Question #15
What makes your agency “outstanding”? Please cite three specific examples that capture the outstanding nature of your agency as you serve your unique community.

Serving the greater Beaverton, Ore., community since 1955, THPRD has never been more vibrant.

Public Support
A $100 million bond measure (approved by voters amid a struggling economy) is now in its seventh year of yielding land acquisitions, new and redeveloped parks, natural area restoration, athletic fields, trail development, facility rehabilitation and expansion, ADA access improvements, and capital improvements.

Commitment to Inclusion
Our Access for All initiative underlines our unified commitment to providing recreational amenities to historically underserved populations. Inclusion efforts, driven by dedicated full-time staffers, support adaptive recreation programs, scholarships, an ADA transition plan, an inclusive purchasing policy, translation services, bilingual pay incentives, and fundraising to build the first sports field in Oregon for athletes of diverse abilities (among other amenities).

A True Community
THPRD is energized by contributions from 3,700 community volunteers, who donated 52,000 hours of service last year. Staff liaisons serve 15 neighborhood organizations, which helps THPRD remain responsive at the grass roots level. Strategic partnerships with other government agencies, corporations (e.g., Providence Health, Portland Timbers, etc.), and a supportive foundation help advance our mission.
Question #16
Tell us your story about how your agency positively impacts the community you serve. Share with us 5 actions.

THPRD’s expansive scholarship program provides recreational opportunities to residents who cannot afford typical program fees. In three years, 15,000+ scholarships have funded nearly $2.4 million toward program participation.

Flourishing partnerships with healthcare organizations, including Medicare, support healthy aging programs (SilverSneakers®, Silver&Fit®) that provide free fitness classes and facility use to 1,200 qualifying residents. Similar partnerships with Rx PLAY and FamilyCare Health allow free facility use to families and children battling obesity and inactivity.

The area’s leading provider of swim lessons, we support water safety with USA Swimming Foundation’s free lesson program, a life-jacket loaner program, and National Water Safety Month promotion. Our adaptive aquatics program has taught swimming to about 2,700 residents with disabilities in the past three years. Our Women-only Swim and a new partnership with Muslim Educational Trust School provide water education to our community’s expanding immigrant population.

Last year, about 20,000 participants enjoyed our Rec Mobile and Nature Mobile, which visit low-income neighborhoods, parks, schools, and THPRD events to provide games, activities, creative projects, active recreation, and healthy meals.

Our Park Patrol ambassadors canvass about 90 parks, greeting neighbors, investigating resident concerns, enforcing our smoke-free parks initiative, and ensuring the safety of visitors in our well-maintained assets.
Question #17
There are few resources more critical than public support, citizen involvement, and staff engagement. Please identify one outstanding example for each of these three characteristics.

Public Support
Since passing the 2008 bond measure, our community has continued to demonstrate overwhelming support. More than $1 million has been raised in support of Oregon’s first inclusive multi-sport field and other adaptive amenities at a 21.5-acre community park scheduled to open in 2017. Our first “Access for All” campaign includes support from Tualatin Hills Park Foundation, individuals, community partners, and local businesses.

Citizen Involvement
A good idea can come from anywhere – a Twitter comment recently prompted the installation of new diaper-changing tables, and input from informal volunteer “friends groups” has yielded several new amenities, including an outdoor fitness circuit. More formally, three citizen advisory committees guide the planning of nature & trails, parks & facilities, and programs & events, while budget and bond oversight committees provide guidance in their two key areas.

Staff Engagement
To increase staff engagement and productivity, THPRD management have embraced a collaborative leadership model. Remarkably, more than 60% of full-time staff participate on process improvement committees, empowered to address topics such as policy reviews, ADA accessibility updates, capital improvements, employee retention, and future trend forecasting. While still upholding required executive and legal processes, senior management have improved staff camaraderie and collaboration and prepared their own successors by formally mentoring emerging leaders.
NRPA Gold Medal Application

Question #18
Public entities have been increasingly called upon to demonstrate the results of their services and practices to decision-makers and the general public. Please share with us 3 results you have measured.

Strategically placed trail counters along THPRD’s heavily used trail network provide data to help secure grants for new segments, prioritize surfacing conditions, and bolster intergovernmental collaboration regarding trail safety. This data has supported construction of 6.76 miles of new trails and eight road crossings over three years. The data illustrates the community benefit: usage typically increases – up to 15,000 additional visits annually – after new segment construction.

THPRD has created functional plans in five key areas to measure growth and service levels. The Athletic Facilities plan, for example, analyzed field hours available and used, by field type and sport. This baseline data, coupled with population projections and ongoing measurement, will help us identify emerging sports and better enable us to plan what types of fields to develop and where. Planning teams inventoried existing amenities and solicited feedback through neighborhood meetings, key user group presentations, and social media.

