



# MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

## PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

### MEMORANDUM

PRC #09-51



**DATE:** November 4, 2009  
**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission  
**FROM:** Elizabeth Stanley, Administration Superintendent  
**SUBJECT:** 2010 Operating Budget

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#### Overview

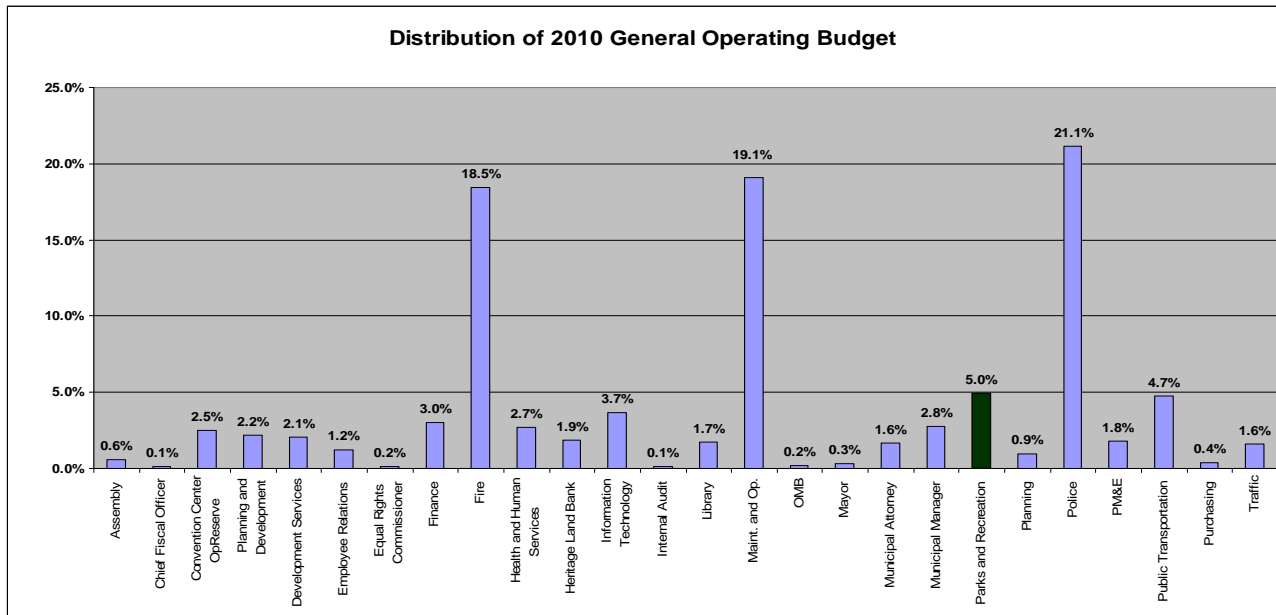
Anchorage's parks system is one of the most diverse and largest in land acreage in the country. The Parks and Recreation Department serves the needs of urban, rural and suburban residents. Serving more than 350,000 residents, and visitors, and 95 linguistic groups within its 10,800 acres of parkland, Anchorage has many opportunities and challenges in providing services to its residents. To accommodate these needs, the City provides a vast system of parks, sports fields, pathways and facilities such as arenas, pools, and community centers. It offers recreation programs for families, children, seniors and persons with special needs such as playgrounds, athletic fields, dog parks, fitness classes, learn to swim and learn to ski classes, a variety of instructional and leisure enrichment classes, and after-school and youth employment programs.

The annual cost of maintaining clean and green parks that are safe and secure for Anchorage citizens and visitors annually requires millions of dollars in operational funds and approximately 250 million dollars in capital funds to eliminate the deferred maintenance backlog. In addition to financial resources, park development and operation will require park supporters and partners to leverage funds and dedicated maintenance and recreation staff working with volunteers and park advocates to execute the work in an effective and cost efficient manner. Unfortunately, due to the state of the local economy, the availability of financial resources has shrunk, resulting in a cut of 1.8 million dollars of equipment and human resources from the Parks and Recreation 2010 Proposed Operating Budget that has the potential to adversely impact the Department's ability to deliver its core services of providing clean and safe parks and quality programs.. Fortunately for Anchorage, it has dedicated employees, avid volunteers, and park advocates to help raise funds and to retool its program operation to allow it to continue on a modified scale to maintain, beautify

and program Anchorage 223 parks, 250 miles of trails and 11 recreation facilities and to deliver 5 million hours of recreational opportunities.

