



BALTIMORE CITY
RECREATION & PARKS



Artist's Rendering of Rita Church Recreation Center, Clifton Park

Recreation Center Task Force Implementation Plan

AUGUST 19, 2011

"To be a network of high-quality facilities that offer diverse and accessible programs and services for personal growth, health, learning and fun that enhances the quality of life in our communities."

— Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake's Recreation Task Force Members Vision Statement

A PLAN FOR A NEW COMMUNITY CENTER NETWORK & IMPROVING RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

I. INTRODUCTION

The Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks (the "Department") currently operates 55 recreation centers across the City. The majority of centers were constructed in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, when the city's population was nearly double its current population. Now, more than 40 years later, many centers are in need of substantial capital repairs and are obsolete for providing today's recreational services which have changed significantly over the last five decades. Concerns were raised about the condition of recreation centers, staffing levels, programmatic needs and future funding. As a result, in July 2010, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake convened a Mayor's Recreation Center Task Force to address these issues.

II. RECREATION CENTER TASK FORCE SUMMARY

A. The Task Force Objectives

- 1.) Develop a broad vision for Baltimore City's recreation center network that reflects the current needs of the community;
- 2.) Establish criteria for a "model" recreation center based on current national best practices, including size, staffing levels and programmatic considerations;
- 3.) Develop a "report card" for the Department to assess existing recreation centers as compared to model recreation center criteria;
- 4.) Determine short-term and long-term goals to implement the Task Force's vision.

B. Task Force Report Summary

The Task Force issued a final report based on the objectives listed above. The Report included the following main components:

1. Vision Statement Prepared By the Task Force

To be a network of high-quality facilities that offer diverse and accessible programs and services for personal growth, health, learning, and fun that enhances the quality of life in our communities.

2. Model Recreation Center Criteria

The Task Force recommended existing recreation centers transition into larger "community centers" that offer a variety of uses for a broader audience while continuing to focus primarily on youth. The Task Force recommended that while each center must reflect the unique needs of the community it serves, community centers should be approximately 15,000 square feet in size, provide flexible programming space, be ADA accessible and serve a wide constituency. The Task Force emphasized quality over quantity in developing a network of community centers.

3. Report Card

The Task Force developed a "report card" for the Department to use in assessing all existing recreation centers. The report card consisted of three areas: 1.) Building Systems (interior and exterior structure of the building); 2.) Building Function (interior space utilizations, outdoor space, storage, and multi-purpose rooms); and 3.) Building Operations (staffing, program flexibility, neighborhood needs, walkability and transit options).

4. Short-Term and Long-Term Goals

Short-Term Goal: Over the next two years, stabilize recreation facilities and move them toward safer, more encompassing community centers with expanded services available through partnerships based upon financial realities.

Long-Term Goal: The Department will have a network of community centers supported by a comprehensive plan that includes a capital plan and a financial plan.

III. RECREATION AND PARKS PLAN FOR A NEW COMMUNITY CENTER NETWORK AND IMPROVING RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Based on the Task Force findings and recommendations, the Department developed a comprehensive Plan for a New Community Center Network and Improving Recreational Opportunities (the "Plan"). This Plan sets forth a series of strategies and steps to improve recreational opportunities to serve a broader community with a focus on youth and maximize City resources. This forward-looking plan, based on professional standards, will create a network of high-quality community centers and sustainable recreation services for Baltimore City.

A. Components of the Plan

The Plan consists of six key strategies:

- 1.) Construct new community centers (including substantial renovation);
- 2.) Transform 10 existing recreation centers into new community centers;
- 3.) Upgrade remaining recreation centers;
- 4.) Implement charter center, collaboration and partnership programs;
- 5.) Provide afterschool recreation programs;
- 6.) Invest operational savings into recreation facilities;

B. Strategy Summaries

Strategy #1 – Construct New Community Centers (including substantial renovation)

Based on the Task Force's recommendations, the Department is implementing a comprehensive approach to recreational activities and programming by creating "community centers," which will have a larger footprint, additional staff, expanded hours of operation, and increased programming options to better serve a broader community.

