



## Client Profile: Metro Parks Tacoma

### Organizational Development Consulting

#### The Need:

Metro Parks Tacoma was created in 1907 as a municipal corporation to manage park, recreation and zoological services and facilities for the citizens of Tacoma. At the beginning of the 2015, Invista Performance Solutions (IPS) staff met with Carol Mitchell, new Organizational Development and HR Manager at Metro Parks to discuss the delivery of a variety of classes; however, the usual training delivery proposal based on that first meeting did not result in a contract for just training. A series of assessment and planning meetings resulted in an overall organizational development objective related to the organization's annual performance review process.

#### The Invista Performance Solution:

A working partnership between Metro Parks Tacoma and IPS developed with the objective of moving the old performance review system into the 21st century with an emphasis on the revision of the tool utilized. This facilitated movement to a system adaptation that would motivate employees and improve performance, initiate a separate Individual Development Plan (IDP) tool, and train employees to successfully implement the tool.

Any organizational change endeavor such as this requires several elements:

##### **Talented staff and consultants**

Pivotal to this success were two key players: IPS's Myra Downing, who has worked successfully for years with similar complex client designs; and Carol Mitchell, the new and talented OD/HR Metro Parks staff with a strong HRD background. The expertise and skills of these two individuals as well as their synergy were key to this project's success. If there isn't a strong creative element present in the initial planning stages, such a large organization-wide endeavor could not have been successful. It is important to carefully identify internal staff and consultants to guarantee project success and make sure that they can and will work together successfully as a team. In this case, establishing a creative team, able to work together effectively resulted in much more than originally delineated.

##### **Clear, specific objectives with attached timeframes and tasks**

Although Carol and Myra had not worked together before, they both started with these specifics, completely vested in meeting all of these tasks and were on-time with all deliverables. The team absolutely maintained the intense schedule originally designed.

##### **Organizational involvement**

Research indicates that an organization absolutely cannot change and purposely develop without overall organizational involvement: a key element. From the initial project inception to its very end, the team utilized established committees and groups to provide input,



recommendations and input. In addition, these stakeholder groups were gradually introduced positively to the OD objective, and became initial change supporters. Although it is well-documented that successful endeavors such as this require wide-spread organizational support, the team immediately set up meetings which included established groups. The outside consultant was present for these scheduled meetings and took an active part in developing needed materials and identifying stakeholder outcomes.

**Continued monitoring and evaluation**

Obviously, long-term analysis over the next few years will enable the identification of both modifications and changes in the annual Performance Review System, including the IDP aspect, which may be needed.

**OUTCOME:** An Individual Performance Plan tool was developed and separated from the annual Performance Management Review Tool. All Metro Park supervisors were trained on how to successfully implement this tool and it was utilized during the annual review process. But the results of the endeavor resulted in much more than initially expected. Instead of the usual and not-effective standard annual Performance Review System, Metro Parks has established a positive evaluation system with emphasis on employee development. The first IDP Cohort has been identified and will work together on professional development that will result in specific measurable organizational development and individual employee development. The Management Review Process is no longer primarily an identification of employee weaknesses and shortcomings, but an opportunity for positive organizational development and succession planning. In addition, Myra and Carol also identified and grouped competencies into “Developing MPT (Mastery, Performance, and Transformation). In essence, an old-fashioned annual Performance Review System has been updated to include a vibrant all-encompassing and exciting system where all employees work towards both behavioral and technical competencies positively. The Individual Development Process was only one of the steps Metro Parks is taking.

**About the Metro Park Tacoma Training Program:**

- Introduction to Individual Development Plan
- Effective Performance Management

The sessions were evaluated with the standard IPS evaluation. 98% of participants rated the workshops as Good to Excellent and 98% rated the facilitators’ knowledge of subject matter as Good to Excellent.

**Results:**

The results of the project were successful and IPS continues to work with Metro Parks in 2016. As a final comment on the project, Metro Park’s Carol Mitchell told IPS that she “especially valued the creative design-work Metro Parks did with Myra. Her energy and outside-the-box thinking helped breathe new life into our individual development process.”