



All For One, Fun For All!

Bethlehem's Parks & Recreation Master Plan



Public Engagement
January 14-15, 2015

GREENPLAY LLC

*The Leading Edge In Parks, Recreation
And Open Space Consulting*

Weston & Sampson

Agenda

- What we've heard
- Your input
- Questions & answers



Focus Group Summary

Length of Bethlehem Residency

145 participants in
11 Focus & Stakeholder Groups

< 5 years	–	7%
5-9 years	–	3%
10-19 years	–	18%
20+ years	–	61%



Not a resident but support or use programs – 11%

Strengths

- Programming options
- Maintenance of facilities
- Dog park
- Response to requests
- Good website
- Distribution of parks north to south
- Friendly
- Good Director
- Marketing and promotions
- Aquatics
- Picnic areas
- Range of summer programming
- Walking/fitness trails
- Conservation of green space
- Summer park programs
- Variety of amenities
- Creative, open to new ideas
- Summer employment opportunities
- All age activities available

Areas of Improvement

- Lack of arts and cultural resources
- Lack of connectivity with trails
- Too much emphasis on youth sports
- Teen spots: Skate park, etc.
- Schools/Parks coordination programming and services
- Lack of shade trees
- Facilities not keeping up with growth
- Pool condition
- Lack of Indoor activities (pool – tennis – theater)
- Outdoor Volleyball courts
- Natural history interpretation
- Lack of synergy with schools
- Access to dogs on leash areas
- Funding
- Aging, dated facilities
- Can't accommodate everyone: limited infrastructure
- Picnic shelters lacking
- Lack alternative/Non-traditional sports activities

Overall Quality of Current Programs Offered

■ EXCELLENT	14.7%
■ VERY GOOD	51.5%
■ GOOD	30.9%
■ FAIR	2.9%
■ POOR	0%

Additional Programs or Activities

- Outdoor/nature based education/programming
- Music in parks
- Arts in parks
- Family Festivals celebrating heritage
- Programs for teens/tweens
- Off road/Mountain biking
- Disc golf
- Pickleball
- Adult learn to swim
- Bike share
- Tennis league
- Kayaking
- Off hours programming
- Allow dogs in parks
- Unstructured open space – breathing space
- Balance between conservation and use

Overall Quality of Existing Parks & Recreation Facilities



Overall Quality of Maintenance of Parks & Recreation Facilities



■ EXCELLENT	32.4%
■ VERY GOOD	52.1%
■ GOOD	15.5%%
■ FAIR	0%
■ POOR	0%

Improvements To Existing Facilities

- Playground at Elm Ave Park, replaced and maintained
- Parking
- Pool building/locker room
- Family restrooms at pool
- Accessibility to parks - ADA
- Longer, better maintained fitness trails
- Pool up to standards for meets
- Teen: Place to go
- Henry Hudson Headwall repair
- Canoe and kayak ramp
- Drainage issues on lacrosse fields
- Shade/shelter
- Seating areas at the parks
- lighting at fields, courts, parking at dog park
- Restrooms
- Improved trails maintenance
- Lighting on sports fields
- Water fountains near pavilions

Underserved Portions Of Community

- Seniors. Difficult access due to distance
- Connected paths for walking and bikes
- Teen/middle school programming
- Special populations – better ADA accommodations
- Non-vehicle operators
- Exercise or fitness opportunities
- Glenn Mark isolated
- Inactive adults – more passive activities needed
- Mountain bikers
- Disc golfers
- Bicycling
- Low income citizens – costs prohibitive
- Adult team sports

New Facilities/Amenities

- Performance venue, preference for ability to enclose
- Amphitheater
- Dog parks
- Indoor activity facilities
- Community center
- Walking/biking trails, Connectivity.
- Disc golf
- Greenspace acquisition
- Mountain biking trails
- Community gardens
- Paved running/biking trails
- Pickleball
- Utility corridors for trails
- Adaptive Playground / Special Needs
- Restrooms at parks
- Field & Court lights
- Golf cart paths to connect parks and retail spaces
- Road biking
- Multi-use paths
- Synthetic turf field
- Model farm
- Archery range
- Story grove

Overall Quality of Customer Service

EXCELLENT	63.2%
VERY GOOD	32.4%
GOOD	4.4%
FAIR	0%
POOR	0%

Seeking Community Feedback

EXCELLENT	6.3%
VERY GOOD	32.8%
GOOD	35.9%
FAIR	25%
POOR	0%

Financial Support

- Combination Fees and Tax Support

- Sponsorships, grants, naming rights, advertising on website

- Explore efficiency and alternate sources of energy
- Community fundraising
- Don't do naming rights, sponsorships
- Fee in lieu
- Opposed to allowing all in for accepting fed/state grants
- Consider a 'free day' occasionally
- Discuss a bond for recreations and parks.
- Sweat equity and fund raising

Key Potential Partners

- Schools
- Youth Sports Associations
- Youth scouts
- Mohawk-Hudson land conservancy
- Arboretum....local nurseries....Garden Club
- YMCA
- Transportation district
- Historical society
- Arts walk
- Service organizations
- Friends group
- Other Open Space entities (land trusts, foundations, etc.)
- Economic development – market parks as assets to live, work and play
- Community theater
- Retailers
- Water line – City of Albany
- Sewer line property – utility
- Ethnic groups
- Surrounding jurisdictions

Key Issues / Values

- Sustainability
- Arboretum
- History/Culture
- Divided neighborhoods: Parks can unify
- Need teen programming
- Community engagement
- Healthy kids
- Clean water
- Clean air
- exercise
- Accessibility all ages
- Diversity of activities
- Native landscaping
- Renewable energy
- Intergenerational programs
- Willingness to invest in the community
- Don't like to spend money
- Identity of community

Top Priorities

- Connectivity: non-motorized transportation
- Dog parks
- Arts in the park
- Rail trail
- Financial assessment – finding the money
- Unifying the community
- Collaboration
- Pool locker rooms
- Community center design
- Plantings and landscaping
- Create a coalition serving teens/tweens
- Being creative re: Master Plan
- Update facilities
- Passive areas
- Energy self-sufficiency
- Be open to creativity
- Fiscally sustainable
- Sidewalks – walkability

Thank You For Your Time & Consideration!



Weston & Sampson

Daniel P. Biggs, RLA
Direct: 463-4400 x5517
biggsd@wseinc.com

Questions? Your Project Team

Art Thatcher, CPRP
Direct: 757-592-3103
artt@greenplayllc.com

Tom Donlin, CPRE
Direct 443-995-9079
tomd@greenplayllc.com