



COMMON COUNCIL BUDGET HEARING

Presentation – 2026

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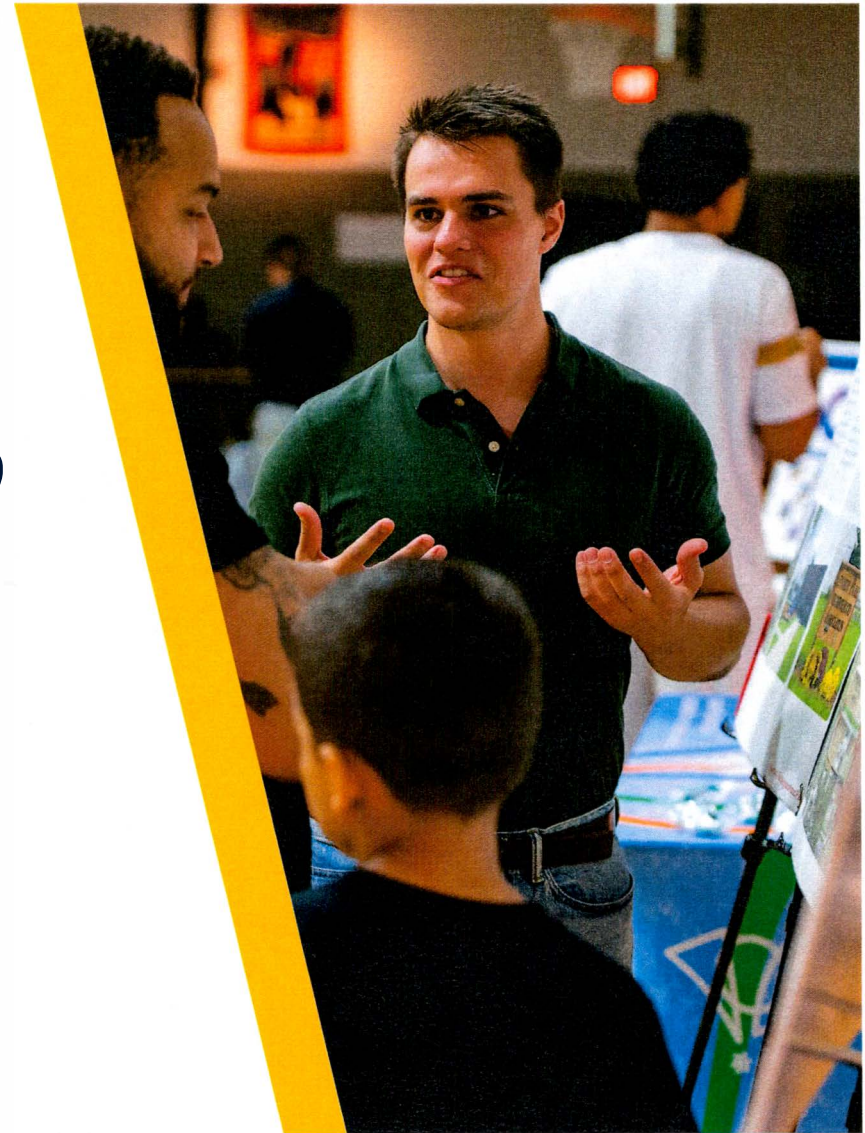
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*Bianca Tirado
City Clerk, South Bend, IN*

VPA'S MISSION

WHAT DRIVES US FORWARD

"Inspires a more livable South Bend for all,
connecting us to emotionally engaging
experiences and to one another"



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IMPACT DRIVERS

SOCIAL EQUITY:

Erasing societal divides and ensuring the ability to thrive for all, regardless of income level, race, gender, ability, orientation or age.

NEIGHBORHOOD & ECONOMIC IMPACT:

Creating strong and safe neighborhoods providing significant return on investment.

HEALTH & WELLNESS:

Enhancing the physical and emotional well-being of individuals.

ECOLOGICAL STEWARDSHIP:

Responsible use and protection of the natural environment through conservation and sustainability practices.

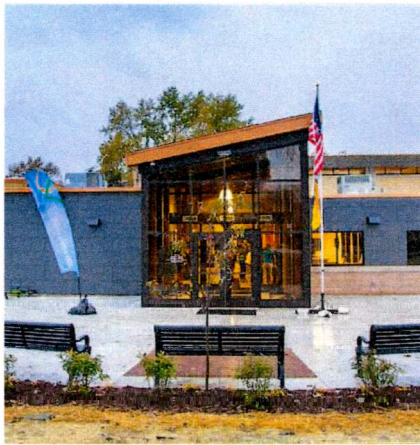


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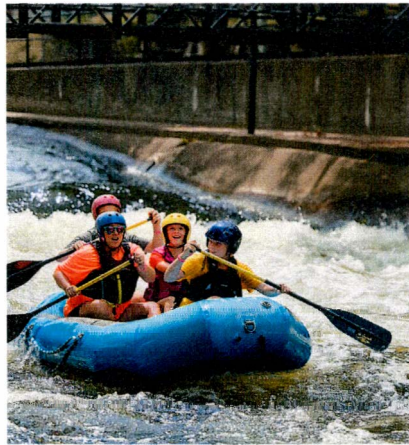
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VPA Stats, Infrastructure, and Amenities



Programming Facilities:

6 total, including Charles Black, Howard Park, MLK Dream, Rum Village, Pinhook, and O'Brien YMCA partnership.