The new community centers are based on the Task Force's model center criteria, which includes a minimum of 15,000 square feet of building space; a staffing model consisting of four to six full-time staff and two to four part-time staff; operational hours from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. during the week and on Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and programming based on the needs of the communities it serves. Currently, all City recreation centers are closed on weekends (see Appendix C).

Four new or substantially renovated community centers will be constructed within the next 1-4 years:

- Morrell Park
- Rita Church (Clifton Park)
- Virginia Baker (Patterson Park)
- Cherry Hill

All facilities will incorporate new standards for size, amenities and programming from the Mayor's Recreation Center Task Force. All facilities will be in compliance with the latest ADA standards and incorporate "green" and environmentally friendly building components, including a geothermal heating and cooling system and a green roof. All facilities will be secured with card reader access and security cameras.



The Rita Church Community Center (Clifton Park), located at 2101 Saint Lo Dr., will incorporate both renovation and new construction. This new community center will enclose and convert an existing historic pavilion above the recently renovated pool bathhouse. The project will be constructed in two phases. The first phase, to be completed by September 2012, will add locker rooms, an elevator and mechanical rooms on the lower level. The second level of the building will house a lounge space, computer lab, kitchen, craft room, multipurpose room, game room and office space. The second phase, currently in design, will add 11,500 square feet and include a gymnasium, restrooms and concession space. This project broke ground on July 13, 2011, and is expected to be completed by mid-September 2012.



The Morrell Park Community Center will be located at 2651 Tolley St. The center will be newly constructed and approximately 17,000 square feet. The two-story building will house active uses on the first floor, including a gymnasium, locker rooms, and four activity/exercise rooms. A second level mezzanine has a reception area, office, computer lab, activity room, community meeting space with adjacent kitchen, restrooms, storage space and outdoor deck. This project broke ground on July 23, 2011, and is expected to be completed by October 2012.



The Cherry Hill Community Center will be located on the 800 block of Roundview Road adjacent to two public schools: Cherry Hill Elementary/Middle School (#159) and Patapsco Elementary/Middle School (#163). The center will be new construction. Currently in the initial stage, the center design and programming will be developed in consultation with the surrounding community. The center will be approximately 15,000-20,000 square feet.

The existing Virginia Baker/ Patterson Park Community Center located at 2604 East Baltimore St., will be expanded from 12,200 to 18-20,000 square feet, adding to the center classrooms and recreational spaces and provide programming for all ages with an emphasis on youth programs and activities.

Appendix A entitled, “New and Expanded Community Centers”, shows the locations of the new community centers as indicated by the red stars. These centers are also shown with a three-quarters-mile service radius, given they will attract users from multiple nearby communities. All of the newly constructed community centers are free-standing, meaning they are not attached to public schools. These four new community centers will be operated and funded by the Department of Recreation and Parks. The construction cost for the new facilities is estimated at a total of \$14.8 million.

Strategy #2 – Transform Existing Recreation Centers into New Community Centers

In addition to building four new community centers, the Department will prioritize the use of existing Baltimore City Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funds and Public Open Space (POS) funds to expand up to 10 existing recreation centers to a community center model. These centers will be increased in size to meet the Task Force criteria and be made compliant with ADA accessibility requirements. The Department estimates the total capital cost to be approximately \$8,450,000 to transform the 10 recreation centers into community centers. This estimate is based on a new construction cost of \$250 per square foot multiplied by the additional square footage needed for each center to achieve a minimum of 15,000 square feet in size (approximately 29,994 square feet of total new space). Capital costs will vary from center to center as will the total amount of new space needed (see Table 1: List of Recreation Centers to Be Transformed Into Community Centers).

