

VI. MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

Administrative and Operational Needs

As the “baby boomers” approach senior status, the study of attitudes and preferences of the future senior population suggest that retirement will come later or not at all, and thus rather differing levels of “semi-retirement” are anticipated by this study. Separation from the younger population is not anticipated as a strong preference, except when safety is a concern. In assessing the future needs of seniors, it is apparent that the preferred level of physical activity will be greater than the current senior population exhibits; that coordinated “outings,” connections to greenways, bike trails and aquatics facilities, and even sports viewing rooms and coffee bars will be a significant part of providing senior services; and that coordination of available programs and activities will be very important in creating the senior-friendly community envisioned for the City of Raleigh. It is also true that the senior center providing for the most basic needs such as nutritional guidance, meals and social activities, will be in demand, perhaps as never before. The key in developing such a senior center involves appropriate planning for maximizing use of the facilities. Typically, the peak hours for senior activities in the Raleigh area are between the hours of 10:00am and 12:00noon, with a diminishing amount of activities in the afternoon, and a few senior clubs meeting in the evenings. This allows for additional uses of the facilities in the afternoons, evenings and weekends. Consistent and coordinated efforts to increase use of facilities would be ideal and may offer significant opportunities to generate additional revenue.

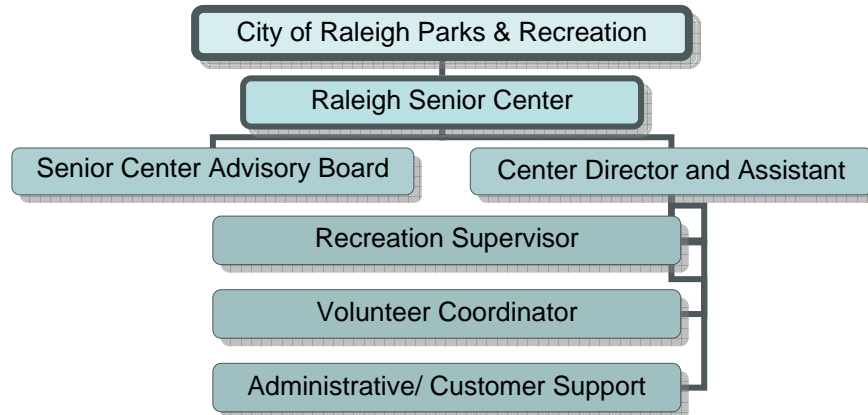
Perhaps most important, the governance of the senior center and its programs should include the user group. Working off the model already in place in the senior clubs, an Advisory Board could be established to provide program and scheduling input and direction, and work in cooperation with the center Director. This would provide a vehicle that would allow the population being served to have direct and meaningful involvement in the operation of the senior center facilities and programs.

Secondly, and in addition to the programs identified as desirable for physical, social and educational activities, a program focusing on volunteerism and appropriate projects for volunteers should be initiated. From evidence of volunteer programs already in existence with Resources for Seniors, it is believed that there are a large number of senior citizens, particularly those recently retired or semi-retired, who want to maintain involvement in the community and to contribute in vital necessary activities. These seniors may not want to be committed for long periods of time or to create for themselves obligations that limit their time and freedom. These people continue to be important assets to the community and could benefit by volunteering their services, expertise, time and effort through appropriate and effective coordination of volunteer projects and programs.

Such a program should involve a volunteer coordinator who would identify projects that could be done effectively by volunteers from a group of citizens expressing interest in such activities. Such an organization would provide a valuable means of accomplishing projects or tasks throughout the community on both public and private properties that may not be otherwise possible. Such a program could provide an outlet for those seniors who continue to be vital, contributing in a less structured way that previous employment would allow.

The following diagram illustrates a proposed model for the organization of the Senior Center administrative and advisory structure that would include the volunteer program described.

FIGURE 19
PROPOSED SENIOR CENTER ORGANIZATIONAL DIAGRAM



Since one of the recommendations of this study is to provide expansions at existing Community Centers in support of additional senior programs, and since the current practice is for the Center Director of centers where a senior club meets to be the club's "Leaders," the current practice of having the Community Center Director and involved in senior activities could continue, with perhaps only the addition of a staff member as Recreation Supervisor, Volunteer Coordinator, or Customer Support as the program needs dictate.

One possible option that the City has for operating a proposed facility is to create a non-profit organization, a 501(c)(3). This would provide the center with the advantage of being exempt from paying Federal taxes and would allow individuals and organizations who make contributions to claim a deduction on their federal taxes.