



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA
PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: September 26, 2007

TO: Park and Recreation Commission

FROM: Administration, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: National League of Cities City Platform for Strengthening Families and Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive a report on the City of Santa Barbara adoption of a City Platform as part of the National League of Cities' Strengthening Families and Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth program.

DISCUSSION:

Parks and Recreation works as staff liaison to the Council Committee on Youth and Children (CCYC), working with council members to identify and address community issues and needs related to youth. Under direction from the CCYC, staff worked with other City departments to develop a platform for the City of Santa Barbara, as part of the National League of Cities' (NLC) Platform for Strengthening Families and Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth program. The platform describes ways that the City currently acts in support of families and children, and identifies action steps the City will undertake in the future.

On July 31, 2007, the Santa Barbara City Council adopted the Santa Barbara Platform for Youth, joining the NLC movement to improve quality of life for families in communities across the nation and restating the City's commitment to youth. The platform will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis, reflecting the City's continued emphasis on youth, achieving priorities and fulfilling unmet needs.

NLC City Platform for Strengthening Families and Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth

Strong cities are built on a foundation of strong families. For this reason, the actions that municipal leaders take to strengthen families and improve outcomes for children and youth play a key role in boosting the health and vitality of their cities and towns. Developed by the NLC Council on Youth, Education, and Families, the City Platform for Strengthening Families and Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth outlines the essential tasks necessary for sustained progress and provides a framework for local action.

The first part of the platform highlights essential “infrastructure,” key functions and processes that play a crucial role in communities making effective sustained investments in children and families. The second part of the platform calls upon municipal leaders to take a series of more specific action steps in each of the 7 issue areas: early childhood development; youth development; education and afterschool; health and safety; youth in transition; family economic success; and neighborhoods and community.

Seventy cities in 30 states have adopted the platform.

Santa Barbara Platform for Youth

In order to develop a course of action for Santa Barbara, individual City departments were asked to provide information on current services for families and children, unmet community needs, and recommended action steps which should be undertaken to improve outcomes for families and children.

Key function and action step information was provided from 8 City Departments, City Administration, City Council, and the Santa Barbara School Districts. Over 100 current services and programs were identified, demonstrating the City’s high level of commitment to youth. The City of Santa Barbara platform includes over 40 recommended actions to meet areas of unmet need or enhance current programming. Some of those actions include:

- Continue to seek opportunities to expand afterschool and summer recreation for elementary and junior high age groups
- Appoint more youth interns to City boards
- Look for ways to collaborate and communicate better with the Santa Barbara School Districts
- Work to improve child care opportunities
- Provide bilingual recreation programs
- Extend literacy materials to small family home care providers
- Adopt formal policy and funding of Safe Routes to School Program by the Santa Barbara School Districts

As part of the review process, the CCYC asked the Santa Barbara Youth Council to review and comment on the proposed platform. At their July 16, 2007, meeting, the Youth Council supported the proposed platform and recommended approval. They expressed concern that the City’s Platform not become a static document, rather it should be used as a dynamic tool for future action items. They also expressed interest in participating in future updates to keep the document current and opportunities to add additional recommendations from the youth perspective. City Council adopted the platform on July 31, 2007.

The community derives great benefit from the services and leadership which the City provides towards achieving stronger families and positive outcomes for children. The Santa Barbara Platform for Youth will serve as a guiding document for priorities and long term planning, and departments will be challenged to identify ways to meet areas of unmet needs.

ATTACHMENT(S): 1. National League of Cities – A City Platform for Strengthening Families and Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth.
2. Cities Who Have Adopted the National League of Cities Platform

SUBMITTED BY: Nancy L. Rapp, Parks and Recreation Director