Appendix A, entitled “New and Expanded Community Centers”, shows the locations of the potential expanded community centers as indicated by the red stars. These centers are also shown with a three-quarter-mile service radius given they will attract users from multiple nearby communities. Of the 10 potential newly expanded community centers, five are free-standing and five are attached to public schools.

Table 1: List of Recreation Centers to Be Transformed Into Community Centers

| Existing Recreation Center | Existing Square Feet (SF) | Additional New Square Footage required to reach 15,000 SF | New Construction cost based on \$250 per SF |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|
| Bentalou | 7,633 | 7,667 | \$1,841,750 |
| C.C. Jackson | 9,792 | 5,208 | \$1,302,000 |
| Cahill | 11,894 | 3,106 | \$ 776,500 |
| Chick Webb² | 18,100 | N/A | \$ 125,000 |
| Edgewood-Lyndhurst | 12,573 | 2,427 | \$ 606,750 |
| Farring-Baybrook | 10,800 | 4,200 | \$1,050,000 |
| Herring Run | 13,290 | 1,710 | \$ 427,500 |
| Madison Square² | 20,645 | N/A | \$ 125,000 |
| Northwood | 9,318 | 5,682 | \$1,420,500 |
| Robert C. Marshall | 11,900 | 3,100 | \$ 775,000 |
| Total | 125,945 | 33,100 | \$8,450,000 |

These center locations and available funds are subject to change.

2 = Indicates renovations only.

In addition to the capital improvements, the Department will also increase operational funding to increase staffing levels and hours of operation at each community center. Staff levels will be increased from approximately one to four staff to four to six full-time and one to two part-time staff (based upon seasonal demand). Hours will be increased during the week from 1 - 9 p.m. to 8 a.m. - 9 p.m. and will also include new Saturday hours from 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. These centers will see an overall increase of 33 operational hours per week.

These community centers will be operated and funded by the Department of Recreation and Parks. The increase in staffing will be accomplished by redistributing staff from recreation centers operated through Charter, Collaboration, and Partnership programs (see Strategy #4 for full details). The Department will also redirect eight staff members who currently serve as both Area Managers and Center Directors to be solely focused on area management to allow for multiple center oversight for both the new and expanded community centers and the remaining recreation centers. Area managers will also increase community outreach efforts as part of their daily responsibilities (see Appendix D).

Strategy #3 – Increase Staffing Levels and Operating Hours at 16 Existing Recreation Centers

The Department will increase staff levels and operating hours at 16 existing centers. These centers are in addition to the four new community centers listed under Strategy #1 and the 10 expanded community centers listed under Strategy #2. In total, the Department plans to fund and operate a total of 30 centers – all of which will be improved from today’s standards. The remaining centers will be operated through charter, collaboration or partnership programs (see Strategy #4).

At these 16 centers, staffing will be increased from approximately one to four staff to three to five full-time and three to four part-time staff (based upon seasonal demand). The Department anticipates allocating approximately \$30,000 more in funding per center to increased staff and increase hours. Hours will be increased during the week from 1 - 9 p.m. to 8 a.m. - 9 p.m. In certain cases, seasonal Saturday hours may also be added. These centers will see an overall increase of 20 operational hours (or more) per week (see Appendix D).

The Department will also make necessary site improvements and building repairs. These capital improvements are anticipated to average \$40,000 per recreation center for a total of \$640,000. These 16 recreation centers will be determined based upon the results of Strategy #4 – Implement Charter, Collaboration and Partnership Programs.

Strategy #4 – Implement Charter, Collaboration and Partnership Programs

The Department will seek to implement Charter Center, Collaboration and Partnership Programs at up to 31 existing recreation centers. Six of these centers will be eligible to become “Charter Centers,” which will receive initial operating funds ranging from \$50,000 to \$100,000 from the Department for the first year. Charter Centers will provide community-based recreational services. Collaboration and Partnership programs will offer non-profit, community-based, and governmental organizations opportunities to provide recreational or other community programming at existing recreation centers. The Department anticipates issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP) in August 2011 with details and submission requirements for all programs.

