



## QUALITY OF LIFE Work Plan 2013 **YEAR END Update** Parks & Recreation, Library, Finance, Human Resources

The City of Mount Vernon believes that our “Quality of Life” is exceptional and creates a lifetime positive difference to our community. The Directors and Managers of the Quality of Life pod met during the month of January to discuss areas in which working collaboratively would result in fulfillment of common goals, better inter-departmental cooperation, and gained efficiencies.

The information in green font are the results of their work in 2013.

**Coordinated Planning:** Larry Otos, Linda Brookings, Brian Soneda, Sara Holahan

The City of Mount Vernon recognizes the significant volume of enrichment offerings in our community by various organizations such as the YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, etc. We find value in coordinating with other agencies in an effort to analyze offerings and provide the most effective recreational experiences.

- “Hub of info” referral center for recreation in coordination with partners – the Recreation Department views itself as the ‘hub’ and will create a referral center culture within the Department. A ‘hub’ design should be planned and implemented with consideration for refreshing information regularly.
  - From the HUB meetings a listing of agencies was created whose focus is community enrichment and youth and adult activities.
  - The IS Department will develop website upgrades to provide a “Community Links” portion on the City website featuring information on recreational activities throughout the community.
- Facilitate collaboration – The City of Mount Vernon will reach out to other entities and organize a roundtable discussion twice per year.
  - HUB partner’s roundtable group has met twice (in April and November 2013) and the intent is to continue to meet twice a year.
- Physical recreation – continue coordination with Skagit County and other municipalities for physical recreational offerings.
  - Ongoing

- Regional parks – City, County & State – maintain referral information
  - Complete
- Arts – consider recreation as a larger part of arts community to include theater, public art, and music
  - Ongoing
- Enrichment – include referrals for enrichment (life-long learning e.g. speaker series, classes...)
  - Complete

**Funding Support:** Larry Otos, Brian Soneda, Alicia Huschka, Mayor

Funding ‘quality of life’ programming has been increasingly difficult over the past several years of recessionary budgets. The value of programming is undeniable. The City of Mount Vernon is committed to exploring all creative options to sustain and generate funding support.

- Sponsorship/Scholarship
  - Update information and include on City website. Sponsorship is part of successful events and should be approached as an integral part of our process.
    - Completed – recreation program sponsorships have increased 18%
    - Completed – The Mayors Wellness Challenge received \$1500 in support
    - \$15,400 received in support of events in 2013
- Donation – cultivate opportunities for the community to donate, make it easy! Cash/in kind; adopt a donation ordinance; and direct donors
  - Not completed – work plan for 2014: Work with IS to develop webpage
- Capital project – Library: work with Mount Vernon Library Foundation to align goals
  - Foundation updated on progress throughout the year
- Foundations – support efforts of Parks & Library foundation work
  - Ongoing - Directors engaged with both foundations
- Thank you – compose consistent framework for thanks from City
  - Any donation \$100 and up receives a letter of thanks signed by Mayor and Parks Director. Any volunteer effort over 100 hours receives a letter of thanks signed by Mayor and Parks Director, and publish a “thank you” in newspaper

**Community Engagement:** Larry Otos, Linda Brookings, Brian Soneda, Sara Holahan, Mayor

Quality of life activities should be focused to meet the needs of the community. Focused studies are part of the Parks & Recreation Comprehensive plan scheduled for 2014. However, the pod has identified areas to focus on for 2013 based on professional experiences.

- **Seniors –**
  - Learn what the funding (\$53,856 from City budget) to the Mount Vernon Senior Center provides
  - Develop relationship with Senior Center
  - Research information to provide in the ‘referral center’
  - Develop marketing strategy to this group
  - Continue successful e-reading instruction
  - Take activity to the seniors; mobile programming

