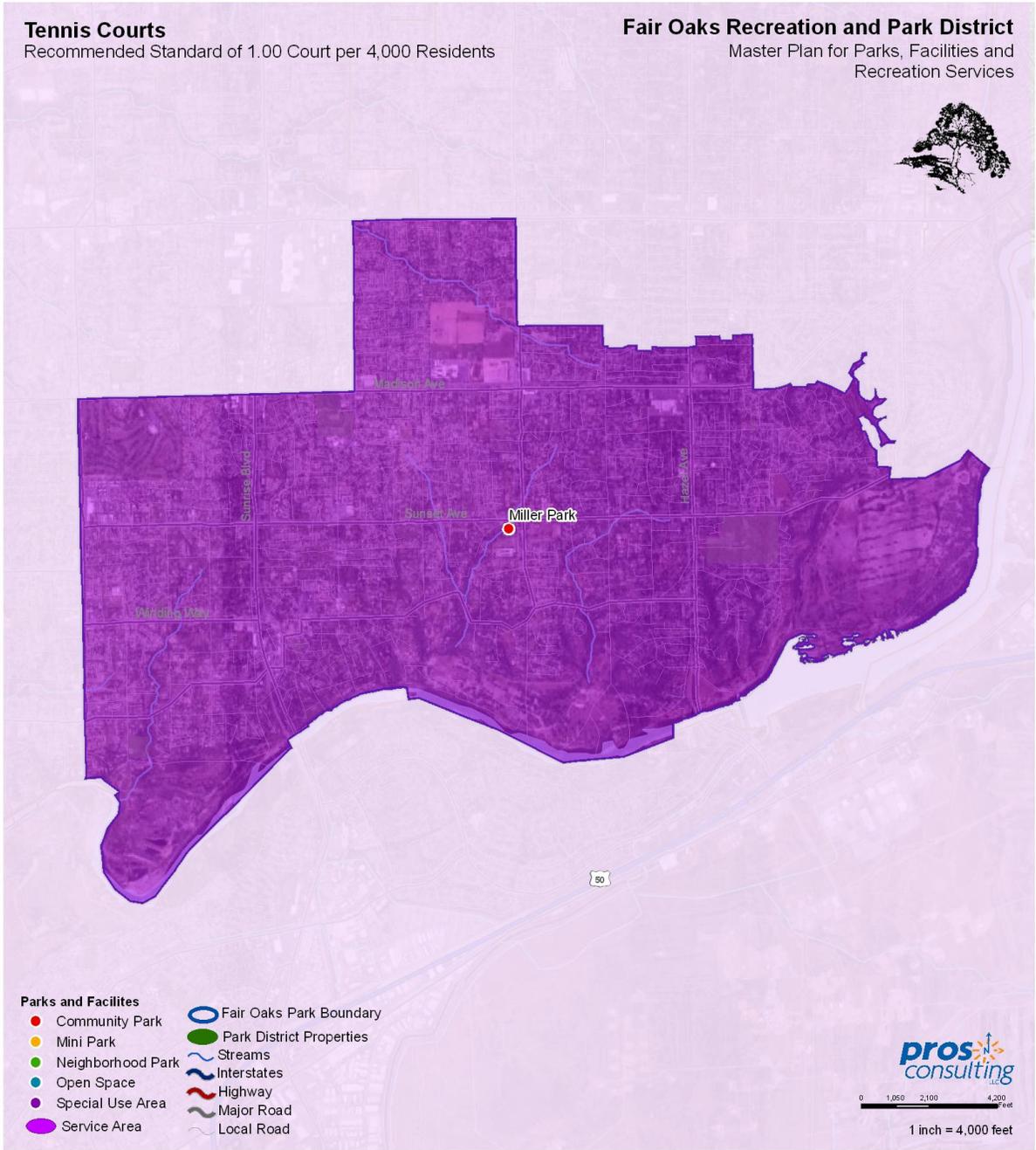


Figure 81 - Tennis Courts Service Area



Trails (all surface miles)

