

SCORP Advisory Council  
Fresno Focus Group  
September 28, 2016

Health Sector Partnership and Study

- The idea of coming up with information regarding the positive effects of recreation services helps us to be able to show that an investment in recreation is important. There needs to be a better voice there, social service providers are thought to be more important than the services that recreation provides.
- We have lost community recreation therapists, they do not just work with people who have disabilities, but they can also work with kids to help them.
- There are not really resources to be able to create studies at a local level; to be able to provide resources to decision makers.
- There is a coalition within Fresno to have discussions at the local level with decision makers and parks and recreation. There needs to be more of these types of coalitions. If there is a way to free up some money for advocacy, that would really help a lot of communities. Numbers need to come from the local level.
- Wellness grant about increasing physical activity at the local level within Fresno County. One of which is a Park Prescriptions program.
- There is a lack of programming within Fresno, as well as green space. There are some joint partnerships in the works to be able to provide services. But it is a negotiation process. The health sector is on board, but the infrastructure isn't available.
- A proposal within the Kaiser Foundation, while health assessments are occurring on a mobile level, then parks and recreation students can provide programming at the same time. Perhaps this is something that can be developed into a larger state program.
- We do not tell our story well. Recreation as an industry fails to let people know of the things that we are doing. We need to get people to tell our story for us.
- We are considered non-essential services; decision makers need to see that we are essential.
- We need to add credibility.
- Healthy Visalia; several different agencies are at that table, and it is important to have parks and recreation at that table. Sometimes, you just need to invite yourself.
- Prescription RX within Tulare County, however, there was an assumption that these classes were free and that wasn't possible. People are willing to pay for health services, but may not be as willing to pay for recreation services. There needs to be a funding source to provide those programs or scholarships for people to be able to attend.
- It isn't easy to make those decisions about where budget dollars go. It always comes down to money. This state has many policies in place; but leaders at the state level and federal level for funding, it isn't important to them. It is police, fire, water quality, recreation just isn't important. There needs to be a funding source that just supports recreation. It is a challenge to even convince parents to support and invest in their kids. Maybe add taxes on tobacco, alcohol, etc. to fund recreation, and have that only go towards that.

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- The tie of health is important, but there is no advocacy.
- People would rather be sitting at home, then be in parks. How do we make them transition from technology back into the parks?
- It takes someone at the leadership level to really buy into how important these programs are. How do we convince them? How do we get that buy in?
- We invest new technology and new equipment in our parks, but without funding it isn't enough.
- We need to educate families about what parks are for.
- You have to establish credibility at the local level to the community. If we cannot convince the community that it is important, what happens at state and local level won't matter.
- Our services are looked at as being not important. Funding gets taken away very easily. The focus is now on creating services for the community. Facilities are opening, and there is a new opportunity with the school districts.
- There are advocates, but decision makers do not always listen.
- The easy thing to do would be to let the Boys and Girls Clubs take over, or churches. We shouldn't put ourselves in a position that our services are a luxury. We have to be able to better promote a professional image of what we do.
- Visalia has decided to go to a business model, pay for play model, which has helped them. They can recover some of their fees.
- Measure on the ballot that will increase sales tax for essential services within Visalia, in which parks is included. This is the first time that parks have the ability to get a piece of that pie.
- Majority of what is important to people is that they want to live in a safe neighborhood, and at the end of the day, police services gets funded.
- All of the counties have the same issue, money just isn't available.
- We have kids living in Fresno that have never seen the San Joaquin river, but the city doesn't see it that way.
- We have focused so much on parks and green space aspect of what we do, but we do not promote the programs and everything else that we do. There needs to be a marketing campaign that shows the programs that we do. Programs take place in those parks. They are not synonymous.
- We have green space, but use of the parks is not always appropriate. You need to have the programs to make the parks safe and better utilized.
- Parks are really challenged right now; smaller parks are having difficulties due to transient issues. These small parks are not programmed because they are small, and people do not want to go to the parks. Maybe there needs to be a ranger program.
- Give the ownership of the parks back to the residents of the neighborhood. It really changes the dynamics of that community. It helps kids to understand that these are their facilities and they do not want to see them destroyed. Have families patrol parks, having cameras helps to change what is happening at the park.

