



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Date: 11/26/2018

In Control: Community Health and Equity Committee

DEPARTMENT: Parks and Recreation

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Xavier D. Urrutia

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City Wide

SUBJECT:

Briefing on the Cities Connecting Children to Nature Initiative

SUMMARY:

In March 2018, the City of San Antonio was awarded a grant in the amount of \$75,000.00 from the National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education and Families and the Children & Nature Network as part of the Cities Connecting Children to Nature initiative. The grant term runs through October 2020.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In February 2018, the National League of Cities (NLC) released a special call for applications for their Cities Connecting Children to Nature (CCCN) initiative which is designed to connect children with the natural world through an equity-based approach. The CCCN grant program is intended to help support cities across the country develop planning strategies and pursue projects that create equitable access and connections between children and nature in urban areas. In March 2018, San Antonio was selected along with Atlanta, Baltimore, Houston, St. Louis, and Gary, Indiana as grant recipients.

The CCCN initiative began with an intensive eight-month planning phase during which the Parks & Recreation Department engaged stakeholder groups to assess the landscape of critical systems identified as necessary for equitable access and connections between children and nature in urban areas. Examples of these systems include transportation, health demographics such as obesity rates, and sustainability. To achieve this, a core team has been designated led by the Parks & Recreation Department consisting of community partners such as North East Independent School District, San Antonio River Authority and others to work directly with NLC and

CCCN project staff to establish a baseline of the existing community-wide inventory of services, identify priority populations, and analyze assets, gaps, barriers, and potential opportunities. This required broad participation among local government agencies, non-profits, schools, and other community organizations to help pinpoint potential concerns related to nature deficits among school-age children.

By targeting broader themes outlined in the SA Tomorrow plan and data discovery focusing on existing race- and equity-based data from the U.S. Census, the CCCN Core Team and community partners were able to identify strategies designed to systematically connect more children to nature in an equitable way. Potential strategies include enhancements to the School Park Program; introduction of green career pathways for underserved youth; and nature smart libraries. These strategies will target historically underserved areas within the City based on racial demographics and poverty rates.

Upon conclusion of the planning process, the Parks & Recreation Department will submit the proposed two year action plan to NLC for review and endorsement prior to implementation. The proposed plan is due in December 2018 and funding for implementation will run through October 2020.

ISSUE:

The briefing will explain the Cities Connecting Children to Nature Initiative as well as the Parks & Recreation Department's role in it.

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.