
Parks and Recreation 5-10 Year Plan

Template

Purpose

It is surprising how often communities spend a great deal of time, manpower and money to meet the needs of their citizens only to find a few years later that they have failed miserably. Why? Because the community failed to do two very basic things: 1) ***set some realistic goals and objectives, and 2) develop a plan to reach them.*** Planning encompasses looking forward and developing things in advance and not basing decisions in a reactive stance. **Planning saves money and prevents headaches and heartaches for a parks department.** Plans should, and always can be, revised and developed with flexibility in mind in order to meet ever changing conditions.

Three key ingredients in developing a successful parks and recreation plan are:

1. **Technical Knowledge:** Know the current conditions and utilize expertise from the areas of parks and recreation planning, administration, maintenance, landscape architecture, engineering, and programming.
2. **Common Sense:** Every planning and design decision needs to have a justifiable purpose or function.
3. **Creativity:** The ability to brainstorm alternatives and solutions and choose the best one.

Guidelines to use when starting a long range planning process:

- Recreation and park systems should be established to meet total community leisure needs and should provide equal recreation opportunity to all, as far as possible.
- Planning should be based on a comprehensive and thorough inventory and evaluation of existing public, private and commercial facilities and programs, including the public schools.
- Planning should reflect the needs and wishes of all citizens and should involve them in data gathering and decision-making processes.
- Each recreation area should be centrally located within the jurisdiction it is planned to serve and should provide safe and convenient access for all residents. Insofar as possible, facilities should be equally distributed throughout the major areas of the city/county.
- The design of each park or recreation facility should be handled individually to ensure that it is adapted to the needs of the specific population it serves.
- Beauty, functional efficiency, and encouraging physical activity are major goals of planning with convenience and economy of maintenance being important added considerations.
- Governments should have a long-range plan for site acquisition, in conjunction with the government's comprehensive land use plan to ensure that properties are acquired while still available.

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- Every effort should be made to achieve space standards through acquisition in advance of anticipated needs, even if limited financial resources delay actual development of facilities.
 - Properties acquired should be held in perpetuity (protected by law from encroachment, or diversion to non-park and recreation uses).
 - Recreation properties should be designed and developed to permit the fullest possible use by different groups at different times, on a year-round and around-the-clock basis.
 - Public school buildings should be designed for the fullest possible community use, through reciprocal agreements and operational coordination between school and park and recreation authorities.

Format of Plan

1. Introduction

Examine the history and present situation of the parks and recreation delivery system in the community.

- A. Cultural Information: Population projections, social/economic characteristics, and land use/zoning ordinances. Section should include information on transportation systems available and accessibility within the community.

2. Review of Mission Statement

- A. Determine if Mission Statement still accurately reflects the agreed upon purpose and goals of the parks and recreation delivery system that has the support of the local governing body. Make any revisions using citizen and staff input.
- B. If there is no Mission Statement, one should be developed. Consult Appendix A for guidance.

3. Recreation Inventory and Analysis

Any planning study that examines only the facilities operated by a public recreation and parks department today and ignores the facilities and programs of other public, voluntary, private, or commercial agencies will fall short of fulfilling its potential. Planning **must** examine all potential resources and must place recreation and parks within the total spectrum of social, educational, health, environmental, and transportation concerns.

- A. Evaluate existing Recreation Facilities operated and maintained by local government and those private facilities such as YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, churches, and then also local schools.

Each facility is listed by location and acreage, then evaluated based on age, physical condition, safety, Americans with Disability (ADA) compliance, usage numbers, maintenance costs, revenue, and if it is adequately serving the purpose or mission of the Parks and Recreation Department.

- B. Evaluate existing recreation programs and leisure activities conducted by the Parks and Recreation Department and the community through private organizations, civic

groups, and schools. Examine type of program: athletic, cultural, aquatic, health and fitness, and environmental as examples. Attendance numbers, cost of program, revenue generated, instructor quality, competing programs, and compatibility with mission statement. Are programs accessible both physically and economically to members of the community?

4. Staffing Review

In many cities, playgrounds, community centers in housing projects and other recreation facilities are either understaffed or not staffed at all. A continued emphasis on developing facilities for their own sake, without serious preliminary consideration of how they are to be operated, results in ineffective planning recommendations. This section evaluates current staffing levels of facilities and programs. A current organizational chart is included to examine responsibilities. Staffing review includes administrative, maintenance, programming, athletics, aquatics and the part time and seasonal staff. Years of service, current pay, scheduling shortages, and are current staff levels allowing the department to meet the mission of the department.

5. Budget Review

Include current year budget and examine any trends and changes in the last five years. Evaluate if the budget adequately provides for the operation of facilities and delivery of recreation services that is compatible with mission of the department. Examine existing funding revenue sources and current capital improvement projects.

6. Maintenance Equipment Inventory and Review

This includes a current listing of maintenance equipment and evaluation of age, condition, current maintenance costs, and depreciation values.

7. Natural Habitat or Environmental Review

Include current conditions of streams, wildlife, trees, within the parks system. Any endangered species of plants and animals on the Natural Heritage list of federal or state government should be cited. Include status and condition of any wetlands. Include aerial photographs.

8. Identify Needs and Issues

Any program of land acquisition and facilities development should be based on the listing of needed facilities (a follow up to your inventory) and, more importantly, the particular priorities and needs of a given neighborhood or community. Also, by examining currently available facilities and the nature of the present and anticipated population, it is possible to project recreation needs in specific detail, geared to the unique needs of the people served. This is first accomplished by utilizing information done through the current review of conditions identified in sections 2-7 above and entering into a strategic planning phase.

Strategic Planning is a set of concepts, procedures and tools, and requires a more comprehensive view of what may be important than that which normally guides decision making. It is important that Strategic Planning is constituted as a vital component of long range planning. Strategic Planning is a disciplined effort to produce

fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what a parks and recreation department is, what it does, and why it does it.

A. Identify **Internal Strengths and Weaknesses in Your Parks and Recreation**

Department - this should be done through staff, citizen parks board evaluations and through public citizen input meetings. Include results or reports from public strategic planning meetings and needs assessments/surveys. A description of the public input process should accompany this section. Consult Appendix B

B. Identify **external factors of opportunities or threats**. An example of an external threat or challenge is rapid increase of residential and commercial development that surrounds park land and facilities. Roadway development can be an opportunity that provides better access to facilities or more traffic that is not conducive to natural environment. It is no longer feasible for a single department to move ahead unilaterally in planning its own facilities. Recreation and park departments may receive financial support from the federal government's Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Local Parks and Recreation Fund (LPRF) and the Recreation Trails Program (RTP), all coordinated by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation – Recreation Services Division. These competitive grants are given higher point status when projects are submitted that show intergovernmental cooperation. In addition, many smaller communities coordinate their efforts with neighboring communities, townships or county departments to avoid overlap of facilities. In many cases, cooperative planning and operation of facilities has been successfully undertaken by neighboring governmental units. **Similarly, it is essential to plan closely with other departments, such as school boards, highway departments, health departments, or police departments, in developing facilities.**

C. Identify and Prioritize Future Issues and Needs

The next step is to take the information found in identifying strengths and weakness, opportunities and threats, and prioritize which are the most important to address in the future. Again this should involve input from staff, citizen parks board members, and the public.

9. **Action Plan/Recommendations**

Develop the strategy and recommendations needed to achieve each of the identified prioritized needs and opportunities for the future. Each goal and objective should be listed and an action strategy for implementation assigned that includes:

- Roles of recreation providers
- Capital improvement plan
- Facility development, Improvement and Expansion
- Resource Management
- Maintenance
- Cost analysis which includes future operational cost and revenue generation

-
- Accessibility and Connectivity
 - Funding sources: Grants, Fees and Charges, Partnerships, Sponsorships, and local tax funding.
 - Staffing requirements
 - School Facility Use
 - Communication and Awareness
 - Publicity and Marketing
 - Zoning and land use
 - Outside consultants

Each goal and objective with the action strategy should have a time frame formulated. This need not include a specific year, but could for example identify year 1-3 of the five year plan to implement. If grant funding is identified as a strategy for implementation, then the specific year would need identification for this goal or objective. The time frame is necessary to promote action rather than deferring indefinitely any action.

