All For One, Fun For All!
Bethlehem’s Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan

APPENDIX - DRAFT
October 1, 2015
Appendix A – Bethlehem Trends Report

The following information highlights relevant regional, and national outdoor recreation trends from various sources that may influence the Town of Bethlehem’s recreation planning for the next several years.

A. Demographic Trends in Recreation

The highest ranking age cohorts in the Town of Bethlehem in 2014 were 45-54 and 55-64 (16.3 percent and 16.2 percent of the population, respectively) followed by the 35-44 cohort at 11.4 percent of the population. Planning for the next ten years suggests a growing demand for programs and services for Baby Boomers and seniors.

Adult – The Baby Boomers

Baby boomers are defined as individuals born between 1946 and 1964, as stated in Leisure Programming for Baby Boomers. They are a generation that consists of nearly 76 million Americans. In 2011, this influential population began its transition out of the workforce. As baby boomers enter retirement, they will be looking for opportunities in fitness, sports, outdoors, arts and cultural events, and other activities that suit their lifestyles. With their varied life experiences, values, and expectations, baby boomers are predicted to redefine the meaning of recreation and leisure programming for mature adults. In the July 2012 issue of Parks and Recreation magazine, published by NRPA, Emilyn Sheffield, Professor of Recreation and Parks Management at the California State University, at Chico, wrote an article titled, “Five Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today.” In it, she indicated that Baby Boomers are driving the aging of America with boomers and seniors over 65 composing about 39 percent of the nation’s population.

In the leisure profession, this generation’s devotion to exercise and fitness is an example of its influence on society. When boomers entered elementary school, President John Kennedy initiated the President’s Council on Physical Fitness; physical education and recreation became a key component of public education. As Boomers matured and moved into the workplace, they took their desire for exercise and fitness with them. Now as the oldest Boomers are nearing 65, park and recreation professionals are faced with new approaches to provide both passive and active programming for older adults. Boomers are second only to Gen Y/Millennials (born between 1980 and 1999) in participation in fitness and outdoor sports.

Jeffrey Ziegler, a past president of the Arizona Parks and Recreation Association identified “Boomer Basics” in his article, “Recreating retirement: how will baby boomers reshape leisure in their 60s?” Highlights are summarized as follows.

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Boomer Basics:
Boomers are known to work hard, play hard, and spend hard. They have always been fixated with all things youthful. Boomers typically respond that they feel 10 years younger than their chronological age. Their nostalgic mindset keeps boomers returning to the sights and sounds of their 1960s youth culture. Swimming pools have become less of a social setting and much more of an extension of Boomers’ health and wellness program. Because Boomers in general have a high education level they will likely continue to pursue education as adults and into retirement.

Bethlehem’s demographic profile indicates that 32.5 percent of the current population falls within the Baby Boomer age range (those approximately 45-64)

Boomers will look to park and recreation professionals to give them opportunities to enjoy many life-long hobbies and sports. When programming for this age group, a customized experience to cater to the need for self-fulfillment, healthy pleasure, nostalgic youthfulness, and individual escapes will be important. Recreation trends will shift from games and activities that boomers associate with senior citizens, as Ziegler suggests that activities such as bingo, bridge, and shuffleboard will likely be avoided because boomers relate these activities to being old.

Boomers will reinvent what being a 65-year-old means. Parks and recreation agencies that don’t plan for boomers carrying on in retirement with the same hectic pace they’ve lived during their years in employment will be left behind. Things to consider when planning for the demographic shift:
- Boomer characteristics
- What drives Boomers?
- Marketing to Boomers
- Arts and entertainment
- Passive and active fitness trends
- Outdoor recreation/adventure programs
- Travel programs

Youth - Planning for the Demographic Shift
In her article, Sheffield also identified that the proportion of youth is smaller than in the past, but still essential to our future. As of the 2010 Census, the age group under age 18 forms about a quarter of the U.S. population, and this percentage is at an all-time low. Nearly half of this population group is ethnically diverse, and 25 percent is Hispanic.

Multiculturalism
Our country is becoming increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. In May 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau announced that non-white babies now account for the majority of births in the United States. “This is an important tipping point,” said William H. Frey,24 the senior demographer at the Brookings Institution, describing the shift as a, “...transformation from a mostly white Baby Boomer culture to the more globalized multi-ethnic country that we are becoming.” Cultural and ethnic diversity adds a unique flavor to communities expressed through distinct neighborhoods, multicultural learning environments, restaurants, places of worship, museums, and nightlife. 25

As the recreation field continues to function within a more diverse society, race and ethnicity will become increasingly important in every aspect of the profession. More than ever, recreation professionals will be expected to work with, and have significant knowledge and understanding of, individuals from many cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.

The Town of Bethlehem has an overwhelmingly Caucasian population (90.9 percent in 2014), the Bethlehem demographic profile indicates that 3.7 percent of the population is Asian and 2.8 percent, African American. Additionally, 3.2 percent of the population is of Hispanic origin (irrespective of race).

- Outdoor Participation varies by Ethnicity: Participation in outdoor activities is higher among Caucasians than any other ethnicity and lowest among African Americans in nearly all age groups.

- Lack of interest reason for not participating: When asked who they did not participate in outdoor activities more often, the number one reason given by people of all ethnicities and races was because they were not interested.

- Most popular outdoor activities: Biking, running, fishing, and camping were the most popular outdoor activities for all Americans, with each ethnic/racial group participating in each in varying degrees.

Recreational Preferences among Ethnic/Racial Groups (Self-Identifying):
Nationwide participation in outdoor sports in 2013 was highest among Caucasians in all age groups and lowest among African-Americans, according to the 2014 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report. The biggest difference in participation rates was between Caucasian and African American adolescents, with 65 percent of Caucasians ages 13 – 17 participating and only 42 percent of African Americans in this age range participating.

African-Americans
African American youth ages 6 – 12 (52% participation), are the only age group in this demographic to participate in outdoor recreation at a rate of more than 50 percent. By comparison, Caucasians in four of the five age groupings participated in outdoor sports at rates of 60 percent or more, with only those aged 45+ (40% participation) participating at under 50 percent. According to the 2014 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report, the most popular outdoor activities among African-Americans are: running/jogging and trail running (18%); fishing (freshwater, saltwater, and fly) (11%); road, mountain, and BMX biking (11%); birdwatching/wildlife viewing (4%); and camping (car, backyard, backpacking, and RV) (4%).

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**Asian-Americans**
Research about outdoor recreation among Asian-Americans in the San Francisco Bay Area (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino)\(^\text{27}\) found significant differences among the four groups concerning the degree of linguistic acculturation (preferred language spoken in various communication media). The research suggests that communications related to recreation and natural resource management should appear in ethnic media, but the results also suggest that Asian Americans should not be viewed as homogeneous with regard to recreation related issues. Another study\(^\text{28}\) found that technology use for finding outdoor recreation opportunities is highest among Asian/Pacific Islander populations. Over 60 percent of these populations use stationary or mobile technology in making decisions regarding outdoor recreation.

According to the 2014 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Report,” the most popular outdoor activities among Asian/Pacific Islanders are: running/jogging and trail running (24%); hiking (15%); road, mountain, and BMX biking (14%); camping (car, backyard, backpacking, and RV) (11%); and fishing (freshwater, saltwater, and fly) (10%).

**Caucasians**
According to the 2014 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Report,” the most popular outdoor activities among Caucasians are: running/ jogging and trail running (19%); fishing (freshwater, saltwater and fly) (18%); road, mountain, and BMX biking (17%); camping (car, backyard, backpacking, and RV) (16%); and hiking (14%).

**Hispanics**
In the United States, the Hispanic population increased by 43 percent over the last decade, compared to five percent for the non-Hispanic population, and accounted for more than half of all the population growth. According to Sheffield, the growing racial and ethnic diversity is particularly important to recreation and leisure service providers, as family and individual recreation patterns and preferences are strongly shaped by cultural influences.\(^\text{29}\)

Participation in outdoor sports among those who identify as Hispanic is at seven percent nationwide, according to the 2013 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report.\(^\text{30}\) Those who do get outdoors, however, participate more frequently than other outdoor participants, with an average of 43 outings per year. Hispanic youth (ages 6-17) are the most likely age group to participate in outdoor recreation, in the Hispanic demographic, followed closely by those in the 25-44 age range. The most popular outdoor activities among Hispanics are: running and jogging (22%); road, mountain, and BMX biking (17%); fishing (freshwater, saltwater, and fly) (14%); Camping (car, backyard and RV) (11%); and hiking (9%).

**Multiculturalism and Marketing**
Today the marketplace for consumers has dramatically evolved in the United States from a largely Anglo demographic, to the reality that the United States has shifted to a large minority consumer base known as “new majority.”

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The San Jose Group, a consortium of marketing communications companies specializing in reaching Hispanic and non-Hispanic markets of the United States, suggests that today’s multicultural population of the United States, or the “new majority,” is 107.6 million, which translates to about 35.1 percent of the country’s total population. The United States’ multicultural population alone could essentially be the 12th largest country in the world.31 Parks and recreation trends in marketing leisure services continue to emerge and should be taken into consideration in all planning efforts, as different cultures respond differently to marketing techniques.

B. Facilities

According to Recreation Management magazine’s “2014 State of the Industry Report,”32 national trends show an increased user-base of recreation facilities (private and public). Additionally, parks and recreation providers responding to the survey indicated an average age of 23.8 years for their community recreation facilities. To meet that growing need, a majority of the parks and recreation survey respondents (69%) reported that they have plans to build new facilities or make additions or renovations to their existing facilities over the next three years. Nearly one-third (32.5 percent) of parks respondents said they have plans to build new facilities, and 28.9 percent said they plan to add to their existing facilities. More than half (52.2%) are planning renovations to existing facilities.

The current national trend is toward “one-stop” indoor recreation facilities to serve all ages. Large, multi-purpose regional centers help increase cost recovery, promote retention, and encourage cross-use. Agencies across the U.S. are increasing revenue production and cost recovery. Multi-use facilities verses specialized space is a trend, offering programming opportunities as well as free-play opportunities. “One stop” facilities attract young families, teens, and adults of all ages.

