

VOLUME 2
chapter



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE: PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

GOAL	POLICIES FOR DECISION MAKERS	FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK		
1	Protection of remaining wetland areas inside and outside the levee system	7.13 - 7.14
	1.A. Ensure that land use and zoning categories for wetlands and coastal areas promote wetland preservation.	7.13 - 7.14
	1.B. Seek conservation solutions for wetlands through permanent protection or acquisition by conservation organizations.	7.14
2	Restoration and expansion of New Orleans' urban forest to reach 50 percent tree canopy by 2030	7.14
	2.A. Promote tree planting on both public and private property.	7.14
	2.B. Restore and plant new trees in parks and neutral grounds.	7.16
	2.C. Promote tree preservation and planting on private property.	7.16
	2.D. Establish storm water management planting practices.	7.17
	2.E. Restore and plant new trees in public parks, green spaces, and neutral grounds.	7.17
PARK SYSTEM		
3	A commitment to no net loss of public parkland	7.17 - 7.18
3.A.	Establish systems to ensure that the city does not lose acreage dedicated to parks.	7.17 - 7.18
4	A park within walking distance—approximately 1/3 mile—of every New Orleans resident	7.20
4.A.	Balance passive and active uses of parks and public spaces.	7.20
5	More public access to waterfronts	7.21
5.A.	Create parks and public spaces along the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain.	7.21
6	More green connections throughout city	7.22
6.A.	Create linear parks and green ways for multi-use pathways using the city's neutral grounds and other linear connections, such as levees, canal edges and former rail lines.	7.22
7	Maintenance of existing parks and green spaces to a high level	7.23
7.A.	Establish expanded maintenance criteria.	7.23

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		7.B. Establish clear and permanent policies and procedures for accepting, placing and maintaining public art in parks, green spaces and recreation sites.	7.24
		7.C. Establish green infrastructure planting practices for green infrastructure in public spaces.	7.24

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PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND RECREATION

Park and Recreation Resources (as of 2009)

- ▶ New Orleans has 26,164 acres of park land, or 22.5% of the city's land area
 - 22,770 of those acres are in Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge
 - The total does not include neutral grounds, school and institutional green space, levees, or urban wilds
 - In 2009, not counting the wildlife refuge, there were about 14 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons
- ▶ Almost half the city's park was acquired by donation or other non-purchase method
- ▶ Major parks include:
 - City Park: 1213 acres
 - Audubon Park: 400 acres
 - Lakeshore Park: 400 acres
 - Pontchartrain Park: 198 acres
 - Joe Brown Park and Louisiana Nature Center: 193 acres
 - Brechtel Park: 112 acres
 - Behrman Park: 60 acres
 - Lincoln Beach: 24 acres (closed before Katrina)
 - West End Park: 23 acres
 - Waldenberg Riverfront Park: 16 acres
- ▶ 14 multi-neighborhood parks including 9 stadiums pre-Katrina
 - 5 stadiums currently restored
- ▶ 83 neighborhood parks and playgrounds pre-Katrina
 - 60+ playgrounds currently restored
- ▶ 64 pocket parks
- ▶ 19 public swimming pools pre-Katrina
 - 7 currently restored
- ▶ 10 recreation centers pre-Katrina
 - 5 currently restored
- ▶ 7 public and 4 private golf courses
- ▶ 7 historic urban squares
- ▶ 43 park and recreation recovery projects are currently underway by ORDA
- ▶ A new downtown riverfront park is being designed

Park and Recreation Management

- ▶ Divided among four entities with different funding sources:
 - New Orleans Department of Parks and Parkways
 - New Orleans Recreation Department (NORD)
 - City Park Improvement Association
 - Audubon Commission
- ▶ Maintenance and funding are persistent issues for city-funded parks and recreation
- ▶ Pre-Katrina per capita funding was better than many southern cities and slightly above the national average, but New Orleans had greater needs as a denser city with more income diversity

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- ▶ New Orleans has an enviable network and inventory of park land for an urban center.
- ▶ Not counting Bayou Sauvage, in 2000 the city had about 14 acres of park land per 1,000 persons, comparing favorably with many US cities.
- ▶ In most neighborhoods, most residents have a park within walking distance.
- ▶ Neighborhood park deficits are found especially in some older neighborhoods and parts of New Orleans East.
- ▶ Effective maintenance of parks was a challenge pre-Katrina as well as since Katrina.
- ▶ Many parks and recreation facilities, and the city's urban forest, were significantly damaged by Katrina and are still in the process of restoration.
- ▶ City Park had a master plan completed before the storm that has served as a foundation for post-storm restoration.
- ▶ The city's neutral grounds are an exceptional resource.
- ▶ The city does not take sufficient advantage of its water resources as an amenity or for recreation.