Provide maps indicating current facilities and planned future development or land acquisition.

10. **Approval and Adoption**

No long range plan has a chance of implementation without approval and acceptance from them Mayor, Council, Parks Board, and the public. Include in this section the approval process and adoption of the plan.

11. **Monitoring the Plan**

A system for monitoring the implementation of the plan that evaluates progress, effectiveness, and any obstacles is necessary once approval comes from the local government and citizens. Include the monitoring system intended as the evaluation tool to appraise progress.

APPENDIX A

MISSION STATEMENT

Parks and Recreation

Strategic Planning Process

Mission Statement Development

PARKS AND RECREATION TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICE

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

What is your Parks and Recreation Department Mission?

Definition of the Mission for Parks and Recreation Services

The essence of a Parks and Recreation Department's mission lies in the nature of the community...in terms of physical, economic, demographic, and social characteristics and determines the level of parks and recreation services which local government wishes to develop and maintain. Without a minimum level of agreement on the desired level of parks and recreation services it is difficult to develop and to evaluate strategies and subsequent policy adopted by the local governing body relating to recreation.

- To consider development or revision of the mission statement, it may be helpful to complete the following checklist:
- Why does local government provide parks and recreation services?
- What are the services the parks and recreation department provide?
- What is the most important service of the local Parks and Recreation Department?
- Who are the Parks and Recreation Department's clientele, and why are they using the local government parks and recreation services?
- How has the Parks and Recreation Department changed in the past five years?
- What would be lost if the local government Parks and Recreation Department and its services were no longer available.

I. Describe below what you understand your Parks and Recreation mission/purpose to be.

2. List any questions, ideas, or concerns you have about your present mission.

3. Consider what might be the best mission for your organization in the future. Describe what your Parks & Recreation Department might accomplish in coming years and who will be served.

4. Discuss as an input team (questions 1-3). Note: Agreement/ Disagreements.

5. Develop Mission Statement:

APPENIX B

Parks and Recreation

Strategic Planning Process

Citizens' Input Task Force Worksheets

Identify Internal Strengths, and Weakness in Your Parks and Recreation Department

- (1) List your perception of the positive aspects or major strengths (assets) of your Park and Recreation Department as it faces the future.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

- (2) List the major weaknesses (liabilities) of your Parks and Recreation Department as it faces the future.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- (3) Identify/Prioritize which strengths and weaknesses will be most critical to your Parks and Recreation Department's future success and growth.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Identify the Critical Issues/Needs for the Future

Major Issues/Needs Regarding Parks and Recreation

After reviewing your responses in the previous worksheets, list what you perceive to be the major issues/needs (interests, concerns) facing local government and its Parks and Recreation Department today, and for the next five years. As you are developing your list of issues/needs, you may want to think of possible options (alternatives or solutions) that you perceive may be available to address the issues/needs you have identified.

(1) List issues/needs that your Parks and Recreation Department faces over the next 2 - 5 years.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

(2) Identify and Prioritize (limit to the most critical issue/needs).

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

(3) Alternatives or solutions

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE LONG RANGE

PLANS

“Our mission is to enhance the quality of life by ensuring diverse recreational opportunities for citizens of all ages and providing the highest quality staff, services, facilities, parks and programs possible.”

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

GOAL: Establish cooperative relationships to expand recreational opportunities, to promote and enhance service delivery, and to preserve open space areas.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Nurture existing relationships and establish new and better rapport with the county, state and federal agencies, leaders and staff.

Action Strategy 1: Appoint a liaison (ex-officio member) to the parks and recreation board from the County government. Year-1

Action Strategy 2: Work with the county liaison to identify needs and interests of county residents not being served by recreation services. Year-1-5

Action Strategy 3: Provide direction to the planning commission and other private sectors in the acquisition and development of open space/recreation facilities. Identify opportunities for the development community to complement the **(city/town name)** _____ open space and recreation facility network (impact fees, ordinances, etc.) Year-1-5

Action Strategy 4: Engage in joint use efforts with other jurisdictions to most effectively and efficiently meet recreation needs. (Written school-park agreement for use of school building for classes, etc.) Year-2-5

-
2. Submit appropriate grant applications – on a regular basis and at all levels of government – as a way of partnering and sharing resources and information with other government entities.

Action Strategy 1: Apply for next round of LPRF/LWCF/RTP grants through TDEC, by Spring, 2005. Year-2

Action Strategy 2: Prepare next plan and grant application for Urban Forestry program grants (annually). Year-1-5

3. To assist staff, Board members should be prepared to answer questions when solicited by government agencies.

Action Strategy 1: Continue parks and recreation board orientation annually or as new members start their term. Include Board notebooks, tours of park system and program information regularly. Year-2-5

Action Strategy 2: Establish a Speakers' Bureau to assist staff in promoting the parks and recreation department – to government agencies and other organizations. Year-2-5

4. Continue the cooperative working relationship with other town departments, not only by asking for assistance, but also providing assistance.

Action Strategy 1: When feasible, engage in joint purchasing with other governmental units with the goal of saving tax dollars. Year-1-5

Action Strategy 2: Town Administrator should continue monthly staff meetings with department heads and designate a time during that meeting to have a round table discussion – including “pats on the back” and requests for cooperative events, etc. Year-1-5

USE OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

GOAL: Utilize financial resources and available assets efficiently and equitably.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Utilize available county services such as grading, paving, and Dirty Street Fighters.

Action Strategy 1: Identify in the budget process annually, these areas where costs could be covered or offset by using county services. Communicate this plan in writing with appropriate county officials to secure commitment. Year-1-5

2. Pursue alternative funding sources

Action Strategy 1: Actively seek state, federal and local grants each year for priority projects and programs, while putting an emphasis on the search for other grants related to programs and youth. Year-1-5

Action Strategy 2: Establish a Department Fees and Charges Policy based on cost analysis of current programs. This will help to determine the balance of fee-based versus free programs and will justify to the public why fees are being addressed. Year-2

Action Strategy 3: Outline a plan for current revenue collections as well as incorporating additional funding ideas. Possible funding sources that could be researched include: non-resident fees, sponsorships, private industry and foundations, a county appropriation, etc. Year-2

Action Strategy 4: Establish a Funding Committee of the parks and recreation board that would work with staff to secure donations and contributions. Year-1

Action Strategy 5: Continue to solicit businesses and civic clubs for fund raising of specific projects and sponsorships and establish sponsorship programs for various parks (Adopt-a-Park), facilities and programs/events. Year-1-5

Action Strategy 6: Develop and implement 1 or 2 big Fundraising/Revenue producing events annually (i.e., golf tournaments).Year-2

3. Conduct survey of recreational interests and activities

Action Strategy 1: Design a survey tool and implement a random sample survey or interest assessment in the community. This should be done about every 2-3 years. Year-1,3,5

LAND ACQUISITION

GOAL: Acquire and preserve open space and high quality natural areas to meet existing and future recreation needs of **(city/town name)** _____ residents.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Develop a Land Use Plan for the **(city/town name)** _____ that would identify future potential land acquisitions for the future.

Action Strategy 1: Continually monitor areas of high growth and target priority acquisitions within these areas. Year-1-5

Action Strategy 2: Encourage acquisitions that can link open space areas and helps complete the trails/greenway plan for the Town. Year-1-5

Action Strategy 3: Cooperate with other public and private entities in the acquisition/development of open space to address recreation needs and the preservation of significant environmental areas. Year-1-5

2. Utilize innovative acquisition techniques, when appropriate, to acquire open space/conservation easements, covenants, and land trusts to secure open space within the Town boundaries without Town expenditures.