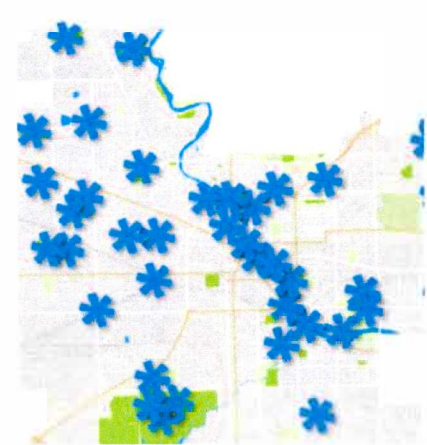
Recreational Attractions:

6 key sites—Boomin' Mobile Vehicle, HP Ice Trail, East Race Waterway, Byers, Leeper, Potawatomi, and Kennedy Waterpark.



PROGRAMS:

Over 120 programs that positively impact many residents, including the Forever Learning Institute for continuing education for seniors.



PARKS & Trails:

13+ miles of trails for everyone to enjoy.
56 parks spanning 1,300 acres in total.



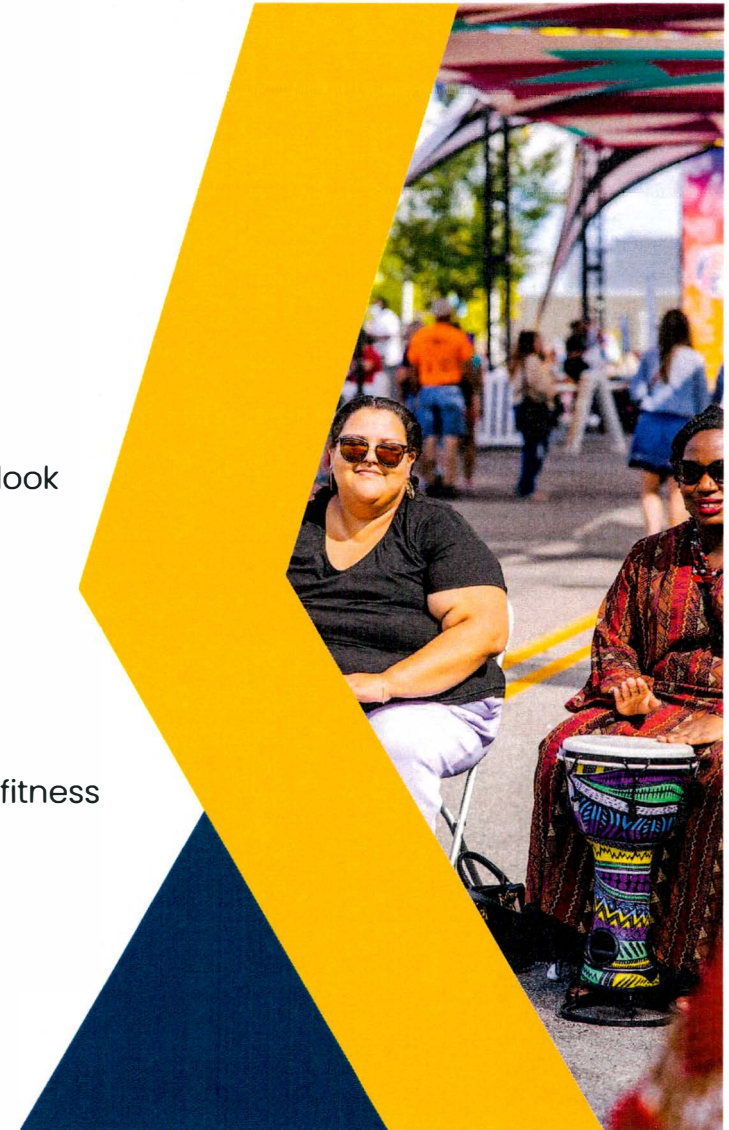
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2024-2025 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 6,300+ priorities mowed, 10,100+ trees watered
- 775+ graffiti removals of 10,400+ work orders
- Major park upgrades (Boehm, O'Brien Skate Park, Riverwalk lighting, Plaza Overlook
- Tree City USA (28th year) + Growth Award (3rd year)
- 77,000+ golf rounds (Elbel, Erskine, & Studebaker all up in revenue)
- Kids Play Freememberships ~1k & 3,600+ free rounds
- Over 400 events with 315,000+ visitors
- Morris Performing Arts Center; Top 200 theatre worldwide / Top 100 in the U.S.
- Raclin Murphy Encore Center
- MLK DreamCenter: 2,500+ members with tutoring, open gym, pickleball, senior fitness
- ~14,000+ fitness classes & 4,000+ youth basketball participants
- Successful evolution of Visitor Experience division
- Fusion Fest 35,000 attendees



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VPA COMPLETED PROJECTS

*Project Success Through Collaboration - Community engagement is the foundation, with key contributors: consultants & contractors, VPA team, private partners, Public Works engineers, inspectors, permitting, City Departments DCI, IT, Planning, HPC, ODI, and leadership.



MLK Dream Center

from Riverside Drive across the St. Joseph River to the east to Angela Boulevard and connection to the East Bank Trail.



Seitz Park

The South Bend River Lights is a public art piece bringing life to the St. Joseph River every night.



Walker Field Trail Connectivity

Several new outdoor features, like new paths, a roller-skating loop, new shaded seating areas and another pavilion and picnic area.