Also according to the “2014 State of the Industry Report” (p. 56), “…parks and recreation departments continue to see a slow recovery from the lowest points of the recent recession.” While 69 percent plan for construction for parks, the average amount planned for construction in the 2014 budgets saw a slight decrease of 4.5 percent from an average of $3,973,000 in last year’s survey to an average of $3,795,000 for 2014. There was very little change in the types of features and amenities included in the facilities of the survey respondents from last year to this year. The most commonly found features include splash play areas, trails, dog parks, park structures (shelters and restroom buildings); playgrounds; disc golf courses, open spaces (gardens, natural areas), synthetic turf sports fields; and concession areas.

Aquatics/Water Recreation Trends

According to the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA), swimming ranked third nation-wide in terms of participation in 2012.33 Outdoor swimming pools are not typically heated and open year round. Swimming for fitness is the top aspirational activity for “inactives” in 6 of 8 age categories in the SFIA “2013 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report,” representing a significant opportunity to engage inactive populations. Nationally, there is an increasing trend towards indoor leisure and therapeutic pools. Additional indoor and outdoor amenities like “spray pads” are becoming increasingly popular as well. In some cities and counties spray pads are popular in the summer and are converted into ice rinks in the winter.

The 2014 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report” provided nation-wide trends for various outdoor activities, including the following water recreation activities: board sailing/windsurfing, canoeing, fishing, kayaking, rafting, sailing, stand-up paddle boarding, and wakeboarding (Table 6). Among water recreation activities, stand up paddling has had the largest increase in participation in the past three years (23.9% increase) followed by several varieties of the kayaking experience: kayak fishing (20% increase), recreational kayaking (11.1%) and whitewater kayaking (6.6% increase). Fly fishing participation is up while other fishing activities are down in the past three years. Sailing participation has increased somewhat over the past three years, while rafting participation is down.34

Table 6: Water Recreation Participation by Activity (in thousands) (6 years of age or older)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>3 Year Average Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boardsailing/Windsurfing</td>
<td>1,128</td>
<td>1,607</td>
<td>1,151</td>
<td>1,593</td>
<td>1,324</td>
<td>-2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canoeing</td>
<td>10,058</td>
<td>10,553</td>
<td>9,787</td>
<td>9,839</td>
<td>10,153</td>
<td>-1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing (Fly)</td>
<td>5,568</td>
<td>5,478</td>
<td>5,360</td>
<td>6,012</td>
<td>5,878</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing (Freshwater/ Other)</td>
<td>40,961</td>
<td>38,860</td>
<td>39,071</td>
<td>39,135</td>
<td>37,796</td>
<td>-0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayak Fishing</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>1,044</td>
<td>1,201</td>
<td>1,409</td>
<td>1,798</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayaking (Recreational)</td>
<td>6,212</td>
<td>6,465</td>
<td>8,229</td>
<td>8,144</td>
<td>8,716</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayaking (White Water)</td>
<td>1,369</td>
<td>1,842</td>
<td>1,546</td>
<td>1,878</td>
<td>2,146</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rafting</td>
<td>4,318</td>
<td>4,460</td>
<td>3,821</td>
<td>3,690</td>
<td>3,836</td>
<td>-4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
<td>4,342</td>
<td>3,869</td>
<td>3,725</td>
<td>3,958</td>
<td>3,915</td>
<td>-.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stand Up Paddle Boarding</td>
<td>no data</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>1,242</td>
<td>1,542</td>
<td>1,993</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wakeboarding</td>
<td>3,577</td>
<td>3,645</td>
<td>3,389</td>
<td>3,348</td>
<td>3,316</td>
<td>-3.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Outdoor Foundation 2014 (numbers in thousands).

Dog Parks

Dog parks continue to see high popularity and have remained among the top planned addition to parks and recreational facilities over the past three years. 2014 saw the addition of a new association dedicated to providing informational resources for starting and maintaining dog parks, the National Dog Park Association. Recreation Management magazine35 suggests that dog parks can represent a relatively low-cost way to provide an oft-visited a popular community amenity. Dog parks can be as simple as a gated area, or more elaborate with “designed-for-dogs” amenities like water fountains, agility equipment, and pet wash stations, to name a few. According to Dog Fancy magazine, an ideal dog park should include the following:

- One acre or more surrounded by a 4- to 6-foot fence
- Shade and water
- Adequate drainage
- Parking near the site
- A double gated entry
- Benches
- Pet-waste disposal stations with pickup bags and covered waste receptacles

Fitness Programming

There have been many changes in fitness programs in the last 15 years. What clients wanted in 2000 is not necessarily what they want today. The American College of Sports Medicine’s (ACSM’s) Health and Fitness Journal\(^{36}\) has conducted an annual survey since 2007 to determine trends that would help create a standard for health and fitness programming. Table 7 shows survey results that focus on trends in the commercial, corporate, clinical, and community health and fitness industry. Some trends first identified in 2007 have stayed near the top of the list year after year while others came and went in popularity. Zumba made a brief appearance on the top 10 in 2012 but has fallen off the list of top 20 in 2014. Body weight training appeared as a developing trend in 2014 and is projected to stay strong in 2015 as is high-intensity interval training. Yoga is regaining popularity after falling out of the top 20 in 2009 and staying out of the top 10 until 2014. Fitness programs for older adults will remain strong in 2014 and 2015.

Table 7: Top 10 Worldwide Fitness Trends for 2007 and Predicted Trends for 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2007</th>
<th>Trends for 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Children and obesity</td>
<td>1. Body weight training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Special fitness programs for older adults</td>
<td>2 High-intensity interval training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Educated and experienced fitness professionals</td>
<td>3. Educated and experienced fitness professionals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Functional fitness</td>
<td>4. Strength training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Core training</td>
<td>5 Personal training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Personal training</td>
<td>7. Yoga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mind/Body Exercise</td>
<td>8. Fitness programs for older adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Exercise and weight loss</td>
<td>9 Functional fitness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Outcome measurements</td>
<td>10. Group personal training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American College of Sport Medicine

General Programming

One of the most common concerns in the recreation industry is creating innovative programming to draw participants into facilities and services. Once in, participants recognize that the benefits are endless. According to Recreation Management magazine’s “2014 State of the Industry Report,”\(^{37}\) the most common programs, offered by survey respondents, include holiday events and other special events (78.1%), youth sports teams (69.1%), day camps and summer camps (64.7%), adult sports teams (61.3%), arts and crafts (60.9%), educational programs (60.5%), sports tournaments and races (56.8%), programs for active older adults (55.2%), fitness programs (61.4%), and festivals and concerts (53.2).


The report also suggested more than three in 10 (35.7%) respondents indicated that they are planning to add additional programs at their facilities over the next three years. The most common types of programming they are planning to add include:

1. Programming for active older adults (up from No. 5 on the 2013 survey)
2. Fitness programs (up from No. 3)
3. Teen programming (down from No. 2)
4. Adult sports teams (did not appear in 2013)
5. Holiday events and other special events (up from No. 6)
6. Mind-body/balance programs – yoga, tai chi, Pilates or martial arts (up from No. 7)
7. Environmental education (down from No. 1)
8. Educational programs (up from No. 4)
9. Festivals and concerts (up from No. 10)
10. Sports tournaments or races (down from No. 8)

Older Adults and Senior Programming
The American Academy of Sports Medicine issues a yearly survey of the top 20 fitness trends. It ranks senior fitness programs eighth among most popular fitness trends for 2015. Whether it’s SilverSneakers, a freestyle low-impact cardio class, or water aerobics, more and more people are realizing the many benefits of staying active throughout life.

According to the National Sporting Goods Association, popular senior programming trends include hiking, birding, and swimming.

C. Festivals and Events
In the context of urban development, from the early 1980s, there has been a process that can be characterized as “festivalization,” which has been linked to the economic restructuring of towns and cities, and the drive to develop communities as large-scale platforms for the creation and consumption of “cultural experience.”

The success rate for festivals should not be evaluated simplistically solely on the basis of profit (sales), prestige (media profile), size (numbers of events). Research by the European Festival Research Project (EFRP) indicates there is evidence of local and city government supporting and even instigating and managing particular festivals themselves to achieve local or regional economic objectives, often defined very narrowly (sales, jobs, tourists, etc.). There are also a growing number of smaller more local community-based festivals and events in communities, most often supported by local councils that have been spawned partly as a reaction to larger festivals that have become prime economic-drivers. These community-based festivals often will re-claim cultural ground based on their social, educational, and participative value. For more information on the values of festivals and events, see the CRC Sustainable Tourism research guide on this topic.

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In 2014, festivals grew in popularity as economic drivers and urban brand builders. Chad Kaydo describes the phenomenon in the January 2014 issue of Governing Magazine: “Municipal officials and entrepreneur see the power of cultural festivals, innovation-focused business conferences, and the like as a way to spur short-term tourism while shaping an image of the hose city as a cool, dynamic location where companies and citizens in modern, creative industries can thrive.”

Examples of successful festivals include:

- South by Southwest (SXSW) – this annual music, film, and digital conference and festival in Austin, Texas, is a leading example. Launched in 1987, the festival’s economic impact has grown steadily over recent years. In 2007, it netted $95 million for Austin’s economy. In 2013, the event topped $218 million.
- Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in California – this two-week cultural event draws big-name bands, music fans, and marketers, attracting 80,000 people per day.
- First City Festival in Monterey, California – Private producer, Goldenvoice, launched this smaller music event in August 2013 with marketing support from the Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau, drawing on the city’s history as host of the Monterey Jazz Festival. Adding carnival rides and local art, furniture and clothing vendors to the live music performances, the event drew 11,000 attendees each of its two days.

D. Healthy Lifestyle Trends and Active Living

Active Transportation – Bicycling and Walking

Bicycle friendly cities have been emerging over the last ten years. Cycling has become a popular mode of transportation as people consider the rising cost of fuel, desire for better health, and concern for the environment. Some people also use cycling as a mode of transportation just for the fun of it.


“leading its Benchmarking report from 2012. The report shows that increasing bicycling and walking are goals are clearly in the public interest. Where bicycling and walking levels are higher, obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes levels are lower.

Design of a community’s infrastructure is directly linked to physical activity – where environments are built with bicyclists and pedestrians in mind, more people bike and walk. Higher levels of bicycling and walking also coincide with increased bicycle and pedestrian safety and higher levels of physical activity. Increasing bicycling and walking make a big impact on improving public health and life expectancy. The following trends as well as health and economic indicators are pulled from the 2012 and 2014 Benchmarking Reports:

Public health trends related to bicycling and walking include:

- Quantified health benefits of active transportation can outweigh any risks associated with the activities by as much as 77 to 1, and add more years to our lives than are lost from inhaled air pollution and traffic injuries.