Action Strategy 1: Contact nature conservancy for grant info on purchasing land for conservation easement/multiple use. Year-1

Action Strategy 2: Conduct a feasibility study on leasing unused land for sports/recreational activities. Year-2

COMMUNITY AWARENESS/PARTICIPATION/IMAGE

GOAL: Integrate programs and facilities into the lifestyle of residents through public input and enhanced awareness of the **(city/town name)** _____ parks and recreation department, its facilities, programs and services.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Promote the Town through a multi-media based public information program.

Action Strategy 1: **(city/town name)** _____ has a great website but hardly anyone utilizes it to its potential. Promote the diversity of the community through www. **(city/town name)** _____ .org! And then promote the web site through every method available – using Links, etc. Year-1-5

Action Strategy 2: Enhance residents' awareness of **(city/town name)** _____ recreation events through regular mailings and by disseminating education/public relations information to groups gathered for programs and activities. Year-2

Action Strategy 3: Utilize downtown businesses, restaurants, and bed and breakfasts to communicate upcoming events and possible event packages. Year-1-5

Action Strategy 4: Always use and promote the Mission Statement of the **(city/town name)** _____ Parks and Recreation Department on all print materials and advertisement. Year-1-5

2. Regularly utilize various citizen input methods to assist in planning for your comprehensive recreation program.

Action Strategy 1: Utilize mail and telephone surveys to periodically assess community recreation trends, user preferences and levels of satisfaction with facilities, programs and services. Year-1,3,5

Action Strategy 2: Utilize neighborhood meetings to receive public input regarding the planning of facilities and programs and educate resident to all aspect of the parks and recreation department. Year-2-5

Action Strategy 3: Work closely with community organizations to educate community leaders and the public about the department's programs and facilities and role with in the **(city/town name)** _____ / _____ County area. Year-1-5

PROGRAMMING

GOAL: Provide recreational opportunities and facilities to meet the physical, social, environmental and cultural programming needs of **(city/town name)** _____ residents.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Maintain current programs and events while planning/adding new ones.

Action Strategy 1: Conduct periodic user preference surveys to evaluate existing programs and identify recreation trends. Year-1,3,5

Action Strategy 2: Coordinate programming with facility acquisitions, development, and redevelopment. Year-1-5

Action Strategy 3: Target specialized programs for specialized interest groups. (Senior Citizens Center, Special Olympics, etc.) Year-1-5

Action Strategy 4: Increase Trails and Greenways to promote fitness and environmental education. Year-1-5

2. Create partnerships to offer improved programming and opportunities.

Action Strategy 1: Coordinate programs with other jurisdictions (such as **(city/town name)** _____) to provide comprehensive and efficient programming. Year-2-5

Action Strategy 2: Use other facilities to expand and offer new programs – and create written joint use agreements. Year-2-5

Action Strategy 3: Continue work with **(city/town name)** _____ to increase cultural and performing arts programming. Consider adding Reading Workshops and other day camps focused on the Arts. Year-1-5

Action Strategy 4: Work with the county liaison to identify needs and interests of county residents not being served by recreation services. Plan and implement programs and events at satellite locations in areas of the county that are not being served. Year-1-5

MAINTENANCE/FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT

GOAL: Preserve and enhance the historical landscape and heritage of **(city/town name)** _____'s facilities while anticipating needs and recognizing trends and innovations.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Plan and program facilities that can flexibly and efficiently accommodate a variety of uses and programs as future needs dictate.

Action Strategy 1: Develop a Facilities Plan that includes the following citizen priorities on the wish list: Year-2

- New outdoor amphitheater and identify location
- Fitness center
- Athletic complex/fields
- Trails/greenway system, specifically the completion of the **(name of park/trail/system)** _____
- Outdoor Tennis Courts

Action Strategy 2: Identify ways to utilize available city and county land for more activities (e.g., **(name of property)** _____) Year-1-5

2. Continue to be aware of current maintenance standards and practices.

Action Strategy 1: Develop a formal Maintenance Plan for the **(city/town name)** _____ Parks and Recreation Department. Year-2

Action Strategy 2: Identify and assess innovative conservation practices and technologies. Year-1-5

Action Strategy 3: Continue to incorporate safety standards and Americans with Disabilities Act requirements in the development, redevelopment and maintenance of facilities. Year-1-5

Action Strategy 4: Upgrade existing capital equipment according to a capital improvements program. Year-1-5

3. Initiate a facility assessment program that reviews user survey results and considers neighborhood and community input to identify modifications to existing facilities necessary to meet anticipated recreation needs.

Action Strategy 1: Identify these results in the Town's Facility Plan and annual budget process. Year-2

PLANNING

GOAL: Maintain and update on an annual basis, the *(city/town name)* _____ Parks and Recreation Department Five Year Plan, with the overall goal of developing a Comprehensive Recreation and Parks Master Plan in the future.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Continually evaluate and update the Five Year Plan on an annual basis.

Action Strategy 1: Evaluate the goals and objectives and time lines and make sure they are clear and measurable. Make necessary revisions or additions. Year-2-5

Action Strategy 2: Establish an “Annual” meeting of the parks and recreation advisory board for the purpose of planning, evaluation, and orientation. Year-1-5

2. Develop a comprehensive park and recreation system plan, which is basically an inventory of existing conditions and recommendations for future programs and services, acquisition and development of areas and facilities, and administration. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen should officially adopt the plan and it should be updated regularly, and be linked with a capital improvement budget and a phased development.

The plan should reflect transportation patterns, population profiles, demand projections, private facilities, socioeconomic factors, aligned and impacted agencies, organizations, and groups and many other variables. Year-2-5

Action Worksheet

Goal/Objective: _____

FY _____

STRATEGY OR ACTION	PERSON/GROUP RESPONSIBLE	TIME SCHEDULE	FUNDING SOURCE/COST ESTIMATE

TOWN OF *(city/town name)* _____

**PARKS AND RECREATION
MASTER PLAN**

Adopted May 29, 2002

Prepared For:

The Town of *(city/town name)* _____

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CRITICAL FINDINGS AND HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MASTER PLAN

The following is a brief summary of the most critical findings and recommendations in this Report. A complete summary follows.

1. A major focus of Town efforts in the next 10 years should be the repair and renovation of facilities and parks. The Town should focus on those facilities most in need of repair including the Hargraves Center, Community Center, Lincoln Center, Hargraves and Cedar Falls playgrounds, and most Tennis facilities.

2. By the year 2011, it is recommended that *(city/town name)* _____ make provisions for the following new park facilities:

- Complete the Homestead Aquatics Center
- Complete the first phase of Southern Community Park
- Complete Meadowmont Park
- Improve existing neighborhood park sites at Hargraves, Umstead, Community Center, North Forest Hills, Oakwood, Jones and Burlington.
- Purchase two new neighborhood park sites.
- Designate the 34 acre Springcrest property as a neighborhood park site.
- Develop three new neighborhood parks.
- Use existing undeveloped sites and public property to develop mini-park sites.
- Develop a minimum of 6-7 miles of greenway trails.
- Continue acquisition of open space property.

3. Expand upon cooperative efforts, especially with:

- *(city/town name)* _____ City Schools
- *(name of county)* _____ County including the Intergovernmental Park Work Group
- Town of *(city/town name)* _____
- Private enterprises
- Public organizations

4. The Town cannot meet the facility goals of this Report unless it purchases additional parkland, develops open space portions of existing parks, or enters into ambitious partnerships with other recreation providers.

