

Recommendations of the New Orleans Recreation Community Advisory Panel

*Creating and Sustaining
World-Class Recreation
Opportunities for All*

August 28, 2009



What do world-class playgrounds and recreation organizations have in common?

- Provide quality recreation opportunities for young and young-at-heart
- Promote values of teamwork, leadership and discipline
- Provide positive outlets and activities for young people
- Provide ample safe, clean, professionally supervised, well-lighted facilities



What do world-class playgrounds and recreation organizations have in common?

(continued)

- Clear long-term plan for playground improvements and expansion
- Offer cultural and artistic opportunities for all citizens
- Improve quality of life
- Consistent private sector funding



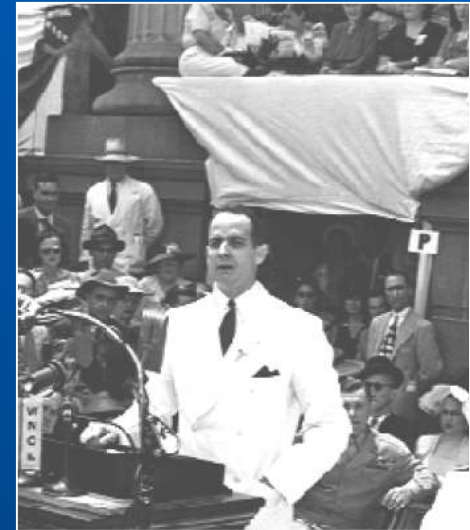
**Is New Orleans satisfied
with the status quo or
can we do better?**



Brief history of NORD

Created in 1946 during Mayor “Chep” Morrison’s administration to:

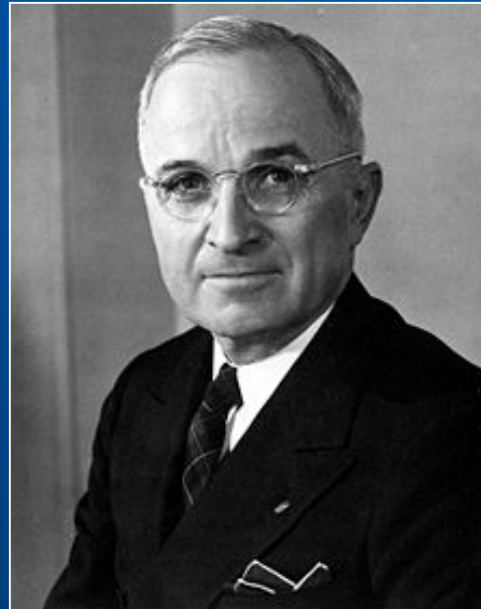
- Occupy young people during summer months
- Promote teamwork, leadership, fun
- Managed by athletic coaches from local schools





For perspective:

- Harry Truman was President





For perspective: *(continued)*

- American troops were still coming home from World War II





For perspective:

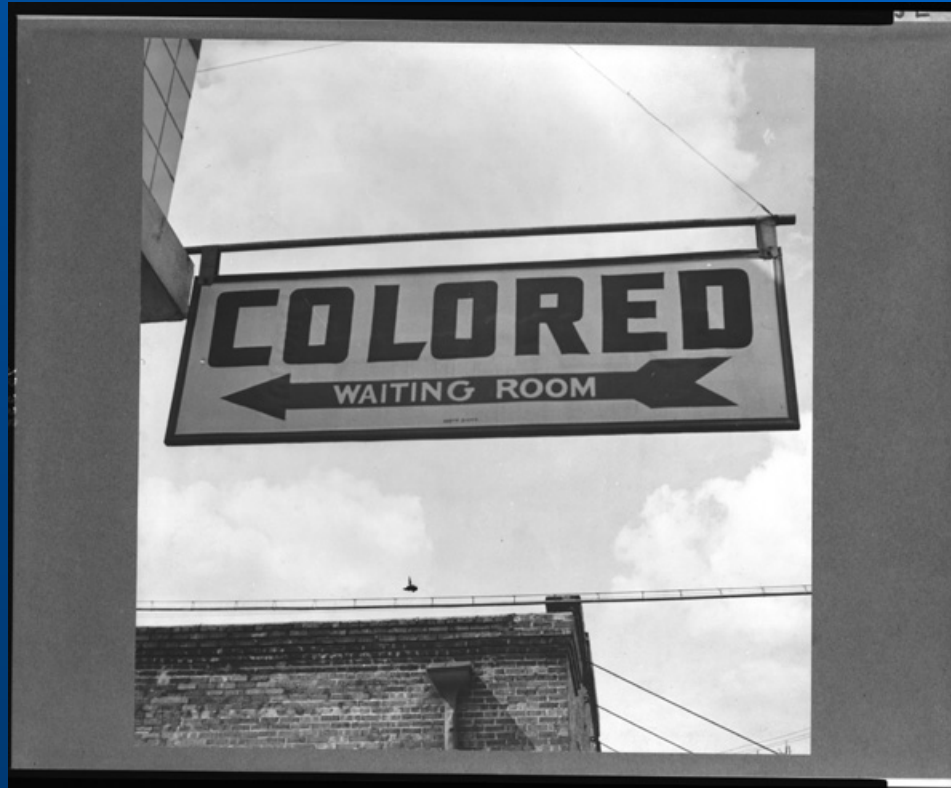
- Much of suburban Algiers, New Orleans East and Lakeview was still undeveloped





For perspective:

- New Orleans was strictly segregated





World-class playgrounds and recreation for all

- Politicians, policy makers, recreation, business, civic and religious leaders have talked about improving NORD for years
- A 2004 independent survey showed overwhelming desire for a change for improved recreational opportunities and facilities



2004 Verne Kennedy Survey

- 92% believed strong recreation programs/good parks/playgrounds helps reduce juvenile crime
- 85% believed that improved recreation/parks increase property values
- 93% believed improved recreation/parks build stronger neighborhoods
- 96% believed that they beautify the city and reflect a sense of pride



2004 Verne Kennedy Study

(continued)

- 72% would vote for a tax millage that would provide additional funding
- 69% would vote for a Park and Recreation Commission governed like the Audubon Institute
- 81% favored taking politics out of parks and recreation



2008 BWR Study

- BWR analyzed NORD's governance and funding model compared with best practices
- Using the National Recreation and Park Association, BWR identified three prevailing governance models:
 - combined Department of Parks and Recreation under Mayor or City Manager
 - separate departments for recreation services and park services
 - a special district providing both parks and recreation services in one agency



2008 BWR Study

(continued)

- Key issues affecting NORD are more common to cities with separate departments like New Orleans than they are to the other models
- There are fewer “pros” to the dual department model than the other two models
- NRPA: only 3% of all agencies in the U.S. use the New Orleans dual department model
- NRPA: 100% of agencies recognized for excellence are either a combined city or county department or a special district



Studying options for change

- Community Advisory Panel
 - Created by the City Council
 - First meeting, October 2008
 - Held 6 public meetings/workshops



Studying options for change

(continued)

- Analyze current conditions and options for change
 - Objective non-political analytics (no turf battles)
 - Community/stakeholder participation
 - Solicit feedback from the community on the present/future of NORD and react to BWR best practices study



Studying options for change

(continued)

The CAP focused on four categories

- What's working?
- What isn't? Why?
- What requires minor intervention?
- What requires major intervention?
- What should be done differently?

**Facilities &
Maintenance**

Programming Quality

Financing

**Governing Structure
&
Leadership**



What's working

- Numerous activities
- Spirit of volunteerism
- Cultural heritage
- Loyal, dedicated New Orleanians doing the best they can with limited resources





Identifying the challenges

- Leadership that is constrained and plagued by frequent turnover
 - Since 1978:
 - 12 directors in 31 years
 - Average length of service: 2.5 years
- Results in poor continuity and instability of programs
- The absence of a shared vision and overall plan for success



Identifying the challenges

(continued)

- A community unaware of successful alternatives
- Ineffective governance structure
- Competition for resources and coordination of services between City departments

