

## **Staff Introduction to Succession Planning**

### **Introduction**

Planning for both the foreseen and unexpected absences of people who hold key roles within the Park Board is a task that requires concentrated effort by Executive Leadership. When succession planning is carefully conducted and the plan periodically reviewed, the Park Board can avoid extended and costly vacancies in all levels of the organization.

### **What is Succession Planning?**

Succession planning is the process of identifying high-potential employees, evaluating, and honing their skills and abilities, and preparing them for advancement into positions that are key to the success of the Park Board's operations and objectives. Succession planning involves understanding the Park Board's long-term goals and objectives, identifying high-potential candidates and their respective developmental needs, and determining workforce trends and predictions.

### **The Importance of a Plan**

A Succession Plan is important to avoid extended and costly vacancies in key positions and ensure the stability of operations. It also provides meaningful developmental opportunities for both the organization and its employees as it targets key leadership positions at varying levels. Finally, it helps develop a diverse workforce by enabling decision-makers to look at the future makeup of the organization.

### **Steps Involved in Succession Planning**

1. Identifying legal and diversity issues to consider
2. Establishing present and future leadership roles and objectives
3. Selecting key employees
4. Evaluating the strengths, weaknesses, and readiness for succession of key employees
5. Planning for the individual development of and ways to retain key employees
6. Identifying emergency positions without successors
7. Planning for positions that cannot be filled internally

### **Keeping the Plan Current**

The plan will be reviewed on a semiannual basis to determine its effectiveness, whether it still meets organization's objectives, whether the candidates have changed, and necessary adjustments need to be made, and to assess and develop new candidates.

### **Communicating the Plan to Employees**

It is important to inform employees about the benefits of developing a succession plan and how it affects them. Communication will help employees recognize that the Park Board's leadership looks toward the future with optimism and invests in employee development and growth.

In closing, the most successful organizations think of succession planning as a focused program of keeping talent in the pipeline. It is an ongoing process of preparation, not a one-time process of pre-selection. And it should extend beyond the top executive level to all tiers of the organization that play a pivotal role in the success of the operations.