To ensure THPRD is meeting bond objectives and using funds as planned, a bond oversight committee tracks progress of the voter-approved measure. The committee meets at least twice annually and produces a robust annual report that summarizes accomplishments (e.g., 98 acres of new land and 53 construction projects over the last three years) and provides a snapshot of remaining projects and funds.
Question #19
Park and recreation agencies have long been known for creativity and innovation. Please identify and briefly explain three innovations.

A 2016 finalist for the Oregon Innovation Award, THPRD prides itself on innovation.

An extensive partnership with Beaverton School District (BSD) includes recent land acquisitions that will soon yield community parks near two schools. Those deals expand an already successful intergovernmental agreement that maximizes facility use and public resources. THPRD receives priority access to school gyms, fields, and tennis courts for programming; in exchange, THPRD provides field maintenance and priority access to our fields and pools.

THPRD’s Security Operations Department developed a parent reunification program with BSD to provide a safe location for parents to reunite with children in the event of a traumatic school event (e.g., shooting, bomb threat). This plan is endorsed by local law enforcement, the county’s emergency management division, and the Department of Homeland Security. Through our Shelter-in-Place program, our facilities are equipped to provide shelter and basic supplies for 72 hours following a traumatic event such as a major earthquake – a concern of many in our region.

THPRD’s Leadership Academy addresses staff development and succession planning by transferring organizational knowledge over the course of three years. Tiers I and II provide a base level understanding of THPRD and skill development training. Tier III is a team capstone project addressing a district challenge such as valuing part-time employees or overcoming language barriers in our service delivery. Tier IV is a leadership development program in which employees work with an internal mentor and external executive coach.
Oregon Rehabilitation Association’s Public Employer of the Year, THPRD is committed to social equity. THPRD funded a 2014 assessment by Portland State University and, subsequently, an eight-month PSU fellowship. This external oversight and an employee climate survey (95% of full-time employees responded!) informed our long-term planning. Our new community outreach roadmap is centered on trust-building, cultural humility, and strengthening community relationships. Dedicated full-time employees oversee internal and external implementation, including a Spanish language website and development of the Equity Seminar Series, which provides training (e.g., “serving transgender youth,” “communicating through language barriers”) to city, school district, and THPRD employees. Many additional programs – including mobile recreation, scholarships, an ADA transition plan, and abundant adaptive recreation programs – support this commitment.
The Elsie Stuhr Center, exclusively for our rapidly growing 55+ population, includes an expanded 2,436-square-foot fitness room. Strength/mobility benchmark testing inspire patrons, including 4,900 remote participants in Wellness on Wheels. Annually, the center accommodates 60,000+ class visits and serves 275,900 meals. 

Nutritious, balanced meals keep THPRD kids healthy, too. A USDA program will provide ~41,000 healthy meals at THPRD’s afterschool programs; a Beaverton School District partnership provides 11,000+ lunches to low-income neighbors participating in our out-of-school time summer programs.

In 2014, THPRD’s 3,600 acres of parks and natural areas became smoke-free. In 2016 we worked with city and county regulators to control recreational marijuana sales near THPRD facilities such as athletic, recreation, and swim centers that feature children’s programming.
Partnerships and volunteer programs support watershed-scale improvements, including 100,000+ native plantings each year. Local nonprofit SOLVE recognized a THPRD employee who coordinated 13,792 natural resource volunteer hours last year. A fruitful partnership with Clean Water Services supports stream and habitat restoration at five natural area sites.

THPRD joined Portland General Electric’s Clean Wind Program Platinum (highest level) to source 100% of our electricity from renewable resources. We are an EcoBiz-certified agency that conducts an annual greenhouse gas emissions inventory and participates in a Strategic Energy Management cohort.

Maintenance supervisors initiated a “zone management” model and installed high-capacity, solar-powered trash receptacles to reduce fleet usage by nearly 13,000 miles. Similarly, last summer we reduced irrigation at 73% of our park sites.

In what ways has your agency addressed the issue of conservation?
Question #23
What challenges has your community and/or agency experienced over the past 3 years and what steps or actions have you taken to resolve these challenges?

Meeting the diverse needs of our community in the face of changing demographics is THPRD’s greatest challenge. Beaverton has the fastest growing immigrant population in Oregon: 1 in 8 Beaverton residents are not fluent in English. To address patrons’ evolving needs, THPRD increased its community outreach and diversity and inclusion efforts. We initiated a bilingual pay incentive and required front-line positions to be fluent in Spanish. We passed a language access policy for providing high-quality service to non-English-speaking patrons, including through telephonic interpretation services and more Spanish print materials.

Over the past two years THPRD also saw increasing requests to use our facilities under special circumstances based on cultural practices, specifically from the Muslim community. In response, THPRD developed a Women-only Swim program which provides female-only staff, an appropriate physical layout for privacy, and ample time between programs for transitions. These monthly swims, open to all women in our community and children under 5, have tripled in attendance.

Policy revision is another key strategy to boost engagement of underrepresented participants in our programs. We loosened our age requirement to allow families to attend fitness classes together and relaxed our rules on identification requirements. Coupled with improved language access, these changes provide a more welcoming atmosphere and have greatly increased participation.