

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**Pragmatic steps in bringing the long range plan to reality**

To achieve the vision for parks and recreation in the City, there are multiple steps that need to be taken. Some of these steps are broad and sweeping and others are smaller. The intent of the Implementation plan is to guide the progress of City Parks and Recreation Department in that every incremental step, no matter how small, advances the City's overall vision for the future. In order to accomplish this goal there are both program and policy initiatives that must be initiated as well as budgeting and capital improvement planning that must be done. All of the following recommendations below are intended to collectively meet the on the priorities identified in the Needs Assessment process and are organized into those areas that require program or policy initiatives and those that would require capital improvement funding or budgeting. The priorities identified in the Needs Assessment are:

- Enhance partnerships and planning efforts
- Maintain what we have
- Improve trails and connectivity
- Improve Beach access
- Protect natural resources and providing nature programming
- Provide health, fitness and wellness programs
- Provide more neighborhood parks
- Increase safety and security
- Provide adequate and qualified staff
- Enhance sustainability

Following is a description of the recommended steps needed to meet the priority needs identified through the Needs Assessment process and to achieve the Long Range Plan.

7.1 PROGRAM AND POLICY INITIATIVES:**Enhanced Partnerships and Cooperation**

The key to the success of this plan is the expansion of the Department outside its traditional role of strictly parks and recreation and the development of strategic partnerships with other organizations and agencies. The planning process identified fourteen key agencies and organizations that the Department must expand its association with. They are:

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| • Broward County School District | • Community Hospitals |
| • Department of Public Works | • Private Schools |
| • Planning Department | • State Parks |
| • Transit Authority | • County Parks |
| • Downtown Development Authority | • Private Schools |
| • Neighborhood Associations | • Local Churches |
| • Condominium Associations | • Waterway Agencies |



Integration of the Master Plan Tenets into the City Comprehensive Plan

The City's Comprehensive Plan has been recently updated as a part of The Evaluation and Appraisal Report process and is currently under review by the State Department of Community Affairs. The Long Range Strategic Plan is consistent with the major Goals and Objectives of the Parks and Recreation Element of the Plan, however, the Plan provides further refinement of policy recommendations and promotes additional monitoring policies. Additionally, the Plan is in accord with the major tenants of the other Elements of the Comprehensive Plan; however the CIP, Conservation, Intergovernmental and Transportation Elements may need to be refined to be concurrent with the revised Parks and Recreation Element.

Revision of the City Land Development Regulations to be Consistent with the Plan Objectives

Concurrently, the City of Fort Lauderdale Unified Land Development Regulations should be revised to insure concurrency and consistency in the development process.

Develop a Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

The current Parks and Recreation Element of the Comprehensive Plan calls for the establishment of a Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. The City's approach of first developing a Long Range Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation facilities is prudent. The Needs Assessment process identified many issues of connectivity throughout the City and the Parks System Vision provides a framework for the plan.

Evaluate and Develop a "Safe Routes to Parks" Program to Insure Safe Access to Local Parks

As a part of the effort above or as a separate initiative the City should evaluate and develop a plan for better, safer access to parks from the surrounding neighborhoods. Many instances exist in the City where the immediate interface and logical connection points from neighborhoods to parks are not conducive to use by children. The Long Range Strategic Plan sets forth a basic framework for park connections, but further study of traffic and crossings will be needed to insure proper safety.

Increased Coordination and Promotion of Programs

One issue for the Department identified through the public opinion survey was a higher than usual response by the general public that they are unaware of the programs being provided by the City. Upon further inquiry it was discovered that the Department has reduced the mailing of their seasonal brochures to only those who have previously participated in City programs. The Department has tried to increase the public's use of its web site; however this has not reached all of the public. The City should reestablish funding for a full mailing of the seasonal brochures. The brochure should encourage the use of the web site and provide an e-newsletter to those who sign up and then remove from the mailing those who prefer this method of communication. The hope is that the numbers of brochures needing to be printed will quickly reduce down to approximately the same level as now, but a broader user group will be reached.