• Summary of the Charter Center Program

Based on the concepts of charter schools and recreation councils, the Department is creating a Charter Center Program that will enable interested groups to operate existing City recreation centers. Organizations will enter in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Operating Agreement with the City, through the Department, and subject to the approval by the Baltimore City Board of Estimates (BOE). The Department would conduct regular reviews of Charter Center activities and issue an annual report for each Charter Center.

Charter Centers will be divided into two categories: Tiers 1 and 2. The tiers are based on the center size, the partner capacity, level of City funding, and Department requirements for operation. The Department will fund up to two Tier 1 Centers and up to four Tier 2 Centers annually at an amount up to \$100,000 and \$50,000, respectively. Funds will be provided on a one for one matching basis. Tiers 1 and 2 are outlined in Table 1: Summary of Charter Center Types, below:

Table 2: Summary of Charter Center Types

| Charter Center Types | Tier 1 (up to 2 funded initially) | Tier 2 (up to 4 funded initially) |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Funding | Up to \$100,000 in annual matching funds (requires 100% match by partner) | Up to \$50,000 in annual matching funds (requires 100% match by partner) |
| Size | 7,000 square feet or more | Less than 7,000 square feet |
| Programming | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming must be recreational. • Partners must provide after school programs. • Partners must provide evening programs. • Partners must provide one weekend day of limited programming. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programming must be recreational. • Partners must provide after school programs. • Partners must provide evening programs. • Weekend activities are not mandatory, but encouraged. |
| Hours | 45-50 hours per week year round | 35-45 hours per week year round |

• Summary of the Collaboration and Partnership Programs

The Collaboration and Partnership Programs are designed to utilize existing recreation centers that are no longer operated by the Department by engaging non-profits, City agencies and the Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS). The Department has received interest from City agencies, including the Mayor’s Office of Employment Development, Baltimore City Department of Social Services, and Baltimore City Health Department, to utilize obsolete centers for office and programming needs. BCPS is interested in using recreation centers attached to public schools for additional classroom and educational space.

Non-profits and community-based service providers whose missions may not be not focused on recreational or youth services, but align with community needs, are also encouraged to submit proposals in response to the Department’s RFP for the use of certain recreation centers. Through Collaboration and Partnership Programs, the City will be able to better utilize its resources to maximize City services and provide community resources.

Strategy #5 – Operate Afterschool Programs

The Department is committed to providing recreation opportunities to every community. In cases where the Department cannot operate an existing recreation center and a partnership or management option is not feasible, the Department will provide afterschool programming at a public school or other public facility in the community. The afterschool program provides families with recreational experiences for elementary school-age children (5-11 years old) in a supervised, fun environment. Daily and weekly scheduled activities include nutrition and physical fitness, arts and crafts, music and drama, games, special events, homework assistance, and a nutritional afternoon snack. These programs will use a 15:1 ratio for participants to staff to meet best practices. A budget for afterschool programs is provided in Appendix B.

Strategy #6 – Use Operational Savings to Upgrade Recreation Centers

By implementing Strategies #1 through #5, the Department anticipates saving between \$300,000 and \$400,000 in annual operating funds. The Department will allocate these savings toward capital improvements and repairs needed at the 16 recreation centers described in Strategy #3.



