



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB Item # 10-3
November 19, 2008
Roundtable Discussion

Memorandum



DATE: November 19, 2009

TO: Montgomery County Park Commission

VIA: Mary Bradford, Director of Parks *MB*
Mike Riley, Deputy Director of Parks *M*
John Nissel, Division Chief Facility Management

FROM: John Schlee, SmartParks Manager *JS*

SUBJECT: Department of Parks - SmartParks update

An update report has been requested by the Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee of the County Council on the SmartParks program. A response to their request is attached for your review and approval to transmit to PHED. Attached is a draft memorandum to the PHED Committee summarizing progress of the SmartParks program to date. The draft memo includes a brief background of the program, recent accomplishments and challenges, and future directions of the program.

The Planning Board is requested to take one action at the roundtable discussion:

Approve the attached memo for submission to the PHED Committee



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION



Memorandum

DATE: November 19, 2009

TO: Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee

VIA: Mary R. Bradford, Director of Parks *MRB*
Mike Riley, Deputy Director of Parks *MR*
John Nissel, Division Chief Facility Management

FROM: John Schlee, SmartParks Manager *JS*

SUBJECT: Department of Parks – SmartParks Update

This memo serves as a status update of Montgomery County's Department of Parks inventory tracking and work order management system (SmartParks) system for the County Councils Planning Housing and Economic Development Committee (PHED). The memo includes a brief background of the program, recent accomplishments and challenges, and future directions of the program.

Background

SmartParks is an enterprise information management system (EIM). It was planned to have two basic functions; to serve as a complete park facility inventory system and be the work order management generation and tracking system. Original conceptual design work began in 2002, with funding provided through the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) in 2004 at the amount of \$920k. Of the initial funds, \$147k remain in FY09 for a system upgrade.

Organizationally, SmartParks has been in several divisions over time and moved to different facilities, making for several changes in leadership and direction to the program. SmartParks has now been placed, along with property management, in the newly formed Facility Management Division. A new chief and IT manager have been hired in the past year to provide leadership to the division and a technical management direction to the program.

Accomplishments / Challenges

In the past year, SmartParks has accomplished the following:

- Aligned the business processes of the department – data collection and organization is being modified to report to the departments work program elements. More of the Department's asset inventory has been collected into SmartParks, and we are in communication with other workgroups within the department to develop a plan to integrate their data into Smartparks.
- Finding cost savings / tracking of actual costs. Recently, we have been able to accurately report actual costs for the following projects:
 - Parks ½ marathon
 - Needwood dam inspection and repair costs – for reimbursement from FEMA
 - Risk management reports – to collect on insurance claims for damage done in parks
- Facility Condition Assessment audit of regional parks. With our consultants, we have begun a complete asset inventory of the parks system, starting with the regional parks, in order -Little Bennett, Rock Creek, and Wheaton. The initial audits focused on specific critical facilities such as playgrounds, trails, and recreation buildings. Current audits focus on comprehensive inventories one park at a time.

Future

In the short term, SmartParks staff will do the following:

- Audit of department software applications. SmartParks will inventory the data collected and stored in these "silo" systems and determine how they fit into the overall business processes of the department. The effort will focus on reducing overlapping functions, stop the reentry of data, better support business processes, and reduce software maintenance costs. By consolidating the "silo" systems and integrating the data contained in each, SmartParks should be able to report information across department functions.
- System upgrade. In order to perform these projects, the current SmartParks system is not adequate for the task. The current system will be upgraded. The new system will entail a migration of existing data and functionality to a web based solution, with support for mobile update and data retrieval by field crews.
- Simplify data entry and access. The upgrade will need to be less complicated for data entry, provide simpler input forms, and well documented procedures for data collection and entry. For reporting and analysis, it will need improved management tools to wider access to information to all staff. A more robust database structure is needed to allow for collection and retrieval of detailed inventory data, like that collected as part of the facility condition study.

- Paperless system. Our major goal is to move to a paperless system. Currently, field crews collect status information in paper notes and log, then return to the office to have the data keyed into SmartParks. Errors can enter in the system and paper reports are generated to verify the data entry. This system of write/entry/print is time consuming and not efficient. A system that allows for mobile access by crew chiefs and park managers in the field would eliminate the redundancy and allow staff more time to focus on field work instead of data entry.
- Expand inventory. SmartParks will improve support for inventory tracking and work order management for other divisions within department. As we upgrade the existing system, we will also be able to better link data collection and reporting of data to budget work elements.
- Expand training and support from field units to management seminars. "Mobile" training – taking the training directly to the operational units at their location.

External to the department. SmartParks will work in a coordination role to establish the following:

- Better integration with CAS systems and processes including personnel updates and establishment of blended rates for costs estimates.
- Cooperate and coordinate with Prince Georges Park and Recreation in their development of an inventory and work order system looking for efficiencies that can be achieved.