Recommended Standard of 0.40 Miles per 1,000 Residents

Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District

Master Plan for Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services

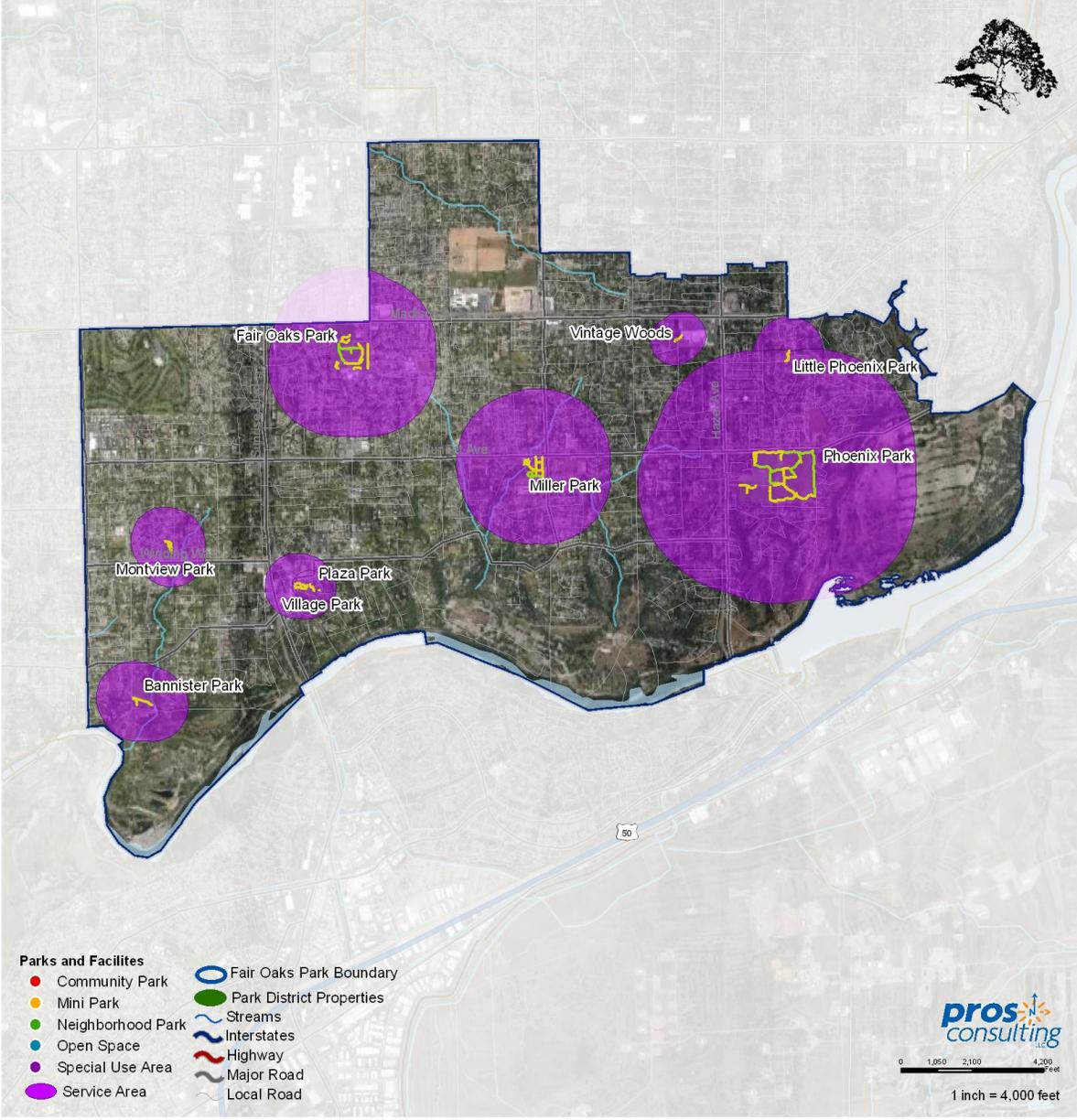


Figure 82 - Trails Service Area



Dog Parks

Recommended Standard of 1.00 Site per 30,000 Residents

Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District

Master Plan for Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services

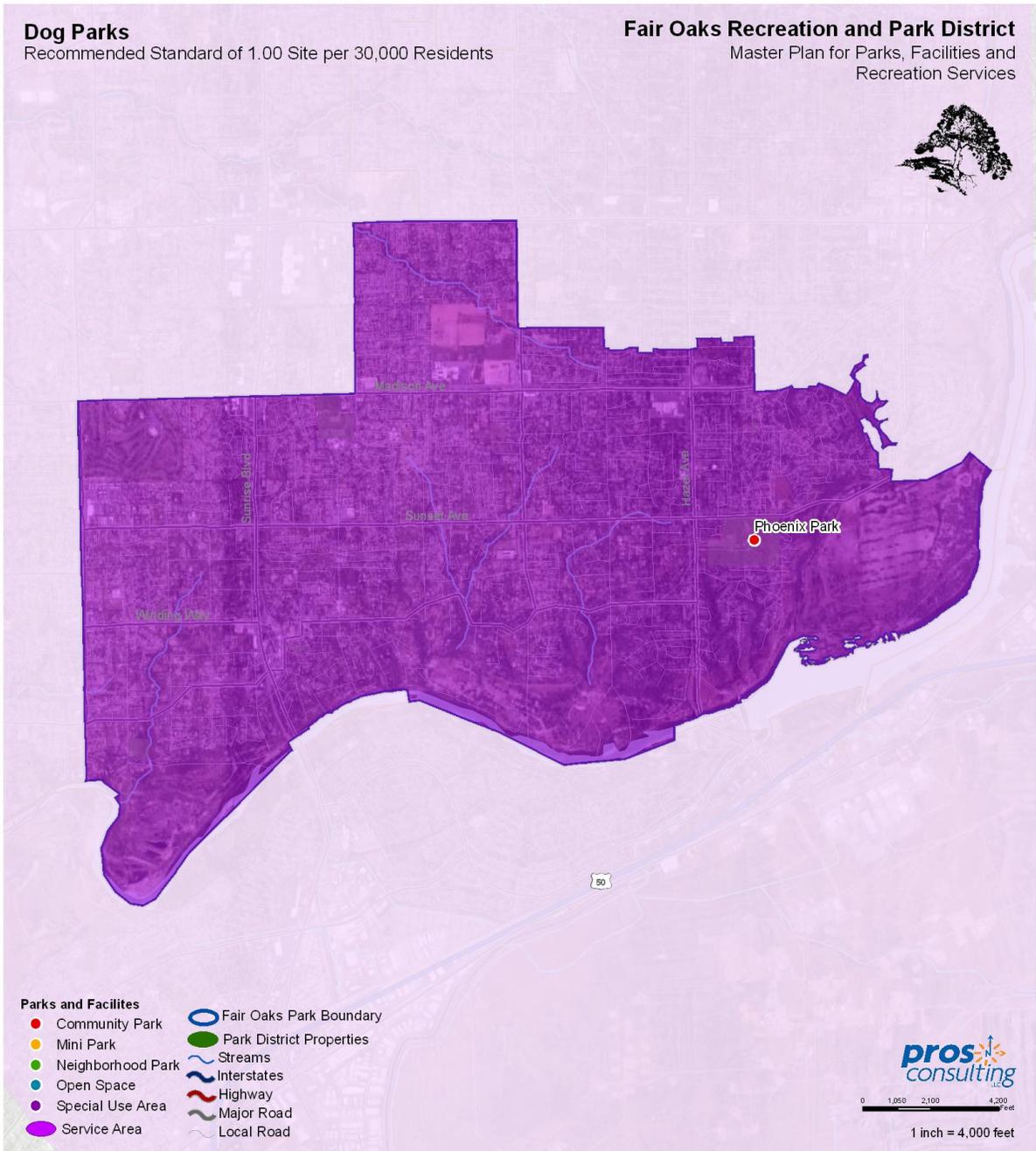


Figure 83 - Dog Parks Service Area



Skateparks

Recommended Standard of 1.00 Site per 35,000 Residents

Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District

Master Plan for Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services

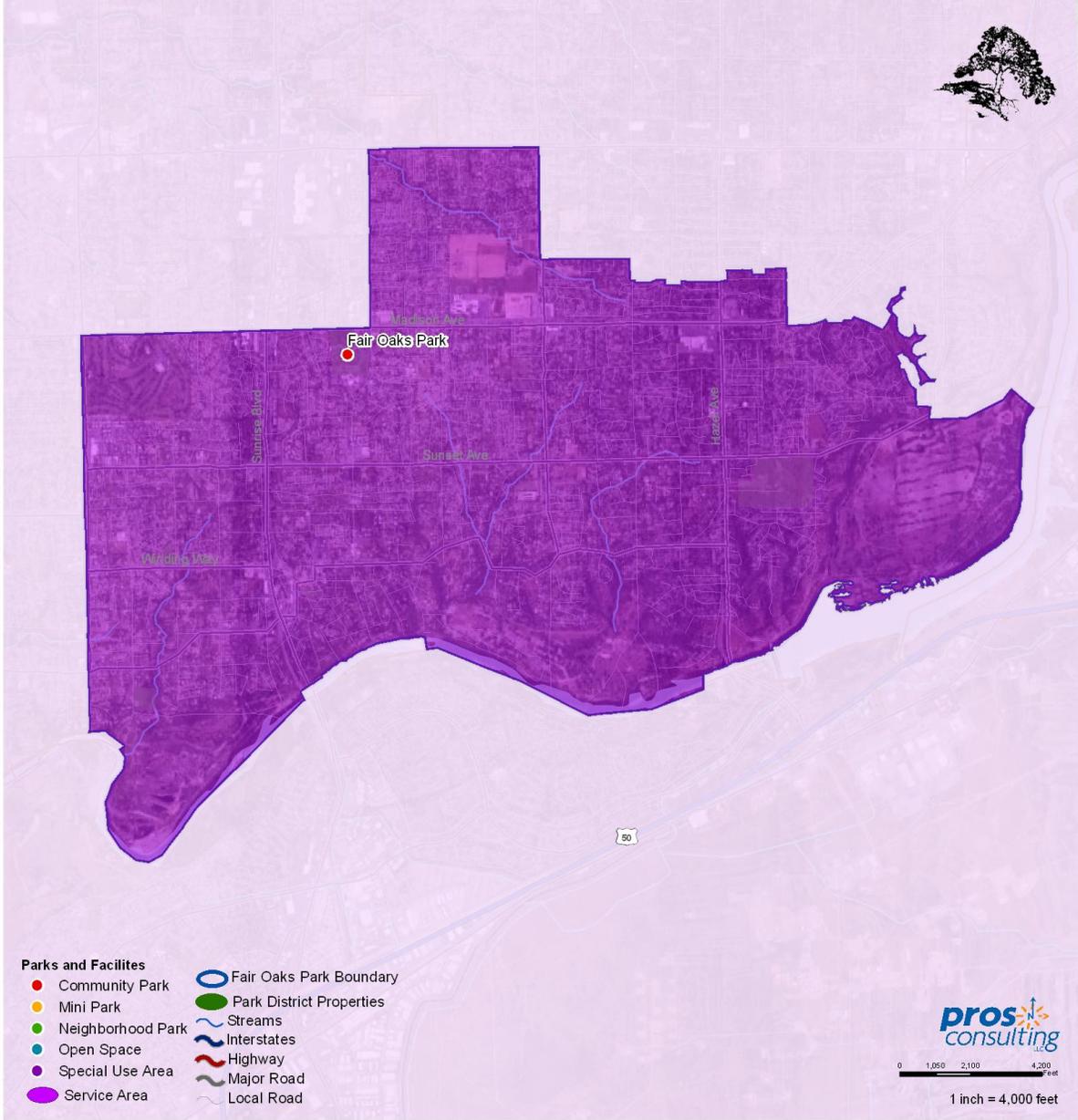


Figure 84 - Skateparks Service Area



Community Gardens / Horticulture Centers

Recommended Standard of 1.00 Site per 35,000 Residents

Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District

Master Plan for Parks, Facilities and Recreation Services

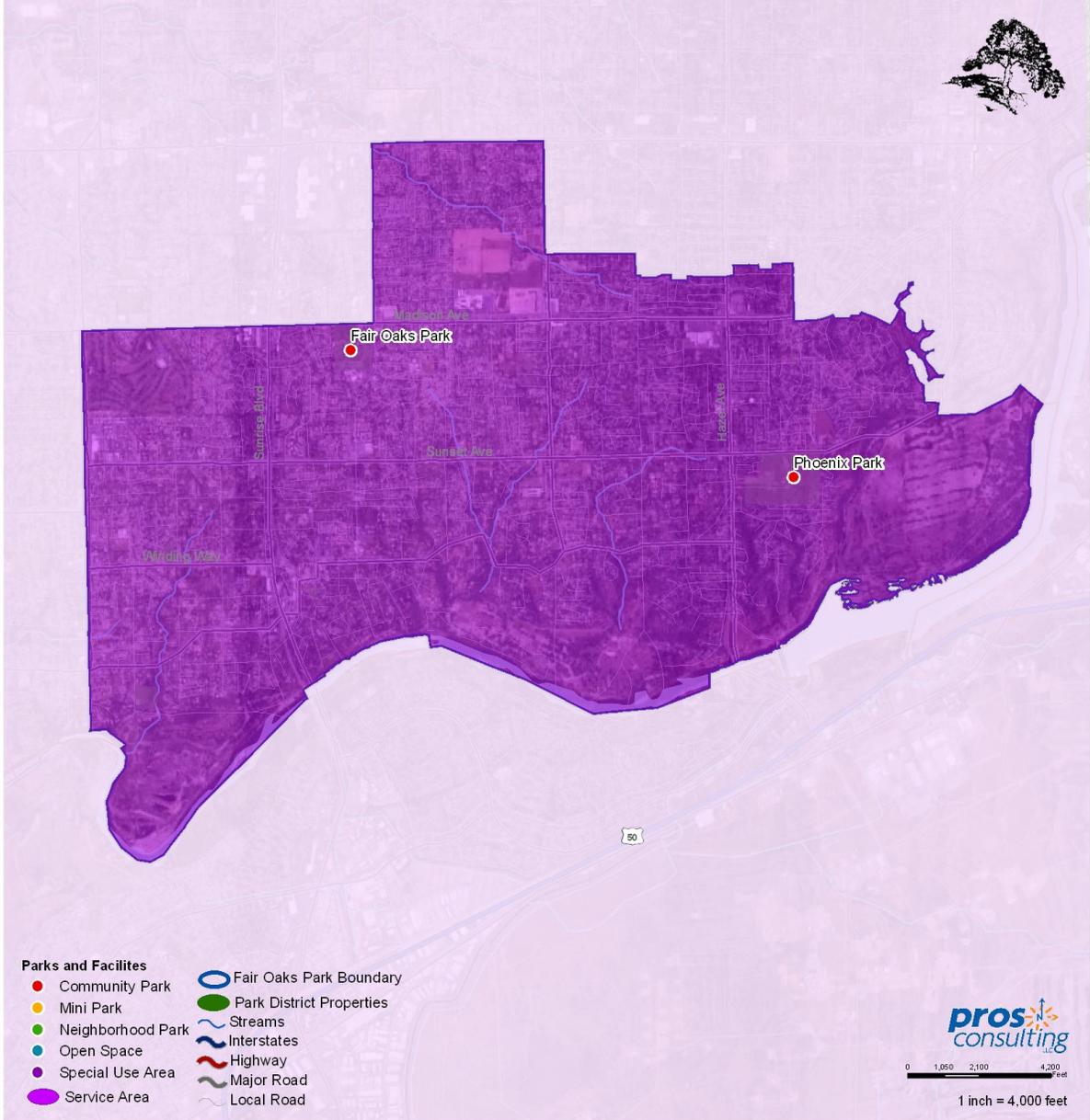


Figure 85 - Community Gardens/Horticulture Centers Service Area



Recreation/Fitness Center Space (Square Feet)
Recommended Standard of 1.50 Square Feet per Person

Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District
Master Plan for Parks, Facilities and
Recreation Services

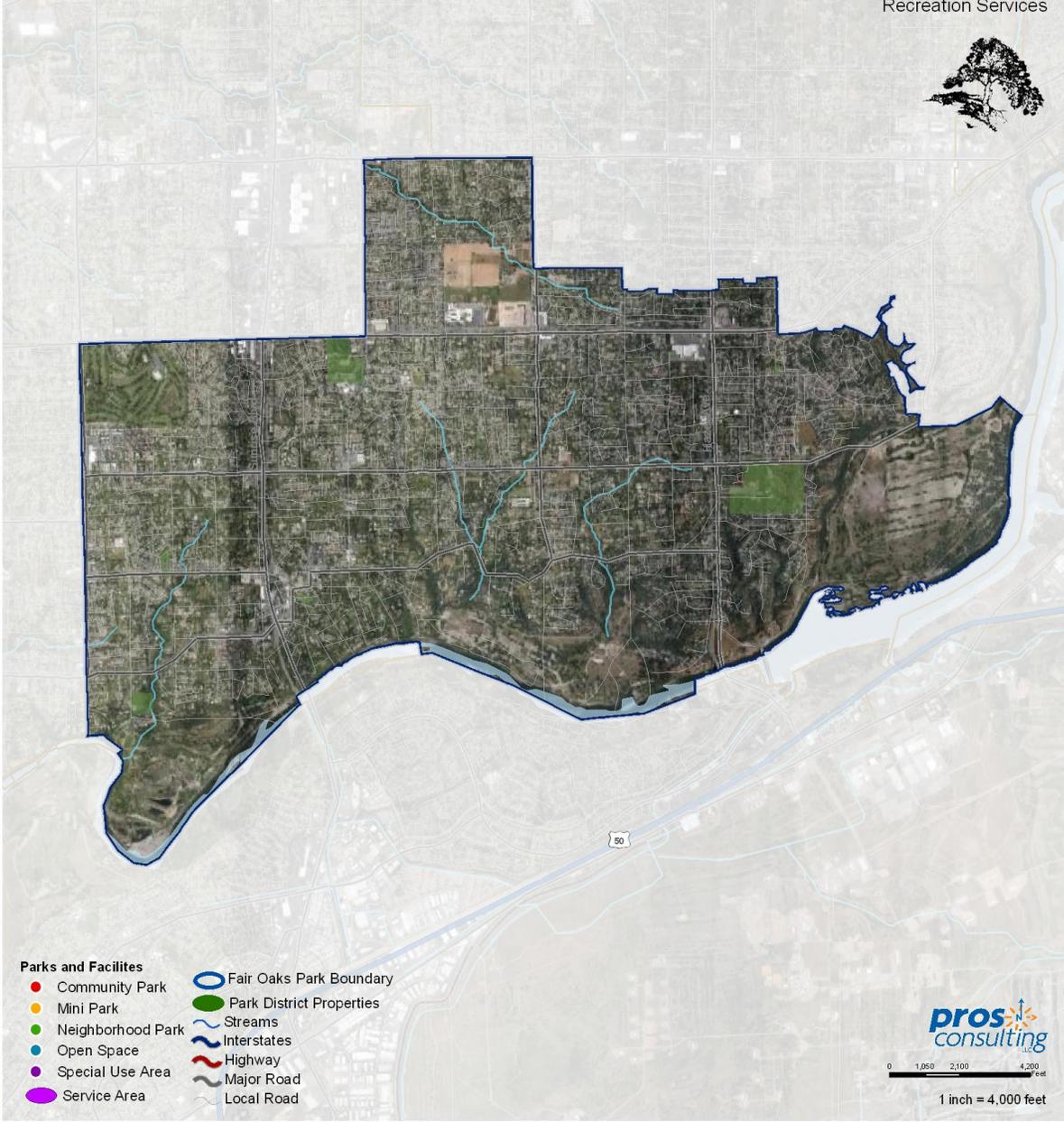


Figure 86 - Recreation/Fitness Center Space Service Area

4.3 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

The consulting team performed an assessment of the Fair Oaks Recreation and Park District. The Recreation Program Assessment offers an in-depth perspective of the recreation program offerings and helps identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in programming. The Assessment also assists in identifying core programs, program gaps within the community, duplication of programs with other recreational service providers in the community, and determining future program offerings for residents.

The consulting team based these program findings and comments from program assessment forms, discussions, and interviews with the recreation staff. The consulting team completed a programming meeting with staff, reviewed the existing inventory of programs and also toured parts of the system.

