

DATE ISSUED: May 31, 2000

REPORT NO: 00-108

ATTENTION: Honorable Mayor and City Council
Docket of June 5, 2000

SUBJECT: Community Service Center Program Update

REFERENCE: City Manager's Reports No. 96-173 dated 8/28/96 and No. 99-90 dated 4/29/99

SUMMARY

THIS IS AN INFORMATION ITEM ONLY. NO ACTION IS REQUIRED ON THE PART OF THE CITY COUNCIL.

BACKGROUND

In December 1994, the Mayor announced the creation of the Renaissance Commission and the Renaissance Project, a long term effort designed to make San Diego a city of truly liveable neighborhoods. The Commission, a panel of business and community leaders, was charged with the mission to reach out to the communities to determine what was needed to help make all of our neighborhoods healthy and liveable. Meetings were held throughout the City of San Diego with input received from a diverse cross-section of citizens from various communities. Out of these meetings, the Renaissance Commission developed five core themes. One of these themes was to "restore public trust through accountable city government and improve access to government services and information. Decentralize the delivery of services by redesigning and expanding the use of Community Service Centers throughout the City."

In 1996, City Council approved the establishment of the Community Service Center Program (CSC) with twenty-two distinct community areas. Between 1997 through 1999, four existing Neighborhood Service Center in Rancho Bernardo, Otay Mesa/Nestor, Chollas View and Mid-City joined six new facilities in Clairemont, San Ysidro, Peninsula, Golden Hill, Navajo, and College to become Community Service Centers. The newest Center, the Central Community Service Center opened on March 4, 2000 alongside the new Central Area Police Substation on Commercial Street. Three new Centers will be opening during the spring and summer of 2000 to serve the neighborhood clusters of Rancho Penasquitos/Scripps Ranch/Mira Mesa/Miramar;

North City/Torrey Pines/Carmel Valley/Sorrento Valley; and North Park. Attachment A shows the location of all approved Centers. During the Council discussion of Phase III, the City Manager was given direction to provide an update on the CSC Program and decentralization of City services.

DISCUSSION

The City's vision of a Community Service Center is..."A Place Where Neighbors and the City share Information and Service to Enhance the Community's Quality of Life." Community Service Centers serve as a hub of community involvement where City services and other public resources are made more accessible to residents and neighborhood groups. Their goal is to serve as a "one-stop shop" for many City services. In turn, community groups and residents can use the Centers to gain information; have an accessible point of contact to bring forth issues and concerns needed to be address by City departments; use the public access computer workstation to view the City's Web page; and use the community meeting rooms. Each Community Service Center provides a variety of core City services. To also recognize the uniqueness of the neighborhoods, each individual Center partners with other community organizations and non-profit agencies to provide more comprehensive services specific to that community. Attachment B outlines the services offered per Center.

Each full-service Center has a Manager who serves as a management level City team member to coordinate and oversee the activities of the Center. In addition, the Center Manager serves as a liaison between City departments and the community, provides insight and feedback to the Mayor and City Council on community issues; and is encouraged to be proactive and non-traditional in approaching solutions to community concerns and issues. Each Manager also retains their position from their sponsoring department and brings those duties and responsibilities to the Center. For example, two Center Managers from the Planning and Development Review Department also serve as planners for the areas around their assigned Centers. The idea to use existing City staff as Center Managers was a core theme by the Renaissance Commission to decentralize City services with existing resources.

A full-time Customer Service Specialist is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Center, answering phones and assisting customers over the counter. These individuals are highly customer service-oriented and serve as "goodwill ambassadors" in the communities. Feedback on customer surveys indicate that clients are very satisfied with the customer service levels provided by the Center teams. The Specialist positions are funded through CDBG grants, general fund and other City department sponsorships.

Successes

The Community Service Center Program is making a positive impact on the communities in which they are located and successes have been measured throughout the Program. The Program continues improving upon the coordination to offer City services and to be more knowledgeable about the communities and their needs. During 1999, the Community Service Centers (CSC) collectively performed over 102,000 transactions (Attachment C).

Some recent successes include:

Through a complaint received at the Clairemont CSC, the Center Manager coordinated with the Community Relations Police Officer, graffiti control, code compliance, homeless coordinator, Council office and local high school to clean up a canyon area and relocated and assist transients in the area. The canyon has been returned to its original pristine condition and continues to be monitored.

The Golden Hill CSC will be participating and assisting in several local events including The World Music Festival, Old House Fair and a Golden Hill Street Fair with its site partners, Greater Golden Hill Community Development Corporation and MANA, a non-profit organization for mentoring young latinas. The Center will provide information about the City and its many services to hundreds of expected participants.

Through a coalition of site partners and community organizations, the Peninsula CSC assisted in producing a Social Service Resource Directory for the communities within its service area. This first time-ever comprehensive booklet makes obtaining government services much easier for the public.