Increased Awareness and Programming of Natural Areas

The City of Fort Lauderdale has limited natural areas under its specific control but there are multiple locations in the area being managed by other agencies. The Parks and Recreation Department needs to arrange for cooperative programming at these facilities. Facilities currently owned by Broward County and the Hugh Taylor Birch State Park are beautiful natural areas that are not being fully utilized. Furthermore these facilities do not promote one another. The department should cooperatively promote these areas and provide for cross-marketing with the State and Broward County. The State Park provides only information about their site and the County web site only promotes the County facilities. The Department should work together with these areas and provide a centralized information point and one web site for all natural areas in the Greater Fort Lauderdale area. The Department should also maximize the benefit to the public of the few water access points that are available in the City. Currently the street ends at the New River and the canal ends at various points in the City are not clearly marked and are not obviously available to the public.

Increased Programming in the Riverwalk and Downtown Areas

The Riverwalk area in the downtown area of the City has great potential to be the heart of the City. The current facilities there are underutilized and the area is not readily visible to the public. Further efforts need to be made to work with the adjacent owners and downtown business groups to make this area the vibrant area that it could be. Additionally, special attention needs to be made to connect this area into the surrounding neighborhoods and business districts and knit this area into the fabric of the overall community. The needs assessment process identified the need for a health and fitness center in the downtown / Riverwalk area. Through the planning process the idea was developed that this facility could help to provide much needed foot traffic in the area and work to advance the desire by the downtown condominium associations provide more activity in the area. This activity provides potential customers for the businesses, especially in off-peak times and keeps more eyes on the park areas.

Development of Consistent Park Facility Planning and Design Guidelines

The City of Fort Lauderdale has many very nice facilities. Many are indicative of particular design styles or periods in the Parks Department history, however there is little consistency in materials or form. This leads to a lack of recognizable branding for the Parks and Recreation Department and also creates maintenance difficulties by virtue of the vast array of materials and products used. This effort should not preclude creative and unique design, but sufficient guidelines should be developed that all facilities start to take and a consistent character that is uniquely Fort Lauderdale and are maintainable with readily available materials, when possible.

Adoption of CPTED standards for safety and security in park and open space areas

Concurrent with the design guidelines above, the City should adopt the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). The public expressed a concern for safety in the Parks; however crime statistics for the parks are no higher than other areas of the City. Whether real or perceived, the public's fear of the parks is no less real. Many simple measures can be done to make the parks feel safer and more defensible. Creating clear site lines and improved lighting can greatly increase local residents comfort and make the parks more enjoyable to users and adjacent residents alike.



Expand the Adopt-A-Park Program

The City should also seek to promote and expand its Adopt-A-Park Program. This program provides a means for residents or groups to volunteer to help enhance or maintain particular parks. Aside from the obvious benefit of increased volunteer workforce, these programs provide a vital social and mental connection between parks and the community. This builds a sense of ownership in the park and promotes stronger neighborhoods through local resident's participation.

Adoption of Green Design and Sustainability Practices

The residents of the City of Fort Lauderdale identified that they would like the City to adopt more "Green" Design and Sustainable practices. These terms are often used casually to describe a general desire for environmentally friendly products and practices; however in practice these terms are sometimes vague and too general. Many of the tenets of this plan are implicit in the concept of making the department more livable and sustainable. The Parks and Recreation Department itself is an integral part of a sustainable community, however it is also a large consumer of resources. The Department as a whole needs reevaluate its use of resources and seek to reduce its waste stream to minimize its impact on the environment.

The Center for Urban and Environmental Studies (CUES) at Florida Atlantic University" has identified in its recent publication "Charting the Course" identifies many environmental issue facing South Florida as it progresses into the future. One of the big issues for the Parks and Recreation Department is the very real potential for water shortages in the future. The Department is large consumer of water and future water restriction could seriously affect the viability of some facilities. Efforts should be made now to reduce water consumption in the Parks by a measurable objective of one percent per year. This can be accomplished by incorporating native plants and xeriscaping principles in landscape plantings and could also include the conversion of some athletic field to synthetic turf. Additionally, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles should be used to reduce the need for pesticides. Finally all general practices should be evaluated to assess means of reducing the carbon foot print of the department.

Expand Field Trip Programming

A predominant theme that emerged through the kids workshops was the great enthusiasm for field trips and for greater opportunities for youth to participate in programs throughout the area. The Parks and Recreation Department should expand the field trip programs it provides and look for sponsors or partner agencies to help encourage these opportunities.

7.2 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM AND BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS**Capital Improvements Program Recommendations**

The Department currently conducts a capital improvements planning process that is based on individual requests and departmental identified priorities. This process is internal to the City and does not include the capital improvement planning of other critical partner agencies. As the Fort Lauderdale Parks and Recreation Department moves forward there will be an ever increasing need to develop facilities in partnership with other agencies and organizations.

