



CITY OF COMMERCE AGENDA REPORT

TO: Honorable City Council
FROM: City Manager
SUBJECT: Eligibility Expansion for Competitive Sports Programs
MEETING DATE: October 28, 2025

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the City Council approve the eligibility expansion for all City of Commerce competitive sports programs, permitting non-resident athletes to participate when roster spots remain unfilled by resident athletes. Non-resident participants shall be required to pay double the resident Plus Card rate, cover all uniform and travel-related expenses, and will not be eligible for any scholarship programs. Staff will continue focused outreach efforts to strengthen resident engagement and participation across all sports programs.

BACKGROUND

The City of Commerce has long been recognized for its outstanding competitive sports programs, which include:

- Baseball
- Boxing
- Soccer
- Water Polo
- Dance Team
- Crush Volleyball
- Swim Team

These programs have produced exceptional athletes and fostered a strong sense of community pride. However, like many municipalities, Commerce has experienced declining participation trends consistent with regional and statewide data:

- Youth sports participation in California is declining, with only about half of youths engaged in organized sports, and nearly 70% dropping out before high school (Governor's Office, 2024).

These challenges mirror Commerce's own experience, where rosters for several competitive teams are increasingly difficult to sustain.

In addition, the city allows non-resident participation in programs that once did not permit this practice. These changes have proven beneficial to residents:

- Preschool – Non-resident enrollment has sustained classes that otherwise would have closed.
- Youth Recreational Sports – Non-resident athletes have filled rosters, ensuring full leagues.
- Women's water polo -Junior Olympics 2025
14U partnered with Back Bay from El Segundo to complete athlete roster.
- Senior Programming, Teen Programs, Fitness, and Arts & Crafts – Non-residents are permitted to participate, while residents always receive priority registration and reduced program fees.

This precedent demonstrates that carefully managed non-resident participation can strengthen programs while preserving resident benefits.

BENEFITS OF EXPANSION

- Maintains full and competitive rosters across all sports.
- Ensures Commerce residents continue to benefit from strong competitive programs and support the long-term development of athletes across multiple sports.
- Generates additional program revenue through non-resident registration fees.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Approve staff recommendation
2. Disapprove staff recommendation
3. Provide further direction to staff

FISCAL IMPACT

There will be no added cost to the City. Non-resident participants will be subject to higher registration fees than Commerce residents, and all their travel expenses will be paid directly by the non-resident athletes/families.

Respectfully submitted: Ernie Hernandez, City Manager
Recommended by: Adolfo Marquez, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director
Fiscal Impact reviewed by: Alvaro Castellon, Finance Director
Approved as to form by: Noel Tapia, City Attorney