



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION REPORT

AGENDA DATE: April 27, 2016

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Administration Division, Parks and Recreation Department

SUBJECT: Healthy People, Healthy Trails Program

RECOMMENDATION: That the Commission receive a presentation on the *Healthy People, Healthy Trails* Program.

DISCUSSION:

Background

In 2000, Parks Victoria, Australia established the *Healthy Parks, Healthy People* initiative to recognize and reinforce the connection between community health and a healthy environment. This initiative spread, not only across Australia, but across the Pacific Ocean to North America. In 2009, the Institute at the Golden Gate began to catalyze a nationwide partnership around the *Healthy Parks, Healthy People* concept. In 2011, the National Park Service (NPS) adopted a United States (U.S.) program to “reframe the role of parks and public lands as an emerging, powerful health prevention strategy”. The NPS developed a *Strategic Action Plan* which included staff and funding to provide technical support to communities developing their own programs.

Today, *Healthy Parks Healthy People* is a worldwide campaign to encourage personal health through fun activities in the outdoors while appreciating and taking care of public parks and open space areas. It has been embraced by 35 countries with model programs in the U.S., including: New Mexico, District of Columbia, and San Francisco Bay Area in California.

Healthy People, Healthy Trails Program - Santa Barbara County

In 2014, Sansum Clinic and Santa Barbara County Trails Council partnered to explore developing a *Healthy Parks, Healthy People* program suited for Santa Barbara County. A proposal was sent to the National Park Service- Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program to request technical support and was accepted. A working committee was formed to lay the groundwork for a local program, named ***Healthy People, Healthy Trails, Parks and Open Spaces (Healthy People, Healthy Trails or HPHT)***. The goal of the program is to:

*Launch and sustain a **Healthy People, Healthy Trails** program to increase use of trails, parks and open spaces as outdoor gyms for health, wellness and fitness that is free of charge and easily accessed.*

The working group includes representatives from Sansum Clinic, Santa Barbara County Trails Council, City Parks and Recreation Department, Cen Cal Health and Cottage Health. As part of the NPS assistance, NPS staff provide free, on-location facilitation and planning expertise, including:

- Define project vision and goals;
- Inventory and map community resources;
- Identify and analyze key issues and opportunities;
- Engage collaborative partners and stakeholders;
- Design community outreach and participation strategies;
- Set priorities and build consensus; and
- Develop a sustainable organizational framework to support the project

The **Healthy People, Healthy Trails** Program is consistent with the Parks and Recreation Department's long range vision of enhancing the walkability of City parks and increasing use by all segments of the community. The Department manages a diverse array of over 60 parks, beaches, open spaces and recreational fields and is actively engaged in the management of the Santa Barbara Front Country Trails. Santa Barbara's parks provide a reprieve from the urban environment and opportunities for social interactions, reduced stress and increased physical activity.

Program Development

The group has met monthly over the past year to develop the program, including:

1. Developed tools necessary to communicate to a broad audience, including: the medical community, potential partners, and the public. Materials are in English and Spanish.
2. Established a small group of "Champion" doctors at Sansum to help launch the program and review materials;
3. Assessed eight trails and developed trail maps for easy walks the whole family can enjoy;
4. Worked with volunteers willing to test and provide feedback on maps;
5. Developed a prescription pad for health care prescribers to use with patients; and
6. Developed a *HPHT* website (<http://healthypeoplehealthytrails.org>).

Trails were chosen based on a number of factors, including: location, ease of use by a broad range of users, and length of trail. Trails are mostly flat, paved or packed dirt and

are generally suitable for walkers, joggers, strollers, small children and dogs on leash. Most trails will take about an hour to complete at a comfortable pace and are located at:

- Carpinteria Salt Marsh
- Ennisbrook in Montecito
- Andrée Clark Bird Refuge
- Chase Palm Park
- Shoreline Park
- Alice Keck Memorial Gardens and Alameda Plazas
- Lake Los Carneros
- Girsh Park

The intended outcome of the program includes the following:

- Health care providers utilize a prescription for outdoor activity to encourage use of local parks and trails for exercise.
- The prescription for outdoor activity and resource guide is distributed as an informational campaign that will gradually expand county-wide.
- Santa Barbara County healthcare providers and public land managers better support each other in their goals to serve personal, community and environmental health needs.
- Santa Barbara County residents are increasingly aware of local trails, parks and open spaces; value outdoor environments for improving health and wellness; and become advocates and stewards of public land.

Program materials are attached to this staff report, including example trail maps.

Next Steps

Launch of the program will be phased. In March 2016, the program went “live” as a soft launch at Sansum Clinic. Sansum staff/HPHT committee representatives are working closely with “Champion” physicians to receive feedback on the materials. Full program launch is expected to occur in the summer of 2016.

NPS assistance will wrap up in September 2016. The working group will hold a special meeting in May to determine how to expand the program through development of a *Santa Barbara HPHT Strategic Plan*. The two-year plan will include over-arching focus areas, which may include organizational needs, financial resources, and community outreach, plus review the roles of current and future partnerships.

The Department will link **Healthy People, Healthy Trails** Program with other park initiatives to build community awareness and support outdoor activities. A recent project

partially funded by a grant from the State Coastal Conservancy, included development of web and outreach materials that enhance the public's opportunities to explore the coast. As part of this effort, the Department is developing a walking tour map stretching the extent of the Coastal Trail in Santa Barbara, from Andrée Clark Bird Refuge to Arroyo Burro Estuary. The maps will call out specific stops along the way to acknowledge coastal cultural, environmental and historic resources. Walkability combined with new fitness equipment at Andrée Clark Bird Refuge is another example where the Department will link initiatives.

ATTACHMENT: HPHT Packet: Prescription Pad, Trail Overview, Shoreline Park and Andrée Clark Bird Refuge

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