5. The Town's agreement with the *(city/town name)* _____ City Schools for use of most joint use facilities expires in 2007. It is critical that a fair and inclusive agreement is developed that includes all facilities and possibly incorporates concepts such as elimination of fees that both entities charge each other. It is possible that the Town may lose the use of the Lincoln Arts Center in 2007.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

The Master Plan is intended to be an “action oriented” document for the development of parks and recreation facilities through the year 2011. The main purpose of the Master Plan is to provide the Town with an accurate, usable tool to guide its actions and decisions concerning:

- New park and facility development
- Existing facility renovations, expansions and upgrades
- Cooperative efforts in providing recreation needs
- Possible land acquisitions

The plan is organized into five major components with appendices:

1. **Introduction:** Includes a description of the master plan process, history of parks master planning in the Town, and a narrative describing compliance with the Town’s newly adopted (2001) *Planning for (city/town name) _____ Future, The Comprehensive Plan*, (Comprehensive Plan).
2. **Analysis of Existing Park and Recreation Facilities:** Provides analysis of parks, buildings and special facilities.
3. **Community Needs Assessment:** Assesses recreation programs and park facilities including development of local standards and consideration of national trends.
4. **Proposals and Recommendations:** Provides recommendations related to park types, land needs, existing facility improvements and individual facility needs.
5. **Action Plan Implementation:** Suggests methods and means of addressing capital costs, operating costs, staffing needs, and funding.
6. **Appendices:** A number of appendices give detailed information on a variety of subjects including demographics, physical factors that affect the community, review of trends anticipated to affect parks and recreation operations, partnership issues and opportunities, and a record of focus group comments.

Review of Background Demographic and Land Use Information

Population : (see Appendix A for detailed information)

In general *(city/town name) _____* should experience continued population growth throughout the planning period. Based on the 2000 Census data the annual population growth rate was 2.3% from 1990 to 2000. According to the Census the population for the year 2000 is 48,715, (see Table 1-1 of Appendix A). Projections for the years 2005 and 2010 are 52,480 and 56,536 people respectively.

Land Use: (see Appendix B for detailed information)

Currently 90% of the *(city/town name) _____* Urban Service Area is developed. There are approximately 16,800 acres within the Urban Service Area, of which 1,600 acres are either undeveloped or underutilized at one dwelling per 3 or more acres.

Close to 50% of the Town’s land use is low to moderate density residential (see Table 1-11 of Appendix B). Almost 20% of the Town’s lands are developed for institutional uses, including property owned by the University of *(state) _____*. Privately owned commercial, office, mixed-use, and industrial areas comprise less than 9% of the Town’s overall lands. Parks and open space occupy close to 8% of the Town’s land.

The areas with the highest percentage of undeveloped land are located in the northwest and southern portions of the Town's planning jurisdiction. Those areas that have the fewest acres of undeveloped or underdeveloped land are in the central and eastern portions of the Town.

Because the Town is fast approaching build-out capacity, it is essential that the Town act quickly to secure any land needed for future parks.

Existing Facility Inventory

Recreation facilities are presented based on their ownership and facility type. Refer to Table 2-1 "*(city/town name)* _____ Park and Recreation Facility Inventory" (for information on the number of individual amenities such as fields, courts, etc.)

The public sites listed include Town sites, school facilities, and other facilities. For the most part, all of the listed sites are open to public use with the exception of the university sites.

The Town of *(city/town name)* _____ has over 400 acres of open space and parkland.

Many of the park sites have undeveloped areas that provide needed open space for Town residents. However, in order to address the facility needs identified in this report the Town would have to either acquire additional parkland or develop the open space portions of some parks.

Community Needs Assessment

Community Input

Community needs for new recreation and park facilities were determined by using various techniques: advisory committee review, focus group interviews, public forum input, review of acceptable park planning standards and a review of state and national trend assessments.

Focus group interviews were held from September 24-26, 2000 with seven separate groups. Public information meetings/forums were held on September 27, 2000 and January 18, 2001.

The January meeting was held to solicit more public comment on recreational needs and to present the preliminary recommendations of the plan.

Written comments from Town citizens or groups were received and incorporated into the public involvement process.

Community input information presented from the process has been included in Appendix C. The information was organized into four categories—facility statements, program statements, policy statements, or funding statements. It is important to note that the statements are not listed in order of priority.

The participants identified many needs and concerns; however the following is a summary of the major themes found in the community input needs assessment:

- Build more facilities especially pools, athletic fields, indoor multi-purpose space, gymnasiums and facilities targeted for seniors.

- Improve existing sites and facilities.

- Continue the greenways program.

- Improve the variety of programming and outreach efforts (kids at risk, special populations, and transportation).

- Improve promotion and awareness of programs.

- Make access to registration more user friendly (more than one location, web access etc.)

- Maintenance issues should be addressed.

Partnerships will be more important in the future (schools, county, public, private, U(*STATE*) etc.)

State and National Assessments

Surveys designed to determine the demand for outdoor recreation have been conducted by the State of (*state*) _____ and on a national level by the National Park Service, the President's Commission on Americans Outdoor, and the National Sporting Goods Association. These surveys were also reviewed and incorporated in the process of determining recreation needs and standards for (*city/town name*) _____ (see Appendix D for detailed information concerning Nation Trends).

Park Classifications and Land Requirements

Standards developed by organizations including the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), the (*state*) _____ Department of Environment Health and Natural Resources (*STDEHNR*), and master plans for towns or cities of similar size were reviewed for the plan. (*city/town name*) _____ 's recommended standards for park classifications and land area requirements are itemized in Table 3-1 "*(city/town name)* _____ Park Classifications & Area Requirements" (see page 3-10). Park classifications conform to one of three general categories: places for active recreation, resource-oriented areas, and specialized facilities. Space requirements, typical facilities and programs, and unique environmental features further define the park types. The classifications used are Regional Park, District Park, Community Park, Neighborhood Park, Greenway/Linear Park, Mini-Park, and Unique/Specialized Area.

Evaluation of Parkland Needs and Land Requirements

The minimum park land requirement (in acres) for the total population of (*city/town name*) _____ is provided in Table 3-2 "Total Parks Sites and Acreage Requirements" (see page 3-11). The acreage requirement is based upon the population ratio method (acres of parkland per 1,000 population) established for each park classification.

The types of parks which will be needed by the end of the planning period (FY 10/11) based upon the acreage standards provided in Table 3-1 and total acreage shown in Table 3-2 include, District Parks, Community Parks, Neighborhood Parks and Mini-parks.

The recommended total acreage for these parks as expressed by the standards are as follows and does not take into account existing park acreage for each designation.

District Parks: 283 acres or approximately 1 park for the total population of (*city/town name*) _____ .

Community Parks: 170-283 acres for the Town population or approximately 4-6 community parks.

Neighborhood Parks: 113 acres for the Town population or approximately 10-11 neighborhood parks

Mini-Parks: 14 acres or approximately 13-14 sites.

Additional acreage needed by the end of the planning period (2001-2011) is summarized by park type as follows:

Land Needs for 2011

- Regional Park Land — Existing acreage is adequate (over 13,000 acres available)
- District Park Land — Need 283 acres, (standards identify 283 acres and none exist)
- Community Park Land — Existing acreage is adequate (standards identify 283 acres, 272 acres exist w/future sites)
- Neighborhood Park Land — Need 29-acres, (standards identify 113 acres, 84-acres exist including 2 schools)
- Mini Park/Tot Lots Land — Need 10 acres, (standards identify ±14-acres, 3-4-acres exist)

Facility Standards - Evaluation of Facility Needs

Minimum standards for recreational facilities (i.e. ball fields, courts, outdoor areas, etc.) have been developed for (*city/town name*) _____ in accordance with industry guidelines established by the NRPA, and (*STATE*)DEHNR. Table 3-3, “Standards for Public Facilities” (see page 3-12), identifies minimum recreation facility standards for use by (*city/town name*) _____ to compare with other public entities in (*state*) _____ and the United States.

The number of public facilities needed in (*city/town name*) _____ through the planning period (2001-2011) are identified in Table 3-4, “Public Facilities Needs Analysis” (see page 3-13). Using standards the following major individual facility needs were identified through 2011:

- (1) Adult baseball fields(legion/high school)
- (3) Youth baseball/adult softball fields
- (7) Multipurpose athletic/soccer fields
- (7) Volleyball courts
- (15) Picnic shelters/facilities
- (18) Play areas
- (5) Trails (walking/jogging)
- (1) Recreation centers w/gym
- (2) Swimming pools

Master Plan Proposals and Recommendations

The challenges for the future are to maintain the current inventory of parks and facilities in safe, useable, and enjoyable condition, while at the same time providing new facilities for a growing and changing population. The recommendations provided in Chapter Four are based on a number of sources including the public input process, standards, professional evaluation of current inventory, and a comparison with national and state standards.

