



TASK FORCE SUMMARY

RECREATION CENTERS FACT SHEET

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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 size. Now, 50 years later, many centers are in need of substantial capital repairs and are obsolete for providing today's recreational services, which have significantly changed over the past five decades. The condition of the recreation centers, their staffing levels, current programming and future funding needed to be examined. As a result, in July 2010, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake convened a Mayor's Recreation Center Task Force to address these issues.

TASK FORCE OBJECTIVES

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

TASK FORCE RESULTS SUMMARY

1. VISION STATEMENT PREPARED BY THE TASK FORCE

To be a network of high-quality facilities that offers 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 that 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 Americans with Disabilities Act 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: Building Systems, (interior and exterior structure of the building); Building Function, (interior space utilizations, outdoor space, storage, and multi-purpose rooms); and 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.



BALTIMORE CITY
RECREATION & PARKS

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PLAN FOR A NEW COMMUNITY CENTER NETWORK

Based on the Task Force Report, the Department developed a comprehensive plan to achieve the goals and objectives of the Task Force aimed at creating a network of high-quality facilities and programming. Under this plan, all affected communities will continue to have recreational programming.

QUICK FACTS

- Under this plan, all City recreation centers will remain open with current operating hours through summer/fall 2012. No recreation centers are planned to close summer/fall 2011 through 2012;
- Under this plan, there will be no layoffs of existing recreation center staff; staffing and hours will be increased at most City recreation centers;
- Under this plan, the Department will appropriate over \$19.050 million within the next two years to build new community centers and extensively renovate certain existing recreation centers;
- Under this plan, the Department will have a long-term sustainable financial plan for operating quality facilities by making strategic investments and leveraging outside resources and partnerships;
- The Department has issued two RFPs for partners to operate Lillian Jones, Brooklyn O'Malley, Collington Square, Towanda, Hilton and Easterwood recreation centers.
- The plan's implementation will begin in late 2011 after extensive community input and dialogue.

SUMMARY OF THE PLAN

1. NEWLY CONSTRUCTED AND SUBSTANTIALLY REHABILITATED FACILITIES

The Department will construct three new community centers and substantially renovate/expand one center at a total cost of \$19.050 million as follows:

- **Morrell Park**—The new 17,000-square foot two-story facility will include a gymnasium, locker rooms and four activity/exercise rooms with a mezzanine level containing a reception area, office, computer lab, activity room, community meeting space with a kitchen, restrooms, storage space and an outdoor deck.
- **Rita Church** (Clifton Park)—An existing historic pavilion will be converted into a facility equipped with locker rooms, lounge, computer lab, kitchen, craft room, multipurpose room, game room and office space. A second phase, currently in design, will add 11,500 square feet and include a gymnasium, restrooms and concession space
- **Virginia Baker (Patterson Park)**—The existing facility will be substantially expanded from 12,200 to 18,000-20,000 square feet, adding classrooms and recreational spaces.
- **Cherry Hill**—This new facility will be located on the 800 block of Roundview Road adjacent to two public schools and is in its initial design phase. The center will be approximately 15,000-20,000 square feet.

2. TRANSFORM EXISTING RECREATION CENTERS INTO NEW COMMUNITY CENTERS

The Department will expand up to 14 existing recreation centers into "model" community centers by adding square footage, accessibility features, new furnishings, fixtures and equipment. In addition, staff levels will be increased from approximately one to four staff to four to six full-time and one or 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.-5 p.m. These centers will see an overall increase of 34 operational hours per week.

3. UPGRADE EXISTING RECREATION CENTERS

The Department will significantly enhance up to 18 existing recreation centers by making building repairs, increasing staff levels and improving programming options. Staffing will be increased from approximately one to four staff to three to five full-time and three or four 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. 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.

4. IMPLEMENT CHARTER CENTER, COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

The Department will seek to implement Charter Center, Collaboration and Partnership programs at up to 25 existing recreation centers. Six centers will be eligible to become "Charter Centers" that 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 will issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) in August 2011 with details and submission requirements. ❖

Download Full Task Force Report at: www.baltimorecity.gov/recnparks