Plan Implementation Timeline

| | Timeline | Activity Description |
|--------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Strategy #1 | August 2011 – September 2011 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commence construction on Rita Church and Morrell Park Community Centers. Continue design documents for Virginia Baker and Cherry Hill Community Centers. |
| Strategy #2 | August 2011 – December 2011 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify required capital improvements for 10 recreations centers. • Identify funds for capital improvements and create a schedule for construction. |
| Strategy #3 | December 2011 – July 2012 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based upon the result of the Request for Proposals, create a plan to enhance up to 16 existing recreations with an increase in staff levels and operating hours. |
| Strategy #4 | August 2011-December 2011 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue Request for Proposals (RFP) for Charter Center, Collaboration & Partnership programs. • Make selections and work to execute Agreements with non-City partners. |
| Strategy #5 | July 2012 – Ongoing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In areas where existing recreation center change to a non-recreational use, the Department will operate afterschool recreational programming. |
| Strategy #6 | July 2013 – July 2015 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After implementation of Strategies 1-5, the Department will invest annual operational savings into 16 recreation center by making capital improvements and enhancements. |

CONCLUSION

The Department is committed to having a high-quality and sustainable system of recreation and community centers to serve the citizens of Baltimore City. The challenge at hand cannot be solved overnight, as there is not a single solution. The multi-strategy approach set forth in this Plan is a solid step in the right direction. Still, it will take innovation, leadership and a strong commitment from the Department to overcome the years of deferred maintenance and lack of adequate resources that have existed in the past. The vision and goals outlined in this Plan are achievable with help from community partners. The Department is eager to usher in a new era of community and recreation centers for the citizens of Baltimore City.