120+ Completions So Far since 2017

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FY 2026 Projected Revenues

Row Labels	Sum of 2022 Actuals	Sum of 2023 Actuals	Sum of 2024 Actuals	Sum of 2025 Adopted Budget	Sum of 2026 Proposed Budget
Property Taxes	10,742,492.31	11,441,106.82	13,118,404.82	12,564,386.00	12,715,507.00
Charges for Services	3,503,012.35	3,171,540.84	3,506,474.00	3,531,304.00	5,406,788.00
Debt Proceeds	1,290,000.00	-	68,750.00	1,347,128.00	1,415,383.00
Donations	640,928.93	1,447,300.00	-	-	294,000.00
Fines, Forfeitures, and Fees	24.00	-	-	-	-
Interest Earnings	37,004.04	130,670.23	463,113.08	107,060.47	239,387.14
Intergov./ Grants	-	135,000.00	-	-	-
Intergov./ Shared Revenues	427,491.38	861,196.86	827,071.51	1,138,013.00	1,511,148.00
Licenses & Permits	347.50	288.75	915.00	360.00	360.00
Other Income	336,986.03	240,432.42	125,724.58	117,264.00	199,214.00
Interfund Transfers In	119,221.00	5,372,562.25	6,000,000.00	4,100,000.00	2,551,400.00
Grand Total	\$ 17,097,507.54	\$ 22,800,098.17	\$ 24,110,452.99	\$ 22,905,515.47	\$ 24,333,187.14

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FY 2026 Budget Summary

	2022 Actual	2023 Actual	2024 Actual	2025 Adopted Budget	2026 Proposed Budget
11 Venues, Parks & Arts					
011 Community Initiatives	-	2,449.00	1,586,611.00	1,851,787.00	1,177,760.00
200 Park Administration	538,283.00	593,827.00	686,920.00	551,280.00	376,700.00
201 Park Maintenance	9,372,758.00	12,352,654.00	10,763,214.00	10,087,014.00	8,387,590.00
202 Golf Courses	1,834,474.00	2,024,142.00	2,557,459.00	2,898,617.00	2,487,391.00
203 Recreation	2,047,866.00	2,039,516.00	2,263,516.00	2,436,478.00	1,974,636.00
204 Potawatomi Zoo	2,124,173.00	6,167,955.00	403,422.00	450,000.00	450,000.00
205 Development & Promotions	1,009,814.00	1,023,719.00	1,636,850.00	2,458,520.00	2,013,272.00
206 Park Projects & Capital	3,320,327.00	1,627,067.00	570,000.00	100,000.00	-
207 Park Debt	1,879,171.00	1,894,946.00	1,879,371.00	1,886,749.00	1,880,321.00
208 Community Programming	1,052,588.00	1,137,025.00	1,762,862.00	2,234,197.00	1,876,479.00
209 Visitor Experience	-	-	-	1,451,650.00	2,512,756.00
220 Morris Performing Arts Center	8,186,854.00	2,538,062.00	1,435,803.00	1,681,919.00	1,682,460.00
221 Palais Royale Ballroom	141,963.00	146,843.00	220,248.00	220,889.00	160,515.00
230 Century Center	4,164,107.00	4,489,937.00	4,782,126.00	3,694,422.00	5,143,707.00
240 Parking Garages	789,054.00	1,131,424.00	1,106,680.00	1,240,743.00	1,216,415.00
11 Venues, Parks & Arts Total	\$36,461,432.00	\$37,169,565.00	\$ 31,651,661.00	\$ 33,244,265.00	\$ 31,340,003.00

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MAJOR BUDGET CHANGES

- Moving positions, salary adjustments, and title changes
- Consolidation of VPA staff across divisions with reductions
- Golf historically budget neutral and revenue continues to improve year over year
- MLK Dream Center is back with a focus on programmatic efforts
- Marketing team under the new Venues & Promotion division
- Visitor Experience centralizes the events team for expanded impact

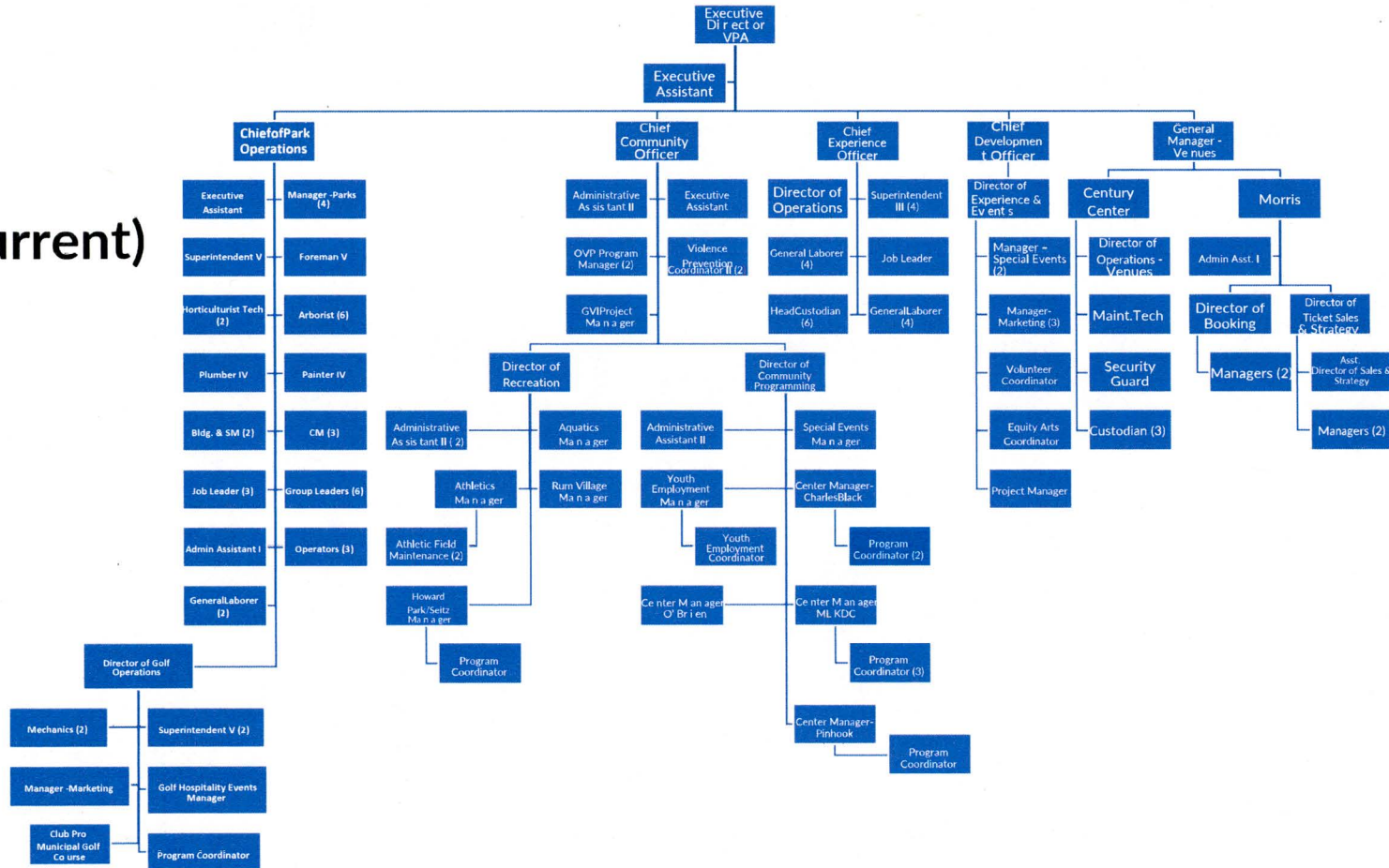
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VPA (Current)



