

APPROVED

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

MAR 18 2009

NO. 09-072

DATE March 18, 2009

BOARD OF RECREATION and PARK COMMISSIONERS

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BOARD OF RECREATION AND PARK COMMISSIONERS

SUBJECT: SOUTH LOS ANGELES INITIATIVE – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS AND PEOPLE FOR PARKS LOS ANGELES

R. Adams _____	J. Kolb _____
H. Fujita _____	F. Mok _____
S. Huntley _____	K. Regan _____
*V. Israel <u> <i>VS</i> </u>	M. Shull _____

 R. Adams
General Manager

Approved *[Signature]*

Disapproved _____

Withdrawn _____

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board:

1. Approve a proposed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), substantially in the form on file in the Board Office between the Department of Recreation and Parks (Department) and People for Parks Los Angeles (PFP) subject to the approval of the Mayor and City Attorney as to form;
2. Direct the Board Secretary to transmit the MOA to the Mayor for approval in accordance with Executive Directive 3, and concurrently to the City Attorney for review and approval as to form; and,
3. Authorize the General Manager to execute the MOA, subsequent to all necessary approvals.

SUMMARY:

The South Los Angeles Initiative is a collaborative program between PFP and the Department. In 1989, PFP began the effort to preserve our public parks, natural areas and open spaces, while expanding recreational opportunities in communities across Los Angeles County. PFP works in partnership with community organizations, public agencies, nonprofits and the private sector to expand public access to greenspace in the Los Angeles area. PFP serves as a land trust, promotes environmental education, and advocates for innovative legislation and greater funding for parks and recreation, especially in the neediest neighborhoods. PFP has recently been working with the Los

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

PG. 2 NO. 09-072

Angeles City Council, Los Angeles Unified School District, the Mayor's office, and grassroots organizations to green school playgrounds and open them to the public when classes are not in session. PFP is a 501(c)(4) and the Charitable Fund is a 501(c)(3); a charitable tax exempt organization.

The South Los Angeles Initiative is an experimental project designed to improve and enhance recreation opportunities for young people living in Nickerson Gardens, Imperial Courts and Jordan Downs, three public housing developments run by the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles. The initiative will operate for two years at which time a program evaluation, by the proposed oversight board, will assess the efficacy of the program for possible renewal. Currently the recreation centers operate separately under the supervision of the Department's Pacific Region. Because each housing project is the home of a street gang, even for the youth who don't join the gang, the stereotype of the gang membership follows them. For this reason, the South Los Angeles Initiative proposes to use a "cluster" or joint programming approach to program management. Department staff will be responsible for the overall administration and implementation of the program. Such joint or cluster programming will attempt to break down the gang stereotype, which prevents youth from rival territories from being friends or crossing gang territories. The centers will share resources, exercise joint planning and use a team approach to improve and add to existing services. PFP staff along with Department staff will design the program as well as sit on an oversight board which will be responsible for guiding the program.

The cluster will be designed to strengthen youth programs in the Watts Housing Developments. The concept of Smart Recreation where activities are designed to achieve social goals will be used to build community and increase "life chances" for youth. Department staff in implementing the initiative will build a neighborhood leadership core and seek community involvement while taking advantage of the talents of recreation leadership currently working at the projects. By pursuing values based programming which includes ethics, civic organizing, character, womanhood, manhood and other methodologies it is believed that feelings of self-efficacy and self-actualization will increase.

The cluster is expected to work closely with the Mayor's Gang Reduction and Youth Development Office and community based organizations active in South Los Angeles.

The South Los Angeles Initiative has the support of the Mayor, the Councilmember from Council District Fifteen of which the Watts area is a part, and the Principal of Markham Middle School also in Watts. Each of the three public housing projects, Jordan Downs, Imperial Courts and Nickerson Garden are feeders for Markham and since Markham is considered gang neutral, many of the "smart programs" are expected to take place at Markham.

REPORT OF GENERAL MANAGER

PG. 3 NO. 09-072

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT:

Participation in this project results in unknown impact to the Department's General Fund; the assessment of which has yet to be completed. As a part of the proposed partnership, PFP is expected to spend up to \$30,000 per year for program related expenses, as well as solicit sponsorships and donations for such expenditures. Department staff proposed to participate in the program will not be required to perform additional duties or work additional hours; therefore there is no anticipated increase in the budget for staff at the proposed sites.

Report was prepared by Olujimi A. Hawes, Management Analyst II, Pacific Region.