Summer Camp Registration Project

Arlington County Sports Commission (SC) and Park and Recreation Commission (PRC) Joint Meeting

February 23, 2023

Summer Camp 2023 Registration Dates:
- Early Registration for select Park & Recreation camps for individuals with disabilities or, those who qualify for fee reductions, begins **Monday, March 13 @ Noon**

- Partner Camps: Tuesday, **March 21 @ Noon**

- Parks and Recreation Camps: **Tuesday, March 28 @ Noon**

- Summer Camp Registration Project Presentation Enclosed

ARLINGTON
VIRGINIA

Summer Camp Registration Overview

- Background

- After Action Review

- Public Engagement

- Technology Review

- Recommendations

- Next Steps

BACKGROUND

Summer Camp Registration

Background - Project Participants

Jane Rudolph, DPR Director

Jennifer Fioretti, DPR Deputy Director

Devon Kotch, DPR Administrative Specialist

Technology

Rebecca Schmitt, DPR Department Finance Officer

Deborah Hay, DPR Business Systems Analyst

Frank Baker, DPR Business Systems Analyst

Jonathan Manely, Department of Technology, Technology Manager

Registration Process Operations

Nakish Jordan, Athletic and Facilities Division Chief

Greg Anselene, Recreation Services Supervisor

Kathryn Salyers, DPR Program Specialist

Chemin Brown, DPR Program Specialist

Cheryl Johnson, DPR Community Recreation Division Chief

Yvana Cordova, DPR Program Specialist

Communications

Susan Kalish, DPR Public Relations Director

Martha Holland, DPR Communications Specialist

Adam Segel-Moss, DPR Communications Specialist

Background

- DPR Activity Registration System

  - Vendor - Vermont Systems

  - Historically inconsistent system performance

- February 23, 2022 Summer Camp Registration

  - Pre-planning

  - Registration technology system failure

  - Customer impact

- Priority #1 - Summer Camp 2022
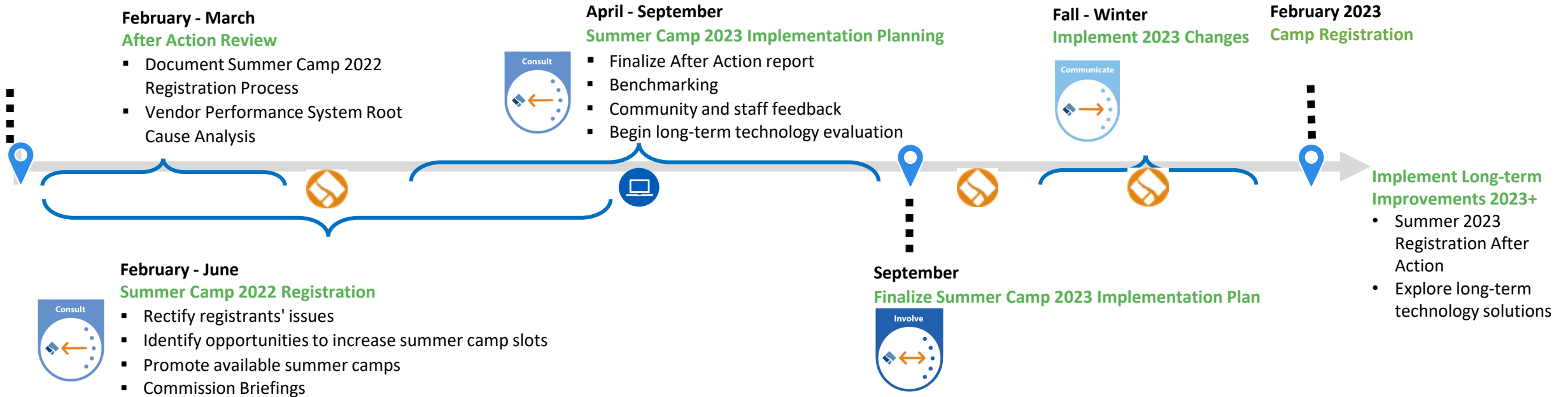
BACKGROUND