• Between 1966 and 2009, the number of children who bicycled or walked to school fell 75 percent, while the percentage of obese children rose 276 percent.
• Bicycling to work significantly reduces absenteeism due to illness. Regular bicyclists took 7.4 sick days per year, while non-bicyclists took 8.7 sick days per year.

The economic benefits of bicycling and walking include:
• Bicycling and walking projects create 8-12 jobs per $1 million spent, compared to just 7 jobs created per $1 million spent on highway projects.
• Cost benefit analyses show that up to $11.80 in benefits can be gained for every $1 invested in bicycling and walking.

National bicycling trends:
• There has been a gradual trend of increasing bicycling and walking to work since 2005.
• Infrastructure to support biking communities is becoming more commonly funded in communities.
• Bike share systems, making bicycles available to the public for low-cost, short-term use, have been sweeping the nation since 2010. Twenty of the most populous U.S. cities have a functional bike share system.

In November 2013, the Institute for Transportation & Development Policy published a Standard for Transportation Oriented Design, with accessible performance objectives and metrics, to help municipalities, developers and local residents design land use and built environment “to support, facilitate and prioritize not only the use of public transport, but the most basic modes of transport, walking and cycling.” The TOD Standard, along with its performance objectives and scoring metrics, can be found at www.itdp.org/documents/TOD_v2_FINAL.pdf. ⁴³

National Healthy Lifestyle Trends
The population of the United States is becoming more diverse. As demographics are experiencing an age and ethnic shift, so too are landscapes, daily lifestyles and habits changing. The number of adults over the age of 65 has increased, lifestyle changes have encouraged less physical activity; collectively these trends have created profound implications for the way local governments conduct business. Below are examples of trends and government responses.
• According to the article “Outdoor Exercise ‘Healthier than Gym Workouts,’” published in February 2011, ⁴⁴ researchers found that going for a run outdoors is better than exercising in the gym because it has a positive impact on mental, as well as physical health. Levels of tension, confusion, anger, and depression were found to be lowered. This aligns with the trend of adult fitness playgrounds that are popping up all over the world.

• While Americans have been notoriously unhealthy, a recent survey found that 58 percent of Americans adults are paying more attention to their personal health than in the past; 57 percent seek to eat a healthier diet, 54 percent seek to achieve a healthy weight; and, 45 percent want to reduce stress in their lives.45

• The link between health and the built environment continues to grow as a trend for local governments. They are increasingly incorporating active living and physical activity into daily routines.

More and more, local governments are accepting the role of providing preventative health care through park and recreation services. The following facts are from an International City/County Management local government survey46:

• Eighty-nine percent (89%) of respondents believed parks and recreation departments should take the lead in developing communities conducive to active living.
• Eighty-four percent (84%) had already implemented recreation programs that encourage active living in their community.
• The highest priority selected for the greatest impact on community health and physical inactivity was a cohesive system of parks and trails and accessible neighborhood parks.

Health and Obesity
According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), obesity continues to be a serious issue in America, growing at an epidemic rate—almost tripling since 1990. Overall, more than one-third (35.7%) of adults and 17 percent of children in the United States are obese.47 These statistics illustrates the importance of intercepting the epidemic in youth.

As obesity in the United States continues to be a topic of interest for legislators and our government, there continues to be research suggesting that activity levels are stagnant among all age groups. The following are statistics that support this concern.

• Only 25 percent of adults and 27 percent of youth (grades 9-12) engage in recommended levels of physical activity.
• Fifty-nine percent (59%) of American adults are sedentary.
• Children nationally spend 4.5-8 hours daily (30-56 hours per week) in front of a screen (television and/or computer).


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Shade Structures
Communities around the country are considering adding shade structures as well as shade trees to their parks, playgrounds and pools, as “a weapon against cancer and against childhood obesity”\textsuperscript{48}; both to reduce future cancer risk and promote exercise among children. A 2005 study found that melanoma rates in people under 20 rose three percent a year between 1973 and 2001, possibly due to a thinning of the ozone layer in the atmosphere. It is recommended that children seek shade between 10am and 4pm, but with so little shade available, kids have nowhere to go. Additionally, without adequate shade, many play areas are simply too hot to be inviting to children. On sunny days, the playground equipment is hot enough to scald the hands of would-be users.

Trees would help, as tree leaves absorb about 95 percent of ultraviolet radiation, but they take a decade or more to grow large enough to make a difference. So, many communities are building shade structures instead. The non-profit Shade Foundation of American is a good resource for information about shade and shade structures, www.shadefoundation.org.

Trails and Health
That a connected system of trails increases the level of physical activity in a community has been scientifically demonstrated through the Trails for Health initiative of the CDC.\textsuperscript{49} Trails can provide a wide variety of opportunities for being physically active, such as walking/running/hiking, rollerblading, wheelchair recreation, bicycling, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, fishing, hunting, and horseback riding. Recognizing that active use of trails for positive health outcomes is an excellent way to encourage people to adopt healthy lifestyle changes, American Trails has launched a “Health and Trails” resource section in its website: www.americantrails.org/resources/benefits/.

The health benefits are equally as high for trails in urban neighborhoods as for those in state or national parks. A trail in the neighborhood, creating a “linear park,” makes it easier for people to incorporate exercise into their daily routines, whether for recreation or non-motorized transportation. Urban trails need to connect people to places they want to go, such as schools, transit centers, businesses, and neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{49} “Guide to Community Preventive Services” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), http://www.thecommunityguide.org/index.html
E. Natural Environments and Open Space

Conservation

The top ten recommendations of the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Conservation Task Force were published in the November 2011 issue of Parks and Recreation Magazine.51 These recommendations are a compilation of best practices used by trend-setting agencies.

1. Take a leadership role in the community to promote conservation. Park and recreation agencies have a unique opportunity to bring governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, community leaders, and the public together for the cause of working together on community wide conservation objectives – clean water, wildlife habitat preservation, reducing energy use and improving environmental quality. Park and recreation agencies must lead the way in promoting conservation to diverse and underserved audiences.

2. Lead by example in employing best management conservation practices in parks. Park and recreation agencies should become the catalyst in the community for conservation by showing how best practices can be adopted-not mowing what you don’t need to mow; stopping wasteful energy consumption; and reducing pesticide use for example. Show the public how conservation practices can benefit everyone.

3. Engage volunteers in conservation and stewardship. Create a sense of belonging and stewardship for parks by creating a personal sense of ownership and value. Enable people to identify with their parks and natural resources, and to care about their future. Sustain stewardship by creating meaningful public participation in implementation of conservation principles and practices.

4. Establish a strategic land acquisition strategy based on knowledge and awareness of significant natural and cultural resources (watershed protection, unique ecological characteristics, and sensitive natural areas deserving protection). As the largest owners of public land within most communities, park and recreation agencies should lead the way in developing a strategic vision for preserving open space and conserving important landscapes and natural features.

5. Engage youth in conservation. Get kids and teens outdoors and enjoying their parks. The experience of nature is inherently rewarding for youth. Set as a goal to connect kids in the community to nature and the outdoors. Children and youth will be fascinated by nature and will develop a lifelong affinity as well as a conservation ethic if they have early opportunities to enjoy nature and recreate outdoors in a safe, rewarding way.

6. Conserve energy in all ways. Park and recreation agencies must lead by example, showing the public how and why they should adopt practices that they can see demonstrated in parks and recreation facilities. Park and recreation agencies should adopt energy conservation measures that make sense and save public taxpayer funds.

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"ALL FOR ONE, FUN FOR ALL!" – PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN 87
7. Protect natural resources in parks and in the community. A core mission of public parks is to protect land and water resources and to be stewards of natural resources. This means committing personnel and resources to protect natural and cultural resources and creating sustainable long-term methods of funding this conservation mission. Parks and recreation agencies are entrusted with some of the most important public assets of a community and the conservation and long-term protection of this public trust is and should be a core component of every parks and recreation agency’s mission.

8. Create sustainable landscapes that demonstrate principles of conservation. Utilize sustainable landscape practices to save taxpayer funds, to measurably improve conservation benefits, and to educate the public about conservation. For example, agencies can reduce turf grass and mowing frequency; replace turf with native plants; manage floodplains for multiple uses including conservation and public recreation; enhance wetlands for water filtration and groundwater recharge; plant model landscapes of drought tolerant native plants adapted to climate and culture; and promote parks as food sources through edible landscapes and community gardens.

9. Forge partnerships that foster the mission of conservation. The greatest and most beneficial conservation successes most often occur as a result of collaboration. Park and recreation agencies should partner with non-profit and community service organizations, universities and colleges, school systems, other governmental agencies, and non-traditional partners for conservation outcomes. Promote health, education, and other goals while working toward a common mission of conservation.

10. Utilize technology to promote conservation. Park and recreation agencies need to embrace technology to promote conservation. This is not only in applications such as GIS, but in utilizing social media to engage the public, especially youth. Technology is not to be feared as something that detracts from the conservation mission of parks agencies, but rather it is to be accepted as a means of sharing knowledge and connecting people to conservation and stewardship.

**Economic & Health Benefits of Parks**

There are numerous economic and health benefits of parks, including the following:

- Trails, parks, and playgrounds are among the five most important community amenities considered when selecting a home.
- Research from the University of Illinois shows that trees, parks, and green spaces have a profound impact on people’s health and mental outlook.  
- US Forest Service research indicates that when the economic benefits produced by trees are assessed, the total value can be two to six times the cost for tree planting and care.  
- Fifty percent of Americans regard outdoor activities as their main source of exercise.

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The Trust for Public Land has published a report titled: “The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space.” The report makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental, and social benefits of parks and open space55:

- Physical activity makes people healthier.
- Physical activity increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and physiological health.
- Residential and commercial property values increase.
- Value is added to community and economic development sustainability.
- Benefits of tourism are enhanced.
- Trees are effective in improving air quality and act as natural air conditioners.
- Trees assist with storm water control and erosion.
- Crime and juvenile delinquency are reduced.
- Recreational opportunities for all ages are provided.
- Stable neighborhoods and strong communities are created.

Researchers have long touted the benefits of outdoor exercise. According to a study published in the Journal of Environmental Science and Technology by the University of Essex in the United Kingdom, “as little as five minutes of green exercise improves both mood and self-esteem.”56 A new trend started in China as they prepared to host the 2008 Summer Olympics. Their aim was to promote a society that promotes physical fitness and reaps the benefits of outdoor exercise by working out on outdoor fitness equipment.

