



City of San Antonio

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Title: Briefing on San Antonio Parks and Recreation Summer Programming [David W. McCary, CPM, Assistant City Manager; Homer Garcia III, Director, Parks and Recreation]

Sponsors:

Indexes:

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Attachments: 1. Staff Presentation

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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DEPARTMENT: Parks and Recreation

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Homer Garcia III

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Briefing on San Antonio Parks and Recreation Summer Programming

SUMMARY:

City staff will provide a briefing on summer programming opportunities provided by the San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Parks and Recreation Department is committed to offering a variety of opportunities centered on youth development, aquatics, and enhancing the parks user experience which promote health, safety, and staying active during the summer months. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Department will offer summer programming designed to accommodate necessary safety precautions including capacity and staffing level considerations.

Youth Development

For nearly three decades, the Department has provided a recreation summer program for youth. The Summer Youth Program provides supervised, structured recreational activities to children ages six to fourteen years old. The program operates for approximately eight weeks each summer (dependent on local school district calendars) and this year has the capacity to serve approximately 2,130 children at 21 Parks' facilities and are coordinating with local area school districts for available school sites to expand service delivery.

Through a grant from the Texas Department of Agriculture, the Summer Food Service Program provides nutritional meals to children age eighteen and below and has the capacity to serve over 231,000 lunches and 230,000 snacks. These offerings will occur at 86 sites in conjunction with the Summer Youth Program, city pools, and other non-profit organization's locations and have been designated Por Vida healthy by Metro Health. Additionally, with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the State has authorized meal distribution through a "grab-and-go" method and the Department will continue service delivery via this method in Summer 2021.

The Natural Areas division provides a variety of programming for visitors exploring our Natural Area parks. Starting Out Wild (geared for 18-month to three-year-olds) and Growing Up Wild (geared for four- to six-year-olds) are pre-recorded virtual programs providing an early foundation for developing positive impressions about nature and lifelong social and academic skills. Grab-and-go nature lessons kits filled with activities to help visitors explore natural area parks are available on select weekends with plans to expand to other parks and nature smart libraries. Additionally, the department offers livestream nature-based activities and guided group hikes on a limited basis.

Aquatics

The summer provides an opportunity for several aquatics-related activities for families to stay cool and learn valuable skills. The Parks and Recreation Department will operate up to 18 outdoor swimming pools contingent on temporary staff hiring, with staggered openings beginning in May and staggered closings concluding in September. Additionally, 5 splash pads located at Benavides, Elmendorf Lake, Lincoln, and Pearsall Parks and Yanaguana Garden at Hemisfair are open March through November. A few pools will be open each weekday with all pools open on weekends to provide 7-day coverage. Additionally, aquatic fitness classes such as Aqua Zumba will be offered at several pool locations throughout the season.

Programming includes free group swimming lessons which provide an opportunity to learn valuable life-saving skills. Three, two-week sessions at designated pools will be offering morning lessons for beginners ages 6 - 12.

Park Ambassadors

The Department engages park and trail users through a variety of programs aimed at enhancing the park/trail user experience. The Trail Steward and Trail Watch Volunteer programs aim to provide safety awareness amongst trail users through "observe and report" monitoring and proactively engage visitors on safety and trail etiquette. Trail Stewards and Trail Watch volunteers are actively expanding to additional segments of the trail system extending these ambassador programs.

With the recent opening of the system's 16th dog park at Maverick Park, the Department's Dog Park Ambassador program engages park visitors by encouraging safe use of dog park amenities, providing pet owners with City-approved information, and explaining dog park rules and use guidelines to park visitors.

ISSUE:

The San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of summer programming for both youth and adults and has integrated these initiatives into the Department's core service delivery.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item is for briefing purposes only.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for briefing purposes only.