

ATHLETICS

Service Description

The Athletics program promotes and facilitates active lifestyles, physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction by serving adults and youth through league sports and other organized sports activities. The Athletics program also coordinates the use and maintenance of City-owned athletic fields and facilities and serves as a central information source regarding community athletic activities.

Athletics offers organized sports activities for adults, including men's, women's, and coed league competition for softball, volleyball, basketball, ultimate frisbee, and outdoor soccer. Athletics contracts with a private operator to manage Laurelwood Golf Course. These activities contribute 95% of the services revenue.

Athletics maintains 23 softball fields, 19 turf sports fields, 1 outdoor hockey rink and the Westmoreland disc golf course. The Athletics staff coordinates the use of these community facilities along with the City's 23 tennis courts and 6 artificial surface playing fields with 2 additional fields to be added by Fall 2008. Facility coordination is a major focus of staff time; however, facility coordination generates minimal program revenues.

Approximately 75% of all facilities managed by Athletics are used by youth. Local youth programs, Eugene School District 4J and Bethel School District 52 are not charged for use of facilities, with the remaining 25% use generating minimal rent.

The Athletics staff also serves as a community liaison and provides professional support for various adult and youth sports agencies and nonprofit groups. The staff regularly responds to requests for information concerning athletic game rules, facility availability, equipment requirements, and community resources.

The FY08 approved budget for Athletics is \$586,269 with 3.73 FTE.

Historic Perspective

- 1946 Athletics leagues and program implemented with the start of the Recreation Department at the City of Eugene.
- 1968 City purchased Laurelwood Golf Course.
- 1975 Shasta Ballfield jointly opened with Bethel School District.
- 1979 Laurelwood Golf Course leased to private operator.
- 1988 Disc Golf Course established.

- 1992 Council Eugene Decisions strategy established multi-year fee-recovery targets.
- 1996 Indoor soccer established at the Lane County Fairgrounds property.
- 1997 As part of the Measure 50 strategy Council directed the athletics program to be self-supporting.
- 1997 Open gym activities eliminated.
- 1999 Lane County Fair Board terminated indoor sports contract ending City indoor soccer and skating activities.
- 2000 Four artificial surface playing fields jointly opened with Eugene School District 4J.
- 2003 Multi use hockey/tennis surface installed at Amazon tennis courts.
- 2006 Two additional artificial turf fields installed at 4J middle schools. City coordinates community scheduling.
- 2007 New Laurelwood operator selected after extensive search and process after prior operator retires after 18 years.

Citizen Involvement

- Athletic services are included in City community surveys. Each year, the Budget Committee and City Council review the Athletics budget.
- The Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Comprehensive Plan provided significant public input that will shape services for two decades.
- Staff meets regularly with community partners and other service providers to identify gaps, address funding issues, encourage interagency collaboration, and eliminate barriers to service provision.
- Voters validate programs and funding through the election process, as in passage of the 2006 Parks, Recreation and Open Space bond measure. (Measure 20-110)

Customer Input

Advisory committee meetings occur for each sport. The Athletics program uses team managers and officials groups to obtain customer input and to involve customers in program design. In addition, team managers are surveyed at the end of each sports season.

Mission

Athletics creates and facilitates recreational and competitive sports opportunities, promotes active lifestyles, and encourages physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction. Athletic services philosophy is that well-balanced, healthy people contribute to a productive and thriving community.

Outcomes

- Preserve safe access to City parks.
- Contribute to the quality of life of the community.
- Promote on-going fitness and health of all citizens.
- Contribute to social integration and sense of community.
- Contribute to the economic health of the community.

Operating Principles

- Maintain fields in a manner to allow safe participation in team sports.
- Serve all athletes regardless of age, skill level, gender, race, ethnicity, and income.
- Serve families as participants in team sports and as spectators.
- Provide a sense of continuity in a time of accelerated change.
- Provide a structure for sports participation and a catalyst for athletic league organization.
- Seek to maximize and balance use of the community's athletic facilities.
- Schedule activities at optimum times for users (earlier times for youth, later times for adults, etc.)
- Continually seek to improve our services and to make them more accessible to our customers.

