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## Parks and Recreation Department Code of Conduct

This report provides the Parks, Arts, Libraries and Education Subcommittee with an update on the Parks and Recreation Department's efforts to develop a code of conduct for parks, facilities and programs, and requests feedback from the Subcommittee.

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION.

### Summary

The Parks and Recreation Department is currently working diligently to develop a code of conduct that will promote conduct and behaviors that allow everyone to enjoy clean, safe and accessible parks, facilities and programs. Although state laws, City ordinances and existing park rules address certain illegal or prohibited activities, the code of conduct will provide clear expectations of acceptable behavior in the following areas: flatland parks; desert and mountain parks and preserves; and park facilities, including community centers.

### Public Outreach

The Parks and Recreation Department recognizes that community input is critical to the success of the code of conduct, and is dedicated to listening to the community's input to develop a code of conduct that addresses challenging behaviors that neighborhoods, park visitors and City staff experience in our parks, while respecting the rights of the community.

### Community Meetings

Staff held a meeting with neighborhood and community leaders from across the City on January 8, at the Encanto Clubhouse. In addition during the month of January 2019, the Parks and Recreation Department held a series of four community meetings at locations across the City:

- January 15: South Mountain Community Center.
- January 16: Deer Valley Community Center.
- January 17: Steele Indian School Park Memorial Hall.
- January 22: Maryvale Community Center.

At the community meetings, staff listened to the feedback about challenging and

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negative behaviors experienced in parks and gathered their observations and ideas as to proposed solutions. Representatives from the Human Services Department, Neighborhood Services Department, Police Department, Maricopa County Environmental Services, Healthy Giving Council and various other agencies and stakeholders were also present at the meetings to hear the community's feedback and answer questions.

After the presentation, the community was able to provide feedback directly to City staff. Staff also collected comment cards with any information community members desired to share with staff. The dialogue at the community meetings was focused around challenging, inappropriate and negative behaviors that community members witness in parks and their proposed solutions. Interpreters were available at each of the meetings, to assist Spanish-speaking community members.

### Flyers

Staff worked with the department's public information team to develop a flyer, in English and Spanish, informing the public about the community meetings (Attachment A). The flyer was shared the following ways:

- Posted and distributed at community and recreation centers citywide.
- Shared through the department's social media channels (Facebook and Twitter).
- Distributed to the Mayor and City Council for sharing, including in their newsletters.
- Sent via email to a broad list of community members, including neighborhood and community leaders and others who have shown an interest in the code of conduct; individual identified by the Mayor and City Council; and all of the neighborhood associations, block watches and other community groups registered with the Neighborhood Services Department (approximately 1,450 emails).

### Website

Staff also created a web page for the code of conduct, which is linked to the Parks and Recreation Department's main web page ([www.phoenix.gov/parks](http://www.phoenix.gov/parks)). Staff's intent is to continue to add information to the web site as the code of conduct process moves forward, so the community can obtain the most up-to-date information. In addition to attending the community meetings, residents can also direct questions or comments about the code of conduct via email at [receptionist.pks@phoenix.gov](mailto:receptionist.pks@phoenix.gov), by contacting the department by phone at 602-262-6862, or by mailing a letter.

### Media Outreach

The department's public information team also distributed a press release to media outlets, generating media coverage of the code of conduct and the community meetings (Attachment B ).

### Summary of Preliminary Community Feedback

The community meetings in January 2019, including the meeting with the neighborhood and community leaders, were attended by a total of approximately 75 residents. A table summarizing of the behaviors and proposed solutions that have been expressed through the community meetings is attached to this report ( Attachment C ). The following are major categories of items that emerged through the community meetings and feedback received to date:

- Trail etiquette (bicycles yielding, motorized bikes, after-hours hiking, spider trails, etc.).
- Monopolization of park amenities (ramadas, picnic tables, etc.).
- Misusing park features or using for unintended purposes (bikes on picnic tables, bathing in restrooms/fountains, etc.).
- Littering and dumping.
- Using items for unintended purposes in parks (shopping carts and other wheeled devices, etc.).
- General improper behavior/conduct (swearing around playgrounds, vehicles driven on sports fields, not picking up dog waste, etc.).
- Park health and safety initiatives (smoking and vaping, drug use, needles in park restrooms, etc.).
- Need for more activation and programming of parks, including partnering with the community.
- Concerns about criminalization of populations of the community and respecting the cultural/historical importance of parks.
- Concerns about enforcement of the code of conduct.