Additional Green Resources:

- ▶ 125 acres in two 19th-century forts in state parks: Fort Pike and Fort McComb
- ▶ Jean LaFitte National Historic Park
- ▶ 22 miles of Mississippi River waterfront
- ▶ 16.5 miles of lakefront with four major boat harbors pre-Katrina
- ▶ More than 250 miles of neutral grounds ranging from 2 feet to 350 feet wide
- ▶ 54 active community gardens pre-Katrina
 - 25+ currently re-established
- ▶ Recreation programs focus on youth, some adult and senior fitness programs
- ▶ Nonprofit partners include Parkway Partners and Friends of NORD
 - Parkway Partners ReLeaf Program has facilitated planting of over 3,000 trees
- ▶ Bike and pedestrian paths on levee sections, St. Anthony Street neutral ground
- ▶ Plans for Lafitte Greenway and proposal for Woodlands Trail in lower east Algiers



fact sheet

PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND RECREATION

Park and Recreation Resources

- New Orleans has 27,110 acres of park land, or 23.3% of the city's land area
 - 22,770 of those acres are in Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge
 - The total does not include neutral grounds, school and institutional green space, levees, or urban wilds
 - In 2010, not counting the wildlife refuge, there were about 13 acres of park land per 1,000 persons
- Almost half the city's park was acquired by donation or other non-purchase method
- Major parks include:
 - City Park: 1213 acres
 - Audubon Park: 400 acres
 - Lakeshore Park: 400 acres
 - Pontchartrain Park: 198 acres
 - Joe Brown Park and Louisiana Nature Center: 193 acres
 - Brechtel Park: 220 acres
 - Behrman Park: 60 acres
 - Lafitte Greenway: 26 acres
 - Lincoln Beach: 24 acres (closed before Katrina)
 - West End Park: 23 acres
 - Crescent Park: 20 acres
 - Woldenberg Riverfront Park: 16 acres
- 14 multi-purpose neighborhood parks including 9 stadiums pre-Katrina
 - 5 stadiums currently restored
- 83 neighborhood parks and playgrounds pre-Katrina
 - 60+ playgrounds currently restored
- 64 pocket parks
- 19 public swimming pools pre-Katrina
 - 7 currently restored
- 10 recreation centers pre-Katrina
 - 5 currently restored
- 4 public and 4 private golf courses
- 7 historic urban squares

Park and Recreation Management

- Divided among four entities with different funding sources:
 - New Orleans Department of Parks and Parkways
 - New Orleans Recreation Development Commission (NORDCC)
 - City Park Improvement Association
 - Audubon Commission
 - French Market Corporation
- Maintenance and funding are persistent issues for city-funded parks and recreation
- Pre-Katrina per-capita funding was better than many southern cities and slightly above the national average, but New Orleans had greater needs as a denser city with more income diversity

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- New Orleans has an enviable network and inventory of park land for an urban center.
- Not counting Bayou Sauvage, in 2010 the city had about 13 acres of park land per 1,000 persons, comparing favorably with many US cities.
- In most neighborhoods, most residents have a park within walking distance.
- Neighborhood park deficits are found especially in some older neighborhoods and parts of New Orleans East.
- Effective maintenance of parks was a challenge pre-Katrina as well as since Katrina.
- Many parks and recreation facilities, and the city's urban forest, were significantly damaged by Katrina and are still in the process of restoration.
- City Park had a master plan completed before the storm that has served as a foundation for post-storm restoration.
- The city's neutral grounds are an exceptional resource.
- The city does not take sufficient advantage of its water resources as an amenity or for recreation.

Additional Green Resources:

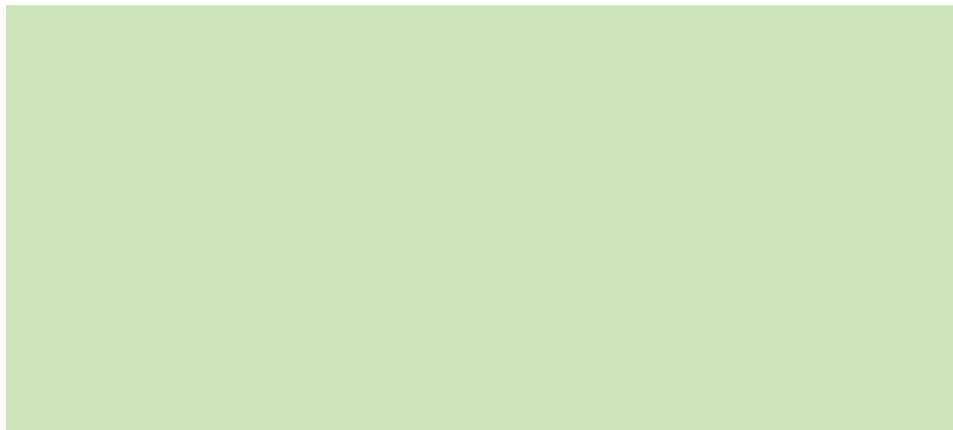
- 125 acres in two 19th century forts in state parks: Fort Pike and Fort McComb
- Jean LaFitte National Historic Park
- 22 miles of Mississippi River waterfront
- 16.5 miles of lakefront with four major boat harbors
- More than 250 miles of neutral grounds ranging from 2 feet to 350 feet wide
- 54 active community gardens pre-Katrina
 - 25+ currently re-established
- Recreation programs focus on youth; some adult and senior fitness programs
- Non-profit partners and community based organizations
- Bike and pedestrian paths on levee sections on the river and lakefront, along Bayou St. John, and in several neutral grounds throughout the city, including: West End/Pontchartrain Boulevards, Galvez Street, Napoleon Avenue, Jefferson Davis Parkway, Lake Forest Drive, and St. Anthony Street.