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- We need to make sure that bond funding can go towards programs, and not just building the park.
- If we can build the connection with the community that we have lost, so that they see us, and they can see that they have this space that is a source of pride within their community.
- Have one voice that could impact the advocacy and could allow you to leverage some of the resources that are coming into the community. It doesn't seem that we are organized enough for this.
- TPL has a great website to see where parks are and where they are not.
- Kaiser has a community health needs website that is interactive where you can draw a circle within an area that pulls health information. You can overlay that information with available park space.
- All of the hospitals within the California are required to put together a community health plan. Obesity and health issues will be high priorities.
- There are hospital councils that have different chapters throughout the state. This would be a great opportunity for funding.
- Physical activity is going to be a priority for 2017 – 2019 for Kaiser, and they are a funding source.
- [www.communitycommons.org](http://www.communitycommons.org)
- Green space challenges are being resolved with school districts. There needs to be an initiative that open space at schools should be open to the public, there shouldn't have to be a special initiative for that to happen.
- The benefits that parks and recreation provide have been left up individual local agencies to promote.
- State organizations, i.e. League of California Cities; is there a presence at their conferences? We need access to their training systems about promoting our messages. If you can enlighten some of the managers, then you may get a few enlightened elected officials that know this message. However, it is reliant on us to move the message along; it would be nice if it came from the other way. Getting others to tell our story.
- We cannot just rely on the park message alone. We need to tie in that human level. Maybe in the future when people are applying for funding there is a component that asks what the applicant has done at the local level for parks. It could help to put some focus on these good services.
- There is not funding to be able to maintain the new parks that are built.
- Data needs to reflect health outcomes; green space with this level of programming provides this level of health.
- Traditional programs are provided, but sometimes only revenue programs have the focus. It may work in some parts of the community, but not in all. Put services where people are, and provide meaningful services, provide incentives for kids to stay with it. Hopefully this will help to keep recreation in their minds when they get older and become decision makers.
- Have staff that is reflective of the residents in the community.

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Public Survey

- Fresno is experiencing for the first time in a long time park concerns in the community as well as the importance of green space. Locally already providing survey in preparation for planning and questions are very similar. Visiting local high schools, local organizations to reach people and in different language
- How can parks, Kaiser, etc. use this tool in the future to perpetuate the programs, longevity
- Questions that don't lead the answer, but tell the story of local wants/needs
- Tell the story from Eureka to Calexico
- Development of SCORP will include reports from all over California including the one Fresno is developing
- Survey will include follow up, using technology as well. The survey will not be just the traditional phone call survey
- How can we get the data to reflect the central valley considering the diversity of California
- Beyond a standard survey for all of California consider a section that is specific to localities, like Fresno/central valley
- Work with focus group to develop specific regional questions, get a sense of consistent issues to include in the survey
- Value and recognize the diversity and reflect survey to recognize priorities of specific regions
- Focus on disparity to identify gaps in various demographics (age, income, gender) as well as geography not just for parks but services as well to help identify needs overall of the community for all branches of providers
- Access existing data by zip code and availability from last survey (2009) on web site
- Current survey being developed will include local level data and easily accessible
- Question regarding funding and bond measures to identify public attitude, fees/taxes
- Include senior centers for survey
- Do you have a primary care physician, how are you covered? These questions can identify persons that are or are not accessing their health care provider
- Some questions can be revised to more accurately paint the picture of the needs
  - Would you like to see more parks can be changed to how far are you away from a park, how far are you willing to go
  - Do you feel safe in your park, welcome
- Questions regarding the park's overall condition – amenities versus open empty space
- Lesson learned from master plan development is that people are willing to answer questions as long as they are addressing the needs
- Trails are including in definition of parks
- How to capture diversity of park/facility types: parks, trails, beaches, pocket parks,

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- Build pocket parks are not necessarily a solution due to many factors including maintenance – consider combining pocket park along trails
- Where to reach people that are not going to parks: mobile workshops like mobile library, open streets events, temporary parks, mobile recreation program
- Important to create programs that exist on a regular basis
- Fairs to collect information
- Advocacy questions – parks as essential service, rated/ranked but ask the question
- Parks as public works and its role in water quality/conservation
- Recreation services versus parks and the perception of needs, safety
- Police are after the fact, parks are prevention however when it comes to perception of need/importance police are seen as priority, how can messaging shift the paradigm
- Create consistent value in parks and recreation throughout the state to change the outlook and foster parks as important funding programming
- What is the definition of recreation? Need to define and change the perception to recognize the overall benefits of recreation as beyond “throwing a ball”
- Need to convey the importance of recreation and the vast positions in parks and recreation that provide more than just safety (like lifeguarding)
- The importance of play and the health benefits as well as cognitive and creativity from play, and the overall well being

Other ideas and last thoughts

- The fact that this is a State of California document really adds to the importance.
- Personal stories would be good as a part of the data collection process.
- Add to success stories; personal stories from park professionals
- Engage executive level people from health organizations; have them endorse the report when it is created. This could be a very powerful way to align these concepts.