Full-time Code Compliance officers work at several CSCs and have been quite successful in proactively addressing code compliance issues in the surrounding communities.

The Retired Senior Volunteer Patrol, co-located with the Rancho Bernardo CSC has had a 100% successful “no break-in” measurement for all the homes that they have been assigned to monitor. They are in daily contact with the Center Specialist to offer a more comprehensive base of knowledge on safety issues in that area.

Many of the Centers are co-located with Police Storefronts and Satellite offices. This allows for the Center Manager and Community Relations Officer to develop successful working relationships in addressing local problems. This site partnership has also allowed for more police presence in the areas around the Center which local businesses appreciate.

During the week of May 22-26, 2000, Head Start Program sponsored a “Community Service Center Week” to advertise the CSC Program at its seventy locations.

The Navajo Community Service Center team took an active role in assisting with the planning and implementation of the Navajo Community SpringFest Parade, a Bike Rodeo and Safety Day, and an upcoming “World’s Largest Garage Sale” in the San Carlos area.

Volunteers are actively solicited through the Citywide Volunteer Program as well as by the individual Centers. Volunteers have been helpful at many Centers with community mailings, assistance with other site programs such as Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program and Census assistance, and supporting the Specialists at the front counter for both the Centers and Police Storefronts.

Phasing Plan

The Community Service Center Program was designed to phase in new Centers over a period of time based upon budget allocations. The original proposal for a fully-phased Program would result in twenty-two Centers located throughout the City. Phase I was completed with the establishment of four Community Service Centers in the areas of Rancho Bernardo, Otay Mesa/Nestor, Market Street, and Mid-City. Phase II was completed with the addition of Clairemont, San Ysidro, Peninsula, Golden Hill and Navajo. Implementation of Phase III was approved by the Mayor and City Council on July 26, 1999. This established three new Centers in Scripps Ranch, Carmel Valley and North Park. In addition, the new Central CSC opened as a part of the new Central Area Police Substation complex in Logan Heights. Council District 7 also provided separate CDBG funding for a Community Service Center in the College/Rolando area.

Phase IV and V consists of implementing the remaining Centers. The following neighborhood clusters have been proposed and with future Council direction and funding, Centers could be opened to serve these communities:

University City/La Jolla/La Jolla Village
Linda Vista/Morena/Mission Valley West
Pacific Beach/Mission Beach
Kearny Mesa/Tierrasanta
Park West/Gaslamp/Balboa Park/Marina/Harborview/Cortez/Core-
Columbia/Horton Plaza/Centre City East
Skyline/Lomita/North Bay Terraces/South Bay Terraces/Paradise Hills/Jamacha
Mission Hills/University Heights/Hillcrest/Midtown/Old Town
El Cerrito/Rolando/Oak Park/Webster/Darnall/Gateway
Serra Mesa/Birdland/Mission Valley East

Decentralization

The Community Service Center Program began with the goal to decentralize City services. While this has been done at some level, there is still a great potential to outsource additional City services. Now that the Community Service Center Program is well established, it is envisioned that City services will be reviewed at a global level with management making decisions on which services to decentralize to the communities.

A task force of key City management will be formed in May 2000 to explore the different City programs and services to make recommendations to the City Manager regarding a decentralization plan for services that would greater serve the public by being offered in the communities.

The Future

The emphasis during the initial phases of this Program was to site and establish Centers; hire personnel; and develop core services to be offered within the communities. This Program is now on the horizon of expanding in many different ways..in its marketing and outreach to all citizens, by increasing the types of City services offered, and further developing relationships within the community as not only a source of information, but to truly make a difference in communities in which the Centers are located. It is important to build on its successes, and be flexible and creative in the ways City services are delivered to the public.

To prepare for this challenge, a huge marketing campaign has begun within the City organization and across the City at large to “advertise” the Program, the location of the Centers, and the many services that are provided. In addition, each Center Manager will continue regularly meeting with key community leaders and attending community meetings to listen to the issues and serve as a resource and offer assistance on City issues. A variety of mediums are used to reach a broader audience...the average citizen who might not regularly be “tuned in” to a formal community group. New services are being offered - Passport Application Services and Notary Services - to bring in new customers and additional revenue to the City. Within the city organization, there has been an effort to re-educate City employees about the Centers and how they can be used in their own department outreach efforts. It’s important for the City to become more coordinated in providing information to the public. And finally, to ensure that technology is being used as effectively as possibly by using the Internet and City’s WEB site to offer greater levels of service.

Future opportunities for the Community Service Center Program are boundless. With direction from the Mayor and City Council, with increased participation from City departments, and with continuing support and feedback from our citizens, the Program will continue to provide tremendous benefits to the communities.

Respectfully submitted,

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Community Service Center Program Manager

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Assistant City Manager

GL:TR

Note: Attachments available for review in the office of the City Clerk.

- Attachments: A. Map of Community Service Center Locations
B. Core Services and Site Partners
C. Community Service Center Program Statistics for 1999