



PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

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For Immediate Release

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Despite major budget cuts, Mayor's Proposed Budget for Portland Parks & Recreation preserves park infrastructure and saves key programs for most vulnerable populations

(Portland, OR) – Portland Mayor Sam Adams released his Proposed Budget for FY 2010-2011 and, while Portland Parks & Recreation took across the board reductions required of all General Fund bureaus, the Mayor restored funding for two important programs for children and teens that were facing potential elimination this year.

The Summer Playground Program, which provides supervised activities at primarily lower-income neighborhoods, was initially part of the budget reductions. The program, which also makes the schools' federal free lunch program available during the summer months, has had \$100,000 of its ongoing funding restored by the Mayor. The bureau hopes to leverage private resources to be able to restore comprehensive programming to all 23 original sites and the mobile program this summer.

In addition, the Mayor has proposed one-time funding of \$300,000 for the Teen Services Program, which has successfully provided year-round outreach to at risk teenagers across the city for nearly four years. This support over the next year will allow PP&R to continue the program, which saw its attendance quadrupled in 2009, with over 91,000 visits by teens to special programs at PP&R community centers.

"I am pleased that Mayor Adams, by restoring some of the funding to our Summer Playground Program and to our Teen Services Program, has helped limit impacts to children and youth," Parks Commissioner Nick Fish stated. "It's important that, with the ongoing success of these important programs, we don't lose any of the momentum that has developed over the past years."

"We very much appreciate that the Mayor's 'back-to-basics' budget proposal dedicated funding toward these important programs," said Zari Santer, Director of PP&R. "Providing healthy, safe activities for children and youth during the summer months is key to our mission." She added that, with funding restored for teen programs, PP&R will now be able to continue to provide those services at five community centers year-round.

While the bureau's remaining funding can only be stretched so far, the FY 2010-2011 budget protects the core infrastructure, including maintenance funding for parks, facilities, equipment, and sports fields, as well as maintains the bureau's vital environmental assets with support for natural areas, trees, and trails.

In addition, programs for seniors, people with disabilities, and users of the SUN Community Schools were not considered for reductions beyond the 4% across the board cuts.

"Over the last year, I have made it clear that I would fight to maintain programs for the most vulnerable populations in our city, so that children, older adults, and people with disabilities would not bear the brunt of the budget cuts," noted Fish. "These programs, along with the Community Garden program, which ensures fresh food for many families and individuals, were off the table for any reductions."

For more information on Portland Parks & Recreation and the Mayor's Proposed Budget for FY 2010-2011, visit the bureau's budget page at www.portlandparks.org.

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