### Next Steps

Staff provided an update to the Parks and Recreation Board at its Jan. 24, 2019 meeting, and received feedback from board members about their priorities, which included the following:

- Interest in seeing information about potential costs associated with enforcement of the code of conduct, including park ranger positions.
- Need for more community engagement, including with block watches and other neighborhood groups, once there are more specifics to share.
- The need to proceed slowly and thoughtfully with the code of conduct process.
- Acknowledging that each park has a different “personality” and coming up with codes of conduct that address specific parks.
- The need to ensure there is adequate representation and diversity in the code of conduct process.

- Interest in looking at park hours and consistency through the code of conduct process.

At this time, the department is reviewing all community feedback and working with the City's Law Department to identify options to legally address the behaviors and proposed solutions brought forward by the community. Additionally, staff is working diligently to draft a code of conduct that reflects the community's priorities, and promotes safe, clean and accessible parks, facilities and programs, while respecting the rights of the community.

#### Writing Draft Code of Conduct - February/March 2019

Staff is currently working to draft the code of conduct and make it available for community input. Once drafted, the code of conduct will be presented in draft form at a Parks and Recreation Board meeting for further input by board members.

#### Public Comment Period - Estimated April/May 2019

Following this meeting, there will be a public comment period, during which time the community will have an opportunity to review and provide comments on the draft code of conduct. The Parks and Recreation Department will publicize the draft code of conduct through a variety of channels, including:

- Creating a flyer to raise awareness about the draft code of conduct.
- Sharing the flyer and draft code of conduct with the Mayor and Council for feedback and sharing via social media, newsletters, etc.
- Emailing information to all neighborhood associations, block watches and other community groups registered with the Neighborhood Services Department, and providing presentations at neighborhood meetings as requested.
- Pushing out information to schools in the community.
- Posting information at Parks and Recreation Department facilities and offices across the City, including community and rec centers, division offices, etc.
- Placing all information on the City's website.
- Sharing information through the City's social media channels, including Facebook and Twitter.
- Sharing a press release with local media outlets.

#### Parks and Recreation Board Approval - Estimated May 2019

At the end of this process, staff will present a final draft of the code of conduct to the Parks and Recreation Board for approval. The Parks and Recreation Board sets policy for the parks system and has jurisdiction over the code of conduct. Prior to the board's approval, staff will keep the Mayor and City Council updated to continue obtaining feedback, so that the draft code of conduct reflects the priorities of the community.

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### Communication with the Community - Ongoing

The Parks and Recreation Department will continue to keep the community updated as the code of conduct process moves forward. Staff has developed an email list from the community meetings sign-in sheets to provide updates on the progress via emails to this list, as well as posting updates to phoenix.gov/parks and sharing updates on social media.

### Roll-Out and Public Awareness Campaign - Estimated Summer 2019

Following final approval of the code of conduct, a campaign will be developed to include signage, marketing materials, a web presence and social media outreach, to educate the public about the new code of conduct.

### Education and Enforcement - Ongoing

Finally, once the code of conduct is finalized, approved and has been rolled out to the community through a robust public awareness campaign, the final phase of the code of conduct, which will be ongoing, will be to provide continuous education and enforcement, as appropriate. Staff understands that members of the community are extremely interested in how the City is going to enforce the code of conduct once it is implemented. An important aspect of the Parks and Recreation Department's approach will include leading with education and services, as the situation may dictate. There will also be a progressive process where repeated violations of the code of conduct, or more serious violations, will result in a progressive discipline-type process.

Together with fellow City departments, the Parks and Recreation Department will be developing a trespassing policy, which will include an appeals process. Consistency of policies, procedures and forms between departments and having a common process is a top priority for staff. Additionally, for the code of conduct to be successful, all consideration will be given to the importance of communication and integration of systems with the City, including our park rangers, our partners in police and other city departments.

Staff will share details of the draft code of conduct, public awareness campaign and education/enforcement with the Mayor and City Council as the code of conduct process moves forward.

### Responsible Department

This item is submitted by Deputy City Manager Deanna Jonovich and the Parks and Recreation Department.