The District program staff selected the core programs to be evaluated and entered the data into the program assessment matrix provided by PROS. This report addresses the program offerings from a systems perspective for the entire repertoire of programs, as well as individual program information. It identifies key issues and presents recommendations for these issues, while also offering recommendations to elevate the core programs to the next level.

4.3.1 PROGRAM ASSESSMENT AND OVERVIEW

The District offers a wide gamut of programs and is especially proficient in its Special Event programs. Based on the community input process undertaken so far, a high number of residents were very appreciative of the nature and variety of recreation offerings. Some specific ones mentioned included The Comedy Theater, Chicken Festival, and Thursday Night Concerts etc.

Some overall observations from the program assessment sheets that were filled out follow:

- The **program descriptions** do a good job promoting the benefits of participation.
- **Age segment distribution** is good, but can be improved. One area of improvement is the high school age program that is currently at 9% distribution. Best practice systems tend to have this in the 12% - 13% range.
- There is a lack of balance in the distribution across various **program lifecycles**. An above average number of programs lie in the mature to declining stage, which needs to be addressed.
- There are several **similar providers** with the majority of them being neighboring agencies including City of Folsom, City of Roseville, Rancho Cordova Park District, Cosumnes CSD Park District, Sunrise Park District among others.
- Limited **program performance measures** tracked.
 - Several areas do track some program performance measures but these measures are not tracked on system-wide basis. Customer satisfaction rates are marginally tracked, while customer retention rate is one performance

measure that is not tracked at all. No performance measures are tracked for Facility Rentals, Health and Wellness or Leisure classes either.