The United States is now catching up on this trend, as park and recreation departments have begun installing “outdoor gyms.” Equipment that can be found in these outdoor gyms is comparable to what would be found in an indoor workout facility, such as leg and chest presses, elliptical trainers, pull down trainers, etc. With no additional equipment such as weights and resistance bands, the equipment is fairly easy to install. Outdoor fitness equipment provides a new opportunity for parks and recreation departments to increase the health of their communities, while offering them the opportunity to exercise outdoors. Such equipment can increase the usage of parks, trails, and other outdoor amenities while helping to fight the obesity epidemic and increase the community’s interaction with nature.

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Nature Programming

Noted as early as 2003 in Recreation Management magazine, park agencies have been seeing an increase in interest in environmental-oriented “back to nature” programs. In 2007, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) sent out a survey to member agencies in order to learn more about the programs and facilities that public park and recreation agencies provide to connect children and their families with nature. A summary of the results follow.

- Sixty-eight percent (68%) of public parks and recreation agencies offer nature-based programming and 61% have nature-based facilities.
- The most common programs include nature hikes, nature-oriented arts and crafts, fishing-related events, and nature-based education in cooperation with local schools.
- When asked to describe the elements that directly contribute to their most successful programs, agencies listed staff training as most important followed by program content and number of staff/staff training.
- When asked what resources would be needed most to expand programming, additional staff was most important followed by funding.
- Of the agencies that do not currently offer nature-based programming, 90 percent indicated that they want to in the future. Additional staff and funding were again the most important resources these agencies would need going forward.
- The most common facilities include: nature parks/preserves, self-guided nature trails, outdoor classrooms, and nature centers.
- When asked to describe the elements that directly contribute to their most successful facilities, agencies listed funding as most important followed by presence of wildlife and community support.

Figures from the Association for Interpretative Naturalists, a national group of nature professionals, demonstrate that nature-based programs are on the rise. According to Tim Merriman, the association’s executive director, the group was founded in 1954 with 40 members. It now boasts 4,800 members, with research indicating that about 20,000 paid interpreters are working nationally, along with an army of more than 500,000 unpaid volunteers staffing nature programs at parks, zoos, and museums. The growth of these programs is thought to come from replacing grandparents as the teacher about the “great outdoors.” It is also speculated that a return to natural roots and renewed interest in life’s basic elements was spurred as a response to September 11, 2001.

In his book Last Child in the Woods: Saving Children from Nature Deficit Disorder, Richard Louv introduced the concept of the restorative qualities of being out in nature, for both children and adults.

“There’s a direct link between a lack of exposure to nature and higher rates of attention-deficit disorder, obesity, and depression. In essence, parks and recreation agencies can and are becoming the ‘preferred provider’ for offering this preventative healthcare.”

– Fran P. Mainella, former director of the National Park Service and Instructor at Clemson University.

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This concept, and research in support of it, has led to a growing movement promoting connections with nature in daily life. One manifestation of this is the development of Nature Explore Classrooms in parks. Nature Explore\(^{60}\) is a collaborative program of the Arbor Day Foundation and the non-profit organization, Dimensions Educational Research Foundation, with a mission of helping children and families develop a profound engagement with the natural world, where nature is an integral, joyful part of children’s daily learning. Nature Explore works to support efforts to connect children with nature.

### F. Sports and Recreation Trends

#### General Sports and Recreation Trends

The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) survey on sports participation in 2012\(^{61}\) found the top five athletic activities ranked by total participation included: exercise walking, exercising with equipment, swimming, camping, and aerobic exercising. Additionally, the following active, organized, or skill development activities remain popular: hiking, running/jogging, bicycle riding, basketball, golf, and soccer. Table 8 outlines the top twenty sports ranked by total participation in 2012.

#### Table 8: Top Twenty Sports Ranked by Total Participation (in millions) in 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Exercise Walking</td>
<td>102.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Exercising with Equipment</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Swimming</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Camping (vacation/overnight)</td>
<td>45.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Aerobic Exercising</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Hiking</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Running/Jogging</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Bicycle Riding</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Bowling</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Workout at Club</td>
<td>35.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Weight Lifting</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Fishing (Freshwater)</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Wrestling</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Basketball</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Yoga</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Billiards/Pool</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Target Shooting</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Golf</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Hunting with Firearms</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Boating, Motor/Power</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NSGA 2012

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The Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) produces a yearly report on sports, fitness and leisure activities in the US. The following findings were highlighted in the 2013 Report62:

- Overall participation in sports, fitness and related physical activities remained relatively steady from 2011 to 2012.
- Fitness Sports had the largest increase in participation (2% increases to 61.1%).
- Racquet Sports participation also increased (1% increase to 12.8 %) but still remains the 2008 peak rate of 14 %.
- Both team (21.6%) and water sports 12.5%) participation increased slightly while individual (36%) and winter sports (6.6) participation decreased slightly.
- Outdoor Sports participation remained stable at around 49%.
- Spending on team sports at school and lessons/instruction/sports camp was expected to increase in 2013 as it has in 2011 and 2012.
- 28% of all Americans are inactive while 33% are active to a healthy level (engaged in high calorie level sport/fitness activities in a frequent basis). New York ranked among the states with the second lowest among five activity levels measured (from 32% to 33.3%).

The “Ten-year History of Sports Participation Report”63 published by NSGA shows national trends in team sports and individual sports. Overall participation trends indicate a general increase in 2011 for most team sports. However, softball and volleyball show a decrease in participation through 2011. Over the decade individual sports show a dramatic increase in aerobic exercising, exercise walking, exercising with equipment, hiking, kayaking, running/jogging, target shooting and target shooting with an airgun, tennis, weightlifting and working out at a club. Error! Reference source not found. illustrates a ten year change in participation for selected activities including both team sports and individual sports.

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Table 9: Ten-Year History of Sports Participation (in millions) 2001-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aerobic Exercising</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archery (Target)</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backpacking/Wilderness Camping</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle Riding</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>36.3</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billiards/Pool</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boating, Motor/Power</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>50.9</td>
<td>42.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dart Throwing</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise Walking</td>
<td>71.2</td>
<td>79.5</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td>89.8</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>97.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercising with Equipment</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing (Freshwater)</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing (Saltwater)</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football (tackle)</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>20.9</td>
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<td>Hiking</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hockey (ice)</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hunting w/Bow &amp; Arrow</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting with Firearms</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Line Roller Skating</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kayaking</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Biking (off road)</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muzzleloading</td>
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<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paintball Games</td>
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<td>7.4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running/Jogging</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skateboarding</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skiing (Alpine)</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skiing (Cross Country)</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Snowboarding</td>
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<td>6.0</td>
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<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.1</td>
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<td>13.8</td>
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<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
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<td>Softball</td>
<td>13.2</td>
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<td>12.4</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Shooting</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Shooting (Airgun)</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
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<td>10.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water Skiing</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight Lifting</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>29.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Workout at Club</td>
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<td>34.7</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>38.3</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrestling</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Participated more than once (in millions), seven (7) years of age and older.
Source: NSGA 2012
Youth Sports
The 2013 SFIA sports participation report indicates that in 2012 youth (ages 6-12) participation was highest for outdoor (63.1%), team (53.1%) and individual sport (49.8%). Children in this age group have increased interest in camping, while young adults ages 18 – 24 are becoming more interested in running/jogging.

The NSGA “Youth Sports Participation Report” from 2001-2011 indicates that specific offerings for children’s fitness are slowly increasing in health and fitness facilities. Facilities are offering more youth-specific exercise equipment. Individualized youth sports training opportunities are becoming more popular as well. In 2011, in-line roller skating experienced the largest percentage decrease in participation. For youth ages seven to 17 years, exercise walking, exercising with equipment, and swimming, followed by overnight/vacation camping had the highest number of participants in 2011.64

In 2009, an article in the Wall Street Journal observed that, in recent years lacrosse has become one of the country’s fastest growing team sports. Participation in high school lacrosse has almost doubled this decade. An estimated 1.2 million Americans over age seven played lacrosse in 2009.65 A 2011 report, “U.S. Trends in Team Sports,” finds that lacrosse and other niche team sports and volleyball are continuing to experience strong growth for youth and adults.66

Outdoor Recreation
The Outdoor Foundation releases a “Participation in Outdoor Recreation” report, annually. According to the 2014 report,67 while the actual number of outdoor recreation outings increased since 2012, the participation rate fell slightly, due to population growth. The foundation reports that the top outdoor activities in 2013 were running, fishing, bicycling, camping, and hiking. Birdwatching is also among the favorite outdoor activities by frequency of participation. The Outdoor Foundation’s research brought the following key findings.

Participation in Outdoor Recreation
- **Return to Nature:** Nearly 50 percent of Americans ages six and older participated in outdoor recreation in 2013. That equates to a total of 143 million.
- **Top Five Biggest Participation Percentage Increase in Outdoor Activities in the Past three years (2014 Topline Report):** Adventure Racing, Triathlon (Off Road), Stand up paddling, Kayak fishing, Recreational Kayaking.
- **Recreation for Exercise:** More than 70 percent of outdoor participants were motivated to recreate outdoors as a way of getting exercise.

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Youth Participation in Outdoor Recreation

- **Good News about outdoor participation rates of female youth:** Participation rates among girls and young women increased by two percentage points – bringing young women’s participation to the highest since 2006.
- **The Influence of Family:** Most youth are introduced to outdoor activities by parents, friends, family, and relatives.
- **Physical education in schools:** The importance cannot be understated. Among adults ages 18 and older who are current outdoor participants, 74 percent say they had PE in school between the ages of 6 and 12.

Outdoor recreation trends are also a recurring topic of study by the United States Forest Service through the Internet Research Information Series (IRIS). An IRIS report dated January 2012 provides the following recent nature-based outdoor recreation trends: Participation in walking for pleasure and family gatherings outdoors were the two most popular activities for the U.S. population as a whole. These outdoor activities were followed closely in popularity by viewing/photographing wildlife, boating, fishing, snow/ice activities, and swimming. There has been a growing momentum in participation in sightseeing, birding, and wildlife watching in recent years.

**Trail Recreation and Cycling Trends**

For trail-related recreation activities such as hiking, bicycling, and running, the 2014 “Outdoor Recreation Topline Report” indicates a positive three-year trend for running/jogging, hiking, road biking, and BMX biking. Additionally, participation in trail running and mountain biking is up significantly over the past two-to-three years.

