



SECTION VII: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The City of Ann Arbor parks, recreation and open space system exists to serve the needs and desires of the residents of the City and the Ann Arbor community by providing a full spectrum of recreational opportunities, while enhancing the visual quality of neighborhoods and the City as a whole. Historically, Ann Arbor's parks, recreation and open space system has been looked upon as one of the most important elements in the quality of life for Ann Arbor residents.

The Park and Recreation System-Wide Goals have not changed significantly from the previous plan. This is because after gathering the public input, staff recognized that even though some issues have changed, the overriding goals and objectives are still relevant and respond to the desires and concerns of residents today.

A. Mission Statement

Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation is committed to the development and maintenance of quality programming, services and facilities for the Ann Arbor community and to foster stewardship of our natural resources. Our goal is to provide both structured and unstructured opportunities which lead to improving the quality of life through recreational, educational, social and cultural enrichment services. We provide these opportunities for community residents, regardless of their age, gender, socio-economic level, ethnicity and abilities. This is achieved through cooperative team efforts with the City and Public Schools, other agencies and institutions, volunteers, the private sector and the general public.

B. Guiding Principles for the Provision of Parks, Recreation and Open Space

- Provide accessible recreation, enrichment and leisure opportunities for the Ann Arbor community, regardless of the physical or socio-economic characteristics of the participants.
- Efficiently employ City resources, in concert with other public resources, to provide a wide range of recreation and leisure opportunities and avoid duplication of services where unnecessary.

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- Actively seek the most appropriate acquisition and uses of community open space and natural features to meet the community's needs for active, structured recreation, as well as passive enjoyment of the outdoors.
- Plan for the continued availability of financial, physical, and personnel resources to support the parks and recreation system through a combination of public and professional input.
- Provide responsible stewardship of the natural resources that impact the City's park system.

C. Goals, Rationale and Objectives

To assure that parks, recreation and open space meet the expectations of the Ann Arbor community, the following goals and objectives are offered:

GOAL 1.

Provide an efficient recreation and open space system, where all the components will complement each other in providing a broad spectrum of services while minimizing duplication, where necessary.

RATIONALE

The effective provision of recreation, enrichment, and leisure opportunities necessitates maximum use of available resources and cooperation among the various providers of services and facilities.

OBJECTIVES

- a. Promote cooperation and resource sharing among the public agencies involved in providing recreation and open space (i.e., Ann Arbor Public Schools, City Parks and Recreation Services, Community Education and Recreation, neighboring townships, Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation, Huron-Clinton Metropark Authority, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, and the University of Michigan).
- b. Maximize the use of existing resources to economically and conveniently serve a variety of uses and purposes (e.g., school buildings as after school meeting space, school grounds serving a neighborhood, golf course/cross-country ski area, schedule softball fields at fewer park locations to consolidate field usage to cut down on mowing). Indoor facilities can be multi-functional to reduce operational costs and provide convenience (i.e., swimming pool and other exercise facilities within one fitness center).
- c. Plan, design, and build parks and facilities to support multiple functions within the limitations of the site or the proposed improvement. Such planning will result in greater use of the parks and facilities and maximize the benefit for the dollars spent (e.g. Veterans Ice Arena and Pool).
- d. Coordinate dissemination of information concerning both public and private recreation programs to reach community residents better.

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- e. Develop mechanisms to allow various public recreation agencies to develop and coordinate future directions, cooperatively address park and recreation issues, and consolidate marketing research.
- f. Optimize utilization of all public land within the community, i.e., land owned by the City, County, schools, and university based on the capacity of the land to accommodate various uses.
- g. Better utilization of existing public land may lessen the need for acquisition of additional lands. School sites, for example, with minimal changes in site design requirements, may serve to fulfill community needs for recreation land in areas deficient in park opportunities and facilities.

GOAL 2.

Achieve and maintain a balanced parks, recreation and open space system, accessible to all of the community.