FINDINGS

- Parks and open space within the boundaries of New Orleans include extensive wetland natural areas as well as passive and active parks.
- New Orleans has an extensive urban park system with ~~an~~ a large inventory of park lands that are generally well-distributed throughout the city. Excluding Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge, New Orleans had approximately ~~3000~~ 4340 acres of park land in ~~2009~~ 2015, giving it more than many southern cities.
- New Orleans lost approximately 100,000 trees as a result of Hurricane Katrina.
- Management of the city's park and recreation system is ~~fragmented~~ divided among several city departments, parish and state agencies, and tax-supported nonprofit organizations.
- Most New Orleans residents are now within one-third mile walking distance of some kind of park.
- ~~The city before Hurricane Katrina had an extensive recreation infrastructure, but many facilities were extremely outdated and in disrepair. Moreover, salaries for parks and recreation department employees are very low, making it difficult to build a more professionalized staff.~~
- Funding for municipal park and recreation agencies has historically fluctuated considerably from year to year.
- ~~The City does not have a unified park and recreation department, as is common in most cities.~~
- New Orleans ~~currently has few~~ expanded designated walking ~~or~~ and biking trails ~~using the Greenway, enhanced neutral grounds, and adding over 150 miles of bike lanes on road repair projects.~~
- Recreation facilities are focused on children and youth, team athletics, and—to a lesser extent—senior citizen activities.

CHALLENGES

- Ensuring effective coordination among the various entities and agencies that manage park land and provide recreation facilities in New Orleans.
- Restoring and enhancing the tree canopy and plantings damaged by Hurricane Katrina.
- Offering more recreation and fitness activities for adults of all ages while continuing to focus on recreation for children and youth, particularly those from low-income households.
- Providing a consistent funding mechanism.
- Providing consistent, high quality maintenance.
- Incorporating maintenance planning in capital improvement programs.
- Effectively serving a very diverse population.



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A Introduction

Excellent parks, recreational resources for adults as well as children and youth, and access to water and nature are key ingredients of the quality of life city dwellers desire in the 21st century. New Orleans' system of parks, open spaces, and recreation resources is one of its most important assets. Excluding the 22,000 acres of Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge, the city had approximately ~~3,000~~4,340 acres of park land in ~~2009~~2015, more than many southern cities, with parks generally well-distributed throughout the city. Today, the traditional elements of park and recreation planning are situated within the broader concept of "green infrastructure." This includes the network of parks, tree-lined streets, bike trails and lanes, pedestrian paths, river and stream corridors, waterfronts, and urban wilds of the city. Responsibility for New Orleans' green infrastructure system is divided among a number of public and nonprofit entities, making coordination a challenge.

The Master Plan focuses on maintaining and enhancing the city's green infrastructure through:

- Protecting resources
- Expanding access to parks, recreation and to waterfronts
- Creating open space connections through green ways and blue ways throughout the city
- Ensuring that recreation meets the changing needs of youth and adults
- Strengthening financial and operational support to ensure high levels of maintenance and programming
- Expanding partnerships

EQUITY

Access to beautiful parks and open space for all constituents is a hallmark of a city's commitment to Equity. We shall continue to leverage resources for the development of parks and recreation space to communities of highest need, enlisting a range of public and institutional partners, such as schools to make open spaces that they control can be made available for community use. Public transportation must also increase access to parks and open space by offering multiple modes of transit, such buses and bicycles. Our parks must also accommodate a wide variety of activities by providing multi-use recreation spaces.

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B Recommendations

A recommendations **Summary** linking goals, strategies and actions appears below and is followed by one or more early-action items under the heading **Getting Started**. The **Narrative** follows, providing a detailed description of how the strategies and actions further the goals. Background and existing conditions to inform understanding of the goals, policies, strategies and actions are included in Volume 3, Chapter 7.