**Table 10: Trail Recreation Participation by Activity (in thousands) (6 years of age or older)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>3 Year Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BMX Bicycling</td>
<td>1,904</td>
<td>1,811</td>
<td>2,369</td>
<td>1,547</td>
<td>2,175</td>
<td>2,168</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycling (Mountain/Non-Paved Surface)</td>
<td>7,592</td>
<td>7,142</td>
<td>7,161</td>
<td>6,816</td>
<td>7,714</td>
<td>8,542</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycling (Road/Paved Surface)</td>
<td>38,114</td>
<td>40,140</td>
<td>39,320</td>
<td>40,349</td>
<td>39,232</td>
<td>40,888</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiking (Day)</td>
<td>32,511</td>
<td>32,572</td>
<td>32,496</td>
<td>34,491</td>
<td>34,545</td>
<td>34,378</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running/Jogging</td>
<td>41,130</td>
<td>43,892</td>
<td>49,408</td>
<td>50,713</td>
<td>52,187</td>
<td>54,188</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail Running</td>
<td>4,857</td>
<td>4,833</td>
<td>5,136</td>
<td>5,610</td>
<td>6,003</td>
<td>6,792</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Outdoor Foundation 2014.

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Other Cycling Trends

- Bicycle touring are becoming a fast-growing trend around the world, including the US and Canada. “Travelers are seeking out bike tours to stay active, minimize environmental impact, and experience diverse landscapes and cityscapes at a closer level.”[^69]
- Urban bike tours, popular in cycle-friendly cities in Europe, are taking hold in the United States as well. Bikes and Hikes Los Angeles, an eco-friendly bike and hike sightseeing company founded last September, offers visitors the opportunity to “see the city’s great outdoors while getting a good workout.” In New York, a hotel and a bike store are partnering to offer guests cruisers to explore the city during the summer of 2014.[^70]
- One of the newest trends in adventure cycling is “fat bike,” multiple speed bikes that are made to ride when other bikes can’t be ridden, with tires that are up to five inches wide run at low pressure for extra traction. Most fat bikes are used to ride on snow but they are also very effective for riding on any loose surface like sand or mud. They also work well on most rough terrain or just riding through the woods. This bike offers unique opportunities to experience nature in ways that would not be possible otherwise.[^71]

Therapeutic Recreation

Nationally, therapeutic recreation as a service is experiencing many struggles and challenges. The changing face of health care is having a dramatic effect on therapeutic recreation (TR) services in many rehabilitation settings and specifically in physical rehabilitation settings, thus affecting community recreation programs.

A secondary issue caused by the decreased stay is the need for a clinical facility to promote community reintegration. In the past, clinical facilities provided programs such as wheelchair basketball, but due to the reduction of expenditures, facilities no longer provide such services and expect communities to address these needs.

The fundamental goal of TR services is to enable participants to return successfully to their communities. This not only means they need to have the functional skill but also that they have physical and social environments in the community that are receptive to the individual.

Another trend is the renewed focus on serving people with psychiatric disabilities. In 2004, The National Council on Disability (NCD) issued a comprehensive report, “Livable Communities for Adults with Disabilities.” This report identified six elements for improving the quality of life for all citizens, including children, youth and adults- with disabilities. The six elements are:

1. Provides affordable, appropriate, accessible housing
2. Ensures accessible, affordable, reliable, safe transportation
3. Adjusts the physical environment for inclusiveness and accessibility
4. Provides work, volunteer, and education opportunities
5. Ensures access to key health and support services
6. Encourages participation in civic, cultural, social, and recreational activities

The right to enjoy services and programs offered to all members by both public and private entities is the essence of the elements. Unlike persons with physical disabilities, people with psychiatric disabilities face attitudinal barriers of those around them. Attitudinal barriers are exemplified by policies, programs, and beliefs about psychiatric disabilities. Fortunately, the mental health system is moving toward a model based on recovery. This model believes that everyone with a mental health diagnosis is able and capable of living independently within the community with supports.

G. Role and Response of Local Government

Collectively, these trends have created profound implications for the way local governments conduct business. Some local governments are now accepting the role of providing preventative health care through parks and recreation services. The following concepts are from the International County/County Management Association.

- Parks and Recreation departments should take the lead in developing communities conducive to active living.
- There is growing support for recreation programs that encourage active living within their community.
- One of the highest priorities is a cohesive system of parks and trails and accessible neighborhood parks.

In summary, the United States of America, its states, and its communities share the enormous task of reducing the health and economic burden of obesity. While numerous programs, policies, and products have been designed to address the problem, there is no magic bullet to make it go away. The role of public parks and recreation as a health promotion and prevention agency has come of age. What matters is refocusing its efforts to insure the health, well-being, and economic prosperity of communities and citizens.

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Administration Trends for Recreation and Parks

Municipal parks and recreation structures and delivery systems have changed, and more alternative methods of delivering services are emerging. Certain services are being contracted out and cooperative agreements with non-profit groups and other public institutions are being developed. Newer partners include the health system, social services, justice system, education, the corporate sector, and community service agencies. These partnerships reflect both a broader interpretation of the mandate of parks and recreation agencies and the increased willingness of other sectors to work together to address community issues. The relationship with health agencies is vital in promoting wellness.

The traditional relationship with education and the sharing of facilities through joint-use agreements is evolving into cooperative planning and programming aimed at addressing youth inactivity levels and community needs.

Listed below are additional administrative national trends:

- Level of subsidy for programs is lessening and more “enterprise” activities are being developed, thereby allowing subsidy to be used where deemed appropriate.
- Information technology allows for better tracking and reporting.
- Pricing is often determined by peak, off-peak, and off-season rates.
- More agencies are partnering with private, public, and non-profit groups.

Agency Accreditation

Parks and Recreation agencies are affirming their competencies and value through accreditation. This is achieved by an agency’s commitment to 150 standards.

There are currently 116 agencies around the nation that have received the Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) accreditation.
Additional benefits of CAPRA accreditation include:
- Boosts staff morale
- Encourages collaboration
- Improves program outcomes
- Identifies agency and cost efficiencies
- Builds high level of trust with the public
- Demonstrates promise of quality
- Identifies best management practices

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - Compliance
On September 14, 2010 the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) issued an amended regulation implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA 2010 Standards)74. On March 15, 2011, the amended Act became effective and, for the first time in history, includes recreation environment design requirements. Covered entities were to be compliant with design and construction requirements and the development of three-year transition plan by March 15, 2012. Implementation of the three-year transition plan must be complete by March 15, 2015.

Funding
According to Recreation Management magazine’s “2014 State of the Industry Report,” survey respondents from parks and recreation departments/districts reporting about their revenues from 2011 through 2013 reveals the beginning of a recovery from the impact of the recession of 2008. From 2011 to 2012, 82.6 percent of respondents reported that their revenues had either stabilized or had increased. This number grew to 84.8 percent of respondents when reporting on the 2012 to 2013 time frame and, by 2015, 95 percent of parks and recreation department respondents are expecting revenues to either increase (49.7 percent) or remain stable (45.4 percent).

Marketing by Parks and Recreation Providers
Niche marketing trends have experienced change more frequently than ever before as technology affects the way the public receives information. Web 2.0 tools and now Web 3.0 tools are a trend for agencies to use as a means of marketing programs and services. Popular social media marketing include:
- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- You Tube
- Periscope
- LinkedIn

Mobile marketing is a trend of the future. Young adults engage in mobile data applications at much higher rates than adults in age brackets 30 and older. Usage rates of mobile applications demonstrate chronologically across four major age cohorts, that millennials tend to get information more frequently using mobile devices such as smart phones. For example, 95 percent of 18-to-29-year-old cell phone owners send and receive text messages, compared to 82 percent of 30-to-49-year-olds, 57 percent of 50-to-64-year-olds, and 19 percent of 65 and older.

It is also a fact that minority Americans lead the way when it comes to mobile internet access. Nearly two-thirds of African-Americans (64%) and Latinos (63%) are wireless internet users, and minority Americans are significantly more likely to own a cell phone than are their white counterparts (87 percent of Blacks and Hispanics own a cell phone, compared with 80 percent of whites). By 2015, mobile internet penetration is forecast to grow to 71.1 percent for Hispanics compared to 58.8 percent for whites.

Appendix B – Pyramid Methodology
THE PYRAMID METHODOLOGY: COST RECOVERY AND SUBSIDY ALLOCATION PHILOSOPHY

The creation of a cost recovery and subsidy allocation philosophy and policy is a key component to maintaining an agency’s financial control, equitably pricing offerings, and helping to identify core services including programs and facilities.

Critical to this philosophical undertaking is the support and buy-in of elected officials and advisory boards, staff, and ultimately, citizens. Whether or not significant changes are called for, the organization should be certain that it philosophically aligns with its constituents. The development of a financial resource allocation philosophy and policy is built upon a very logical foundation, based upon the theory that those who benefit from parks and recreation services ultimately pay for services.

Step 1 – Building on Your Organization’s Values, Vision, and Mission

The premise of this process is to align agency services with organizational values, vision, and mission. It is important that organizational values are reflected in the vision and mission. Oftentimes, mission statements are a starting point and further work needs to occur to create a more detailed common understanding of the interpretation of the mission and a vision for the future. This is accomplished by engaging staff and community members in a discussion about a variety of Filters.

Step 2 – Understanding the Pyramid Methodology, the Benefits Filter, and Secondary Filters

Filters are a series of continuums covering different ways of viewing service provision. Filters influence the final positioning of services as they relate to each other and are summarized below. The Benefits Filter, however; forms the foundation of the Pyramid Model and is used in this discussion to illustrate a cost recovery philosophy and policies for parks and recreation organizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Filter</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benefit</td>
<td>Who receives the benefit of the service? (Skill development, education, physical health, mental health, safety)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access/Type of Service</td>
<td>Is the service available to everyone equally? Is participation or eligibility restricted by diversity factors (i.e., age, ability, skill, financial)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Responsibility</td>
<td>Is it the organization’s responsibility or obligation to provide the service based upon mission, legal mandate, or other obligation or requirement?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Expectations</td>
<td>What have we always done that we cannot change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated Impacts</td>
<td>What is the anticipated impact of the service on existing resources? On other users? On the environment? What is the anticipated impact of not providing the service?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Value</td>
<td>What is the perceived social value of the service by constituents, city staff and leadership, and policy makers? Is it a community builder?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE BENEFITS FILTER
The principal foundation of the Pyramid is the **Benefits Filter**. Conceptually, the base level of the pyramid represents the mainstay of a public parks and recreation system. Services appropriate to higher levels of the pyramid should only be offered when the preceding levels below are comprehensive enough to provide a foundation for the next level. This foundation and upward progression is intended to represent public parks and recreation’s core mission, while also reflecting the growth and maturity of an organization as it enhances its service offerings.

