



History of the 1995 Plan

History of the 1995 Claremont Youth Master Plan

BACKGROUND ISSUES

By the early 1990's, Claremont was faced with several complex issues that were impacting the lives of youth and their families in the community. Both the City of Claremont and the Claremont Unified School District were impacted by significant funding reductions due to state budget shortfalls. Important programs such as afterschool recreation, music and arts, and school intramural sports programs were eliminated. Funding for support services (counseling, etc.) and several community events through Human Services were also reduced or eliminated. Additionally, the community was addressing the effects of the rapid population growth and demographic changes occurring in Los Angeles County. There was concern in the community that significant juvenile crime and gang issues in neighboring communities might be spread to Claremont.

RESPONSE

Members of the City Council and Board of Education, meeting in joint session in 1992 and early 1993, began discussing strategies to address these concerns and to position the community to be proactive in problem solving. There was a desire to make Claremont a youth and family focused community in order to sustain and attract families to Claremont and to better serve children who lived here. There was a belief that Claremont should be proactive in shaping its future as opposed to simply reacting to problems.

During the spring of 1993, a joint youth subcommittee of the City Council and Board of Education was charged with developing a process to create a Youth Master Plan, a strategic roadmap to improve programs and services for youth and families and to set a framework to make Claremont a stronger community for youth.

PROCESS TO CREATE THE YOUTH MASTER PLAN

In the fall of 1993, a community blue-ribbon committee, jointly appointed by the Claremont City Council and the Claremont Unified School District, began work on developing this community-wide master plan to improve services for youth and families. This committee was made up of community members from a variety of backgrounds: parents, youth, coaches, teachers, nurses, community leaders, City Council and Board of Education members.

Following a seventeen month extensive work effort, the YMP Steering Committee presented the Claremont YMP to the community, the City Council and the Board of Education in January 1995. The Plan contained a set of guiding principles (The Claremont Vision for Youth) and ten goals for the community. Each goal contained a set of action steps to improve services and programs and it called upon community organizations, residents, the City and the School District to collaborate in efforts to implement its recommendations.

The YMP was endorsed by the City Council and the Board of Education in February 1995. Over the next twelve years, dozens of new services and programs were implemented. This report includes a chapter (Review of the 1995 Youth Master Plan) that provides a scorecard on the implementation of the 1995 Plan recommendations.

NATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

Since its inception, the Claremont Youth Master Plan (YMP) has been used as a national model for youth strategic planning efforts. Over the past fifteen years, hundreds of communities across the United States and internationally, have begun or completed youth master planning efforts. During this period, representatives from Claremont have taken a leadership role in training other communities on the steps to develop a youth master plan. Claremont has been active in working with the National League of Cities Institute for Youth, Education, and Families in this effort, as well as the California League of Cities, the California Cities, Counties, and Schools Partnership, and the California Parks & Recreation Society.

Claremont has been seen as a national model because of the level of community process used to develop the plan and the level of implementation that has been achieved. Claremont's Youth Master Plan is one of the oldest in the country, so other communities have been able to observe how a plan is actually implemented.

The Claremont YMP has won numerous national, state, and regional awards, and in 1996, the National League of Cities awarded Claremont with its prestigious James Howland Award.

IN HINDSIGHT

As the 1995 Youth Master Plan scorecard shows, the level of services and programs that have been implemented since early 1995 is significant. There are, however, some lessons to be learned from the 1995 Youth Master Plan:

- The level of collaboration between the City and School District became a hallmark of the YMP. However, collaborations with other public and private organizations were less successful or did not develop. Over the past three years, the number of successful collaborations has steadily increased.
- The engagement of the service provider community (non-profits and others) could have been stronger. The notably increased level of service provider participation in the updated Youth & Family Master Plan bodes well for a significant improvement in this area.
- The sustainability of collaboration and commitment between partners has been uneven. Some of the initial joint working groups and dialogue between the City and School District have not sustained itself over the long-term. One of the challenges for the updated Youth & Family Master Plan (Y&FMP) will be to sustain passion for the Plan through changes in staffing and community leadership.
- The initial structures put in place to address Goal Ten (Coordinate Efforts to Reach These Goals) were not as successful as envisioned by the original YMP Steering Committee. The primary sustainers for the YMP ultimately became the City Council and the Board of Education, the City Manager and School Superintendent, and key city and school district staff.
- The engagement of the business community could have been stronger. Over the life of the 1995 YMP, the Claremont business community has gotten larger and stronger, and has been very engaged in the 2007 update process. This is a good sign for the new Y&FMP.