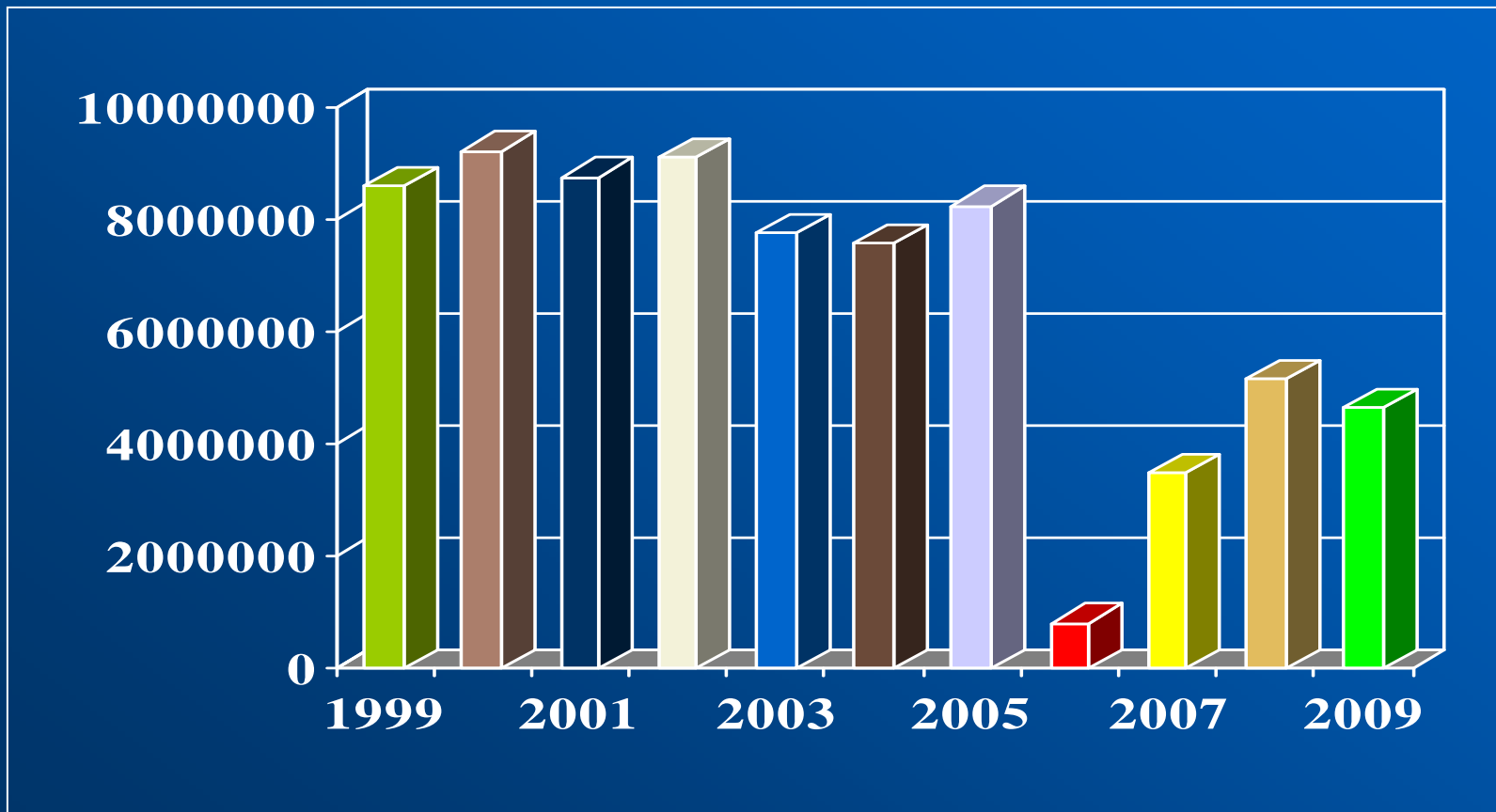




Identifying the challenges

(continued)

- Inadequate and inconsistent funding





Identifying the challenges

(continued)

- Costs increase/budget doesn't keep pace
- Fewer dollars mean fewer programs
- Fewer programs mean diminished impact
- Perception of poor performance gives private and non-profit sector little reason to fund/support