RATIONALE

People throughout the Ann Arbor community have a broad spectrum of abilities, interests, economic resources, and cultural backgrounds. Public service providers have the goal of providing a broad variety of recreation, enrichment, and leisure opportunities for all those in the community who desire these services.

OBJECTIVES

- a. Reflect the needs of all persons in the City, regardless of age, sex, mental capability, socio-economic position and location.
- b. Attempt to provide balance in terms of facilities and opportunities as in the following examples: passive and active, summer and winter, daytime and evening, programmed and informal, structured and non-structured activities.
- c. Enhance opportunities to provide cultural activities (music, dance, crafts, theater, arts, etc.).
- d. Define role as public recreation providers. What services should be provided to meet community needs?
- e. Increase efforts to improve the schedule for retrofitting existing facilities to accommodate people with varying abilities.
- f. Focus on providing play areas that are designed to allow disabled users greater opportunity.
- g. New facilities must continue to be designed barrier free and other accommodations made for people with disabilities must be made.
- h. Develop strategies to identify which targeted groups are not currently receiving or participating in recreation services.
- i. Address the recreation and service needs and interests of disadvantaged persons and residents of public housing sites and cooperatives. Also, improve access to parks and recreation

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services for low-income residents City-wide.

- j. Enhance social and recreational opportunities for senior adults. Improve communications with this growing population.

GOAL 3.

Assure a firm financial basis for the park, recreation and open space system.

RATIONALE

The effective provision of park, recreation and open space today and into the future is dependent on broad public support, through a combination of reliable funding sources.

OBJECTIVES

- a. Consider a variety of funding strategies including millages, grants, easements, use agreements, land use controls, dedication, bequeaths, volunteer work, donations from private organizations, etc.
- b. Require new residential development within the City to contribute equitably to the resulting increased demand for parks, recreation and open space so that the current recreation and open space quality does not deteriorate.
- c. Study the services and facilities that receive General Fund support and those services and programs which charge fees to determine optimal (desired) fee levels and General Fund support levels.
- d. Seek broad support for the park, recreation and open space system, including support from the surrounding townships.
- e. Develop strategies by which volunteers, community businesses, educational institutions (the University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, Washtenaw Community College, etc.) and service groups might be more directly involved in developing, sponsoring, and assisting with recreation programs, or ecological restoration of natural areas.
- f. Increase public support through citizen knowledge of and identification with park spaces. Foster volunteerism and public input to the decision-making process by facilitating organized citizen park stewardship with an adopt-a-park program and continuation of the Natural Area Preservation Park Steward program.
- g. Strive for adult sports programs to be self-sufficient.
- h. Include actions the City is interested in that are also state and federal goals, as these will qualify park projects for state and federal grants.
- i. Encourage the University of Michigan and the Ann Arbor Public Schools to provide more public open space for community use.

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- j. Continue to raise money to offset value of scholarships provided by Parks and Recreation.

GOAL 4.

Assure adequate and suitable provisions of land and facilities to meet present and future parks, recreation and open space needs in terms of maintenance and development.

RATIONALE

As a result of the 2004 City reorganization, responsibility for park maintenance shifted to the Public Services Area. In light of this reorganization, coordination between service areas is particularly important to assure the achievement of a balanced park system in terms of quality and quantity of facilities and park areas. The management and maintenance of a park area is as important as the formulation of an appropriate design and its implementation. The proper care and management of a park and its facilities are essential to instill pride in the system, discourage vandalism, and encourage optimum use.