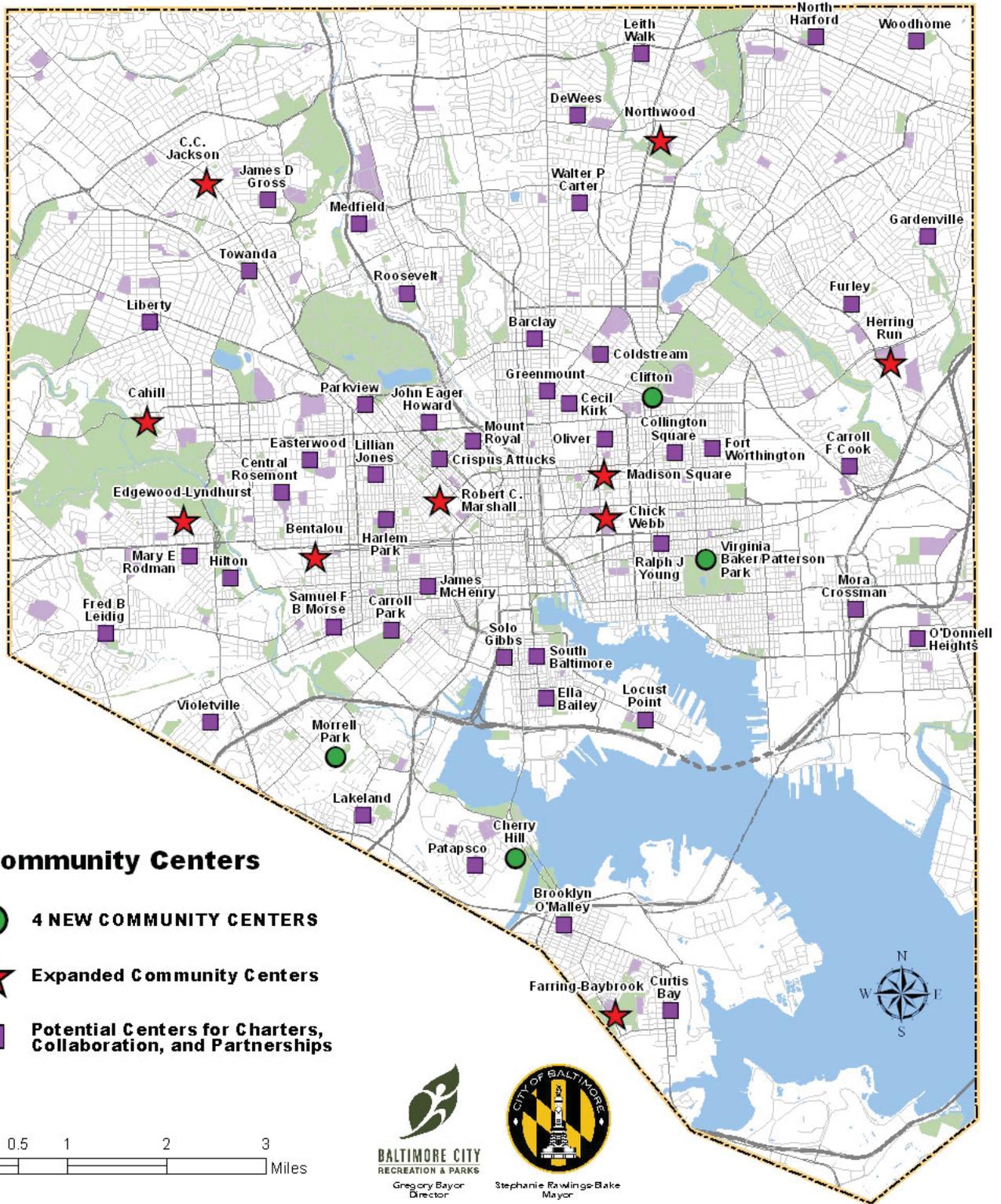
APPENDIX

- A - New and Expanded Potential Centers for Charters, Collaborations and Partnerships
- B - Afterschool Models
- C - Recreation Centers Current Facility Staffing Charts
- D - Center Staffing Models



APPENDIX A

NEW AND EXPANDED POTENTIAL CENTERS FOR CHARTERS, COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS



APPENDIX B

AFTERSCHOOL MODEL ATTACHED WING (STAFFING RATIO 15:1)

AFTERSCHOOL MODEL SCHOOL WING (STAFFING RATIO 15:1)

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------|
| Coordinator | \$12.50 hourly (4.5 hours x 5 days x 36 weeks) | \$10,125 |
| Rec Leader | \$9.50 hourly (4.5 hours x 5 days x 36 weeks) | \$7,695 |
| PERSONNEL COST | | \$17,820 |

SUPPLIES / OPERATIONAL COSTS

| | | |
|---------------------------|--|---------|
| Arts and Crafts | | \$500 |
| Sports equipment | | \$1,500 |
| Custodial supplies | | \$600 |
| Maintenance of phone | | \$800 |
| Medical supplies | | \$250 |
| Office supplies | | \$1,500 |
| Tables and chairs | | \$500 |
| Utilities and maintenance | | |

| | | |
|-------------------------|--|----------------|
| OPERATIONAL COST | | \$5,650 |
|-------------------------|--|----------------|

| | | |
|--|--|-----------------|
| Total Personnel and Operational Costs | | \$23,470 |
|--|--|-----------------|

AFTERSCHOOL MODEL FREE-STANDING (STAFFING RATIO 15:1)

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------|
| Coordinator | \$12.50 hourly (4.5 hours x 5 days x 36 weeks) | \$10,125.00 |
| Rec Leader | \$9.50 hourly (4.5 hours x 5 days x 36 weeks) | \$7,695.00 |
| PERSONNEL COST | | \$17,820.00 |