The following are key factors that influenced the recommendations found in this report:

Anticipated population growth will likely place additional burdens on the existing facilities within the Town.

It is expected that citizen's interest and demand for "quality leisure services" and additional facilities will increase.

Citizens expect local government to be a major provider of recreational services at a price that would accommodate as many people as possible.

The Town Comprehensive Plan identified both public interests in providing improved recreation sites and the difficulty the Town faces in finding available land for these sites.

The Comprehensive Plan also recommends that a variety of strategies be considered to provide increased recreational opportunities including:

- Evaluate Town owned property for park development, particularly for establishing neighborhood parks in areas of need.
- Evaluate redevelopment sites for acquisition and development.
- Enhance existing sites to improve utilization.
- Ensure that new development provides recreation facilities for its future users.
- Pursue cost sharing and joint-use agreements with other agencies (Schools, County, etc.)

In order to present a realistic plan for meeting the recreational needs of the future, master plan scenarios were developed "in-house" as part of the overall planning process. Each scenario was evaluated as to how well each addressed the recreational needs of the Town. The preliminary recommendations were presented and reviewed with staff and advisory team members, prior to presenting them at a public information forum on January 18, 2001. The purpose of each meeting was to refine the proposals for inclusion in the final report for public presentation and adoption by Town Council.

The recommendations have been divided into the following categories:

Recreation Providers: Describes how the Town interacts with other providers.

Parks and Facilities: Identifies proposed new parks or facilities and improvements to existing sites.

Priorities: Lists projects for implementation as part of the action plan.

Recommendations - Recreation Providers

(city/town name) _____ :

The Town should continue to provide park and recreation facilities for use by Town residents. Specifically, the Town should:

- Continue to provide neighborhood parks, community parks, and special facilities.
- Support and maintain existing facilities
- Expand and improve facilities where appropriate.

-
- Continue to implement the greenways plan by preserving open space/greenway corridors, building trails, and working with neighboring jurisdictions to create links with Durham, *(city/town name)* _____ and the County.
 - The Master Plan also recommends that the Town develop a plan that incorporates bike paths, bike routes, sidewalks and greenway trails to provide a coordinated system of connecting neighborhoods to parks and public spaces.
 - Develop better partnerships with a wide variety of agencies, governmental entities and businesses for the provision of facilities and programs.
 - Work on an updated formal joint-use agreement with the Schools for use of existing and future school sites. The Department should be involved with designs for new school sites to create school-recreation opportunities that are specifically for “Joint Use”.

***(Name of County)* _____ County:** (see Appendix E and Chapter 4 for more detailed information)

The County has a Master Plan that was adopted in 1988. However, recent County planning initiatives have gone beyond the recommendation of the 1988 Report and have affirmed the premise that Orange County should develop and maintain park and recreation facilities for all County residents. Town support should focus on encouraging the County to build at least one district park in *(city/town name)* _____ Township. The County has purchased land for a district park near Eubanks Road and has bond approved for phase 1 development.

(city/town name) _____ should continue to seek appropriate levels of financial assistance from the County for new construction of facilities, particularly those that would naturally serve populations outside of the Town limits.

The Town should work with the Orange County Environment and Resource Conservation and Recreation and Parks Departments to search for collaborating opportunities on future projects such as larger parks, greenway connections, sports field complexes, pools, and other special facilities. See Appendix E for more detailed information concerning the role of Orange County within this plan.

- The Town should work with the Orange County Board of County Commissioners and the Intergovernmental Parks Work Group to address countywide issues.
- The Town should support the County’s recent planning efforts to expand its vision beyond its 1988 Master Plan and provide recreation on a countywide basis. The Town should support the County’s efforts to a district park near Eubanks Road to serve the *(city/town name)* _____ area.
- *(city/town name)* _____ should continue to seek appropriate levels of financial assistance from the County for operational support and new construction of facilities, particularly those that would naturally serve populations outside of the Town limits.
- The Town should work with Orange County’s Environment and Resource Conservation Department and Recreation and Parks Department to search for collaborating opportunities on future projects such as larger parks, greenway connections, sports field complexes, pools, and other special facilities.

Other Towns/Municipalities: (see Appendix E and Chapter 4 for detailed information)

- *(city/town name)* _____ should work directly with *(city/town name)* _____, Hillsborough, and Durham whenever possible to plan and fund regional and interlocal parks and facilities.
- *(city/town name)* _____, like *(city/town name)* _____, will likely concentrate on providing community parks, neighborhood parks, and special facilities. Lack of resources, such as land, funding or facilities, will likely encourage *(city/town name)* _____ to look for teaming opportunities with other providers. *(city/town name)* _____ and *(city/town name)* _____ should also team more actively in providing program and services.
- *(city/town name)* _____ provides a wide range of parks and recreation facilities and programs and offers substantial potential as a partner for greenway/trail connections. Opportunities for partnerships should be investigated if they promise to deliver an equitable service to Town residents for expenditures made.
- Recreation needs of all county citizens would be best met if other towns in Orange County offered additional recreational programs and facilities for their own communities. This would require the towns to begin supporting recreation by providing local funding creating partnerships or seeking funds through grant programs. Grant programs can assist communities and associations in funding projects based on need and local commitment (examples include *(STATE)*- Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, and Land and Water Conservation Fund).

Federal & State: (see Appendix E and Chapter 4 for more detailed information)

- The federal and state government will likely continue to be a major provider of regional parks.
- The federal and state government will likely concentrate on protection, preservation, conservation and management of public lands that are deemed appropriate and necessary for all the United States and *(state)* _____.
- The U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Department of Interior manage sites in *(state)* _____ that are used for recreational activities and these sites will likely be maintained past 2011.

The state and federal government will likely continue to assist the community with funding through grant programs such as

- *ST*-PARTF, ISTE(A)TEA(TEA21), CDBG, Clean Water Act, and *STD*OT (bikes and trails) etc. (see chapter 4 for descriptions of these programs)

Schools: (see Appendix E and Chapter 4 for more detailed information)

The current use agreement that guides much of the Town's use of facilities on School property expires in 2007. The Schools and the Town should work to attain a system wide joint-use agreement. This Report recommends that attempts should be made to arrive at an agreement that would:

-
- Deal with all facilities on a uniform system-wide basis.
 - Reduce or eliminate fees that both entities charge each other for rental of facilities.
 - Provide a fair and effective method of sharing maintenance and repair responsibilities.
The Schools and the Department should also work together to:
 - Identify additional programs that can take place on school or park properties.
 - Determine how to mutually approach property acquisition.
 - Jointly construct sports fields, gymnasiums, and aquatic facilities.

Private Sector:

The private sector will likely continue providing commercial “for profit” recreation.

To help implement the Master Plan, the Town will need to develop new ways or means to partner with private sector providers.

Developers are responsible for dedicating open space and parkland through the development process but the ordinance could be improved by:

- Making payments-in-lieu more affordable to encourage payments when appropriate and to help find fair recreation solutions for infill and redevelopment projects.
- Increasing open space requirements when floodplain or steep slope areas are counted toward open space requirements.
- Encouraging clustered development and transfer of development rights to promote more effective open space dedications.

Recommendations - Parks and Facilities

General:

As previously stated, (*city/town name*) _____ should focus on developing and operating community parks, neighborhood parks and special facilities (special facilities such as recreation centers, pools, gymnasiums, and bikeways/greenways). In addition the Town should support and encourage efforts by other agencies, the County and neighboring municipalities to develop larger parks.

Chapter 3 “Community Needs Assessment”, identified the existing and future parks needed in the Town through the planning period. The following is a brief summary of the most critical improvements and additions recommended in this Report. By the year 2011, it is recommended that (*city/town name*) _____ make provisions for the following improvements and new park facilities:

- Renovate the facilities at (*city/town name*) _____ Community Center and (*city/town name*) _____ Community Center.
- Improve and expand facilities at all community park sites. (Cedar Falls, Homestead, Meadowmont and Southern)
- Develop Meadowmont Park as proposed by its master plan.
- Develop at least one phase of Southern Community Park.
- Improve existing neighborhood park sites at Hargraves, Umstead, Community Center, North Forest Hills, Oakwood, Jones and Burlington.