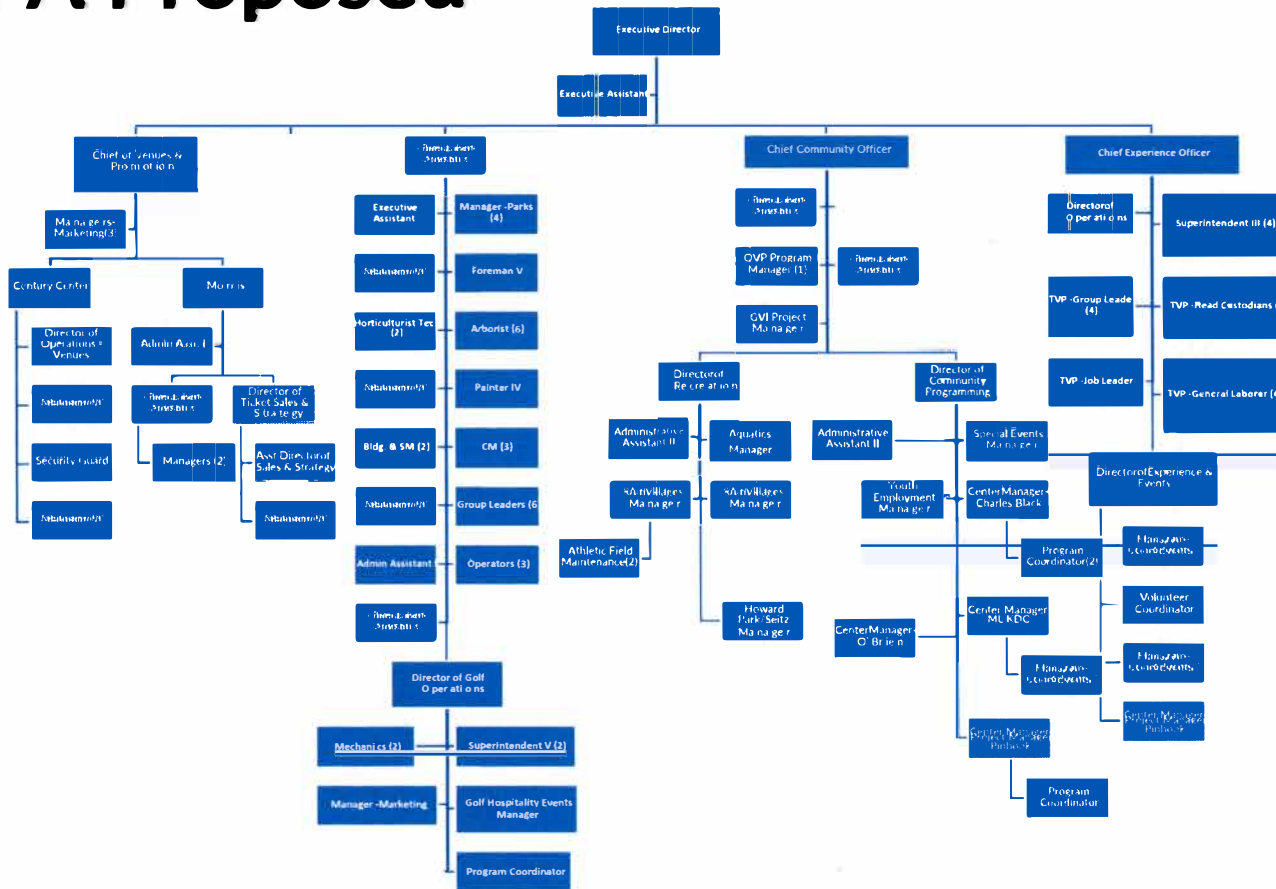
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VPA Proposed



