Office of the City Manager

March 28, 2017

To: Mayor and City Councilmembers

From: *Dwk* Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager

Re: Reduction in Free Summer Lunch Program

This report updates Council on the continuing reduction of the City of Berkeley's Summer Lunch Program. The City is a longtime partner with the State of California Child Nutrition Division to provide free lunches to qualified Berkeley youth during the summer months. The Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department (PRW) manages this program. Due to changing demographics in Berkeley and changing policies within the state's program, we have been serving fewer summer lunches and snacks over the last few years and we are anticipating another significant reduction in participants this year. This report gives Council background, current status, and describes PRW's attempt to increase the number of qualifying free lunch sites in Berkeley.

Background
For over 35 years the City of Berkeley has provided a free Summer Lunch Program to children 18 years and under in partnership with the State of California Child Nutrition Division. The state reimburses the City for the cost of the lunches and snacks it serves. Until four years ago, we served at least 800 summer lunches and snacks per day at ten (10) sites throughout the city. Providing these meals is important to low income Berkeley families in South and West Berkeley. This free lunch provides continuity to those children who are used to receiving a free lunch during the school year.

In order for youth to qualify for the state's free Summer Lunch Program, the child's family household income must be at or below the dollar amount in the chart (see page 2). If families receive Cal Fresh, Cal Works, Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or Kin-GAP Benefits, their children are automatically eligible for free meal benefits.

ELIGIBILITY SCALE FOR CAMPS AND CLOSED ENROLLED SITES (July 1, 2016–June 30, 2017)

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	ANNUAL INCOME
1	21,978
2	29,637
3	37,296
4	44,955
5	52,614
6	60,273
7	67,951
8	75,647

According to the California Department of Education School District Data, the enrollment for Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) in 2015-2016 was 10,462 students with 3,901 or 37.3% of BUSD students qualifying for free or reduced price meals. In 2010-11 this number was 44%. We are expecting the number of qualifying students to continue to decline each year as a result of changing demographics and economic factors.

Historically we have been using data from the Berkeley schools to qualify not only school sites, but neighboring non-school sites for the Summer Lunch Program. To qualify as a site, 50% or more of a school's students must qualify for free or reduced lunches. Fewer schools are meeting that 50% threshold each year, and in 2016, only two public schools were at 50% or higher, Longfellow Middle School and Berkeley Technology Academy (B-Tech). Additionally, the state's site eligibility rules have changed, and they no longer allow school data to be used to qualify non-school sites, which now require Census data. Sites must be located in Census Block Groups where 50% or more of the children qualify for free or reduced lunches.

Current Situation
Staff have relocated many of the Free Summer Lunch sites to correspond with eligible neighborhoods. This has become increasingly difficult as the number of eligible neighborhoods has decreased. Last summer, the program averaged just over 400 lunches per day, down from 800 per day from four years ago. With the changing demographics in Berkeley (fewer Census Block Tracts with high concentrations of low-income families with children), we are anticipating that only three (3) of our traditional Free Summer Lunch sites will be eligible this summer and that we will serve an average of 225 participants per day. Longfellow Middle School, the Skate Park, and James Kenney Community Center still qualify, but sites that no longer qualify include Martin Luther King Jr. Youth Services Center (YAP), Frances Albrier Community Center, Berkeley Youth Alternatives, Black Repertory Theatre, and Rosa Parks School.

In order to find more potential sites, staff will meet with churches and other neighborhood groups in qualifying neighborhoods in South and West Berkeley to see if those facilities meet the state requirements to host a site. Additionally we are exploring "closed" sites, which allow us to feed only the youth that are enrolled in the program at the site. "Closed" sites do not have to be located in Census Block Tracts with 50% or more children qualifying for free or reduced lunches, but they must provide comprehensive documentation that 50% or more of the children enrolled in their program qualify for free or reduced lunch. Through these efforts, we hope to operate up to seven sites in the summer of 2017 and serve 400 meals per day.

Fiscal Impact
Currently, the City General Fund contributes $25,992 per year to cover staffing and equipment while the State reimbursement of $3.68 per lunch and $.86 per snack funds lunches, snacks, refuse and refrigeration. This reimbursement has been decreasing as the number of participants has decreased. In FY10 revenues were slightly over $100,000, while FY17 revenues were approximately $64,000. Typical contracts with meal providers increase the "per meal" as the total number of meals decreases. With smaller numbers of participants, the cost per lunch has increased and, in the future, may not be covered by the state's reimbursement rate. Additionally, if we do a "closed" site, these sites are more staff intensive because we will have to limit the lunches to specific individuals and supervise the requirement of qualifying participants on a weekly basis.

cc: Jovan Grogan, Deputy City Manager
        Ann-Marie Hogan, City Auditor
        Scott Ferris, Director, Parks, Recreation & Waterfront
        Christina Erickson, Deputy Director, Parks, Recreation & Waterfront
        Mark Numainville, City Clerk
        Matthai Chakko, Assistant to the City Manager / Public Information Officer