The options are simple:

- Do nothing - accept the status quo

OR

- Hold ourselves to a higher standard for our children



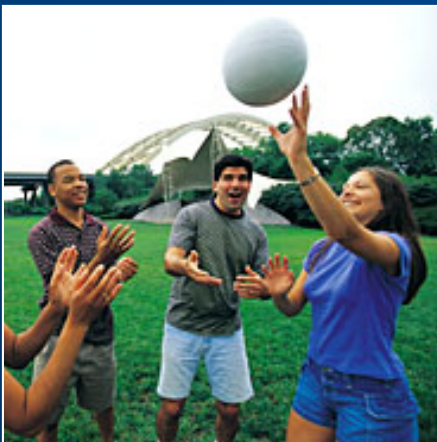
CAP studied successful programs



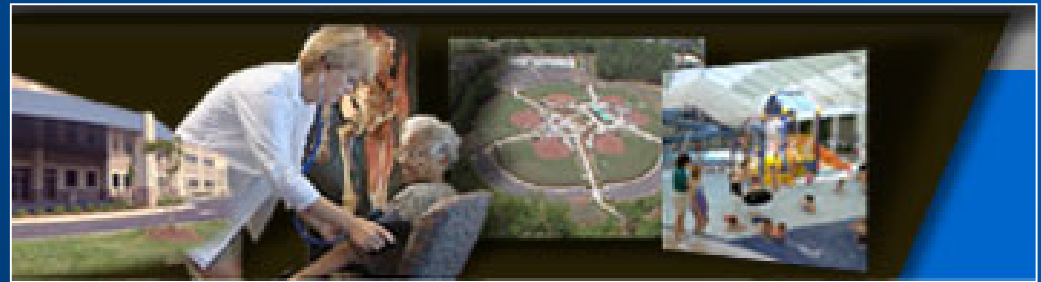
City of Philadelphia



East Baton Rouge Parish



City of Cincinnati



Gwinnett County, GA



We learned what works

- A clear mission and vision that guide decision making over the long term
- Governance by an independent commission composed of a cross section of the community
- Freedom to hire a superintendent empowered to hire his/her own staff
- Single Point Accountability that rests with the Superintendent



We learned what works

(continued)

- Dedicated funding sources approved by the public
- Support of a separate foundation
- Stability and strength of leadership
- Independence from politics



CAP recommendations

“Must Have” principles for success:

- Total independence
- Freedom to hire a superintendent who selects his/her staff
- Broad, bottom-up community involvement and representation
- Stability in leadership with recreational expertise



CAP recommendations

(continued)

“Must Have” principles for success:

- Dedicated and protected funding sources
- Combined programming, recreation, facilities and maintenance under one roof
- Accountability to the public
- Public and private commitment and support



CAP recommendations

(continued)

- Create a special district providing playgrounds and recreation services under one agency:
 - New Orleans Playgrounds and Recreation Commission
 - Created through change to the Home Rule Charter
 - Combine NORD & Parks and Parkways' NORD-related athletic facilities and playgrounds, assets and funding (300 acres of NORD property)



CAP recommendations

(continued)

Commission membership:

- Members initially serve five-year terms
- Terms staggered afterwards by drawing of lots
 - No turn-over after every election
- Minimum qualifications include Orleans Parish residency and registered voter
- Reflect the city's geographic, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity
- Chair elected by commissioners, non-voting position except in case of a tie



NORPC organizational chart

MEMBERS
SET POLICY

NEW ORLEANS
RECREATION AND PLAYGROUND
COMMISSION

SUPERINTENDENT

FOUNDATION
BOARD

DEVELOPS
VISION
ACCOUNTABLE
TO BOARD &
PUBLIC

FUNDRAISING
&
ENDOWMENTS

ASSISTANT
SUPERINTENDENT

ASSISTANT
SUPERINTENDENT

SYSTEM PLANNING &
PARK RESOURCES

ADMINISTRATIVE
SERVICES

RECREATION PROGRAM
& FACILITIES



CAP recommendations

(continued)