It is often easier to integrate the values of the organization with its mission if they can be visualized. An ideal philosophical model for this purpose is the pyramid. In addition to a physical structure, *pyramid* is defined by Webster’s Dictionary as “an immaterial structure built on a broad supporting base and narrowing gradually to an apex.” Parks and recreation programs are built with a broad supporting base of core services, enhanced with more specialized services as resources allow. Envision a pyramid sectioned horizontally into five levels.

**MOSTLY COMMUNITY Benefit**
The foundational level of the Pyramid is the largest, and includes those services including programs and facilities which **MOSTLY** benefit the **COMMUNITY** as a whole. These services may increase property values, provide safety, address social needs, and enhance quality of life for residents. The community generally pays for these basic services via tax support. These services are generally offered to residents at a minimal charge or with no fee. A large percentage of the agency’s tax support would fund this level of the Pyramid.

*Examples of these services could include: the existence of the community parks and recreation system, the ability for youngsters to visit facilities on an informal basis, low-income or scholarship programs, park and facility planning and design, park maintenance, or others.*

*NOTE: All examples above are generic – individual agencies vary in their determination of which services belong in the foundation level of the Pyramid based upon agency values, vision, mission, demographics, goals, etc.*

**CONSIDERABLE COMMUNITY Benefit**
The second and smaller level of the Pyramid represents services which promote individual physical and mental well-being, and may begin to provide skill development. They are generally traditionally expected services and/or beginner instructional levels. These services are typically assigned fees based upon a specified percentage of direct (and may also include indirect) costs. These costs are partially offset by both a tax subsidy to account for **CONSIDERABLE COMMUNITY** benefit and participant fees to account for the **Individual** benefit received from the service.

*Examples of these services could include: the capacity for teens and adults to visit facilities on an informal basis, ranger led interpretive programs, beginning level instructional programs and classes, etc.*
**BALANCED INDIVIDUAL/COMMUNITY Benefit**
The third and even smaller level of the Pyramid represents services that promote individual physical and mental well-being, and provide an intermediate level of skill development. This level provides balanced **INDIVIDUAL** and **COMMUNITY** benefit and should be priced accordingly. The individual fee is set to recover a higher percentage of cost than those services that fall within lower Pyramid levels.

*Examples of these services could include: summer recreational day camp, summer sports leagues, year-round swim team, etc.*

**CONSIDERABLE INDIVIDUAL Benefit**
The fourth and still smaller Pyramid level represents specialized services generally for specific groups, and those which may have a competitive focus. Services in this level may be priced to recover full cost, including all direct and indirect expenses.

*Examples of these services could include: specialty classes, golf, and outdoor adventure programs.*

**MOSTLY INDIVIDUAL Benefit**
At the top of the Pyramid, the fifth and smallest level represents services which have profit center potential, may be in an enterprise fund, may be in the same market space as the private sector, or may fall outside the core mission of the agency. In this level, services should be priced to recover full cost in addition to a designated profit percentage.

*Examples of these activities could include: elite diving teams, golf lessons, food concessions, company picnic rentals, and other facility rentals such as for weddings or other services.*

---

**Step 3 – Developing the Organization’s Categories of Service**
In order to avoid trying to determine cost recovery or subsidy allocation levels for each individual agency service including every program, facility, or property, it is advantageous to categorize agency services into like categories. This step also includes the development of category definitions that detail and define each category and service inventory “checks and balances” to ensure that all agency services belong within a developed category. *Examples of Categories of Service could include: Beginner Instructional Classes, Special Events, and Concessions/Vending.*

**Step 4 – Sorting the Categories of Service onto the Pyramid**
It is critical that this sorting step be done with staff, governing body, and citizen representatives involved. This is where ownership is created for the philosophy, while participants discover the current and possibly varied operating histories, cultures, and organizational values, vision, and mission. It is the time to develop consensus and get everyone on the same page – the page that is written together. Remember, this effort must reflect the community and must align with the thinking of policy makers.
Sample Policy Development Language:

XXX community brought together staff from across the department, agency leadership, and citizens to sort existing programs into each level of the Pyramid. The process was facilitated by an objective and impartial facilitator in order to hear all viewpoints. It generated discussion and debate as participants discovered what different people had to say about serving culturally and economically varied segments of the community, about historic versus active-use parks, about the importance of adult versus youth versus senior activities, and other philosophical and values-based discussions. This process gets at both the “what” and “why” with the intention of identifying common ground and consensus.

Step 5 – Defining Direct and Indirect Costs

The definition of direct and indirect costs can vary from agency to agency. What is important is that all costs associated with directly running a program or providing a service are identified and consistently applied across the system. Direct costs typically include all the specific, identifiable expenses (fixed and variable) associated with providing a service. These expenses would not exist without the service and may be variable costs. Defining direct costs, along with examples and relative formulas is necessary during this step.

Indirect costs typically encompass overhead (fixed and variable) including the administrative costs of the agency. These costs would exist without any specific service but may also be attributed to a specific agency operation (in which case they are direct expenses of that operation). If desired, all or a portion of indirect costs can be allocated, in which case they become a direct cost allocation.

Step 6 – Determining (or Confirming) Current Subsidy/Cost Recovery Levels

This step establishes the expectation that the agency will confirm or determine current cost recovery and subsidy allocation levels by service area based on the new or revised definition of direct and in-direct costs. This will include consideration of revenues sources and services costs or expenses. Typically, staff may not be cost accounting consistently, and these inconsistencies will become apparent. Results of this step will identify whether staff members know what it costs to provide services to the community, whether staff have the capacity or resources necessary to account for and track costs, whether accurate cost recovery levels can be identified, and whether cost centers or general ledger line items align with how the agency may want to track these costs in the future.

Step 7 – Establishing Cost Recovery/Subsidy Goals

Subsidy and cost recovery are complementary. If a program is subsidized at 75%, it has a 25% cost recovery, and vice-versa. It is more powerful to work through this exercise thinking about where the tax subsidy is used rather than what is the cost recovery. When it is complete, you can reverse thinking to articulate the cost recovery philosophy, as necessary.

The overall subsidy/cost recovery level is comprised of the average of everything in all of the levels together as a whole. This step identifies what the current subsidy level is for the programs sorted into each level. There may be quite a range within each level, and some programs could overlap with other levels of the pyramid. This will be rectified in the final steps.

This step must reflect your community and must align with the thinking of policy makers regarding the broad picture financial goals and objectives.
Examples
Categories in the bottom level of the Pyramid may be completely or mostly subsidized, with the agency having established limited cost recovery to convey the value of the experience to the user. An established 90-100% subsidy articulates the significant community benefit resulting from these categories.

The top level of the Pyramid may range from 0% subsidy to 50% excess revenues above all costs, or more. Or, the agency may not have any Categories of Service in the top level.

Step 8 – Understanding and Preparing for Influential Factors and Considerations
Inherent to sorting programs onto the Pyramid model using the Benefits and other filters is the realization that other factors come into play. This can result in decisions to place services in other levels than might first be thought. These factors also follow a continuum; however, do not necessarily follow the five levels like the Benefits Filter. In other words, a specific continuum may fall completely within the first two levels of the Pyramid. These factors can aid in determining core versus ancillary services. These factors represent a layering effect and should be used to make adjustments to an initial placement on the Pyramid.

THE COMMITMENT FACTOR: What is the intensity of the program; what is the commitment of the participant?
- Drop-In Opportunities
- Instructional – Basic
- Instructional – Intermediate
- Competitive – Not Recreational
- Specialized

THE TRENDS FACTOR: Is the program or service tried and true, or is it a fad?
- Basic
- Traditionally Expected
- Staying Current with Trends
- Cool, Cutting Edge
- Far Out

THE POLITICAL FILTER: What is out of our control?
This filter does not operate on a continuum, but is a reality, and will dictate from time to time where certain programs fit in the pyramid

THE MARKETING FACTOR: What is the effect of the program in attracting customers?
- Loss Leader
- Popular – High Willingness to Pay

THE RELATIVE COST TO PROVIDE FACTOR: What is the cost per participant?
- Low Cost per Participant
- Medium Cost per Participant
- High Cost per Participant

THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS FACTOR: What are the financial realities of the community?
- Low Ability to Pay
- Pay to Play
FINANCIAL GOALS FACTOR: Are we targeting a financial goal such as increasing sustainability, decreasing subsidy reliance?

100% Subsidized

Generates Excess Revenue over Direct Expenditures

Step 9 – Implementation

Across the country, ranges in overall cost recovery levels can vary from less than 10% to over 100%. The agency sets their goals based upon values, vision, mission, stakeholder input, funding, and/or other criteria. This process may have been completed to determine present cost recovery levels, or the agency may have needed to increase cost recovery levels in order to meet budget targets. Sometimes, simply implementing a policy to develop equity is enough without a concerted effort to increase revenues. Upon completion of steps 1-8, the agency is positioned to illustrate and articulate where it has been and where it is heading from a financial perspective.

Step 10 – Evaluation

The results of this process may be used to:

- articulate and illustrate a comprehensive cost recovery and subsidy allocation philosophy
- train staff at all levels as to why and how things are priced the way they are
- shift subsidy to where is it most appropriately needed
- benchmark future financial performance
- enhance financial sustainability
- recommend service reductions to meet budget subsidy targets, or show how revenues can be increased as an alternative
- justifiably price new services

This Cost Recovery/Subsidy Allocation Philosophy: The Pyramid Methodology Outline is provided by:

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Appendix C – Inventory and LOS Maps
Appendix D – Sample Partnership Policy
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Sample

Partnership Policy and Proposal Format

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Sample Parks and Recreation Department
Partnership Policy
And Proposal Format

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Part Two

The “Proposed Partnership Outline Format” 17
I. Sample Parks and Recreation Department Partnership Policy

A. Purpose

This policy is designed to guide the process for XX Parks and Recreation Department in their desire to partner with private, non-profit, or other governmental entities for the development, design, construction, and operation of possibly partnered recreational facilities and/or programs that may occur on City property.