- **Summer Camp Registration Project Scope**

  - Evaluate February 23, 2022 Summer Camp Registration event using **race equity and access** as lens across three key topic areas:
    - Technology
    - Operations
    - Communications

  - After Action Review, Benchmark Analysis, Staff and Public Engagement, Technology Review

  - Recommend improvements to summer camp registration system, process and programs in 2023 and beyond
    - Goal: Enable customers to find affordable, accessible, engaging summer camps quickly and easily in future summer camp registration events

- **Recommendations**

  - 12 Short-Term Recommendations – Implement for 2023 Summer Camp

  - 6 Long-Term Recommendations - Implement 2024 Summer Camp and Beyond

PROJECT TIMELINE

February - March
After Action Review
- Document Summer Camp 2022 Registration Process
- Vendor Performance System Root Cause Analysis

April - September
Summer Camp 2023 Implementation Planning
- Finalize After Action report
- Benchmarking
- Community and staff feedback
- Begin long-term technology evaluation

Fall - Winter
Implement 2023 Changes

February 2023
Camp Registration

February - June
Summer Camp 2022 Registration
- Rectify registrants' issues
- Identify opportunities to increase summer camp slots
- Promote available summer camps
- Commission Briefings

September
Finalize Summer Camp 2023 Implementation Plan

Implement Long-term Improvements 2023+
- Summer 2023 Registration After Action
- Explore long-term technology solutions

Key Considerations
- *Communications*
- *Technology*
- *Operations*
- *Access & Equity*

AFTER ACTION REVIEW

Summer Camp Registration

After Action Review – Key Findings

TECHNOLOGY

- Registration system could not handle peak volume
- Lack of technology staff redundancy

OPERATIONS

- Call center set to maximum 50 lines; insufficient to handle call volume
- Demand for summer camp outpaces supply
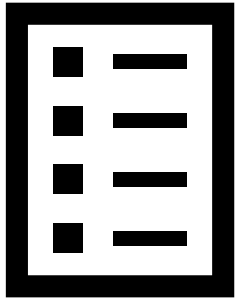
COMMUNICATIONS

- No process connecting technology, operations and communications staff
- No crisis communications plan
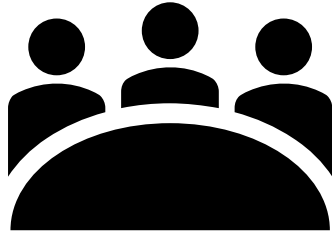
ENGAGEMENT
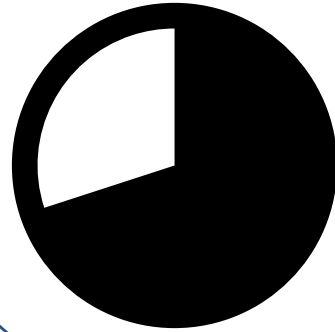
Summer Camp Registration

Public Engagement

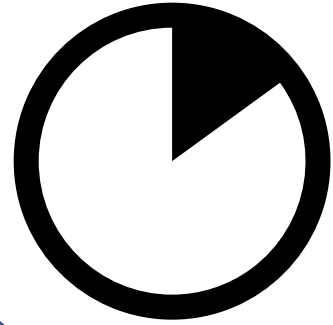**12**
Questions
(Focus: Technology,
Operations, Programs)

649
Arlingtonians
shared their input

629
Group A

20
Group B

Public Engagement

TECHNOLOGY

- Fix the registration system.
- Time to register for camp is a barrier to enrolling.
- Consider staggering the registration or adjusting the day/time to make the system work better.

