



## Your Parks, Your Future (YPYF)

### Community Outreach Summary

November 14, 2018



#### I. Introduction

The Community Outreach Strategy for the YPYF Project outlines several key outreach efforts designed to effectively engage with the citizens of Walnut Creek and regional visitors during the planning process of updating the critical facilities and master plans for Civic Park, Heather Farm, and Shadelands Center for the Arts. Several of the tasks are complete, with results available for review by the Advisory Committee. The following is a summary of the key themes and take-aways from the community input received to date. Additional detail and background are available (see appendix) for review if one wishes to dive deeper into the considerable input provided by the participants.

#### II. Stakeholder Interviews

The project team met with stakeholders, including City Council members, and members of the Arts and PROS Commissions to discuss Goals/Objectives and Assumptions. Individuals and community groups also participated in the stakeholder interviews. Input from stakeholders was broad ranging and informative. The input helped shape the Assumptions, Goals, and Objectives which were accepted by the City Council. Insight into topics help shape the community outreach events. We heard big-picture and detailed input.

*The key themes/input from the stakeholder meetings:*

- a) Be creative with outreach (go to the people)
- b) The master plans should be financially feasible
- c) Arts and Recreation programming in Walnut Creek has a unique brand
- d) Walnut Creek loves Civic Park, Heather Farm, and Shadelands Center for the Arts- Enhance them
- e) The facilities need to be consolidated, remodeled, or rebuilt; they don't adequately serve the community



- f) The community has a desire to balance the man-made with the natural features
- g) Community groups and clubs are passionate about their interests and goals
- h) More parking is desired in Civic Park, but Heather Farm has adequate parking
- i) Flexible space for programs and events is very important to how the parks function
- j) The demand for programs and facilities on the three locations will continue to grow

### III. Pre-outreach Efforts – Branding and Getting the Word Out

Prior to commencing public workshops, the team used Pop-up booths at City events (e.g. First Wednesday), social media, newsletters, banners, posters, and other means to notify all generations and demographics within the community that the project was getting underway. Giveaways, such as colorful bookmarks, seed packets, and flying discs with the **'Your Parks, Your Future'** project logo and website were handed out by the hundreds before the October 3<sup>rd</sup> workshop and October 21 & 27 Pop-up events to get the word out about these events and the online survey.

### IV. Public Input Summary

On October 3, 2018, the City of Walnut Creek held its first interactive community workshop for the **'Your Parks, Your Future'** master planning project. It was a fun and engaging event, with food, a 'Kid's Zone' with activities and story time with Walnut Creek Library staff. The initial workshop was followed by two Pop-up workshops on October 21 & 27 at farmers' markets in the downtown and at Shadelands. A 'Your Parks, Your Future' **online survey** provided another opportunity for input, with **over 1200** participants (over 60% aged 26-60) weighing-in. The open-house format for the 3 workshops provided an introduction of the project to **over 200** people through a series of activity stations which solicited feedback from attendees and set the groundwork for the future decisions about the facilities, arts and recreation programming, conceptual park planning, and design process. The workshops and survey focused on the following 3 topics, summarized below.

#### A. 'Your Parks' Station

The 'Your Parks' station and category solicited feedback through a series of exhibits and survey prompts that posed open-ended questions and choices to participants and encouraged creative thinking and a long-range outlook about Heather Farm and Civic Park. The overall project assumptions and goals and objectives were available to ensure that attendees had a foundation of knowledge on the project process. The following are the questions and key themes from the community input.

1. **Heather Farm: What do you value most about Heather Farm? How could Heather Farm be even better? What changes would you suggest?**
  - a. Clarke Swim Center- renovate/rebuild
  - b. Natural/Environmental Areas & Features (Lake)- Enhance & Preserve
  - c. Trails & Connections- Improve/Expand
  - d. The Gardens at Heather Farm- Protect & Increase Access
  - e. Maintain wide variety of facilities- Passive and Active
  - f. Preserve Equestrian Center



**2. Civic Park: What do you value most about Civic Park? How could Civic Park be even better? What changes would you suggest?**

- a. Natural Features- Enhance and Preserve Creek
- b. Informal & Serene- Maintain Open Areas, including East side
- c. Community Events- Plan for Ice Rink, concerts & movies
- d. Pedestrian & Bike- Maintain, Improve & Enhance Creek Walk and Connections
- e. Play Elements- Improved and Additional Features (eg. Playground, Splash Pad, Games)
- f. Infrastructure & Support Facilities- Add Restrooms and Parking

**B. 'Programs & Classes' Station**

The programming-focused station and survey questions engaged participants in prioritization activities as well as a post-it notes feedback method covering **favorite programs** offered by the City, what the **community values** about these programs, what **trends in programming** they are interested in, and any classes or activities that are currently missing from the City of Walnut Creek Arts and Recreation offerings. The following are the questions asked and key themes from the overall community responses.

**1. Values** -What do you **value** about Arts and Recreation Programs? The community expressed a high appreciation for the following traits or characteristics about the programs offered by the City.

- Affordability: Programs are reasonably priced and most anyone can participate
- Convenience: Programs take place at locations and during times that are most convenient
- Program-Specific Locations: Different locations are known for specific types of programs, i.e., Heather Farm Park has a heavy sports focus,
- Shadelands has an arts focus, Civic Park has many programs for seniors
- Diversity: Programs cover a range of diverse disciplines and topics
- Accessibility: Programs are available to a wide spectrum of the population (demographics, skill levels, abilities and disabilities)

**2. Favorite Programs** – What are your favorite programs currently being offered by the City?

Participants could select five programs. The categories of programs that received the highest level of interest included the following:

- Aquatics
- Adult Programs
- Youth Programs
- Special Events

Existing Arts and Recreation Programs receiving significant support/praise include:

- Aquatics: Swim Teams, lessons and recreation/fitness swim
- Movies under the stars
- Holiday events
- Drop-in sports



- Culinary arts
  - Health and fitness
  - Summer camps
  - Sports
  - Physically active programs
  - Senior activities
- 3. Trends** - While considering future programming for individuals, families, households, and the community in general, workshop and survey participants were asked to rank identified trends in programming. The five trends that resonated most with the community were the following:
- Life-long learning
  - Do it Yourself/Makers programs
  - One-stop facilities: programs/classes for all
  - Aquatic theme park amenities
  - Indoor aquatics
- 4. What are we missing?** – Are there any programs the City should be offering? The participants offered several ideas/topics/issues. Popular categories include:
- Youth related classes and programs
  - Activities & programs for adults and seniors
  - Aquatic related programs
  - Equestrian related events and lessons
  - Family oriented programs and classes

### C. 'Your Parks Buildings' Station

This Station focused on the facilities within the parks including the Heather Farm Community Center, Clarke Swim Center, Civic Park Community Center and Assembly Hall, as well as the Shadelands Center for the Arts. Seven open-ended questions were posed to the community related to the facilities and responses were written on Post-it- Notes.

The community responses at the workshop indicate a strong interest in the following building qualities and characteristics:

- Pool facilities
- Spaces or buildings dedicated to one activity
- Smaller buildings
- Sustainable building features

The responses also showed interest in the following experiences, areas, or topics:

- Easy access/parking
- Indoor/outdoor flexibility
- Connection to other park amenities