- Good **volunteer support** for Special Events, Senior Programs and through the Community Partners program. However, there is an absence of a system-wide volunteer management approach.
- From a **partnership** standpoint, the Community Partners program is a good starting point and must be expanded. Currently, there exist limited partnerships with other surrounding municipal agencies (Junior NFL being one of the exceptions), which could be further explored.
- From a **marketing and promotions** standpoint, the staff undertakes a number of promotions with most programs using program guide, website, social networks, brochures / flyers and direct mail as a part of the marketing mix.
 - Good use of multiple mediums for special events, particularly Chicken Festival.
 - There seem to be minimal to no cross-promotions.
 - Customized email blasts can be increased; use of Web 2.0 technologies including social networks, micro-blogging, blogs / webinars / podcasts could be expanded.
- Most commonly used **customer feedback methods** are post program evaluations and the website.
 - Pre-program surveys are limited. Pre-program surveys are useful to gauge potential user interest before offering programs so as to limit cancellation rates and maximize resources.
 - Lost customer surveys would also be a valuable addition. By building a database of all past and present users, the staff can track lost customers on an annual basis. These could then be surveyed to identify reasons for customer drop-outs.
 - On-going online surveys through www.surveymonkey.com too could be employed.
- **Pricing strategies** are varied across the board and use a variety of strategies from competitor prices, cost recovery, customer's ability to pay, group discounts, multi-use discounts (for comedy shows) etc. This is a good practice and must be continued.
 - Additional strategies using prime-time / non-prime time rates could be employed to help alleviate some capacity utilization issues.
 - Facility Rentals do not seem to have any pricing strategy stated, but based on discussions with the staff, the Consulting Team believes pricing strategies are employed.
- **Financial performance measures** are inconsistent across the board. There is limited awareness of the cost per experience while cost recovery goals are not established

for all program areas. These are areas that could be improved to help the District move towards greater sustainability.

4.3.1.1 AGE SEGMENT DISTRIBUTION

In addition to the lifecycle analysis, staff also assessed age segment distribution of programs. The distribution follows:

- Preschool - 9%.
- Elementary Aged (K-5th grade) - 13%.
- Middle School (6-8th grade) - 15%.
- High School (9-12th grade) - 9%.
- Young Adults 18-24 - 12%.
- Adults 25-44 - 11%.
- Middle Age 45-64 - 15%.
- Seniors 65+ - 13%.
- Family Events - 4%.

The balance of age segment distribution is good but it can be improved. An area that stands out is the 8% distribution of high school age programs, which is among the toughest age groups to program for. Best practice systems tend to have this in the 12% - 13% range.

The demographics report depicts that the U-18 age group comprises 21% of the total population currently and it is projected to further decrease to 18% in the next 10-15 years. However, as seen in the list above, the program distribution by age segment has almost 40% of the programming dedicated to those age segments. On the other hand, the programs for 45+ age groups comprise 28% of the total program offerings, but that age group comprises 48% of the total population based on 2009 population estimates.

The District should review the age segment distribution on an annual basis and ensure that age segments show good balance throughout. In reviewing age segment growth over the next five years, the greatest percentage growth areas will occur in all age segments over 55.

Also, rather than categorizing the 55+ market as one program area, the trend is moving toward having two to three segments of older adults. The District must look into further splitting program offerings into 45–54, 55–65 and the 65–75 and the older segments.

4.3.1.2 LIFECYCLE ANALYSIS

The program assessment included a lifecycle analysis by staff members. The listing of programs is included in **Figure 87** at the end of this section. This assessment was not based on quantitative data, but based according to staff's knowledge of their program areas. The following list shows the percentage distribution of the various lifecycle categories of District's recreation programs.

- Introduction stage (New program; modest participation) –26%.
- Take off stage (Rapid participation growth) – 11%.

- Growth stage (Moderate, but consistent participation growth) – 6%.
- Mature stage (Slow participation growth) – 40%.
- Saturation stage (Minimal to no participation growth; extreme competition) – 11%.
- Decline stage (Declining participation) – 6%.

These percentages were obtained by comparing the number of programs in each individual stage with the total number of programs listed in the program worksheets. The lifecycles indicate a lack of balance with 40% programs being in the Mature stage. The consulting team recommends a percentage of 60% combined in the introduction, take off and growth stages. For the District, this percentage is at 43% which indicates that there is room for improvement.

While there are a high number of programs in the Mature to Decline stage, it is worth noting that some of the programs designated as mature have continuous strong appeal (for example, Senior Luau) and show no signs of declining. Based on discussions with the staff, there is also a sense that the growth in some program areas may be hindered due to limited indoor recreation space.

The overall strategy includes moving more Mature and Saturated programs to the Introductory, stage and continuing to add newer programs based on community needs and trends. Additionally, programs in the Decline stage must be closely reviewed to evaluate repositioning them or eliminating them in the future. Staff should complete a lifecycle review on an annual basis and ensure that the percentage distribution closely aligns with desired performance. Furthermore, the District could include a performance measure of percentage of total number of new programs offered annually as an incentive for more innovation.

An example of promoting innovation in the recreation program development culture could include developing a network of national best-in-class agencies and creating an on-line discussion about programming trends.

From a strategic perspective, based on continuous increases in programs, the District needs to identify ways to increase capacity for recreation programs through better prime-time versus non-prime scheduling, new or expanded facilities and partnerships / leases or agreements with similar providers to carve distinct market niches.

Stage in Program Lifecycle					
Introduction	Take-Off	Growth	Mature	Saturated	Decline
Health & Wellness Classes- Fencing	Chicken Festival	Leisure Classes- Family pottery	Adult Softball	Health & Wellness Classes- Yoga	Leisure Classes- Breakdancing
Health & Wellness Classes- Mind body wellness	Comedy Shows	Leisure Classes- Staging fun and more	Adult Basketball	Health & Wellness Classes- Senior stretch	Leisure Classes-Creative jewelry
Leisure Classes- How to be a princess/pirate	Easter	Youth Sports Tiny tots	Summer Camp	Health & Wellness Classes- CPR First Aid	Leisure Classes- Baby signs
Leisure Classes- Mommy & me art classes	Garage Sale		Health & Wellness Classes- Kenpo Karate	Health & Wellness Classes- Tennis	
Leisure Classes- Baking Classes	Kids Art		Health & Wellness Classes- Skateboarding	Leisure Classes-Adult pottery	
Leisure Classes- Paint your own pottery			Health & Wellness Classes- Kidz love Soccer		
Leisure Classes- Certified baby sitting			Leisure Classes- Youth Dance		
Leisure Classes- Ink & Oil on glass			Leisure Classes- Parents night out		
Leisure Classes- Scrapbooking			Leisure Classes- Wee chefs		
Leisure Classes- Ink & Oil on glass			Leisure Classes- Kids chefs		
Leisure Classes- Parenting			Leisure Classes- Skate deck creations		
Youth Sports JR NFL			Leisure Classes- Dog obedience		
			Leisure Classes- Country line dancing		
			Leisure Classes- Ballroom dance		
			Leisure Classes- East coast swing		
			Leisure Classes- Round dance		
			Senior Programs PASA		
			Senior Programs Luau		
			Youth Sports Tiny tots		
<i>New program; modest participation</i>	<i>Rapid participation growth</i>	<i>Moderate, but consistent participation growth</i>	<i>Slow participation growth</i>	<i>Minimal to no participation growth; extreme competition</i>	<i>Declining participation</i>
Note: Each program or class in core program has been broken into the various stages of the lifecycle based on the definitions provided at the bottom of the chart.					Source: Client

Figure 87 - Stage in Program Lifecycle

4.3.1.3 CORE PROGRAMS

The consulting team believes in the importance of identifying core programs based on current and future needs. This assists in creating a sense of focus around specific program areas of greatest importance to the community. Public recreation is challenged by the premise of being all things to all people. The core program philosophy assists staff in being able to focus on what is most important. Programs are categorized as core programs if they meet a majority of the following categories:

- The program has been provided for a long period of time (over 4-5 years).
- Offered 3-4 sessions per year.
- Wide demographic appeal.
- Includes 5% or more of recreation budget.
- Includes a tiered level of skill development.
- Requires full-time staff to manage the program area.
- Has strong social value.
- High level of customer interface exists.
- High partnering capability.
- Facilities are designed to support the program.

During the programming meeting with the staff, the following core program areas were identified:

- Adult Sports.
- Camps (Camp Fair Oaks).
- Classes (Health and Wellness, Leisure).
- Rentals.
- Senior Programs.
- Special Events.
- Youth Sports.

Other individual programs also include Community Partners programs and Fair Oaks Youth Advisory Board (FOYAB).

