



**A V E N U**

INSIGHTS & ANALYTICS

# HAYWARD AREA RECREATION & PARK DISTRICT

Collaboratively and Comprehensively  
Getting a Large Park District's IT Updated,  
Secure, and Ready for the Future





*James Wheeler* is the *General Manager* of the Park District. He describes the situation in this way:

**“Basically, we realized that we needed to bring our infrastructure and, more importantly, our cybersecurity into the 21st century. But to be honest, we didn’t really know exactly what we needed. We knew we couldn’t do it alone and needed outside help.”**

## CHALLENGE

IT system that was woefully inadequate and out of date

## CLIENT

Hayward Area Recreation & Park District, CA

## TIMEFRAME

2020 – Present

## SOLUTION

IT Managed Solution

Hayward Area Recreation & Park District (“Park District”) knew that its IT system was woefully inadequate and out of date. But it **didn’t know what updates it needed or how to start making them.** The Park District knew it needed help. The Park District is a 104 square mile area near San Francisco. It has about 120 facilities and parks and serves over 300,000 citizens. It has community centers, swimming pools, a theater, nature centers, even a notable Japanese garden and an animal hospital.

But the Park District, like many local government entities, had an IT Infrastructure that had been built out over the years with no overarching plan. There was 1 dedicated employee who supported its ninety or so computer users. But that employee spent most of his time trying to keep employees’ computers working and did not have the capacity to do much more.





**Avenu’s “tremendous amount of experience with municipal clients and we wanted someone that worked with governments.”**

-James Wheeler, *General Manager of The Park District, Hayward, CA*

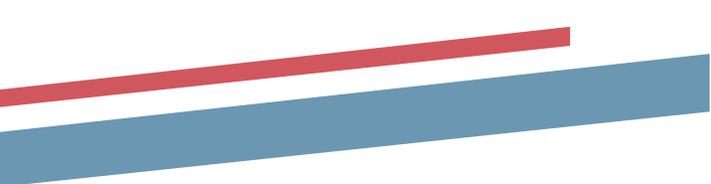
## **The Search for the Right IT Partner**

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The Park District went to market with an RFP for infrastructure support. And it chose to partner with Avenu Insights & Analytics (“Avenu”) to help solve its IT challenges.

According to James Wheeler, the Park District chose to work with Avenu for two reasons. The first was Avenu’s “tremendous amount of experience with municipal clients

and we wanted someone that worked with governments.” The second was that the Park District wanted to work with **a partner** that would take a **comprehensive view and address the entire IT environment and determine a strategic plan that addresses every area** including: desktop computers, software, server systems, public Wi-Fi, cybersecurity, networking, etc.



# How Avenu Helped the Park District

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Avenu's initial focus was simply getting the Park District employees' computers and software up to date. This included updating machines that were still running outdated software and no longer receiving security updates.

Roger Murphy is Avenu's Director of Information Technology and Citizen Support Services. According to Roger,

***When we're in a customer's environment, we see items that ideally need to be addressed that are beyond the scope of our initial engagement. And we bring these things to the client's attention to talk about it so we can have a collaborative and honest discussion of risk, budget, and what to tackle next. We aim to be their trusted advisor.***

And this is exactly what happened when Avenu worked with the Park District. As Avenu spent more time in the Park District's environment, they found additional areas in which they could serve and brought those items to the Park District's attention. Then, **through organic dialogue and collaboration, Avenu developed a plan together to remedy them.**

The Park District's Jim Wheeler appreciated how Avenu had a commonsense approach to addressing the concerns we uncovered. He describes it this way: "They were able to jump right in and pinpoint the areas of highest concern. We started with the low hanging fruit and, later, moved into more costly projects."



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# Results of the Collaboration

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*Has the collaboration between the Park District and Avenu been successful?*

Perhaps the **best answer** is that the parties have recently **signed their sixth amendment** to the original contract. And each amendment has increased the scope of the collaboration. The latest amendment involves replacing Hayward's network in twenty-two different buildings. Avenu's Roger Murphy emphasizes that the expanding collaboration between the Park District and Avenu is a matter of earned trust and confidence.