OBJECTIVES

- a. Maintain, rehabilitate, and restore existing facilities and natural areas in keeping with their planned use, safety, enjoyment, and aesthetic sensibilities.
- b. Assure citizens the best possible park or recreation experience by giving special attention to upkeep, including maintenance, safety, and cleanliness; replacement of worn or obsolete equipment and facilities; landscaping; ecological restoration of natural areas; and rehabilitation where indicated by changed needs or conditions.
- c. Develop efficient maintenance procedures that decrease staff hours, equipment and use of chemicals, and utilize natural processes such as controlled burning and native plant landscape areas.
- d. Develop an adequate plan for maintenance and rehabilitation of all City-owned and operated park facilities.
- e. Justify proposed acquisitions in terms of how they fit into the park and open space system as a whole. Evaluate all proposals with concern for where the benefits will occur and what long-term commitments they entail for operation, upkeep, and program delivery.
- f. Provide physical connections such as walkways, bikeways, trails between City parks, and access to parks from adjacent neighborhoods where the opportunities exist and create linkages where they are lacking.
- g. Encourage volunteerism within the parks system with the expansion of the Adopt-a-Park Program.
- h. Continue to refine the park gifts program to benefit the park and recreation system.
- i. Develop a maintenance plan that will inventory, list maintenance standards, and provide a refurbishment schedule for athletic fields.

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- j. Continue to work cooperatively with the Ann Arbor Public Schools to clarify operational agreements specifying particular duties and functions of each agency as they relate to funding for maintenance and refurbishment of athletic fields.
- k. Emphasize the care of existing park trees and planting of new trees in all park development or improvement projects.
- l. Adapt the extent of maintenance provided to the intensity and nature of use that the park and facility receive.
- m. Analyze the operational and maintenance impact prior to authorization of development, rehabilitation, and new facility construction.
- n. Review the organization structure and total funding of park, recreation and open space to insure that proper services are provided.

GOAL 5.

Foster the quality of life in Ann Arbor by paying particular attention to the park, recreation and open space system as a visual and functional resource.

RATIONALE

One of the prime reasons that Ann Arbor is in its present location is the natural beauty of the Huron River valley. Significant architecture, historic buildings, and appealing landscapes add to the quality of life in the community. The park, recreation and open space system, as a provider of parks and open space, must be conscious of the importance of its visual image to the community. Natural land functions in parks affect the quality of life. These functions include visual image of the City, water retention and cleansing, air purification and cooling, wild plant reserves and wildlife habitat, as well as havens for physical activity and mental recharge for people.

OBJECTIVES

- a. Recognize the importance of views along streets, parkways, buffer areas, and greenways as integral components of visual resource planning.
- b. Analyze and plan entrance corridors, gateway intersections, and visible outside edges of the City so as to enhance the image of Ann Arbor.
- c. Assure the continuance of Ann Arbor as the originally conceived "Ann's Arbor" by continuing a vigorous tree planting and landscape and care improvement program. Remove and replace dead or diseased trees as soon as possible. Provide unstructured and natural areas where possible to assure that these elements are accessible to neighborhoods throughout the community.
- d. Provide, where feasible, unstructured open space within the parks system and within individual parks.

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GOAL 6.

Assure citizens a voice in the decision-making process of the park, recreation and open space system, including acquisition, planning and development.

RATIONALE

The park, recreation and open space system exists to serve the Ann Arbor community. To assure that the system meets the needs of the people, the evaluation of services, assessment of the community, and ongoing communication with the public is necessary. Involvement of citizen advisors and decision makers is crucial to maintaining strong support by the community for the parks and recreation system.

OBJECTIVES

- a. Provide for an ongoing review of the park and recreation system objectives in light of the future opportunities and the use and availability of resources.
- b. Assure that information regarding programs, services, planning, and development proposals is provided to all residents of Ann Arbor, together with such other information needed by the public to make the best use of its system.
- c. Develop strategies to identify those segments of the population whose needs are not currently being met and engage them in dialogue to identify their needs.
- d. Assure that citizens have ample opportunities for public input including public hearings, feedback forms, and surveys.
- e. Expand the use of social media and other electronic media to share information, advertise programs, and solicit input.

GOAL 7.

Develop recreation programs, services and facilities after assessing changing trends and community needs.