-
- Find a source of funds for purchase of neighborhood park sites.
 - Develop three new neighborhood parks.
 - Use existing undeveloped sites and public property to develop mini-park sites.
 - Develop large recreation centers at Homestead Park and the future Southern Community Park (the Homestead site should include an aquatic facility).
 - Coordinate with the school system on improvements to Lincoln Gym/Center.
 - Develop a minimum of 6-7 miles of greenway trails.
 - Maintain Little Creek and Merritt Pasture properties as open space.
 - Continue improvements to tennis facilities.

Regional & District Parks:

The Town should support and encourage efforts by other agencies, in particular the Orange County and neighboring municipalities to develop these larger parks. Partnerships in the development of regional and district parks should be explored as opportunities arise. There is current need for a District Park to serve the population of (*city/town name*) _____ . The County has acquired and has funds for Phase I of (*city/town name*) _____ Township District Park at Eubanks and Old 86.

Community Parks:

The Town currently has 272 acres of land within four existing community park sites (Homestead, Cedar Falls, Meadowmont, and Southern Community). This is very close to the recommended standard of 283 acres by the year 2011. In addition, the service area of (*city/town name*) _____ 's Anderson Community Park (55 acres) overlaps into (*city/town name*) _____ and provides some service to (*city/town name*) _____ residents. (see Maser Plan Proposals Map – Community Parks)

It is important to note that the recommended standards are minimum standards and that the community could benefit from acquisition of additional sites. The plan does not recommend a new community park. However, a site may be necessary if the Town is unable to accommodate the recommended number of proposed individual facilities at existing park sites (this is especially true for sports fields or courts).

The additional park may also be necessary because many Town parks have unusually large open space preservation areas compared to most urban parks. It may be possible to meet individual facility needs by partnering with Orange County or another provider.

Finding a site within the Urban Service District would be such a difficult and costly proposition that the Town should consider acquiring property outside its jurisdictional limits. This may require the Town to obtain land for park development within the County and possibly the rural buffer.

Existing community park sites will require improvements and renovations to accommodate and enhance future use. The recommendations for existing sites are provided in Chapter 4.

Neighborhood Parks:

This Master Plan proposes the acquisition and development of three new neighborhood parks for the planning period (2001-2011). The standards identified a shortage of approximately 29 acres of neighborhood park property.

Site-specific master plans should be prepared for each new park site and local neighborhood residents should be made part of the development process. Where feasible, the parks should be linked to other recreation sites by pedestrian routes and when possible greenways/trails.

Three (3) neighborhood park sites are proposed at the following general locations:

- N1 – North – general area north of Eubanks Road near I-40
- N2 – North (northeast) – general area of Erwin Road and I-40
- N3 – South – General area of Mt. Carmel Road and Parker Road.

(see Maser Plan Proposals Map - Neighborhood Parks)

Location N2 proposes using part of an existing Town property, the 34-acre Dry Creek open space tract at the intersection of Erwin Road and I-40.

Existing neighborhood park sites will require improvements and renovations to accommodate and enhance future use. The recommendations for existing sites are provided in Chapter 4.

Mini-Parks:

Standards from the needs assessment identify a need for approximately 9-10 acres of mini-park land (± 10 sites) by the year 2011. This Master Plan has not identified individual sites for these parks, but recommends using existing natural areas and open space within developed areas to provide 9-10 mini-parks.

Another method of acquiring sites is to use abandoned lots or condemned sites, as they become available. Mini-parks should be approximately one acre in size to provide a setting that is needed or requested by a neighborhood or select interest group. A menu of recreation facilities that may be found in a mini-park includes play equipment, a court game, picnic facilities, and sitting areas. As a general rule, the park should be designed to meet the needs of a specific user group or activity. The most apparent need in (*city/town name*) _____ appears to be additional play equipment areas and picnic facilities (tables, benches etc.)

Special Use Parks and Facilities:

Recreation Centers and Gymnasiums: It is recommended that larger recreation centers be developed to accommodate more programs and activities and allow the Department to schedule a variety of concurrent activities at an individual site. Additionally, the existing sites should be renovated to improve their appearance and usefulness. This plan recommends the Town develop two new centers, at least one of which should be a large multi-purpose recreation center.

The existing facilities are open a maximum number of hours and days for optimal use. However, due to lack of space they are very limited in their ability to accommodate concurrent programs or activities. Therefore, it is recommended that the existing facilities at Hargraves and Community Center should be renovated to improve their usefulness and appearance.

All new building improvements should incorporate design elements that provide an appealing environment for the user. Spaces should be open and well lighted to provide a positive image for the Department and the community.

- **Community Center (Estes Drive):** The center should be renovated to provide for improved use. Many of the improvements are necessary to maintain existing operations.

In addition, minor expansion to common use areas such as meeting rooms, changing areas, storage areas, and lobby space would improve the facilities ability to accommodate more programs (see Chapter Four, Recommended Improvements and Renovations to Existing Facilities).

- **Hargraves Center/Northside Gym:** These existing facilities should be renovated to provide for improved use. Many of the improvements to the Hargraves Center building are necessary to maintain existing operations. In addition, minor expansion of common use areas such as meeting rooms, changing areas, storage areas, and lobby space would improve the ability of each facility to accommodate more programs (see Chapter Four, Recommended Improvements and Renovations to Existing Facilities).
- **Homestead Park Recreation Center/Aquatics Facility:** The Town should develop a multipurpose facility at Homestead Park that includes gymnasium space, meeting/instruction rooms, childcare facilities, changing areas, reception space, a multi-tank aquatics facility, and offices. The aquatic facility should be able to accommodate recreational swimmers, instructional programs, therapeutic programs and competitive swimming.
- **Lincoln Center (gymnasium and arts center):** The Town's lease with the school system for this facility expires in 2007. The Town should renegotiate this lease to continue using the gymnasium and arts center. If the lease cannot be renewed the Town must find other locations for providing an arts facility and gymnasium.
- **Southern Community Park Recreation Center:** Build a multipurpose facility at Southern Community Park that includes gymnasium space, staff offices, meeting rooms, instruction rooms, art facilities, childcare facilities, changing facilities and reception space. The center could also accommodate an adjacent outdoor leisure pool.

Greenways/Bikeways: The Town of (*city/town name*) _____ has an approved Greenways Master Plan that provides direction for future improvements and operational polices. The plan identifies greenway corridors throughout the Town to create a network of trails that would total approximately 28-miles in length. Existing recreational trails (paved and unpaved) account for approximately six-miles of greenway.

This Master Plan recommends that:

- The Town continue to aggressively pursue the recommendations of the 1998, (*city/town name*) _____ *Greenways Comprehensive Master Plan*.
- A minimum of 6-7 miles of new trail should be developed.
- During the planning period an emphasis should be placed on development of paths and trails already identified in the (*city/town name*) _____ *Greenways Comprehensive Master Plan* that would connect with future greenway trails proposed by other providers in the area such as U(*STATE*), (*city/town name*) _____ , Orange County or Durham.
- Continue to seek funding from (*STATE*)DOT administered sources such as TEA-21, (*STATE*)-Trail Fund, Bikeway Funds, and Enhancement Project Funds, as well as Clean Water Management Trust Fund and FEMA land acquisition projects.
- U(*STATE*) should be approached as a partner for developing trails and a cooperative agreement (letter of understanding) should be developed to facilitate the process.
- The current Greenways Master Plan should be amended to delete the recommended eastern access to the Merritt Pasture open space.