The Park District's James Wheeler summarizes his experience with Avenu in this way:

**"I think the beauty of working with Avenu is that if I have a concern, I can express it. Avenu is very professional and very responsive. Our board is very happy with what they've been doing, and our employees appreciate that they have up-to-date equipment. It makes them feel valued. The Avenu employees we've had onsite are really great people to work with who are very smart and passionate about what they do. They care about our agency. They seem to genuinely care about protecting us, making sure we are getting the best deals on computer equipment, and doing everything the right way."**





# What Can Avenu Do for Your Local Government IT System?

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A GovTech 100 company, Avenu has a long history of helping state and local governments optimize operations and deepen community trust. Avenu focuses exclusively on serving local governments. Avenu has deep expertise in local government that is unmatched by any other service provider. The challenge your local government is facing might seem like a difficult and unprecedented challenge to you. But chances are high that Avenu has helped many other local governments address similar issues.

Avenu understands how local governments operate and the pressures various stakeholders face. Avenu knows the critical importance of providing a good citizen experience. Because Avenu is technology-agnostic, it never tries to make its clients' problems fit into a prepackaged solution. According to Avenu's Roger Murphy, ***"We're not here to do it our way. We're here to collaborate with you."*** Avenu knows that our local government customers typically need customized solutions that often involve legacy modernization.

One critical area that Avenu can help with is cybersecurity. This is an increasing concern for local governments. And well it should be. **In 2020, 44% of global ransomware attacks targeted municipalities.<sup>1</sup>**

Ransomware attacks can cripple a local government's ability to deliver services. Since 2019, there has been a significant uptick in ransomware attacks on local governments.<sup>2</sup>

The good news is that most local governments are aware that cybersecurity is important. That's a significant improvement from a few years ago. The bad news is that **local governments are often much more vulnerable than they think they are.** When Avenu asks about cybersecurity, many respond, "We're fine" or, "We have a good IT department." But the truth is often something quite different. **Some IT firms will only address a single aspect of cybersecurity, while leaving many vulnerabilities open.** But Avenu approaches security from a holistic perspective, making sure that all vulnerabilities are addressed.

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<sup>1</sup> Eytan, Oren, "Municipal Cyberattacks: A New Threat Or Persistent Risk?" Forbes, 22 June 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2021/06/22/municipal-cyberattacks-a-new-threat-or-persistent-risk/?sh=6c0fdc113ffb>. Accessed 17 June 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Elwood, Karina, "Ransomware poses threat to vulnerable local governments." Washington Post, 22 August 2021, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/local-government-ransomware-dc/2021/08/05/048051cc-efc6-11eb-81d2-ffae0f931b8f\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/local-government-ransomware-dc/2021/08/05/048051cc-efc6-11eb-81d2-ffae0f931b8f_story.html). Accessed 17 June 2022.

# Into the Future

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When one talks to James Wheeler, it is clear that he is a public servant who cares deeply about the Park District's mission.

James is particularly happy that, with Avenu's assistance, the Park District now **has a plan to maintain its IT system in a way that will help the Park District continue to deliver a great citizen experience for years to come.** For example, the Park District now has an equipment replacement and monitoring plan to ensure that its IT systems are

always up to date. The Park District also now has a capital equipment replacement fund, which it has never had before. James says, "We'll never have a situation in which we say, 'Oh, my gosh! We haven't done anything with our IT equipment in 15 years.' We are even more responsible with the public's money now."

By partnering with Avenu, the Hayward Area Recreation & Park District solved its IT challenges and set itself up for continued success.



If you would like to learn more about what Avenu can do to help you with your local government IT needs, please request more information at [succeed@avenuinsights.com](mailto:succeed@avenuinsights.com).