Key

Existing Position, Standard Raise

Existing Position, Raise > 3%

New Position

Eliminated Position

Title Change

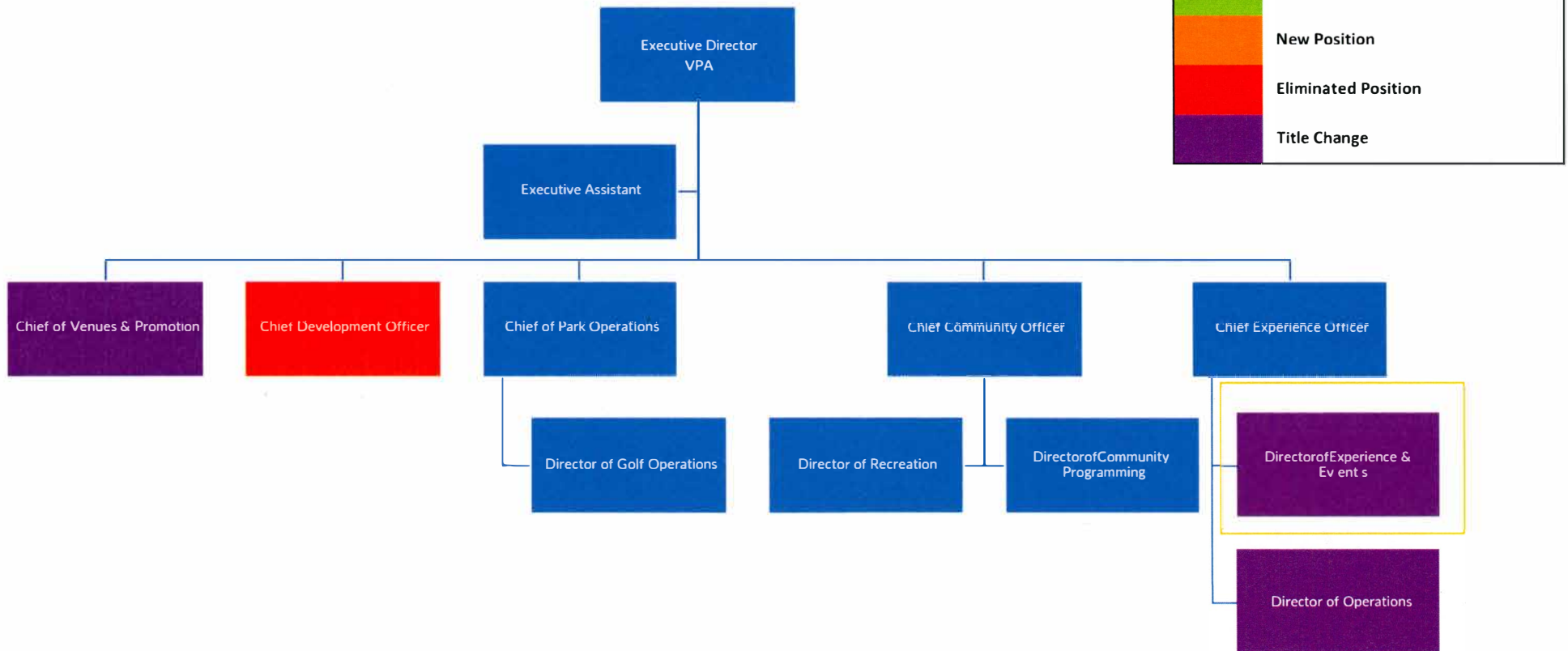
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VPA Administration & Leadership



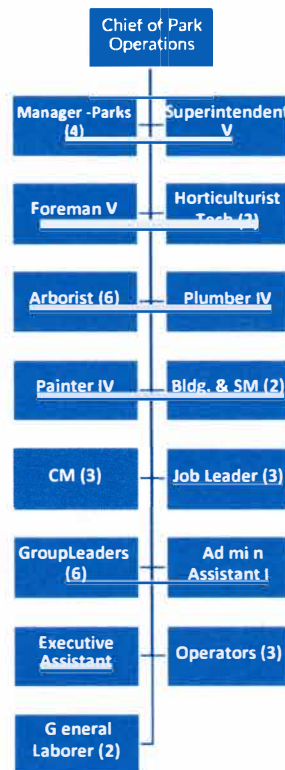
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Park Maintenance



Key	
Existing Position, Standard Raise	Existing Position, Standard Raise
Existing Position, Raise > 3%	Existing Position, Raise > 3%
New Position	New Position
Eliminated Position	Eliminated Position
Title Change	Title Change

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Golf Operations



Key	
<div></div>	Existing Position, Standard Raise
<div></div>	Existing Position, Raise > 3%
<div></div>	New Position
<div></div>	Eliminated Position
<div></div>	Title Change

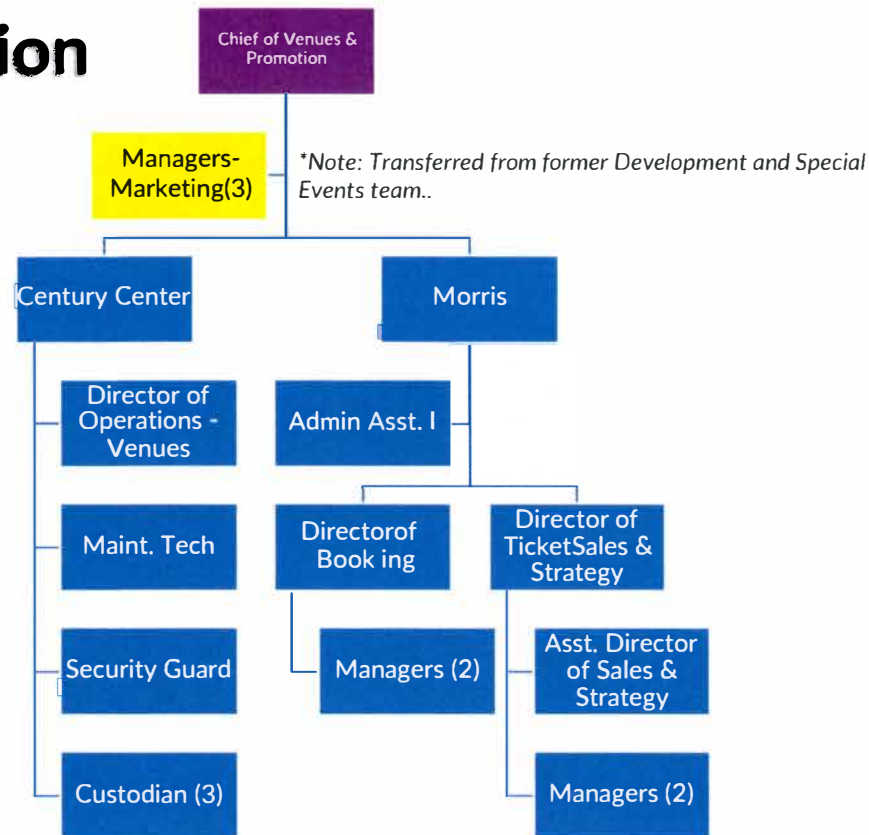
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Venues & Promotion Division