Open Space Network: The Town should use its approved Greenways Master Plan as the core of an open space acquisition effort. However, the greenways plan should be expanded for open space purposes in a number of ways:

- A land acquisition-funding source other than Town Open Space bonds should be found. Legal limitations eliminate use of Open Space bonds for purchasing some of the most desirable, largest and least expensive tracts of open space just outside of the Town limits.
- Open space should be acquired wherever possible beyond the limits of stream corridors. The Town's goal should be to connect a series of large open space tracts by relatively narrow greenway corridors. These corridors can also be used to connect to other pedestrian destination points.
- The Town should concentrate on preserving open space along streams that still have significant undeveloped tracts, especially Morgan, Wilson, Old Field, and Little Creeks.
- Efforts should be made to preserve a significant portion of the Greene Tract for open space purposes.
- The Town should work with the University to explore the possibility of preserving large portions of the Horace Williams property for open space purposes.
- Connecting currently separated open space tracts should be a priority.
- The Town should pursue acquisition of open space outside the Town limits, particularly north of I-40 and south of Southern Village. A funding source would need to be identified. These areas would provide a better buffer between communities and allow greater opportunities for preservation.
- Open space works best when it is large enough to provide wildlife habitat, wildlife corridors, and trails. The Town should work with neighboring jurisdictions to assure that major open space areas are connected.

Recommended Improvements and Renovations to Existing Facilities

(city/town name) _____'s existing park sites and facilities will require improvements and renovations to accommodate and enhance future use. Recommendations are provided in Chapter 4 for all existing parks and facilities. (See page 4-11). Due to age some facilities will require extensive renovation.

Individual Facility Proposals and Recommendations

By the year 2011 *(city/town name)* _____ should contain new and improved community parks, neighborhood parks, and various special facilities. These park sites would allow for expansion of needed individual recreation facilities. All new facilities would need to comply with federal, state, and local building codes. This includes the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act, which requires access for people with disabilities to all public services.

In Chapter 3 “Recreation Standards and Community Needs Assessment”, specific facility needs were identified. Table 3-4 (See page 3-13) identifies the number of individual facilities needed for the 2011 Town population.

Chapter 4 of the report provides detailed information on recommendations for individual facilities. The following list identifies the type and number of facilities that should be considered when developing plans for future park sites:

Recommended New Individual Facilities

- (6-8) Multi-purpose athletic fields
- (4) Youth baseball/adult Softball
- (1) Dog park
- (15) Picnic shelters/facilities
- (18) Play areas (fix existing first)
- (1-2) Recreation centers w/gym
- (n/a) Restroom facilities (each park as needed, see specifics in Chapter 4)
- (1) Roller hockey court
- (2) Swimming pools
- (0) Tennis courts (build only as needed to serve individual neighborhoods)

Priorities for Development

The park and facility proposals have been prioritized into three separate time frames for implementation. The prioritization was influenced by the evaluation of existing facilities; the community needs assessment and the financial ability of (*city/town name*) _____ to implement the overall capital improvement plan. A high priority was established for land acquisition due to the diminished availability of undeveloped land in (*city/town name*) _____. The proposed priorities are illustrated in Chapter Five of this report (see Table 5-1 Capital Improvements Program, page 5-6) and the following general outline:

Years 2002-2006

Land Acquisition

- Acquire land for North Neighborhood Park (site N1 - Eubanks Road area)
- Designate land for North/Northeast Neighborhood Park (N2 - Erwin Road area,)
- Acquire land for South Neighborhood Park (N3 - Mt. Carmel Road/Parker Road area)
- Acquire land for mini-parks (2-sites minimum, locations not identified)
- Acquire land for 2-2.5 miles of greenway trails

Existing Park/Facility Renovations and Improvements

- Renovate/improve existing community parks (Homestead and Cedar Falls)
- Implement renovations/improvements to existing neighborhood parks (Hargraves, Community Center, Umstead, Jones, Burlington, North Forest Hills, Oakwood, Ephesus and schools site)
- Renovate/improve existing recreation centers (Hargraves and Community Center)
- Renovate/improve A.D. Clark Pool at Hargraves
- Implement miscellaneous Small Park Improvements Program

New Park/Facility Development

- Plan and develop Meadowmont Park (improvements outside the developer's responsibility)
- Plan and develop Phase 1 of Southern Community Park
- Plan Phase 1 of North/Northeast Neighborhood Park (N2 - Erwin Road area,)
- Plan and develop Pritchard Park
- Plan and develop Culbreth Mini Park
- Plan and develop 2 mini park sites (locations not identified)
- Plan and develop Phase 1 of Homestead Recreation Center/Aquatic Facility
- Plan and develop approximately 2 miles of paved greenway trails

Years 2006-2011

Land Acquisition

- Acquire land for mini-parks (2-sites minimum, locations not identified)
- Acquire land for 2-2.5 miles of greenway trails

Existing Park/Facility Renovations and Improvements

- Implement Phase 2 improvements to Cedar Falls Community Park
- Implement Phase 2 improvements to existing neighborhood parks (Hargraves, Community Center, Umstead, Jones, Burlington, North Forest Hills, Oakwood, Ephesus and school sites)
- Implement Phase 2 improvements to Community Center Park Recreation Center
- Implement improvements to Lincoln Center/Gym (contingent upon a new lease agreement)
- Implement Phase 2 improvements to A.D. Clark Pool at Hargraves
- Implement Phase 2 of miscellaneous Small Park Improvements Program

New Park/Facility Development

- Plan and develop Phase 1 of North Neighborhood Park (site N1 - Eubanks Road area)
- Plan and develop Phase 1 of South Neighborhood Park (N3 - Mt. Carmel Road/Parker Road area)
- Plan and develop 2 mini-park sites (locations not identified)

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- Plan and develop Phase 1 of Southern Community Park Recreation Center (start in 2010)
 - Plan and develop Phase 2 of Homestead Recreation Center/Aquatic Facility
 - Plan and develop approximately 2-2.5 miles of paved greenway trails

Beyond 2011

Land Acquisition

- Acquire land for mini-parks (3-sites minimum, locations not identified)
- Acquire land for 2-2.5 miles of greenway trails

Existing Park/Facility Renovations and Improvements

- Implement Phase 3 improvements to existing neighborhood parks (Community Center)
- Implement Phase 3 improvements to Community Center Park Recreation Center
- Implement Phase 2 improvements to Lincoln Center (contingent upon a new lease agreement)
- Implement Phase 3 of miscellaneous Small Park Improvements Program

New Park/Facility Development

- Plan and develop Phase 2 of North Neighborhood Park (site N1 - Eubanks Road area)
- Plan and develop Phase 2 of South Neighborhood Park (N3 - Mt. Carmel Road/Parker Road area)
- Plan and develop 3 mini-park sites (locations not identified)
- Plan and develop Phase 2 of Southern Community Park Recreation Center
- Plan and develop approximately 2-2.5 miles of paved greenway trails

Action Plan Implementation

Implementing the Master Plan recommendations will help the Town meet future needs for parks and recreation services, as well as preserving open space. For the plan to succeed the Town must continue establishing annual budgets for the Park and Recreation Department based on projected capital improvement costs, staffing needs, and operating costs presented in the plan. The action plan has taken into account funds identified for projects from the Town's 16-Year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and other sources such as open space bonds, County Bond Contributions and Town appropriations. Capital improvements for the plan have been grouped into three time categories, "2002-2006", "2006-2011", and "Beyond 2011" This is designed to give the Town a realistic approach to implementing the proposals and recommendations of this Master Plan.

Master Plan Capital Improvement Program

The proposed capital improvement program for the acquisition, renovation, and development of parks and facilities was prepared with input from the planning committee team and Town staff. All proposed costs are shown in 2001-dollar values. The capital improvement costs include funds for land acquisition, site development and renovation or significant maintenance improvements. The costs also include estimated planning and design fees.

Table 5-1 “Master Plan Capital Improvements Program” (located at the end of Chapter 5) shows the costs associated with all capital projects and reflects the priorities for development outlined in Chapter 4. Please note that some costs have been extended beyond the year 2011 to account for financing and development that could last for 10-12 years beyond the planning period. Renovations and improvements to existing facilities are itemized in Table 5-1.1.