The XX Parks and Recreation Department would like to identify for-profit, non-profit, and governmental entities that are interested in proposing to partner with the City to develop recreational facilities and/or programs. A major component in exploring any potential partnership will be to identify additional collaborating partners that may help provide a synergistic working relationship in terms of resources, community contributions, knowledge, and political sensitivity. These partnerships should be mutually beneficial for all proposing partners including the City, and particularly beneficial for the citizens of the community.

This policy document is designed to:
- Provide essential background information.
- Provide parameters for gathering information regarding the needs and contributions of potential partners.
- Identify how the partnerships will benefit the Sample Parks and Recreation Department and the community.

Part Two: The “Proposed Partnership Outline Format,” provides a format that is intended to help guide Proposing Partners in creating a proposal for review by Sample Parks and Recreation Department staff.
B. Background and Assumptions

Partnerships are being used across the nation by governmental agencies in order to utilize additional resources for their community’s benefit. Examples of partnerships abound, and encompass a broad spectrum of agreements and implementation. The most commonly described partnership is between a public and a private entity, but partnerships also occur between public entities and non-profit organizations and/or other governmental agencies.

Note on Privatization:
This application is specific for proposed partnering for new facilities or programs. This information does not intend to address the issue of privatization, or transferring existing City functions to a non-City entity for improved efficiency and/or competitive cost concerns. An example of privatization would be a contract for a landscaping company to provide mowing services in a park. The City is always open to suggestions for improving services and cost savings through contractual arrangements. If you have an idea for privatization of current City functions, please call or outline your ideas in a letter for the City’s consideration.

In order for partnerships to be successful, research has shown that the following elements should be in place prior to partnership procurement:

- There must be support for the concept and process of partnering from the very highest organizational level – i.e.: the Board or Trustees, a council, and/or department head.

- The most successful agencies have high-ranking officials that believe that they owe it to their citizens to explore partnering opportunities whenever presented, those communities both solicit partners and consider partnering requests brought to them.

- It is very important to have a Partnership Policy in place before partner procurement begins. This allows the agency to be proactive rather than reactive when presented with a partnership opportunity. It also sets a “level playing field” for all potential partners, so that they can know and understand in advance the parameters and selection criteria for a proposed partnership.

- A partnership policy and process should set development priorities and incorporate multiple points for go/no-go decisions.

- The partnership creation process should be a public process, with both Partners and the Partnering Agency well aware in advance of the upcoming steps.
C. Partnership Definition

For purposes of this document and policy, a Proposed Partnership is defined as:

"An identified idea or concept involving Sample Parks and Recreation Department and for-profit, non-profit, and/or governmental entities, outlining the application of combined resources to develop facilities, programs, and/or amenities for the City and its citizens."

A partnership is a cooperative venture between two or more parties with a common goal, who combine complementary resources to establish a mutual direction or complete a mutually beneficial project. Partnerships can be facility-based or program-specific. The main goal for XX Parks and Recreation Department partnerships is enhancing public offerings to meet the mission and goals of the City. The XX Parks and Recreation Department is interested in promoting partnerships which involve cooperation among many partners, bringing resources together to accomplish goals in a synergistic manner. Proposals that incorporate such collaborative efforts will receive priority status.

Partnerships can accomplish tasks with limited resources, respond to compelling issues, encourage cooperative interaction and conflict resolution, involve outside interests, and serve as an education and outreach tool. Partnerships broaden ownership in various projects and increase public support for community recreation goals. Partners often have flexibility to obtain and invest resources/dollars on products or activities where municipal government may be limited.

Partnerships can take the form of (1) cash gifts and donor programs, (2) improved access to alternative funding, (3) property investments, (4) charitable trust funds, (5) labor, (6) materials, (7) equipment, (8) sponsorships, (9) technical skills and/or management skills, and other forms of value. The effective use of volunteers also can figure significantly into developing partnerships. Some partnerships involve active decision making, while in others, certain partners take a more passive role. The following schematic shows the types of possible partnerships discussed in this policy:

![Types of Partnerships Diagram]
D. Possible Types of Active Partnerships

The XX Parks and Recreation Department is interested in promoting collaborative partnerships among multiple community organizations. Types of agreements for Proposed “Active” Partnerships may include leases, contracts, sponsorship agreements, marketing agreements, management agreements, joint-use agreements, inter-governmental agreements, or a combination of these. An innovative and mutually beneficial partnership that does not fit into any of the following categories may also be considered.

Proposed partnerships will be considered for facility, service, operations, and/or program development including associated needs, such as parking, paving, fencing, drainage systems, signage, outdoor restrooms, lighting, utility infrastructure, etc.

The following examples are provided only to illustrate possible types of partnerships. They are not necessarily examples that would be approved and/or implemented.

Examples of Public/Private Partnerships

- A private business seeing the need for more/different community fitness and wellness activities wants to build a facility on City land, negotiate a management contract, provide the needed programs, and make a profit.

- A private group interested in environmental conservation obtains a grant from a foundation to build an educational kiosk, providing all materials and labor, and is in need of a spot to place it.

- Several neighboring businesses see the need for a place for their employees to work out during the work day. They group together to fund initial facilities and an operating subsidy and give the facility to the City to operate for additional public users.

- A biking club wants to fund the building of a race course through a park. The races would be held one night per week, but otherwise the path would be open for public biking and in-line skating.

- A large corporate community relations office wants to provide a skatepark, but doesn't want to run it. They give a check to the City in exchange for publicizing their underwriting of the park's cost.

- A private restaurant operator sees the need for a concessions stand in a park and funds the building of one, operates it, and provides a share of revenue back to the City.

- A garden club wants land to build unique butterfly gardens. They will tend the gardens and just need a location and irrigation water.
Examples of Public/Non-Profit Partnerships

- A group of participants for a particular sport or hobby sees a need for more playing space and forms a non-profit entity to raise funds for a facility for their priority use that is open to the public during other hours.

- A non-profit baseball association needs fields for community programs and wants to obtain grants for the building of the fields. They would get priority use of the fields, which would be open for the City to schedule use during other times.

- A museum funds and constructs a new building, dedicating some space and time for community meetings and paying a portion of revenues to the City to lease its land.

Examples of Public/Public Partnerships

- Two governmental entities contribute financially to the development and construction of a recreational facility to serve residents of both entities. One entity, through an IGA, is responsible for the operation of the facility, while the other entity contributes operating subsidy through a formula based on population or some other appropriate factor.

- Two governmental public safety agencies see the need for more physical training space for their employees. They jointly build a gym adjacent to City facilities to share for their training during the day. The gyms would be open for the City to schedule for other users at night.

- A school district sees the need for a climbing wall for their athletes. The district funds the wall and subsidizes operating costs, and the City manages and maintains the wall to provide public use during non-school hours.

- A university needs meeting rooms. They fund a multi-use building on City land that can be used for City community programs at night.

E. Sponsorships

The XX Parks and Recreation Department is interested in actively procuring sponsorships for facilities and programs as one type of beneficial partnership. Please see the Sample Parks and Recreation Department Sponsorship Policy for more information.
F. Limited-Decision Making Partnerships: Donor, Volunteer, and Granting Programs

While this policy document focuses on the parameters for more active types of partnerships, the City is interested in, and will be happy to discuss, a proposal for any of these types of partnerships, and may create specific plans for such in the future.

G. Benefits of Partnerships with Sample Parks and Recreation Department

The City expects that any Proposed Partnership will have benefits for all involved parties. Some general expected benefits are:

Benefits for the City and the Community:
- Merging of resources to create a higher level of service and facility availability for community members.
- Making alternative funding sources available for public community amenities.
- Tapping into the dynamic and entrepreneurial traits of private industry.
- Delivering services and facilities more efficiently by allowing for collaborative business solutions to public organizational challenges.
- Meeting the needs of specific groups of users through the availability of land for development and community use.

Benefits for the Partners:
- Land and/or facility availability at a subsidized level for specific facility and/or program needs.
- Sharing of the risk with an established stable governmental entity.
- Becoming part of a larger network of support for management and promotion of facilities and programs.
- Availability of professional City recreation and planning experts to maximize the facilities and programs that may result.
- Availability of City staff facilitation to help streamline the planning and operational efforts.
II. The Partnering Process

The steps for creation of a partnership with the XX Parks and Recreation Department are as follows:

A. XX Parks and Recreation Department will create a public notification process that will help inform any and all interested partners of the availability of partnerships with the City. This will be done through notification in area newspapers, listing in the brochure, or through any other notification method that is feasible.

B. The proposing partner takes the first step to propose partnering with the City. To help in reviewing both the partnerships proposed, and the project to be developed in partnership, the City asks for a Preliminary Proposal according to a specific format as outlined in Part Two - Proposed Partnership Outline Format.

C. If initial review of a Preliminary Proposal yields interest and appears to be mutually beneficial based on the City Mission and Goals, and the Selection Criteria, a City staff member or appointed representative will be assigned to work with potential partners.

D. The City representative is available to answer questions related to the creation of an initial proposal, and after initial interest has been indicated, will work with the proposing partner to create a checklist of what actions need to take place next. Each project will have distinctive planning, design, review, and support issues. The City representative will facilitate the process of determining how the partnership will address these issues. This representative can also facilitate approvals and input from any involved City departments, providing guidance for the partners as to necessary steps.

E. An additional focus at this point will be determining whether this project is appropriate for additional collaborative partnering, and whether this project should prompt the City to seek a Request for Proposal (RFP) from competing/collaborating organizations.

   Request for Proposal (RFP) Trigger: In order to reduce concerns of unfair private competition, if a proposed project involves partnering with a private "for-profit" entity and a dollar amount greater than $5,000, and the City has not already undergone a public process for solicitation of that particular type of partnership, the City will request Partnership Proposals from other interested private entities for identical and/or complementary facilities, programs, or services. A selection of appropriate partners will be part of the process.
F. For most projects, a Formal Proposal from the partners for their desired development project will need to be presented for the City’s official development review processes and approvals. The project may require approval by the Legal, Planning, Fire and Safety, Finance, and/or other City Departments, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Planning Board, The Board of Trustees, and/or the City Supervisor’s Office, depending on project complexity and applicable City Charter provisions, ordinances or regulations. If these reviews are necessary, provision to reimburse the City for its costs incurred in having a representative facilitate the partnered project’s passage through Development Review should be included in the partnership proposal.