Key

	Existing Position, Standard Raise
	Existing Position, Raise > 3%
	New Position
	Eliminated Position
	Title Change
	Transfer to/from other VPA division

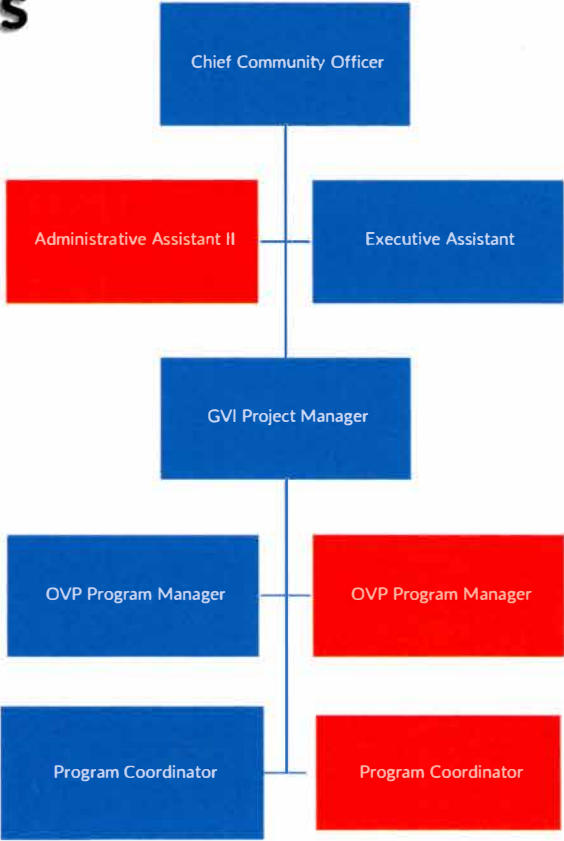
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Community Initiatives Division



Key	
<div></div>	Existing Position, Standard Raise
<div></div>	Existing Position, Raise > 3%
<div></div>	New Position
<div></div>	Eliminated Position
<div></div>	Title Change

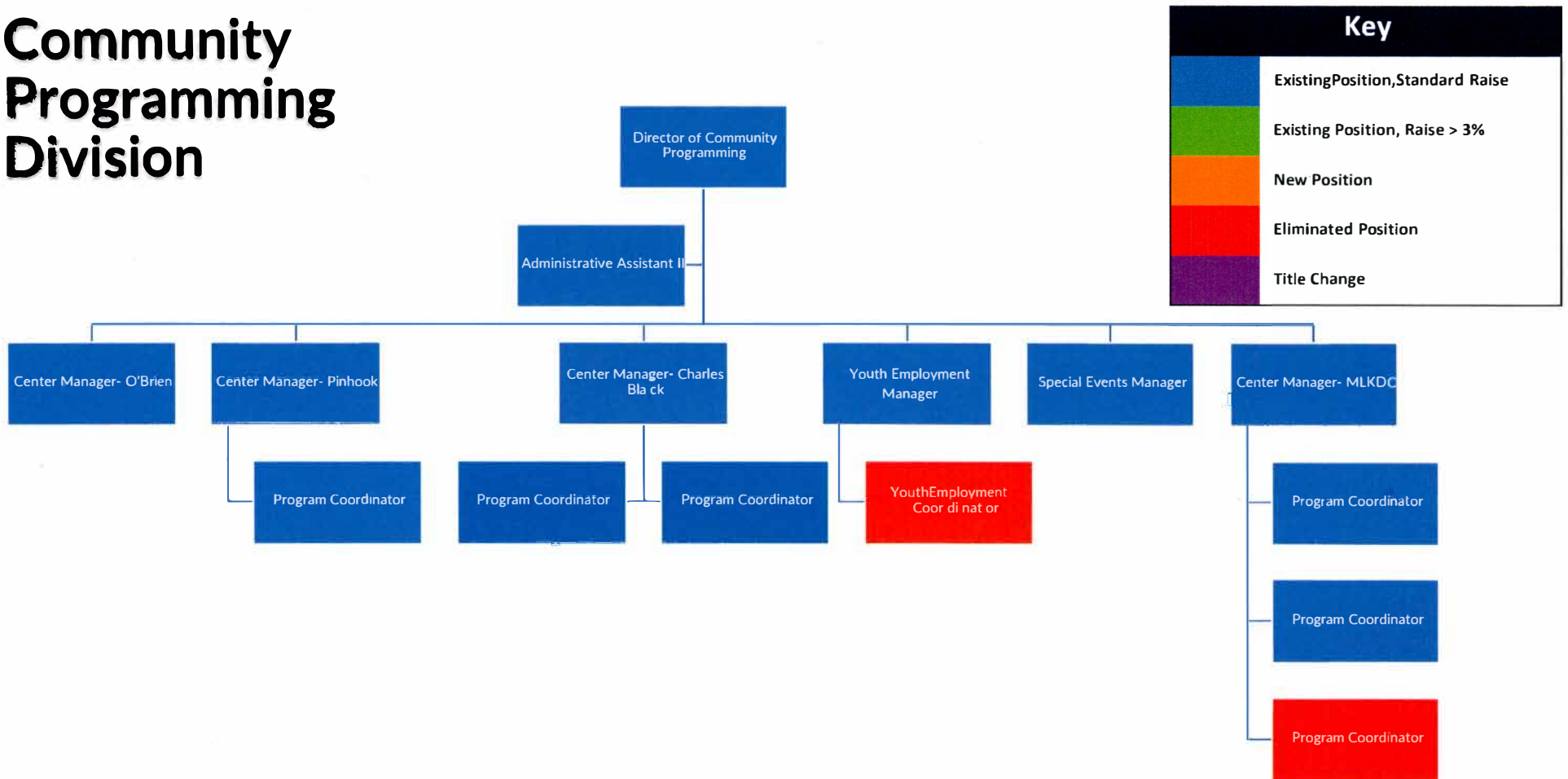
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Community Programming Division