Current Operating Environment

External Trends

Increasing Fees

Increasing costs of fulfilling the service mission have resulted in increased user fees for adult leagues and other users. Surveys of comparable programs indicate fee increases place adult Athletic leagues at or above market rates. Further fee increases will threaten current participation levels and would have the undesired effect of reducing total revenue.

Increased Obesity in Adults and Youth

Over the past 20 years, the number of overweight children between the ages of 6 and 19 has tripled to nearly one out of every three adolescents. Health costs for obesity-related illnesses in the U.S. are estimated to be \$93 billion a year. Adolescent obesity is largely caused by lack of physical activity rather than by increased caloric intake. Physically inactive children grow up to be physically inactive, obese adults. Communities need to create more opportunities for our population to be physically active. Athletic activities are a highly active form of recreation which promotes healthy lifestyles.

Continued Decline in Team Sponsorships

Adult athletic teams have offset increasing fees by obtaining local merchant sponsorships. These sponsorship opportunities may decline for adults as

merchants move towards sponsoring youth, further impacting participation levels.

Population Demographics

The 40+ age group is increasingly fit, active, and interested in fitness activities and recreational team-based competition. Private gyms and leagues are developing to respond to this demand. Community diversity is increasing. These changes represent new demands for Athletics services.

Turf Sports

The growing interest and participation in sports such as soccer, lacrosse, rugby and ultimate frisbee is generating additional demand for turf sport fields. These sports, plus the new artificial surface playing fields, represent new service opportunities for the Athletics program.

Demand Outstrips Development in Athletic Facilities Available to Adults

Since 1970, Eugene's population has more than doubled. Construction of gyms and development of athletic fields has lagged behind this growth, which has increased the competition for facility usage. Thirty-five percent of all City athletic programs are gym-based and rely on school district facilities. Youth athletic activities have the highest priority for many facilities, especially those owned by the school districts. In order for the City to respond to population growth, additional recreational field and facility resources will need to be developed.

Advances in Sports Equipment

Higher performing softball equipment is necessitating larger playing facilities for adults. Fields with short outfields are becoming unsuitable for adult play and may present increasing liability risks. Larger softball fields will need to be developed to respond to the demand for adult softball. Softball leagues account for over 43% of the total Athletics revenue.

Customers' Expectations Increase

At a time of increased customer expectations, the challenge to maintain service quality in light of diminishing resources is significant.

Internal Conditions

Program Requirement of 100% Direct Cost Recovery

At City Council direction, the Athletics Program must recover 100% of its direct costs. The pressure to ensure revenues equal or exceed costs and the need to maintain and/or increase demand is becoming more difficult to achieve. New initiatives must be developed to meet the Council-mandated cost-neutral goal.

2006 Comprehensive Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS) Plan

During 2006, significant public input was gathered regarding the provision of parks, recreation and open space opportunities. In addition, with the adoption of the project and priority list, the strategies and actions of the City's Library, Recreation and Cultural Services (LRCS) department can be designed to meet identified community priorities, goals and desired outcomes.

Performance Measures

Core Processes

Maintain Fields and Facilities

- Number of maintained fields and facilities.

Coordinate Use of City-Owned and Other Community Athletic Facilities

- Number of hours scheduled.

Program Athletic Leagues

- Number and types of leagues programmed.
- City league rates vs. market league rates (youth & adult).

Total System

Effectiveness:

- Number of athletics patron visits.

Efficiency:

- Total athletics service cost per patron visit.
- Direct athletics service cost per patron visit net of revenues.

Financial:

- % of direct athletics General Fund service budget offset by revenues.
- % of total athletics General Fund service budget offset by revenues.

Customer Satisfaction:

- % of team managers surveyed who are satisfied or very satisfied with athletics services.

Strategy 1: Ensure that Athletics service revenues equal its expenses.

Objectives: 100% of direct program expenses covered by revenues in FY09-12.

Work Activities:

- Promote rentals of City-owned athletic facilities.
- Keep team fees as market-competitive as possible.

Strategy 2: Maintain service quality.

Objective: 90% or more of team managers are satisfied or very satisfied with service quality in FY09-12.

Work Activities:

- Maintain quality and continuity of staff and contractual sports officials who support league activity.
- Perform ongoing evaluations of programs.
- Continue collaboration with Public Works to ensure City facilities are well maintained.