G. Depending on project complexity and anticipated benefits, responsibilities for all action points are negotiable, within the framework established by law, to ensure the most efficient and mutually beneficial outcome. Some projects may require that all technical and professional expertise and staff resources come from outside the City’s staff, while some projects may proceed most efficiently if the City contributes staff resources to the partnership.

H. The partnership must cover the costs the partnership incurs, regardless of how the partnered project is staffed, and reflect those costs in its project proposal and budget. The proposal for the partnered project should also discuss how staffing and expertise will be provided, and what documents will be produced. If City staff resources are to be used by the partnership, those costs should be allocated to the partnered project and charged to it.

I. Specific Partnership Agreements appropriate to the project will be drafted jointly. There is no specifically prescribed format for Partnership Agreements, which may take any of several forms depending on what will accomplish the desired relationships among partners. The agreements may be in the form of:

- Lease Agreements
- Management and/or Operating Agreements
- Maintenance Agreements
- Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs)
- Or a combination of these and/or other appropriate agreements

Proposed partnership agreements might include oversight of the development of the partnership, concept plans and project master plans, environmental assessments, architectural designs, development and design review, project management, and construction documents, inspections, contracting, monitoring, etc. Provision to fund the costs and for reimbursing the City for its costs incurred in creating the partnership, facilitating the project’s passage through the Development Review Processes, and completing the required documents should be considered.
J. If all is approved, the Partnership begins. The City is committed to upholding its responsibilities to Partners from the initiation through the continuation of a partnership. Evaluation will be an integral component of all Partnerships. The agreements should outline who is responsible for evaluation and what types of measures will be used, and should detail what will occur should the evaluations reveal Partners are not meeting their Partnership obligations.
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III. The Partnership Evaluation Process

A. Mission Statements and Goals

All partnerships with Sample Parks and Recreation Department should be in accord with the City’s and the Parks and Recreation Department’s Mission and Goals to indicate how a proposed partnership for that Department would be preliminarily evaluated.

SAMPLE MISSION STATEMENT

The XX Parks and Recreation Department will provide a variety of parks, recreation facilities, and program experiences equitably throughout the community. Programs will be developed and maintained to the highest quality, ensuring a safe environment with exceptional service while developing a lifetime customer. Services will demonstrate a positive economic investment through partnerships with other service providers, both public and private, ensuring a high quality of life for citizens of XX.

(Sample) GOALS –

- Promote physical and mental health and fitness
- Nourish the development of children and youth
- Help to build strong communities and neighborhoods
- Promote environmental stewardship
- Provide beautiful, safe, and functional parks and facilities that improve the lives of all citizens
- Preserve cultural and historic features within the City’s parks and recreation systems
- Provide a work environment for the Parks & Recreation Department staff that encourages initiative, professional development, high morale, productivity, teamwork, innovation, and excellence in management

B. Other Considerations

1. Costs for the Proposal Approval Process
For most proposed partnerships, there will be considerable staff time spent on the review and approval process once a project passes the initial review stage. This time includes discussions with Proposing Partners, exploration of synergistic partnering opportunities, possible RFP processes, facilitation of the approval process, assistance in writing and negotiating agreements, contracting, etc. There may also be costs for construction and planning documents, design work, and related needs and development review processes mandated by City ordinances.
Successful Partnerships will take these costs into account and may plan for City recovery of some or all of these costs within the proposal framework. Some of these costs could be considered as construction expenses, reimbursed through a negotiated agreement once operations begin, or covered through some other creative means.

2. Land Use and/or Site Improvements
Some proposed partnerships may include facility and/or land use. Necessary site improvements cannot be automatically assumed. Costs and responsibility for these improvements should be considered in any Proposal. Some of the general and usual needs for public facilities that may not be included as City contributions and may need to be negotiated for a project include:

- Any facilities or non-existent infrastructure construction
- Roads or street improvements
- Maintenance to specified standards
- Staffing
- Parking
- Snow removal
- Lighting
- Outdoor restrooms
- Water fountains
- Complementary uses of the site
- Utility improvements (phone, cable, storm drainage, electricity, water, gas, sewer, etc.)
- Custodial services
- Trash removal

3. Need
The nature of provision of public services determines that certain activities will have a higher need than others. Some activities serve a relatively small number of users and have a high facility cost. Others serve a large number of users and are widely available from the private sector because they are profitable. The determination of need for facilities and programs is an ongoing discussion in public provision of programs and amenities. The project will be evaluated based on how the project fulfills a public need.

4. Funding
Only when a Partnership Proposal demonstrates high unmet needs and high benefits for City citizens, will the City consider contributing resources to a project. The City recommends that Proposing Partners consider sources of potential funding. The more successful partnerships will have funding secured in advance. In most cases, Proposing Partners should consider funding and cash flow for initial capital development, staffing, and ongoing operation and maintenance.

The details of approved and pending funding sources should be clearly identified in a proposal.

For many partners, especially small private user groups, non-profit groups, and governmental agencies, cash resources may be a limiting factor in the proposal. It may be a necessity for partners to utilize alternative funding sources for resources to complete a proposed project. Obtaining alternative funding often demands creativity, ingenuity, and persistence, but many forms of funding are available.
Alternative funding can come from many sources, e.g. Sponsorships, Grants, and Donor Programs. A local librarian and/or internet searches can help with foundation and grant resources. Developing a solid leadership team for a partnering organization will help find funding sources. In-kind contributions can, in some cases, add additional funding.

All plans for using alternative funding should be clearly identified. The City has an established Sponsorship Policy, and partnered projects will be expected to adhere to the Policy. This includes the necessity of having an Approved Sponsorship Plan in place prior to procurement of sponsorships for a Partnered Project.

C. Selection Criteria

In assessing a partnership opportunity to provide facilities and services, the City will consider (as appropriate) the following criteria. The Proposed Partnership Outline Format in Part Two provides a structure to use in creating a proposal. City staff and representatives will make an evaluation by attempting to answer each of the following Guiding Questions.

- How does the project align with the City and affected Department’s Mission Statement and Goals?
- How does the proposed facility fit into the current City and the affected Department’s Master Plan?
- How does the facility/program meet the needs of City residents?
- How will the project generate more revenue and/or less cost per participant than the City can provide with its own staff or facilities?
- What are the alternatives that currently exist, or have been considered, to serve the users identified in this project?
- How much of the existing need is now being met within the City borders and within adjacent cities?
- What is the number and demographic profile of participants who will be served?
- How can the proposing partner assure the City of the long-term stability of the proposed partnership, both for operations and for maintenance standards?
- How will the partnered project meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) requirements?
- How will the organization offer programs at reasonable and competitive costs for participants?
- What are the overall benefits for both the City and the Proposing Partners?
D. Additional Assistance

The XX Parks and Recreation Department is aware that the partnership process does entail a great deal of background work on the part of the Proposing Partner. The following list of resources may be helpful in preparing a proposal:

- **Courses are available through local colleges and universities to help organizations develop a business plan and/or operational pro-formas.**

- The Chamber of Commerce offers a variety of courses and assistance for business owners and for those contemplating starting new ventures.

- There are consultants who specialize in facilitating these types of partnerships. For one example, contact GreenPlay LLC at 303-439-8369 or info@greenplayllc.com.

- Reference Librarians at libraries and internet searches can be very helpful in identifying possible funding sources and partners, including grants, foundations, financing, etc.

- Relevant information including the *City of XX Comprehensive Plan*, the *Parks and Recreation Master Plan*, site maps, and other documents are available at the _______. These documents may be copied or reviewed, but may not be taken off-site.

- The XX Parks and Recreation Department Web Site (**www.XXX.com**) has additional information.

- **If additional help or information is needed, please call 000-000-0000.**
Part Two

Sample Proposed Partnership Outline Format

Please provide as much information as possible in the following outline form.

I. Description of Proposing Organization:

- Name of Organization
- Purpose of Organization
- Years in Business
- Services
- Contact Name, Mailing Address, Physical Address, Phone, Fax, Email
- Provided/Member/User/Customer Profiles
- Accomplishments
- Legal Status

II. Decision Making Authority

Who is authorized to negotiate on behalf of the organization? Who or what group (i.e. Council/Commission/Board) is the final decision maker and can authorize the funding commitment? What is the timeframe for decision making?

Summary of Proposal (100 words or less)

What is being proposed in terms of capital development, and program needs?

III. Benefits to the Partnering Organization

Why is your organization interested in partnering with the XX Parks and Recreation Department? Please individually list and discuss the benefits (monetary and non-monetary) for your organization.

IV. Benefits to the Sample Parks and Recreation Department

Please individually list and discuss the benefits (monetary and non-monetary) for the XX Parks and Recreation Department and residents of the City.

V. Details (as currently known)

The following page lists a series of Guiding Questions to help you address details that can help outline the benefits of a possible partnership. Please try to answer as many as possible with currently known information. Please include what your organization proposes to provide and what is requested of XX Parks and Recreation Department. Please include (as known) initial plans for your concept, operations, projected costs and revenues, staffing, and/or any scheduling or maintenance needs, etc.
Guiding Questions

Meeting the Needs of our Community:
- In your experience, how does the project align with park and recreation goals?
- How does the proposed program or facility meet a need for City residents?
- Who will be the users? What is the projected number and profile of participants who will be served?
- What alternatives currently exist to serve the users identified in this project?
- How much of the existing need is now being met? What is the availability of similar programs elsewhere in the community?
- Do the programs provide opportunities for entry-level, intermediate, and/or expert skill levels?
- How does this project incorporate environmentally sustainable practices?

The Financial Aspect:
- Can the project generate more revenue and/or less cost per participant than the City can provide with its own staff or facilities? If not, why should the City partner on this project?
- Will your organization offer programs at reasonable and competitive costs for all participants? What are the anticipated prices for participants?
- What resources are expected to come from the Parks & Recreation Department?
- Will there be a monetary benefit for the City, and if so, how and how much?

Logistics:
- How much space do you need? What type of space?
- What is critical related to location?
- What is your proposed timeline?
- What are your projected hours of operations?
- What are your initial staffing projections?
- Are there any mutually-beneficial cooperative marketing benefits?
- What types of insurance will be needed and who will be responsible for acquiring and paying premiums on the policies?
- What is your organization’s experience in providing this type of facility/program?
- How will your organization meet ADA and EEOC requirements?

Agreements and Evaluation:
- How, by whom, and at what intervals should the project be evaluated?
- How can you assure the City of long-term stability of your organization?
- What types and length of agreements should be used for this project?
- What types of “exit strategies” should we include?
- What should be done if the project does not meet the conditions of the original agreements?