4.3.1.4 PROGRAM RANKINGS

As part of the Master Plan process, the consulting team prepared a priority needs assessment of facilities and programs based on community needs assessment survey data, community input, and consultant evaluation. As can be seen in **Figure 88**, the highest priority program areas to concentrate on in the future include:

- Adult Fitness and Wellness Programs. (e.g. Yoga, Tai Chi, Pilates, regular fitness classes, nutrition programs etc.)
- Outdoor Skills Programs (e.g. Rock climbing and canoeing / kayaking to outdoor exercise, meditation, ropes courses etc.)
- Youth Sports Programs
- Youth Learn to Swim Programs
- Senior Programs

An infusion of new programs must be evaluated based on the amount of available program space, given its limited availability. Furthermore, programs in the decline stage should be considered for removal to accommodate other new programs that are better aligned with community need. *Note: It is important to clarify that these priorities are derived based on the methodology described on the previous page and are reflective of the community's priorities only. They are not a value judgment by the District. All the programs in the list below are accessible to the entire community.*

Fair Oaks Program Priority Rankings			
	High	Medium	Low
Adult fitness/wellness	1		
Outdoor skills	2		
Youth sports	3		
Youth Learn to Swim programs	4		
Senior programs	5		
Visual/Performing Arts	6		
Adult sports programs	7		
Community-wide special events		8	
Tennis lessons, clinics and leagues		9	
Gymnastics and tumbling		10	
Martial arts programs		11	
Youth summer camp		12	
Before/After school		13	
Environmental education		14	
Youth fitness/wellness			15
Equestrian programs			16
Youth life skill			17
Pre-School programs			18
Birthday parties			19
Programs for the disabled			20

Figure 88 - Program Rankings

4.3.1.5 RECOMMENDED CORE PROGRAMS

The following list includes recommendations to reposition current programs or add newer core programs to the existing ones:

New Program Areas

- Fitness and Wellness programs (Adult and Youth combined)
- Outdoor skills / Adventure programs (Adventure Trips, 5K races, Bi-athlons, Triathlons etc.).
- Visual and Performing Arts programs.

Repositioned Program Areas

- Active Adult Enrichment Programs (as opposed to Senior Programs).

While PROS understands, that staffing resources and limited availability of space may hinder some of the program growth efforts, it is essential that the staff commit to a concerted effort towards expanding / repositioning these core program areas.

As seen in **Figure 88**, based on the Program Priority Rankings community needs assessment survey, **Adult fitness and wellness** activities are the most important program category. Currently, there are some fitness and wellness classes offered through private contractors but there is room for growth. Given the community's high need and the aging population trend, Adult Fitness and Wellness programs are increasingly in demand nationwide. On the other hand, with the increasing focus on childhood obesity, more and more parents are concerned with ensuring a healthy occurrence of fitness and wellness activities in their kids' lives. Thus, an initial core program area focused on Fitness and Wellness with an eventual goal of splitting into Adult and Youth focused program areas, would be recommended.

Nationally, **Outdoor skills / adventure programming** is a growing trend. This can include rock climbing, canoeing, kayaking, paragliding, dirt biking, driving off-road vehicles, running, and triathlons. The staff can add in outdoor adventure trips too as a new program area. Orangevale Park District has recently partnered with Collette Vacations and All West Tours to offer guided tour vacations and day trips. District could evaluate the option of doing something similar for adventure sports trips as well.

From a running / triathlon standpoint, there is an opportunity to create a branded special event similar to the Fair Oaks Chicken Festival or even in conjunction with it. The District Chicken Festival 5K / 10 K / Half Marathon could be good events to extend the festivities and widen the potential visitor base. The largest growth segment by age for triathlons is the youth market. In particular, the women's market is the fastest growing segment in the sport of triathlon. According to USA Triathlon, USAT female membership has increased from 11% in the early 90s, to 37% today. There could also be an opportunity to have an indoor-outdoor hybrid triathlon in partnership with Orangevale Recreation and Park District using their aquatic facility.

With the renovation of the Veterans Memorial Amphitheater, the community will have a facility that matches its interests and leanings towards performing arts. District could

certainly leverage that space to provide opportunities for **Visual / Performing Arts programs** that have emerged as an important and unmet need for the community.

In addition to the new core programs, it would be useful to **reposition Senior programs to Active Adult Enrichment programs** and develop it in conjunction with PASA. The word senior has often times been linked to a negative connotation among the current audiences, especially the active baby boomer population. This would allow for greater participation in the program areas and maximize outreach to all 55+ age segments. Going ahead, a recommendation is to further segment within these age segments to introduce 55-64 and 65+ programs. As observed, 55 year old participants have substantially different recreation needs than 70 year old participants and this would ensure a more focused approach towards serving the community's needs.

4.3.1.6 BARRIERS TO RECREATION PROGRAMMING PARTICIPATION

Along with tracking participant interest and participation in various programs, another important area to investigate further is examining reasons why people do not participate in District's programs. One of the community survey questions asked, "What prevents households from participating in programs?" The four most significant reasons were:

- Too busy – 38%.
- Desired program or facility not offered – 18%
- Program times are not convenient – 18%.
- Do not know what is being offered – 16%.

Since previous survey results are unknown it is difficult to establish how the current 31% participation rate ranks in comparison to past data. However, going forward District should continue to track this number over time to establish trends in participation. Average national program participation trends are around 30% - 32% as obtained from ETC Leisure Vision Institute database and based on the Consulting Team's operational experience. Keeping that in mind, it is encouraging to know that Districts on par with national practices.

In order to move from its current position to best practice rates of over 40%, District must undertake a root cause analysis to delve deeper into the stated causes of non-participation that are stated above. This determination could be difficult, as non-participants generally do not feel motivated to attend a focus group or complete a survey about why they do not participate. One method for this includes participant interviews at the District special events. Also, lost customer surveys by tracking past participants to identify reasons for discontinuation would help shed light on areas of improvement.

For **program times**, conducting informal surveys (offline and on the website) and focus groups could help identify convenient program times that may help increase participation. For **desired programs** not being offered, by way of the program priority rankings, the Consulting Team has provide a listing of programs that had the highest unmet need and importance ranking as chosen by the respondents in the community-wide survey. **Lack of awareness** about District offerings could be partly attributed to insufficient or improper marketing and outreach the community.

It is interesting to note that despite the current economic conditions, less than 10% of the respondents have stated 'fees are too high' as a barrier to participation. This certainly alludes to the fact that the programs are well priced and, in some cases, maybe even underpriced. As can be seen from another survey response, when questioned about the 'overall value' that the household obtains from District facilities and programs, only 3% stated they were somewhat dissatisfied with it.

Overall, the District does have encouraging participation rates and by addressing issues that can be internally controlled (increasing awareness, offering programs and timings that the community needs); there is no reason why participation rates cannot be further increased.

4.3.2 PARTNERS / SPONSORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Currently, there is a good level of support for some of the special events but not adequate system-wide sponsor / partner support. The 2009 sponsorship proposal for Chicken Festival was well done and highlighted multiple facets of the festival and its importance to the community. More importantly, it focused on how the potential partner / sponsor could benefit from supporting the festival, which is a very good practice. There are also individual sponsorship proposals for Easter Extravaganza and Kids Art but there is a lack of packaged offerings for sponsors. From a system-wide standpoint, Districts in the process of developing a sponsorship brochure that can be used to promote and sell the benefits of partnering with the District.

One of the key ways in which the sponsorship brochure can help District evaluate its return on investment (ROI) for sponsorships / partnerships is by providing tangible metrics (participants) for various events. Some other recommendations would be to publish these metrics on the website and promote them aggressively. Additionally, recognizing all existing or past sponsors for their support would certainly help build goodwill. The brochure's images could provide some sample images of promotions that may have been done or could be done. The images should also focus on reflecting the diversity of the participant base in a multi-cultural place like Fair Oaks.

It has been seen that the greater the opportunities to package the offerings, the more the likelihood of selling sponsorship. Providing sample packaging options that tie-in some signature special events such as the Chicken Festival with some of the less popular events would ensure that the staff up-sells events that may not get sold otherwise, while the partner gets more bang for their buck.

The ability to offer a potential partner / sponsor the chance to maximize the experiential marketing opportunities they offer is a huge plus. As an example, using Dell or Apple signage and images would not hold the same value as Dell or Apple products being displayed at the event where the users have the ability to touch and feel the product i.e. experience the product they may want to purchase. Additionally, promotions via coupons / discounts etc. that are shown to directly impact sales are powerful tools and could be used for local businesses.

Also, as mentioned in the partnership assessment report, the District must develop and implement a partnership plan for the next five years to maximize existing resources and serve the community's needs. Identify potential partners, reasons for involvements and desired strategic outcomes from the given partnerships are important steps to bear in mind

as District embarks on expanding the partner / sponsor base. Additionally, teaching and training staff to negotiate and manage partnerships will assist in empowering them and helping ensure the successful implementation of partnership / sponsorship agreements.

The District must seek to establish a volunteer coordinator or allocate a set portion of a staff member’s time towards volunteer management. The focus of this position is to create a system-wide approach to targeting and utilizing volunteer support. Additionally, they must seek to enhance the desirability of volunteering for District’s programs and events by developing a good reward and recognition system, similar to Frequent Flier airline programs. Volunteers can use their volunteer hours to obtain early registration at programs, or discounted pricing at certain programs, rentals or events. District staff is already providing similar incentives with Preschool programs, among others. Other avenues include creating a volunteer section on the website as well as in The Roost. Also, good volunteer programs have an overall system in place for volunteer recruitment, retention, and recognition. Staff should also quantify the labor dollars which volunteers provide to the District and this should be communicated to all partners, stakeholders and community members.