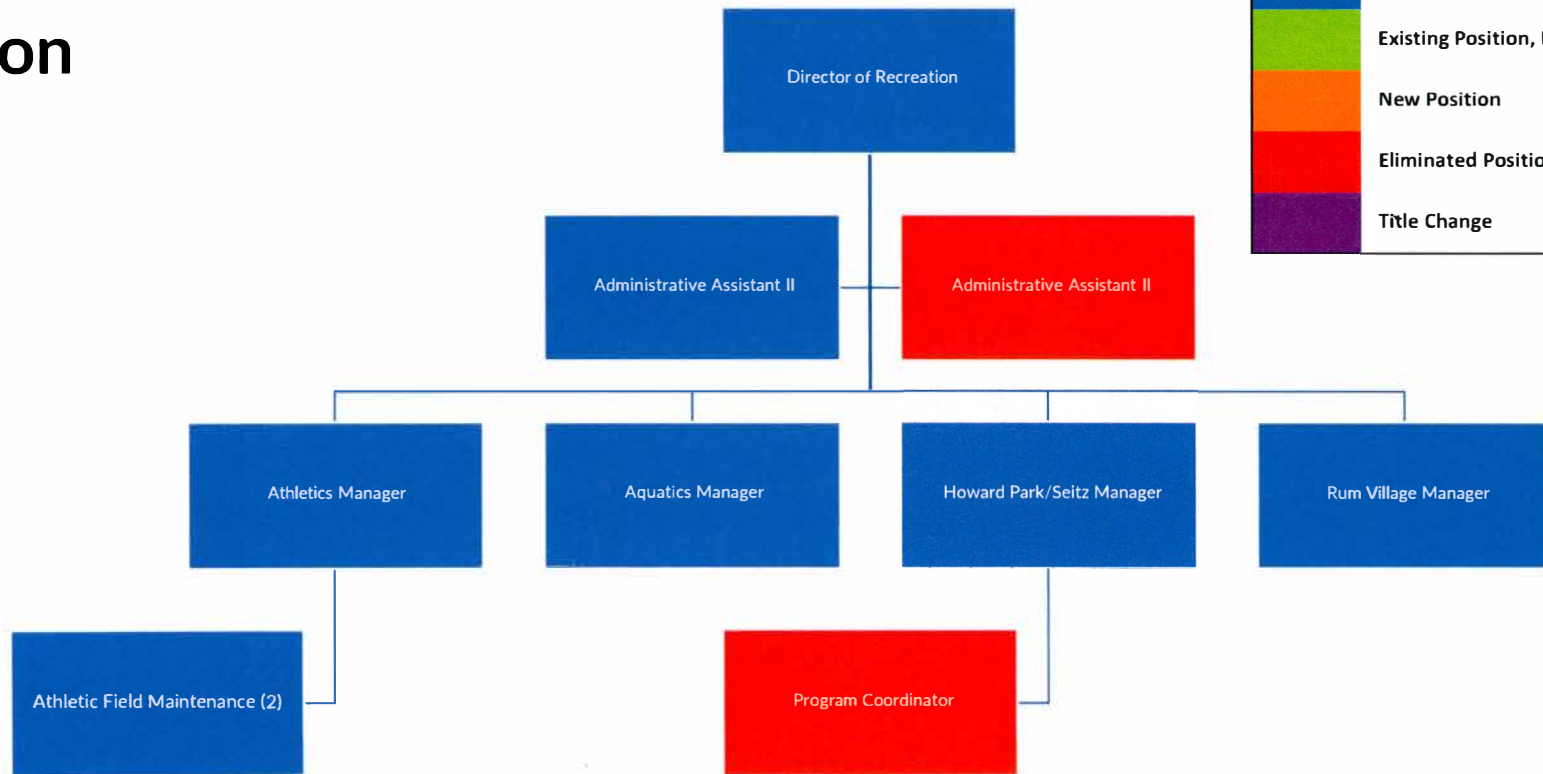
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Recreation Division



Key	
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<div></div>	Existing Position, Raise > 3%
<div></div>	New Position
<div></div>	Eliminated Position
<div></div>	Title Change