OPERATIONS

Registration Time:
- Groups A & B had differing opinions on weekday registration, while both preferred weekend mornings.
- Group A prefers registration in February and March.
- Group B prefers an April registration

PROGRAMS

- Make it easier to register multiple children at once and improve the extended day registration process.
- More camps and more availability.

TECHNOLOGY REVIEW

Summer Camp Registration

Technology Review

- Root Cause Analysis

  - VS confirmed that registration system could not handle high volume

    - Database contention during certain high-volume processes
    - Sub-optimal load balancing to prevent transaction bottlenecks
    - Permitting inefficient, unparameterized searches

  - VS has taken steps to address system performance

    - Implemented Queue-It, creating virtual waiting room
    - Performance improvements to manage high volumes

- Request for Information (RFI)

  - Explore other registration management systems

  - Six vendors responded

  - Issue RFP to evaluate alternative registration technology solutions

RECOMMENDATIONS

Summer Camp Registration

Recommendations - Technology

- Short-Term (2023)

  - Employ registration system waiting room function to manage peak volume
    - Places all users in virtual waiting room prior to registration, managing customer outflow into registration system at level that system can handle
    - "Queue-It" system used in lower volume Enjoy registrations
    - Successful use dependent upon appropriately throttling wait room time
    - The more people that enter the system, the longer the wait time
    - Chance that people may "jump the line" and call registration desk

- Long-Term (2024+)

  - Evaluate alternative technology solutions to manage registration
    - Current contract with Vermont Systems ends in 2025

RECOMMENDATIONS - TECHNOLOGY

- Short-Term (2023)

  - Modernize Online Registration Experience
    - Current online version implemented in 2015
    - Implement new streamlined user interface for self-service portal that improves mobile interface
    - Creates added flexibility and improves access to registration system

- Long-Term (2024+)

  - Evaluate alternative technology solutions to manage registration
    - Current contract with Vermont Systems ends in 2025

RECOMMENDATIONS - OPERATIONS

- Short-Term (2023)

    - Modify registration dates and times

        o Split into multiple registration dates (Early Access, Contractor, DPR Camps)

        o Weekday; 12:00 pm registration start

        o Call center (100 lines)

        o 50-person intradepartmental team to support registration

        o Monitor and adjust future registrations based on performance and public input

    - Early Access

        o Dedicate one-week prior to each registration to conduct early enrollment

        o Eligibility

            - Families with active fee reductions or DPR documented hardships

            - Adapted camp participants

            - Limited to 25% of total camp capacity

RECOMMENDATIONS - OPERATIONS

- Short-Term (2023)

  - Refund Policy Update
    - Discourage households from over-enrolling in camp
    - Establishes clear and consistent standard regarding cancellation deadlines without penalty
    - Lays out increasing penalties for cancelling enrollment closer to camp start

  - Optimize camp offerings
    - Camp expansions; increase capacity and full-day year-round offerings
    - Collaborations; blend traditional camps with specialty programming (i.e., nature)
    - Camp reductions for low enrollment, low capacity and/or half-day camps

RECOMMENDATIONS - OPERATIONS

- Long-Term (2024+)

  - Assess Summer Camp Program Offerings

    - Explore need for full day early childhood camp program offerings (3-5 yrs)
    - Explore traditional v. specialty camp balance and space allocation across providers

  - Registration for Extended Day Hours

    - Approx 30% of families utilize before and after care hours
    - Separate core and extended hours at time of registration
    - Minimize confusion during time of registration; enhances family flexibility

Recommendations - Communications

- Short-Term (2023)

  - Web updates (complete)
    - User friendly summer camp pages
    - "No wrong door" summer camp links
    - Separate landing pages for registration and summer camp onboarding
  - Registering one or multi-participants for multiple camps
    - Promote existing option to prospective and existing customers
  - Implement registration day crisis communications plan
    - Plan used in Enjoy publications
    - Communications built around potential crisis scenarios
    - Focus on tactical and timely internal and external communications

THANK YOU!

Summer Camp Registration