12 Member Commission:

- Commissioners nominated by Mayor and City Council
 - Mayor submits no less than 10 and no more than 15 nominations
 - City Council submits no less than 10 and no more than 14 nominations (2 per member)
- University Presidents choose 5 members from Mayor's list, 5 members from City Council
 - Dillard, Loyola, SUNO, Tulane, UNO, Xavier
- New Orleans Saints and Hornets each select 1 member



CAP recommendations

(continued)

- Funding – voter approved dedicated millage
 - Private sector involved through Foundation Board
- The current millage for NORD is 1.09 mills
(1.09 mills = \$2.5 million)
 - w/ Park and Parkways combined: 2.18 mills
- Orleans Parish School Board: 38.47 mills
- Audubon Zoo & Aquarium: 3.31 mills
- New Orleans Public Library: 3.14 mills



CAP recommendations

(continued)

Voter Approved Dedicated Millage

Years 9 - 15

\$20 million annual budget
incremental 2.5 mills
7.5 mills total

Years 4 - 8

\$15 million annual budget
incremental 2.5 mills
5 mills total

Years 1 - 3

\$10 million annual budget which
represents an incremental 2.5 mills
over current millage

All supplemented by the partnering fundraising organization



CAP recommendations

(continued)

- What is the impact of 2.5 mills?
 - homes valued at \$75,000 or less the increase would be \$0
 - homes valued at \$150,000 the increase would be \$18.75 per year (5¢ per day)
 - homes valued at \$250,000 the increase would be \$43.75 per year (12¢ per day)



Advantages of recommended model

- Independent leadership/sustainable long-term strategy
- Stable leadership
- Parks and recreation professionals
- Stronger case for increased funding
- Accountability to the public
- Public and private commitment, confidence and support

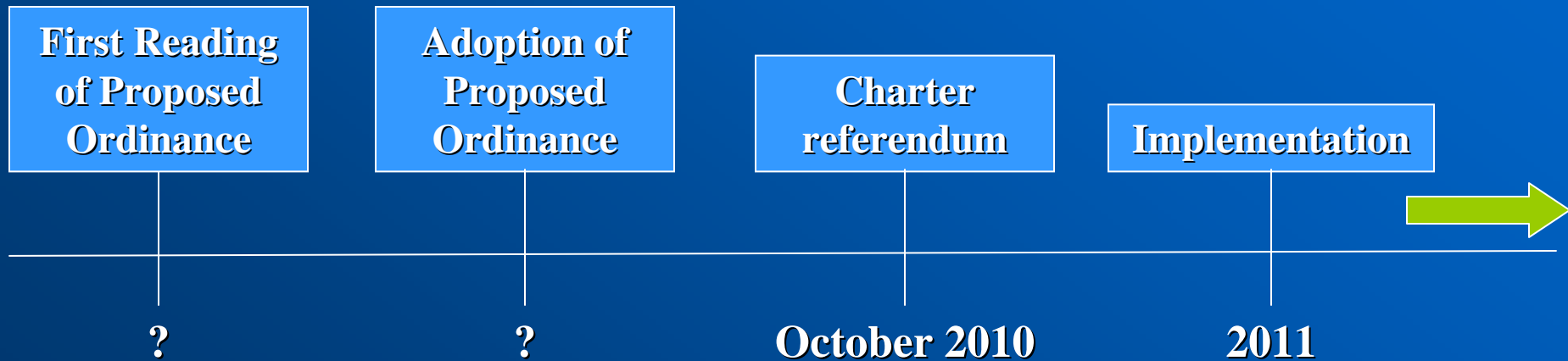


An ideal mission statement:

In partnership with our citizens, the New Orleans Recreation & Playgrounds Commission will provide high quality, broad-based playgrounds, facilities, programs and services creating a sense of community, enabling a safe and secure environment, and enhancing New Orleans' quality of life.



Proposed timeline:





Choices

- If we always do what we always did, we will always get what we always got!
- Something better?



Conclusions

- We can and should do better.
- The model exists for us to follow.
- It's time to implement the changes we need to get the results we deserve.





QUESTIONS