Supplies /Operational Costs

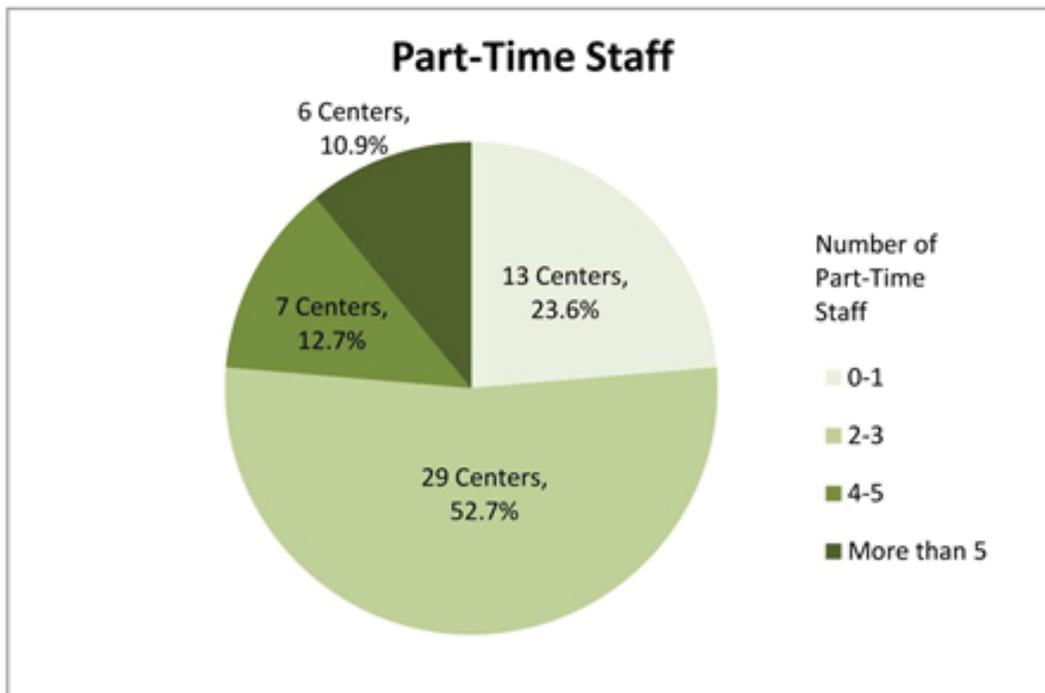
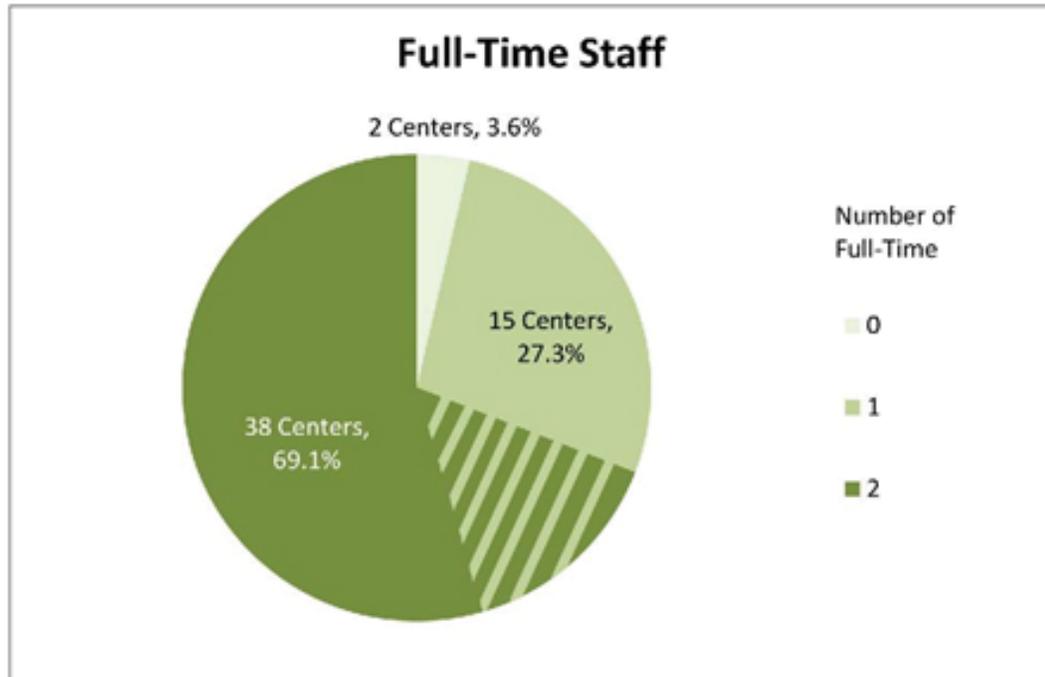
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|---------------------------|--|------------|
| Arts and crafts | | \$500.00 |
| Sports equipment | | \$1,500.00 |
| Custodial supplies | | \$600.00 |
| Maintenance of phone | | \$800.00 |
| Medical supplies | | \$250.00 |
| Office supplies | | \$1,500.00 |
| Tables and chairs | | \$500.00 |
| Utilities and Maintenance | | \$5,000.00 |