Summary of Capital Improvement Cost:

See Table 5-1 (Chapter 5)	Project Type	Amount
	Existing Parks/Facilities (Renovations Improvements)	\$7,205,500
	Land Acquisition	\$1,950,000
	New Park Development	\$4,610,000
	New Special Facilities Development	\$14,300,000
	Total Capital Improvements (includes projects beyond 2011)	\$28,065,500
	Capital Improvements Beyond 2011 (per Table 5-1)	(\$6,240,000)
	Subtotal Cost of Capital Improvements through 2011	\$21,825,500
	Projects with identified funding through 2011	(\$14,038,000)
	Total New Capital Projects (no project funding identified)	\$7,787,500

* All costs are in current (2001) dollars

Table 5-1 also denotes projects that have identified funding in the Town’s 2001-2016 CIP and/or projects that have funds earmarked from Town appropriations, bonds (County and Town), or partnership agreements. The projects account for \$14,038,000.00 and include the following:

2001-2016 CIP Projects:	Amount
Hargraves Center / A.D Clark Pool Repairs	\$1,225,000
Community Center Repairs	\$993,000
Tennis Court Repair (system-wide)	\$320,000
Total	\$2,538,000

Previously Funded Projects and/or Projects Using Bond Funds :	Amount
Greenway/Open space land acquisition (approximate remaining funds from Town open-space bonds)	\$1,000,000
Greenway Development (2001 County bond fund contribution and Town CIP)	\$2,000,000
Homestead Aquatics Facility (2001 County bond fund contribution and Town bond funds)	\$5,600,000
Southern Community Park (County bond fund contributions)	\$2,900,000
Total	\$11,500,000

Capital Improvements Funding Strategy

Based on the information from Table 5-1 and the summary on the previous page there are \$7,787,500 of projects that require funding within the planning period to meet the park and recreation needs identified in this Master Plan. The Department should use a combination of funding sources from various means to accomplish the recommendations of the Master Plan. Potential sources for capital funding are identified in Chapter 5 and Appendix H of this plan and a funding strategy is outlined for consideration by the Town.

Capital Funding Strategy for Consideration:

Funding Source :	Amount
General Obligation Bond Campaign	\$6,000,000
Payments in lieu of recreation area dedication	\$400,000
Grants/Federal & State Assistance	\$1,400,000
Total	\$7,800,000

General Obligation Bonds:

- The Town should create a park and recreation bond campaign specifically for use in acquiring land, renovating existing facilities and developing new facilities proposed by this plan. The first campaign could be for half the amount shown and should be started as soon as possible. However, it may be less expensive to have one campaign handle the full amount.
- General obligation bonds are still the most common source utilized to fund park projects in *(state)* _____ .

Payment in Lieu of Dedication:

- The Development Ordinance could be improved by making payments-in-lieu more affordable to encourage payments when appropriate and to help find fair recreation solutions for infill and redevelopment projects. This could increase the amount of funds raised through the planning period.

-
- Based on past performance the master plan assumes \$400,000 can be collected over the planning period for use in capital improvement projects.

Grants/Federal & State Assistance and Contributions:

- Approximately \$1.6-million should be raised through a combination of partnerships, grants, gifts, or other revenue sources. Based on previous grants awarded to the Town this goal can be achieved with as few as six grants of slightly over \$250,000 each. It should be noted that any growth in proceeds from partnerships, grants, and gifts, would lower the amount needed from other sources accordingly.
- There are a substantial number of opportunities in the area to support this funding as described in the Appendix H under the heading of Key Funding/Revenue Sources. In particular (*state*) _____ PARTF grants, federal grants such as LWCF and UPARR, private sector foundations, and non-profit groups should be aggressively approached by the Town/Department.

Other Methods for Acquisition and Development

Other methods available to (*city/town name*) _____ for acquiring and developing parks can be found in Appendix H.

Staff Needs

The Park and Recreation Department's structure and number of personnel are comparable with that of similar size communities in the state.

The addition of the proposed park facilities and associated programming would require additional staff to accomplish their mission and purpose.

The current program load justifies the immediate need of a parks building maintenance coordinator.

Seven (7) key staff additions are identified for the planning period in the “Proposed Organizational Chart” (see Chapter 5- Exhibit 5-1, page 5-6). Five of the staff additions fit into position classifications that exist in the current structure of the Department, however two new positions have been identified.

In addition four part-time staff positions are identified for upgrading to full-time positions.

Additional staff fitting existing classifications or upgraded to full-time:

- (1) Recreation Supervisor to oversee the management, coordination and promotion of programs and activities at the Homestead recreation/aquatics facility.
- (1) Assistant Center Supervisor for Homestead recreation/aquatics facility.
- (3) Recreation Assistants/Life guards to work at the new and expanded facilities at Homestead.
- (4) Positions to be made full-time that are currently part—time: Recreation Specialist for Special Olympics, Recreation Specialist for Teens/Special Events, Recreation Specialist for pottery/Special Events and Recreation Assistant at Hargraves

Proposed/New staff positions include:

- (1) Parks Building Maintenance Coordinator
- (1) Assistant Building/Grounds Maintenance Coordinator

Proposed Operating Budget

Estimated Operations (see Table 5-2, page 5-7)

The proposed operating budget for the Department has been projected for the planning period as shown on Table 5-2 in 2001 dollars without any allowance for inflation. Table 5-2 “Proposed Operating Budget” reflects the implementation of the Proposed Capital Improvements (including those for Special Facilities) outlined in Table 5-1 through the year 2011.

The grand total cost for operations (no capital) through the year 2011 is estimated to be \$26,696,110 and includes additional staff as new facilities are brought on line. The figure also includes lump sum operating expenses for proposed new parks and special facilities along with the improvements to existing sites

Table 5-2 also denotes approximate per capita general fund contributions needed to implement the proposed recommendations.

Potential Sources of Operating Funds (see Appendix H for details of each funding source)

- General Fund Contributions/Property Tax Revenues
- User Fees and Revenues
- Limited Option or Special Use Tax
- Service Contracts and Partnerships

Operating Budget - Funding Strategy for Consideration:

Funding Source :	Amount
General Fund Contributions (based on 2001 per capita expenditures of \$39.67)	\$21,275,000
1¢ of Additional Property Tax over 5-year period	\$2,100,000
User Fees and Revenues	\$4,000,000
Total	\$27,375,000
Total Operational Need per Table 5-2	\$26,696,110

General Fund Contributions (Property Taxes): Assuming allocations from the General Fund continue at the current FY01/02 level of \$39.67 per person or \$1.99 million annually, the total funds generated through the planning period would amount to approximately \$21,275,000 (based on 2010 population of 56,536). This is short of the funding necessary to meet the operating costs identified for the plan and would require additional funds from sources such as user fees and/or an increase in property taxes. The master plan proposes that per capita allocations continue at no less than \$39.67 and that additional funding for operations be provided from user fees revenues and a 1¢ increase in property tax that is dedicated or earmarked for park and recreation services.

Dedicate 1¢ of Additional Property Tax for Park and Recreation Services: General tax revenues traditionally provide the principle sources of funds for general operations and maintenance of a municipal recreation and parks system. Assessed valuation of real and personal property provides the framework for this major portion of the tax base for the Town. (city/town name) _____ should consider a 1¢-tax increase for accomplishing the objectives of this plan.

Each penny (1¢) of tax on the current property valuation (FY00/01) generates approximately \$411,000 annually. If 1¢ of the property tax were designated for park and recreation use over a five-year period, the increase would conservatively generate \$2.1-million assuming only minimum increases in property valuation of 2% annually.

User Fees and Revenues:

If revenues remain at the current annual level of approximately \$385,000 it would produce \$3.6 to \$3-8-million over the planning period. Assuming the level of return increases 1%--2% annually through the planning period (2001-2011) the projected

amount would total approximately \$4.0-4.2-million. These funds can be used to cover operating costs associated with the plan.

This goal is achievable by bringing new facilities such as the Homestead Center on-line, improving existing centers, and making modest changes to the current fee structure for activities and programs.