4.3.3 MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS

This section reviews District’s marketing approaches as well as key promotions and tactics. According to the community needs assessment survey (**Figure 89**), a very high percentage of residents acquire information about the District’s offerings through Quarterly Activity Guide (The Roost) 59% of respondents get their information from this publication. Nationally, 48% of residents rely on their park and recreation program guide. The other most frequently mentioned ways that respondents learn about programs and activities include: flyers / newsletters (42%), from friends and neighbors (33%), and District website (29%).

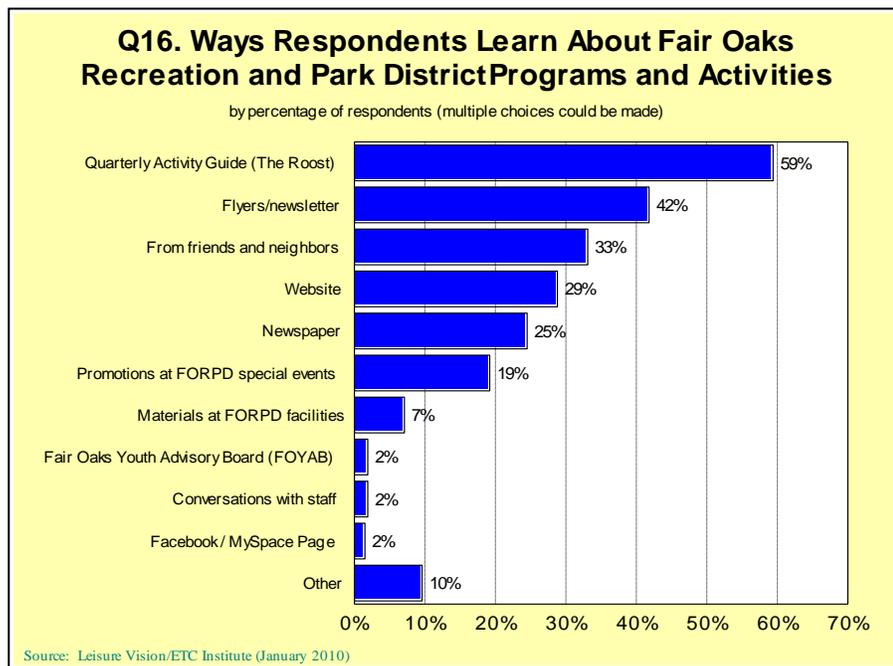


Figure 89 - How Respondents Learn About Programs and Activities

Based on current marketing and promotions activities undertaken, as stated in the program assessment worksheets, virtually every program is promoted via the program guide, the website and through flyers and brochures / direct mail. Less than one out of five respondents chose 'Promotions at District special events' which indicates the limited presence of **cross-promotions** at such programs. It is imperative that District take advantage of the presence of high numbers of relative captive audience in the special event environment to promote its other offerings, programs, facilities and rentals.

An effective and affordable means of promotion is '**On-hold pre-programmed messages**' that highlight upcoming classes, events or key registration dates for everyone who calls in to District. **Emails blasts** are being currently used for special events and classes, but could be expanded to Adult Basketball, Junior NFL and other areas. Email blasts are a very useful promotions tool since they are cost-effective and offer the ability to customize the message to individual groups. Additionally, the use of **Web 2.0 technology** is employed but not to its fullest extent. District has a Face book and MySpace account which is being used sparingly and does not seem to have a strategy to maximize outreach and solidify the brand. Additionally, there is an opportunity to expand into other elements of social networking and Web 2.0 with **Twitter, Blogging, Podcasting and Webinars**.

Face book – Teens are the main target of this movement, but more and more the participant base is expanding to include young moms and middle-aged adults. District could utilize Face book to:

- Provide a plethora of free and constantly updated information, including weekly calendar updates with events and programs.
- Control the message and identify how the target market responds to it.
- Display pictures and clips from special events such as the Chicken Festival.
 - Allow controlled 'user generated content' by encouraging users to send in their pictures from the District special events or programs they participated in.
- Introduce Face book-only promotions to drive greater visitation to Face book.

Twitter – can be updated daily/hourly with promo codes and special events also.

SMS Texting – Current research shows that approximately 1,742 texts are sent and received per month by teenagers. Given that almost one out of four individuals in the Fair Oaks service area is under the age of 19, there is an opportunity to target them through text messaging. By utilizing text messaging, the District can also better track Return on Investment (ROI). Some specific advantages of utilizing SMS include:

- Using different short codes, one can track exactly where the customer saw the promotion – if it were via the newspaper, billboard, or television/radio commercial. In using the short codes, the organization can determine which avenue of advertisement reaches the most customers.
- SMS prompts people to respond; thus, offering a promotion with a relatively short shelf life encourages people to act immediately that may not have otherwise.

Blog – This could be written by alternating Board or staff members or could be ‘from the Administrator’s desk’ where upcoming events, past successes or plain community outreach could be undertaken. This is a very personalized form of communication and helps build an affinity for the staff and Department as a whole. However, blogs do offer an opportunity for almost instant feedback which may need to be controlled or monitored on a regular basis.

There is also an opportunity to add a retail link to the website that could have branded merchandise currently sold at special events such as the Chicken Festival.

Webinars / Podcasting – These allow for a focused topic-based discussion where staff, FOYAB or PASA members, other special interest groups and community members at large can participate in the creation of a webinar or podcast that may be of interest. These could reside on the District website and users can be solicited on a monthly basis to provide feedback to identify the topics of most interest to them

Overall marketing efforts should follow a Department marketing plan, supplemented by business plans for core programs and facility operations. The marketing plan could out the overall marketing direction for District while the business plans provide vision and direction for the individual core program areas.

4.3.4 INTERNAL CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Customer service is at the root of the success of any organization. A true community-service organization prides itself on identifying its customers’ preferences and acting in accordance to help fulfill their needs. In order to do this, an ongoing and system-wide feedback mechanism is of vital importance.

Currently, the District does not have a system-wide approach but rather a program-wise approach towards garnering customer feedback. Most of the feedback is limited to ‘Post-program evaluation’. There are occasional instances of programs such as Summer Camps and Health and Wellness classes that seem to use the website to obtain customer feedback. Some other programs occasionally use on-site surveys as well.

The Consulting team recommends the use of ‘Pre-program survey’ and ‘Lost customer surveys’ on a *regular basis*. *At the beginning of a year or a season, District could also conduct ‘Senior Open Houses’ or Focus Groups to provide users or potential users an opportunity to preview the upcoming program offerings and provide feedback on the types of offerings they would be most interested in.* This provides a constant input mechanism for programming ideas and ensures that offerings are need-based not personality based. Additionally, users are more likely to participate in programs that they have had a chance to provide input on.

It is important that District capture the customer feedback data and develop a database that can be used over the years to track trends and changes. The feedback obtained must be communicated with the District Board and staff so as to ensure an open and transparent process and one that looks at improving as a team without focusing on individual blame.

4.3.5 HR STANDARDS

From an HR standpoint, the Policy and Personnel manual was updated in 2009. Full-time staff has performance reviews in the first 90 days and six months, following which the

evaluations are done on an annual basis. There is, however, no documented process for performance reviews for part-time or seasonal staff. The Consulting team recommends that these are introduced and conducted on an on-going basis. In addition, volunteer review processes too should be established so as to ensure consistency in volunteer standards and manner of representation of Districting the community. Basic life safety training is provided to all full-time and summer camp staff. Specialty skills training and continuing education is provided on an individual basis. There is a lack of customer service training or marketing training for the staff, which should be added. In an increasingly multicultural community like Fair Oaks, diversity training too is an important component of the training mix.

As for instructors, there is an absence of quality control mechanisms or lessons plans to ensure effectiveness. Outside of post-program customer feedback, District does not undertake any mechanism of evaluating instructor performance. Having an on-going instructor quality check as well as establishing lesson plans at the beginning of each class would certainly help elevate the level of the offerings which would in turn enable District to price the programs to its true value.

4.3.6 SERVICE SYSTEM REVIEW

The relationship between the service delivery process and program revenues is of critical importance. With an understanding of this important dynamic, the following section provides an analysis of the service system and includes building on the service foundation that already exists in the District. As observed from the community input obtained, the District currently experiences a high level of customer satisfaction and the respondents are extremely satisfied with the value they obtain from the offerings. This section is intended to move the District to a higher level of sophistication in its service approaches.

It is important for the District to manage service as an overall system in which all program areas consistently apply similar service standards. This is first and foremost in working on continuously improving overall service excellence. One method to achieve this is to follow established standards for customer satisfaction. This can be accomplished through a cross functional 'voice-of-the-customer' team.

ISO 9000:2001 (International Standards Organization) develops standards for various industries worldwide). These are best-practice components that are employed across multiple industries as a mechanism of developing an overall excellent customer satisfaction system. District might consider adopting portions of these standards to improve customer satisfaction. These four components include:

- Top management commitment.
- On-going needs assessment of customers.
- Overall customer satisfaction system.
- Overall customer dissatisfaction system.