| | | |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------|
| OPERATIONAL COST | | \$10,650.00 |
|-------------------------|--|--------------------|

| | | |
|--|--|--------------------|
| Total Personnel and Operational Costs | | \$28,470.00 |
|--|--|--------------------|

APPENDIX C

RECREATION CENTERS CURRENT FACILITY STAFFING





APPENDIX D

STAFFING MODELS

| NEW COMMUNITY CENTER STAFFING | NUMBER OF POSITIONS | BUDGET SALARY WITH BENEFITS AND FICA |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Center Director | 1 | \$65,397 |
| Assistant Center Director | 1 | \$55,224 |
| Recreation Leader II | 1 | \$46,505 |
| Custodian | 1 | \$26,159 |
| Customer Service Rep. | 1 | \$43,598 |
| PT Program - General | 1 | \$16,793 |
| PT Program - Specialized | 0 | \$0 |
| LABOR COST | | \$253,677 |

| OPERATIONAL COSTS (Approximate) | | |
|---|----------|------------------|
| Program Supplies and Equipment | \$6,000 | |
| Facility Charges (i.e. Utilities, Building Maintenance, Custodial Supplies) | \$28,841 | |
| Nondiscretionary Costs (i.e. Computers, Fax and Copier Machines, etc.) | \$6,000 | |
| Overtime/Compensatory Time | \$1,000 | |
| TOTAL COST (Labor + Ops) | | \$295,518 |

| NEW RECREATION CENTER STAFFING | NUMBER OF POSITIONS | BUDGET SALARY WITH BENEFITS AND FICA |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Center Director | 1 | \$65,397 |
| Assistant Center Director | | \$0 |
| Recreation Leader II | 1 | \$46,505 |
| Custodian | 1 | \$26,159 |
| Customer Service Rep. | 1 | \$43,598 |
| PT Program - General | | \$0 |
| PT Program - Specialized | | \$0 |
| LABOR COST | | \$181,659 |

| OPERATIONAL COSTS (Approximate) | | |
|---|----------|------------------|
| Program Supplies and Equipment | \$6,000 | |
| Facility Charges (i.e. Utilities, Building Maintenance, Custodial Supplies) | \$28,841 | |
| Nondiscretionary Costs (i.e. Computers, Fax and Copier Machines, etc.) | \$6,000 | |
| Overtime/Compensatory Time | \$2,000 | |
| TOTAL COST (Labor + Ops) | | \$224,500 |

| CURRENT RECREATION CENTER STAFFING | NUMBER OF POSITIONS | BUDGET SALARY WITH BENEFITS AND FICA |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Center Director | 1 | \$65,397 |
| Assistant Center Director | | \$0 |
| Recreation Leader II | 1 | \$46,505 |
| Custodian | 1 | \$26,159 |
| Customer Service Rep. | | \$0 |
| PT Program - General | | \$0 |
| PT Program - Specialized | | \$0 |
| LABOR COST | | \$138,061 |

| OPERATIONAL COSTS (Approximate) | | |
|---|----------|------------------|
| Program Supplies and Equipment | \$150 | |
| Facility Charges (i.e. Utilities, Building Maintenance, Custodial Supplies) | \$18,181 | |
| Nondiscretionary Costs (i.e. Computers, Fax and Copier Machines, etc.) | \$0 | |
| Overtime/Compensatory Time | \$500 | |
| TOTAL COST (Labor + Ops) | | \$156,892 |



BALTIMORE CITY
RECREATION & PARKS

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