The Capital Improvement recommendations begin with premise that the City needs to first maintain what investment it has prior to committing to any new facilities. The Parks Department currently receives approximately 2.6 million dollars a year in capital improvement funding. Of that amount approximately half is for the recurring replacement of built facilities with predictable life cycles. The first recommendation is to develop a recurring life cycle replacement budget to provide for the predictable replacement of existing park facilities. Further recommendations are intended to meet the expressed needs of the city and advance the overall vision.



The priority capital improvement projects that are derived from this master planning process are:

1. Life Cycle Replacement Budget for all built facilities	\$1,300,000 / year
Sewer and Water Infrastructure	
Roofing Repair and Replacement	
Paving and Resurfacing	
Fencing	
Shelters	
Playgrounds / Splash Playgrounds	
2. Renovation of the community centers at Carter and Holiday Parks to accommodate more health and fitness activities	\$4,000,000
3. Improvements to street-end and canal-end parks for better public access and recognition	\$1,000,000
4. Conversion of two high use athletic fields throughout the city	\$2,000,000
5. Land Acquisition and Development of a new neighborhood park in the Melrose Park neighborhood area	\$3,000,000
6. Development of a downtown community / health and fitness center in cooperation with the downtown property owners and businesses	\$7,500,000 (1/2 cost share)
7. Development of preserves and water access properties	\$1,000,000
8. Renovations at Snyder Park for better public access and nature based program facilities	\$1,000,000
9. Development of a Health, Wellness and Therapeutic Recreation Center in cooperation with healthcare providers in the hospital district	\$2,000,000 (1/2 cost share)
10. Land Acquisition and Development of a new neighborhood park in the Edgewood Neighborhood area	\$2,000,000
11. Addition to and development of new health and fitness centers at Riverland and Croissant Parks	\$6,000,000

Budget Considerations

In addition to the capital improvements needed to effectuate the plan there is also a need to fund several of the initiatives on an ongoing basis. Exact budget costs are difficult to determine and will need to be determined as a part of the budgeting process. Recommended initiatives that will require budgeting include:

- Increased marketing and printing costs to effectively mail seasonal brochures to all City residents
- Rental of a bus and the hiring of a driver for the park loop bus program
- Funding for the development of a Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan
- Hiring of a part time naturalist to expand nature based programming in the City



7.3 ACTION PLAN

1. Increase Health and Wellness Facilities
 - Renovations at Carter and Holiday Parks
 - Cooperative facility development in the Hospital District
 - Cooperative facility development in the Downtown
 - New facility development at Riverland and Croissant Parks
2. Develop a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan
3. Partner with the Transit Authority to provide a Recreation Bus Loop
4. Expand Water Access and Nature-based Programs
 - Formalize neighborhood access at street end and canal end areas
 - Develop more nature programs at Snyder park
5. Expand “At Will” Recreation Opportunities
 - Provide more drop in style programs
 - Create facilities that can be used at peoples discretion
 - Apply the Pyramid Methodology for cost recovery
6. Increased Programming in Downtown and Riverwalk Areas
7. Increase Public Awareness and Promote Joint Marketing Opportunities
8. Enhance Partnerships and Cooperation
9. Integrate Plan into Codes and Ordinances
10. Develop a Life-Cycle Replacement Budget to Maintain Existing Facilities
11. Integrate Sustainability Practices in Park Planning and Design
 - Reduce water consumption and maintenance through the use of artificial turf on high use fields
 - Use native plants in non-active park areas
 - Minimize the use of pesticides through Integrated Pest Management practices
 - Minimize runoff with bioswales and porous pavement
12. Expand Neighborhood and Community Park Special Events
 - Promote neighborhood interaction and identity
 - Strengthen community ties
 - Celebrate Diversity
 - Encourage assimilation
 - Provide information about City facilities and programs



7.4 SUMMARY

The Implementation Plan for the Parks and Recreation Department Long Range Strategic Plan sets forth a course of action for bringing the City's vision plan to reality. The City is very fortunate that a great deal of the proposed plan can be accomplished through the implementation of strategic initiatives and does not require the usual large capital investments that are usually associated with such plans. The plan is not a "buy and build" plan that requires the acquisition of large tracts of land or the construction of numerous expensive facilities. The Implementation Plan is more of a guide to repositioning the Department to more effectively serve to broader interests of the residents of the City and to better accommodate the evolving trends of an urbanizing community.

