

Budget Questions and Requests for Information
2013-14 Recommended Budget
QUESTION 10

QUESTION: What are our plans for Youth Programming?

RESPONDENT: Jim Orr, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director

RESPONSE: We will continue offering a wide variety of programs for youth throughout the year. These programs include: summer camp (2), middle school camp (1), learn to swim classes, swim teams, first aid/CPR classes, youth baseball/softball, youth basketball, youth football/cheerleading, pottery /ceramics classes and a wide variety of non-athletic classes for all youth ages. We also offer a full Special Olympics program as well as an Adaptive Recreation program for children/siblings and their families. Our focus will be to enhance these programs while trying to offer more opportunities in all of these areas.

While the above programs/classes continue to be full throughout the year, another area that we are focusing on is the Teen program. We have been offering a Teen program at the Street Scene Teen Center (first floor of Old Post Office) for the past 6 years. Prior to that, we provided staff to Robert Humphries to help staff the Street Scene Teen Center. The need for Teen space has grown and the popularity of the center has grown as well. With the popularity of the program, there also has been an increased interest from outside organizations to help with the organization, programming and funding for the Teen Center. Because of this interest, the Town Manager formed a Youth Initiative Task Team, to look at what services are provided by Town departments, what services are needed and how to fill the identified gaps of service. The Task Team has representatives from the following departments: Police, Planning, Parks and Recreation, Transit, Library, Housing, and Public Works. The Task Team has developed an implementation strategy and will eventually involve individuals and agencies outside of the Town governmental structure who are involved with providing services to this segment of the population.

The strategy involves the following points:

- Determine what the youth in the community need in terms of services
- Determine what services are being provided at this time by the Town
- Determine if these Town services are addressing the needs identified
- Identify any gaps in these service needs
- Determine how to address these gaps

Once the analysis is completed, the Task Team will present its findings to the community and specifically identify outside partners who can work with the Town to address the service needs and the identified gaps. Partners could include the Chapel Hill/Carrboro City Schools, Street Scene Teen Center, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club and area churches.

Another area of immediate concern is the Teen Center location. Located under the Old Post Office, the facility is less than desirable. The Town is currently developing a list of needed improvements to this facility through a collaborative effort between the Public Works Department, the Parks and Recreation Department and the Street Scene Teen Center organization. Through an appeal by community partners and private citizens, several potential private donors have been identified as having interest in supporting these needed renovations to the space with the understanding that the Town would need to match the dollar amount of the donation through new funding and/or in-kind support. In addition to the renovations needed at the Teen Center, additional staffing will be necessary to adequately monitor the facility and to provide support for new and existing programs with the anticipated increase in participation.

The Task Team has also identified the need to adequately support the summer youth employment program administered by the Police department.

Transportation has been identified by the Task Team as a barrier to providing services for youth in the Community. The availability of public transportation from schools, and other areas where there are large concentrations of youth, to town facilities such as the Library, Recreation Centers and the Teen Center continues to be problematic.

As we move forward, we will be concentrating on the things we are doing well, and trying to do them even better. At the same time, the Task Team will work on strategy development and implementation while continuing to look for other opportunities for improvement within the Teen programming area.