Top management commitment is demonstrated by allocating resources to continuously improve services, such as technology, registration system improvements, staffing to support excellent service, development of overall service training, and recognizing staff for excellent service. Part-time staffing recruitment, retention, salary and benefits were all mentioned as

concerns for delivering excellent service. This is an important area of improvement for the District.

Top management should regularly review data relating to customer satisfaction. This can be achieved by including customer feedback as a regular discussion item in staff meetings.

The **Needs Assessment Rankings** provided in **Section 2.4** are a good starting point in determining customer needs. This formalized approach should be completed approximately every five years. In interim years, it is helpful to do less formal approaches in determining customer needs by core program areas through program evaluations, consumer advisory panels, secret shoppers, and focus groups. Good service systems identify future customer needs as well as current needs.

Customer satisfaction rates should be included as part of a performance measurement system. Results should be shared with the Parks Board, staff, and the public. It is important to ensure that the evaluation criteria match the key customer requirements which should be established for each program area.

Customer satisfaction processes should occur not only with recreation programs, but also with general park maintenance and athletic field quality, new park design, and community events.

Another best-practice suggestion for enhancing the customer satisfaction process is to use the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) score criteria, developed at the University of Michigan. Their customer satisfaction index includes three overall satisfaction scores:

- How satisfied are customers with the District overall?
- How likely will the customer repurchase the program or service?
- How likely will the customer refer the service to a friend?

The averages of all three percentages are then included as one overall score. These questions should be included on all surveys and program evaluations

Survey questions need to correlate with the most important customer requirements. No standardized process exists for determining customer requirements. The most effective method to determine important customer requirements is through interviews/focus groups with customers. Staff input into the process is valuable as well; particularly staff who interface with customers on a regular basis.

Good satisfaction measurement systems include performing additional methods beyond surveying and program evaluations. Many times, high satisfaction rates from surveys provide insignificant actionable data to determine improvements. This is true for the District as a result of high customer satisfaction, as indicated in the community input process.

Surveys are a good tool to measure current conditions. However, in order to keep ahead of customer demand and needs, the District should have some knowledge of future needs and expectations of customers.

Another component of excellent standards for customer satisfaction is the development of a system wide approach to handling **customer dissatisfaction**. Standards should exist for

handling complaints and inquiries. Furthermore, a database should exist that tracks all of the inquiries or comments about needed improvements. This information should be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the senior management team. Consistent suggestions for improvements or dissatisfaction areas should become a focus for the following year's strategic objectives.

As mentioned previously, a voice-of-the-customer team can be responsible for overseeing the service system. This is a cross-functional team comprised of several staff interested in service quality and they assume responsibility for overseeing the organization's service system.

This process ensures consistency in the customer experience throughout the entire organization. This team should have the responsibility of developing an overall customer satisfaction measurement system, the development of standards, and the development of customer requirements for core program areas. The team should also monitor customer service training.

The team should identify specifications for excellent service and develop an audit system to verify that specifications are being met by staff. The audit system could be performed by secret shoppers or staff members who do not have direct responsibility for an audited area. Audits can be as simple as a listing on a check list of important service requirements.

The voice-of-the-customer team can develop a District wide approach to service, supplemented by site-specific individual training and orientation.

4.3.7 INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

4.3.7.1 ADULT SPORTS (BASKETBALL AND SOFTBALL)

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Both **program areas have some benefits listed but they are not an extensive as desired. The internal goals and desired outcomes are good.**
- Both are part of a core program area –Adult sports.
- **High competitive pressures** through the Sunrise PD, City of Roseville and Folsom Parks and Recreation, Rancho Cordova PD, Cosumnes CSD and Sacramento Softball Complex.
 - For adult softball, all but Cosumnes CSD is higher priced than District while for adult basketball; Sunrise PD and City of Folsom are similarly priced while the rest are higher.
 - This indicates that the **overall pricing of District adult sports offerings is on the lower end** of all comparative offerings.
- **Program in the mature stage** in the lifecycle (slow participation growth) and has **limited performance measures.**
- **No volunteer or partner support.**

- **Add 'on hold pre-programmed messages', 'email blasts', 'social networking' and 'blogs'** to the marketing and promotions mix. **Eliminate flyers and brochures** as they do not seem to provide an adequate return on investment.
- **Introduce post program survey and on-site surveys** as means of gaining customer feedback.
- Current pricing strategies are good but **District can include pricing by market rates** among its strategies for adult softball.
- From a financial standpoint, both leagues have demonstrated increasing revenue trends over the last three years, which is certainly encouraging.

4.3.7.2 SUMMER CAMP (CAMP FAIR OAKS)

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- This program **provides good benefits and outcomes** and also includes a description which makes it enticing for potential participants. This must be emulated for other program areas as well.
- Orangevale PD, City of Folsom, City of Carmichael and City of Sunrise all compete for this market, with prices both higher and lower than Districting comparison.
- **Program in the mature stage** in the lifecycle (slow participation growth) and has **good performance measures**. **It is recommended that District start tracking program retention rates** for this area.
- There is no volunteer support for this program area.
- District currently informally partners with San Juan School District to distribute flyers to the various schools
- Programs promotions are comprehensive, but the staff can add **on hold pre-programmed messages', and 'blogs'** to mix.
- Multiple methods of customer feedback, which is good.
- The only discount currently offered is group discounts. Factoring in **market rates and cost recovery goals as pricing strategies is recommended**.
- The registration process was simplified in the last two years to enable greater accuracy. The **revenue figures project an upward trend** which is encouraging.

4.3.7.3 CLASSES – LEISURE CLASSES / WELLNESS CLASSES

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Both programs **provide good benefits** and outcomes though the descriptions are limited.
- Both programs are part of a core program area – Classes.

- **Competitive pressures exist** in the form of Orangevale PD, City of Folsom, Carmichael Recreation and Parks District and Sunrise Recreation and Park District and all of them are fairly similar on prices, with Folsom and Roseville being on the higher side.
- Both program areas have a good mix of **individuals programs that are spread over various lifecycles** from introduction (new program – modest participation) to decline (declining participation).
- **Absence of any form of performance measures** for both program areas.
- **No volunteer support** and the only partnership are with San Juan Unified School District for instructors to distribute their flyers in schools.
- **Variety of promotions mechanisms currently being used.** These include program guides, website, flyers and brochures; email blasts, social networks among others.
 - Some **additional recommended promotions** are on-hold preprogrammed messages, Twitter account, and Press releases or advertorials highlighting the importance of Health and Wellness in an increasingly unhealthy environment.
- Customer feedback mechanisms include post-program evaluation, website and user surveys.
 - Pre-program evaluations too would be a useful addition.
- **Some pricing strategies exist** such as residency, group discounts (for some classes) and scholarships, if required.
 - Consultant team **recommends extensive implementation of variable pricing strategies** for classes. Prime-time versus non-prime rates, weekday / weekend as well as pricing based on instructor quality should be implemented as a way of alleviating capacity issues and maximizing revenue opportunities that corresponding with value of services offered.
- No financial performance information available

4.3.7.4 FACILITY RENTALS

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The benefits are limited** and more focused towards how rentals help District.
 - The Consulting team recommends modifying the rentals to highlight the benefits of the rental facilities to potential renters and users.
- **Rentals are not a core program area at this point.**
 - There are a **large number of similar providers**, but only Cordova Recreation and Park District has fees similar or lower to District. However, the quality of the facilities too is a variable component that would determine the value charged for rentals.

- There is **no mention of lifecycle or facility performance measures** in place.
 - The Consulting team recommends initiating facility performance measures that evaluate customer feedback and satisfaction rates with rentals, facility utilization rates with prime-time and non-prime time capacity utilized etc.
- There are a **variety of program promotions currently undertaken**. Program guides, brochures, website and email blasts are the most effective currently.
 - Some **additional recommended promotions** are on-hold preprogrammed messages, Twitter account, and Blogs / Advertorials highlighting the availability and cost effective nature of rentals and the various organizations that currently use them within the District area.
- **Lack of customer feedback for rentals**. Only website is currently used to obtain feedback.
 - The Consulting team recommends conducting user surveys, post-customer feedback after rentals to identify relevant customer issues and identify ways to exceed customer expectations.
- There are **no pricing strategies mentioned** for rentals.
 - The Consulting team recommends re-evaluating the facility rental pricing on an annual basis to ensure the rental prices reflect the market prices and the true value of the facility. Strategies can include, weekday / weekend and prime-time / non-prime time pricing, resident versus non-residents and also group discounts for groups renting frequently.
- The financial performance measures demonstrate an increase in the revenues generated over the past three years, which is encouraging.
 - The **Consulting team recommends reassessing the extent of discounts offered** for 8-hour usage of indoor rentals. No more than a 10% - 15% discount should be offered on a per hour basis so as to offer a consistent discount across the Board and maximize revenue generating opportunities.