## Tax Support

Although the City is facing a long-term financial crisis, the Department will continue to receive 5% of the general operating budget for parks and recreation operation and debt services, as it has over the past several years. Public safety is the priority of the current Administration and



Anchorage voters. The demand for safety extends into the park system where families want well maintained parks and facilities. To accomplish this objective, the Department will require assistance from its many partners to help leverage resources through private contributions and volunteer hours that the Department has the capacity to absorb to rehabilitate local parks and trails, making them safer, more attractive, and useable.

## The Challenge

With the loss of 1.8 million dollars of resources that included 23 positions, and with the expectation that the financial state of the Municipality of Anchorage will not improve in the next couple of years, it is imperative that the Department, in collaboration with its various

Anchorage Parks and Recreation Operating Budget Summary (Debt Service Not Included)		
	2010	2009/2010 Changes
Expenditures	13,817,223.00	(575,897.00)
IGCs	4,318,829.00	(503,384.00)
Revenues	(1,948,390.00)	50,000.00
Tax Support	16,187,662.00	(1,029,281.00)
Positions	249	-28

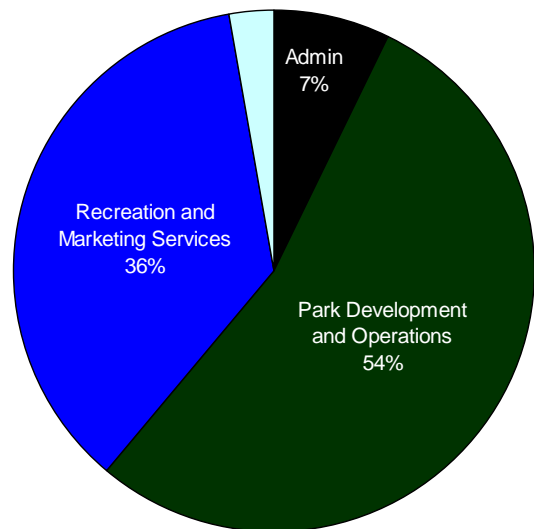
partners, develop and implement strategies and a framework that adheres to its core value of clean and green, safe and secure, and a healthy future through a healthy community of active and engaged residents.

### **Responding to the Challenge**

Building upon the foundation that the previous Administration and Commission members constructed when faced with the prospect of a flat-line budget in 2008, the Department is contemplating the following actions: increase revenues through increased attendance, implement the marketing plan to increase program and facility use, and generate sponsorships to increase the access of the underserved communities; reduce or eliminate redundant programs; close facilities during the times that historically have had low attendance and open them during the times that children are out of school; and decline private funds that seek to match public dollars that the Department cannot afford to develop, maintain or that do not fit into its core values.

### **Budget Objectives**

Prioritize the Department’s limited resources to ensure it continues to “Take Better Care of What We Have” by allocating fifty-four percent of tax revenues to the Park Development and Operation Division for the purpose of providing Anchorage citizens and visitors with parks and trails that are clean, safe, and well maintained. Reassign its recreation and volunteer staff from administrative offices to front line service areas to ensure the continued operation of its recreation facilities and its popular recreation and leisure programs.



Continue to work with its partners to promote community activism and volunteerism and to leverage dollars to fund park improvement and community programs. Develop a marketing and customer service program to attract and retain an increased number of resident using their tax supported facilities and programs.

### **Accomplishments to Date**

Through the reassignment of the recreation and volunteer staff, the Recreation Division has successfully kept all of its recreational and aquatic facilities opened and operational, with limited

hours of operations and its outreach program staffed and functional. Through the negotiations with the Anchorage School District and the assistance of the new Marketing Director, the Aquatic Team has identified new revenue streams to help offset the cost of operating five pools. In partnership with the Anchorage Downtown Partnership and staff from the Community Work Service and Horticulture sections, has lit up Town Square with holiday lights.