RATIONALE

The Ann Arbor community is dynamic with a diverse population. To keep pace with the needs and desires of the public, an ongoing evaluation and marketing plan is necessary to solicit citizen input regarding existing recreation services and identify needs and changing trends.

OBJECTIVES

- a. Expand senior adult activities by increasing the range of programs and scope of service. Explore options for expanded facilities for seniors.

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- b. Study the leisure time needs of adolescents and develop appropriate activities. Develop activities to foster better nutritional habits and exercise for teens.
- c. Collaborate with local non-profits such as the non-profit teen center (Neutral Zone) and the YMCA.
- d. Expand programs and activities for pre-school children - daytime during the week and on weekends.
- e. Develop environmental interpretive programs and activities.
- f. Study the need to expand outdoor recreation opportunities.
- g. Study the desirability and long-term feasibility of multi-site community centers and schools as community learning centers.
- h. Study the need for expanded public transportation to better serve the senior adult population.
- i. Continue to seek ways to connect parks through acquisition of parcels to serve as linkages for use as bicycle and pedestrian paths.
- j. Seek ways to provide flexible all-season performance space for community residents.
- k. Seek ways to provide local neighborhood facilities for meetings, events, etc.
- l. Seek ways to enhance outdoor winter recreation and programming.

GOAL 8.

Excerpted from the Huron River Impoundment Management Plan (HRIMP) of 2009:

A healthy Huron River ecosystem that provides a diverse set of ecosystem services. 'We envision a swimmable, fishable and boatable river, including both free-flowing and impounded segments, which is celebrated as Ann Arbor's most important natural feature and contributes to the vibrancy of life in the City. The river and its publicly owned shoreline and riparian areas create a blue and green corridor across the City that contains restored natural areas and adequate and well-sited public trails and access. Ample drinking water, effective wastewater removal and a full range of high quality passive and active recreation and education opportunities are provided to the citizens of Ann Arbor. Ongoing public engagement in the river's management leads to greater stewardship and reduced conflict among users'.

The following website contains the entire HRIMP document:

www.a2gov.org/government/publicservices/systems_planning/Environment/hrimp/Documents

RATIONALE

The Huron River's watershed, its streams, creeks, wetlands, and floodplains should be viewed as an

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entire natural system. The Huron River can only be preserved and restored by taking care of the land and water system that is connected to the river.

OBJECTIVES

- a. Continue to implement the North Main Street/Huron River Corridor Study, the Argo Pond Framework Study, and other plans and studies that focus on the direction of improvements to the North Main Street and Argo Pond area.
- b. Complete the non-motorized linkages along the river from Dixboro Dam to Barton Pond to enable the nearly ten-mile pedestrian/bicycle way to be completed, and work with other agencies to complete the Huron River Greenway and Border-to-Border trail through Washtenaw County.
- c. Insure that efforts continue to clean up the Huron River and its tributaries and to address the non-point source pollution issues.
- d. Plan and provide for greater access to the Huron River by developing appropriately existing lands along the river to relieve crowding of areas such as Gallup Park.
- e. Enhance the fishery in the river to improve sport fishing.
- f. Improve water quality overall so the river could be declared swimmable.
- g. Enhance and protect scenic shorelines. Provide more native plant landscapes in parks to reduce maintenance, reestablish wildlife habitat areas, and increase diversity of species.
- h. Insure/maximize multiple-use activities/programs/facilities at riverfront parks (i.e., canoeing, rowing, fishing, etc.) that provide balanced opportunities.
- i. Plan and utilize storm water management as a resource for recreational or educational use rather than a waste product to be removed quickly.
- j. Enforce buffer zones of no mowing adjacent to streams and the river and work to restore eroded stream banks through revegetation and erosion control to enhance water quality.
- k. Coordinate water quality monitoring activities with other organizations such as the Huron River Watershed Council and the Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner's Office.
- l. Develop greenways along the tributaries of the Huron River where feasible to improve water quality and reduce flooding.

Additional objectives found within the HRIMP Document.