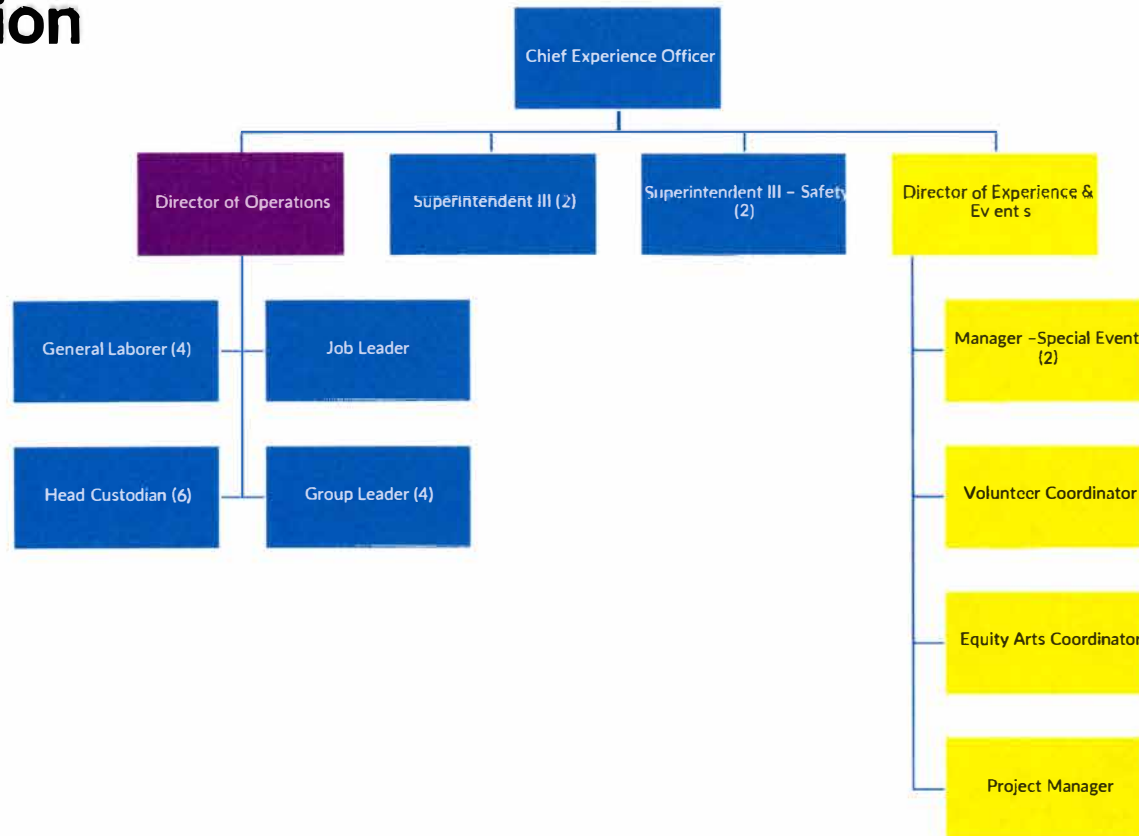
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Visitor Experience Division



Key	
	Existing Position, Standard Raise
	Existing Position, Raise > 3%
	New Position
	Eliminated Position
	Title Change
	Transfer to/from other VPA division

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Summary of Changes

- **Reduction of 9 positions**

- AdminAsst. II (2)
- Program Coordinator (4)
- OVP Manager (1)
- Club Pro-Municipal Golf Course
- Chief Development Officer

- **Title change:**

- General Manager- Venues → Chief of Venues & Promotion
- Director of Development & Special Events → Director of Experience and Events
- Manager- Parks (Visitor Experience) → Director of Operations

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Summary of Changes Cont.

- **Reorganization:**

- Create the division of Venues and Promotion from the former Venues Division
 - Move the Marketing Managers formerly under the Chief Development Officer under the Chief of Venues & Promotion
- Move the Director of Experience and Events (formerly Director of Development & Special Events) to be in the Experience Division.
 - Move the special events team to report to Director of Experience and Events in the Experience Division.

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VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Safety

Brain Garner

Superintendent of Safety

Taloni Reese

Superintendent of Safety

Custodial

**Evelyn
Mitchell**

Superintendent of Custodial
Services



**FT and PT
Custodians**

Downtown

**Paul
Moreland**

Director of Downtown Ops
and Readiness



**FT and PT
General Laborers**

Engagement

TBD

Superintendent of Visitor
Experiences



PT Ambassadors

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VISITOR EXPERIENCE DIVISION UPDATES

Workload Distribution

- Trash/Cleaning over 50% (4,000+ hours)
- evaluate gains form new trash truck
- Planting/Mulching/Weeding: ~20% (1,400+ hours)
- Watering, Mowing, Foot/Vehicle Patrols, Banners & Flags, Snow Removal, & Event Support: less than 10%

Opportunities & Next Steps

- Focus on safety education, downtown watch, and visitor services/hospitality
- Strengthening presence and community engagement with branding and uniforms
- Future improvements will deepen impact through productivity, engagement, and event support

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MLK DREAM CENTER

2025 Wins

- Programs: adult & senior fitness, pickleball, open gym, tutoring, daily activities.
- Membership base: 2,500+ at the MLK Dream Center
- first Summer Camp was successful with 100+ kids

2026 Goals

- Launch Podcasting, Recording Studio, Dream Academy, Adopt-a-School.
- Build partnerships with Boys & Girls Club, SJC Public Library, SBCSC.

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GOALS & KEY HIGHLIGHTS: 2025-2026

- Build social capital
- Increase programmatic efforts
- Achieve CAPRA Re-Accreditation for 2027
- Inclusivity & Well-being
- Extend Community Hours:
Increase weekend availability at community centers
- Capital Projects

- Develop a Skilled Workforce through Youth Development
- Expand Resources: Increase vehicles, equipment, and staff to meet public space needs
- Preserve Natural Areas: Remove invasive species and protect our green spaces
- Advance Strategic Plan: Entering year three of our 5-year vision

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VPA PROJECTS IN CONSTRUCTION/ DESIGN

- Morris Raclin Murphy Encore Center
- Byers Softball Complex
- Leeper Tennis Facility
- Potawatomi Park Street Renovations

- Kennedy Park
- Rum Village Master Plan
- Pier Park Infinity Mirror
- Potawatomi Park Upgrades
- Walker Field Restroom Building Remodel
- Seitz phase 2

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QUESTIONS?

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