- Not complete – After initial conversations, the Mount Vernon Senior Center & Skagit Valley College are interested in partnering on community programs after first soliciting feedback from seniors to see what they would like offered.
  - A senior focus group will be incorporated into the Parks Comp Plan public meetings to target those seniors living in senior housing, 55+ communities, apartments, and mobile homes. The information from this focus group will give important feedback to help guide and give direction to future programming considerations for the partnering organizations.
- **Ward Parties – Mayor**
  - Thursdays, 4:30 – 6:00 p.m. in July, August, September
  - Fire, Police, Parks, Library, Solid Waste, Mayor, Council, WWTP education on rag disposal
  - Information opportunity
  - Food; sponsor (hot dogs, lemonade)
  - Music
  - Location: Wards 1, 2, 3 & Westside
    - Not complete – on work plan for 2014
- **Latino Engagement - Mayor**
  - Increase participation
    - Unable to assess for 2013
  - Needs assessment through outreach
    - What is of interest?
      - Specific Latino focus group is being incorporated into Parks Comprehensive Plan update currently underway
      - Actively partnering with Seamar and grant funded project to increase engagement and participation in healthy living
      - Working on partnership to provide Family Zumba instruction at LaVenture Middle School gym
      - Received sponsorship from Kiwanis of Mount Vernon for Summer Mobile Playground Program, tentatively scheduled for 2-3 high density neighborhoods
      - Exploring possibilities of partnering with library for reading activities and with the Kulshan Station
    - What are the barriers to participation?
      - Cost, transportation, language
- **Teens – (ages 13-17) address needs through comprehensive plan process**
  - Specific teen focus group is being incorporated into Parks Comprehensive Plan update currently underway
  - Consult church groups – Not complete, added to 2014 work plan
  - Include information in referral center – Not complete, added to 2014 work plan
  - Explore teens teaching seniors (e-tech) – Not complete, added to 2014 work plan
    - Author of Warm Bodies, Isaac Marion – event with teens at MV Library
- **Mayors Wellness Challenge**
  - August 15 – September 15, 2013. Sponsorships from Skagit Regional Health will enable us to print 12,000 program guides to insert in all utility bills and distribute at participating event locations. In addition, Skagit Regional Health is providing sponsorship for logo'ed water bottles
  - Medical staff of Skagit Regional Health providing sponsorship for logo'ed water bottles to be given as incentive for community health survey participants.
  - New events this year: Pickleball, Volunteer fair, Downtown historical walk
  - Successfully facilitated 35 free events with 35 partners, estimated 1500 participants

- **Capitalize on Trends – Larry Otos, Linda Brookings**
  - Geocaching
    - Parks has hosted 3 free geocaching classes – including one in coordination with the Library – taught by Police Officer Tom Wenzl (26 attendees)
    - Planning geocaching event with Mount Vernon’s Birthday celebration in June 2014
  - Warrior races: contract with special events company to set up unusual races in partnership with Skagit County Parks Department
    - City of Mount Vernon does not have sufficient open space to produce an event, must partner with Skagit County in order to facilitate event
  - Pickleball
    - Working with Mount Vernon School District on the possibility of utilizing gyms for pickleball events
    - In 2014 the Parks Department will be resurfacing the Hillcrest tennis courts and adding Pickleball lines to all 4 courts
- **AWARDS received** – Association of Washington Cities awarded to the City of Mount Vernon for community engagement

**Communicate:** Parks, Library, and Mayor

Marketing of quality of life programming has been traditional focus in the recent past – largely through flyers, recreation guide (3x per year), TV10, and website listings. The Quality of Life pod will focus on communicating the intrinsic value of our programming.

- **Testimonial video project – users of Parks & Recreation, Library patrons**
  - TV10 to produce, 2 min, 2/ea. Dept., post online and on TV10
    - Complete
- **Joint Council Committee – add Library updates to Parks & Recreation committee meetings, presentations to City Council**
  - Complete
- **Use social media as a tool for communication of programs and value**
  - Complete
  - Parks & Recreation and Library both have active Facebook pages
  - Library uses Twitter

**New Library:** Library, Mayor, with support from CED, Parks, and Public Works

The desire for a new library has been a topic of community conversation for many years. The City of Mount Vernon is embarking on initial study of a currently owned property and will assess feasibility in 2013. Collaboration with the Mount Vernon Library Foundation will take place after initial property assessment to determine further action and planning.

- During the first half of 2013, the City of Mount Vernon invested in preliminary site survey for the “Higgins” property located in the 3000 block of E. Division. Initial critical areas review found the site very limited in use. Staff has determined that this property is unlikely to accommodate the vision of a new library complex’s parking requirements. However, community input is needed to determine desired scope and size of new facility
- RFQ complete and architect chosen to complete study of community preferences in location, size, and services, scoping for future project, & encourage community engagement
- Scoping work commences in January 2014