4.3.7.5 SENIOR PROGRAMS (SENIOR LUAU / PASA)

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Both programs **provide good benefits and outcomes** and also include a description which makes it enticing for potential participants. These must be emulated for other program areas as well.
- **Both are part of a core program area** – Senior Programs.
- Orangevale PD and Sunrise PD both offer similar programs to that of District.
 - **District could explore a partnership** with either of them, to create a joint version of a program similar to PASA.
- Both **programs are in the mature stage** of their lifecycle (slow participation growth).

- Senior LUAU is a popular program and has a high number of program participants. There is a high level of customer satisfaction but it seems to be tracked informally.
 - The Consulting team **recommends implementing performance measures for formal customer feedback and retention rates** as a way of tracking program trends.
- **Good volunteer support** through the Rotary Club and Interact for the Senior Luau.
- **Senior Luau has limited partnership support** through Coca-Cola and Rotary Club.
 - The Consulting team recommends implementing recommendations provided in the partnership assessment report to identify potential partners and establish the nature of upcoming partnerships.
 - Potential partners for PASA could include computer literacy groups, tax preparation organizations, trips and travel organizers among others to offer programs and activities that may be of assistance to the senior audience.
- There are a **variety of program promotions currently undertaken**. Program guides, direct mail, brochures, website and email blasts are currently used.
 - The Consulting team recommends adding in on-hold pre-programmed messages, advertorials / blogs and web-based advertising and cut back on the extent of printed material.
 - Additional promotional opportunities include organizing another special event (in keeping with the stated goals of the District) at the beginning of the year to introduce PASA and solicit program opportunities most desired by current and potential users.
- **Post-program evaluations, website** and post-program evaluations are the most frequently used feedback methods.
 - Additional methods could include pre-program evaluations (as mentioned earlier)
- Pricing strategies could evaluate an increase in the annual dues for PASA to be at least \$2-\$4 a month as opposed to the current fees of less than \$1 per month.
 - The fees for Senior Luau, too, should be evaluated on an annual basis to ensure that they reflect the true value of the services offerings.

4.3.7.6 YOUTH SPORTS (JR. NFL FLAG FOOTBALL / TINY TOTS)

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Both program areas **list some good benefits and outcomes**. **The description of classes for Tiny Tots program is limited** and can be expanded further to make it more enticing.
- They are **not core programs by themselves but a part of a larger core program area** -Youth Sports.

- There **exists some competition for these program areas** but only Sunrise Recreation and Park District is comparable on a price standpoint for Tiny Tots while the two program areas that are lower for Jr. NFL (Southgate Parks and Recreation and West Sacramento Parks and Recreation) are more than 25 – 30 minutes away and do not truly target the same market.
- The **programs are in varying stages in their lifecycles**. Tiny Tots is in the growth to mature stage (moderate to slow participation growth) while Jr. NFL is in the introduction stage (new program; modest participation).
- There are some existing performance measures with respect to participant and staff ratio but customer satisfaction or retention rates are not adequately tracked.
- There **exists some volunteer support for Jr. NFL** (through participants' parents) but more volunteers are required to serve as coaches.
 - The **Consulting team recommends implementing a volunteer recruitment program** to develop a volunteer base for the program area and District at large. Additional incentives such as discounted participation to other District programs would motivate potential volunteers and also help promote District's offerings.
- Jr. NFL has partnered with other neighboring parks and recreation agencies for its tournament, which is a good practice. Tiny Tots currently does not have partnership support.
- There are **various promotions undertaken** at this point. They include program guides and website, in-facility promotions and signage and brochures.
 - Given the target audience, the **Consulting team recommends adding in email blasts and social networks** to the marketing mix. Also, adding in on-hold pre-programmed messages would be useful.
- No public input is currently utilized for either program area.
 - The **Consulting team recommends adding in post-program evaluation, user surveys and website based input**.
- The **pricing strategies used include competition, market rates and customer's ability to pay**, which must be continued.

4.3.7.7 SPECIAL EVENTS (ON-GOING - GARAGE SALE / COMEDY SHOWS)

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Special Events is a programming area that District truly excels in** and the offerings are truly cherished by the community.
- **The programs provide good descriptions and outcomes**. The benefits for Garage Sale can be expanded further to make it more customer-focused as opposed to what the District provides.

- Despite Orangevale Recreation and Park District offering the same program (garage sale) less than 15 minutes away, **this program area has been in the take-off stage** (rapid participation growth) in its lifecycle for a long time.
 - Cosumnes CSD is the only provider of similar comedy shows and they are 45 minutes away. This would provide the District with a competitive advantage to establish price points that help maximize revenue generation efforts without over burdening the users.
- District could evaluate obtaining volunteer support for the garage sale by providing a discounted space to a volunteer.
- The comedy show has a partnership with California Limousines which is a good win-win partnership and similar partnership opportunities must be explored. Other community partners such as Fair Oaks Theater Festival and Fair Oaks Girls Soccer Team are also involved.
 - These programs offer an opportunity for additional partnerships which must be explored. One way to do it would be to package the partnerships for these smaller events with those for the larger annual festivals such as Chicken Festival / Easter Extravaganza etc.
- **Both programs use a wide variety of promotional methods**, which must be continued.
 - On-hold pre-programmed messages could be added in to serve as reminders of these upcoming events.
 - *Additional promotions as a way of driving greater number of users towards the online mechanisms would be to offer discount codes or freebies through the social networks, i.e. Face book / Twitter etc. to the early birds or the first person to show up with that code at the Comedy Show.*
- Customer feedback mechanisms for these programs are adequate.
 - A potential addition could be pre-program surveys for comedy shows to identify potential changes desired by the audience.
- Pricing strategies focus on multiple use discounts or market rates /cost recovery which is a good practice.
 - It is uncertain whether the cost recovery rates include a portion of indirect costs (staff time etc.) within them or not. The Consulting team recommends including these within the cost recovery goals going ahead.
- The participant rates were reducing from 2005 – 2007 but picked up significantly in 2008 for the Garage sale, which is encouraging. The comedy shows have been consistent over the last three years.
 - **The Consulting team recommends evaluating the pricing structure for these programs on an annual basis** to ensure they represent the change in market conditions and true value they provide in the area.

4.3.7.8 SPECIAL EVENTS (ANNUAL - CHICKEN FESTIVAL, EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA, KIDS ART FESTIVAL)

4.3.8 ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **All programs offer a good description of benefits** and outcomes and are an integral part of the community's programming expectations.
- **Programs are a part of the Special Event core** program area but are growing at a rapid pace, and one or all of them could well become individual core events going ahead.
- **There exists limited competitive pressure at this time.** Easter Extravaganza has some other similar providers while the other two program areas have no competition.
- **All program areas have been in the take-off stage in their lifecycle** (rapid participation growth) and are expected to demonstrate positive growth patterns in the years ahead.
- There are limited performance measures in place though in the case of special events, it is a challenge to accurately obtain retention rates or customer satisfaction rates.
- **There is good volunteer support** with each of the program areas having about 50 volunteers from the community to assist District staff.
 - As mentioned earlier, it would be useful for the District to establish a volunteer recruitment and management program that can help maximize volunteer use and also leverage volunteer support obtained for the large special events in other program areas.
- There exists partnership support for the different program areas but there **is limited packaging of offerings for partners / sponsors to up-sell the offerings.**
 - Also, as mentioned in the partnership assessment report of the Master Plan, the partnerships must be evaluated on an annual basis to ensure fairness and equity of offerings.
- **All program areas use a wide number of promotions and marketing methods,** which is encouraging. Some recommendations include:
 - Maximizing cross-promotional opportunities during these events to create maximum awareness about District facility and program offerings among the large audience present at these special events.
 - **Develop a micro-site focused on the Chicken Festival** that can further help enhance the brand name and identity of the festival. This can be connected to the main District website but is used solely to promote the Chicken Festival and its partners as well as provide users an opportunity to share their pictures and experiences during the festival.

- **All programs use adequate pricing strategies and customer feedback methods** and the events are free to the public.
 - A recommendation could be adding in website based feedback as well.
 - As for other program areas, District must evaluate pricing on an on-going basis to ensure it keeps up with market rates.

4.3.9 SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS

In evaluating all the information obtained from the community input, survey, and needs assessments, it would be fair to say that the District has been doing a good job with the limited facilities and resources they have. The lack of indoor recreation space does hinder the ability to maximize offerings for a variety of classes for all age groups. The Special Events are well run, with huge community support and are one of the most appreciated and cherished offerings in the community.

The community feedback has been very positive and staff interactions, program variety and value for money have been some of the biggest strengths. In terms of areas of improvement, lack of system-wide performance measures and tracking user data and customer feedback are the biggest ones to address. Reassessing existing partnerships to ensure maximum advantage for both sides is recommended. Also, focusing on marketing outreach, packaging and up-selling sponsorship opportunities and establishing a volunteer management program are areas that District must target in order to embellish its current offerings, operate efficiently and sustainably and continue to serve the needs of its changing audience.