Summary

FIRST FIVE YEARS: 2010-2014 2015-2019 **20** **MEDIUM TERM:** 2015-2019 2020-2025 **LONG TERM:** 2020-2025-2030

GOAL	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS				FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
		HOW	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES	
1. Protection of remaining wetland areas inside and outside the levee system	1.A. Ensure that land use and zoning categories for wetlands and coastal areas promote wetland preservation.	1. Prohibit further drainage of wetlands for development both inside and outside the levees.	CPC	First five years	CZO rewrite contract	7.13 - 7.14
		2. Establish regulations and enforcement systems to protect wetlands, such as a city wetlands protection ordinance.	Coastal and Environmental Affairs; City Attorney; City Council	First five years	Staff time	7.14
	1.B. Seek conservation solutions for wetlands.	1. Discuss options with Bayou Sauvage and environmental organizations.	Coastal and Environmental Affairs; Trust for Public Land; US Department of the Interior	Medium term	Staff time; federal or nonprofit funding	7.14
2. Restoration and expansion of the city's urban forest to reach 50 percent tree canopy by 2030	2.A. Promote tree planting on public and private property.	1. Prepare an inventory and prepare tree canopy and vegetation coverage set of GIS layer and analyze layers to allow for analysis compatible with appropriate tree cover software with the ability to track values and changes over time.	Parks and Parkways, City GIS unit, Louisiana Urban Forestry Council (LUFC), CPC	First five years/medium term	Louisiana Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry, Urban and Community Grants, Alliance for Community Trees, Grants, Chevron Grants, grants, general fund	7.14 - 7.15
		2. Prepare a street tree and vegetation master plan to plant street trees address public lands including rights of way throughout the city identifying priority areas for planting, species selection	Parks and Parkways, DPW, CPC, City GIS unit, Louisiana Urban Forestry Council (LUFC), consultant	Medium term/first five years	Louisiana Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry, Urban and Community Grants, Alliance for Community Trees, Grants, Chevron Grants, grants, general fund	7.15

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		3. Work with utility companies to develop & refine protocol for conflicts and to develop a public information document.	Parks & Parkways; SWBNO; DPW; Utility Companies; Communications	First five years	Staff time	7.16
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FIRST FIVE YEARS: 2010-2015, 2016-2020
TERM: 2020-2025, 2030

MEDIUM TERM: 2015-2019, 2020-2025

LONG

GOAL	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS					FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
		HOW	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES		
2. Restoration and expansion of the city's urban forest to reach 50 percent tree canopy by 2030	2.A. Promote tree planting on both public and private property. 2.B. Promote tree preservation and planting on private property.	3. Promote tree preservation on private property.	Parks and Parkways, City GIS unit, Louisiana Urban Forestry Council (LUFUC), Parks & Parkways, DPW, SWBNO, NORA, Communications Non-profit partners	Medium term	Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Urban and Community Grants, Alliance for Community Trees, Grants, Chevron Grants, Staff time, non-profit partners, volunteers, grants, donations	7.45	
		4. Improve the city's tree and vegetation protection ordinance (Chapter 106, Article IV).	Parks & Parkways; CPC; City Attorney; City Council	First five years, medium-term	Staff time	7.15	
		5. Require tree planting as part of commercial or mixed-use development where appropriate.	CPC	First five years	CZO rewrite amendment	7.16	
		6. Prepare a GIS layer with street trees and neutral grounds vegetation.	Parks & Parkways	Medium term	Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry, Urban and Community Grants, Alliance for Community Tree Grants, Chevron Grants	7.46	
		7. Prepare a GIS layer with street trees and neutral grounds vegetation.	Parks and Parkways, City GIS unit, Louisiana Urban Forestry Council (LUFUC)	Medium term	(See above)	7.46	
		8. Work with utility companies to develop a protocol for conflicts and to develop a public information document.	Parks & Parkways; LUFUC	Medium term	Staff time	7.46	
		9. Identify priority areas for planting, species,	Parks & Parkways	Medium term	Staff time, possible consultant (approx	7.46	

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		best practices, etc.			\$200K, depending on scope)	
	2.B.C, Restore and plant new trees parks and neutral grounds	1. Continue to work with non-profits who donate trees to the city and develop a program with attractive markers to indicate the donations.	Parks & Parkways;	First five years	Donations	7.16
		2. Create tree nurseries on city-owned vacant land for public plantings and, if feasible, for donation to property owners.	Parks & Parkways; Parkway Partners; NORA	First five years	Staff time; nonprofit partners	7.16

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FIRST FIVE YEARS: 2010-2014 2011-2020 **MEDIUM TERM:** 2015-2019 2020-2025 **LONG TERM:** 2020-2025-2030

GOAL	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS				FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
		HOW	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES	
2. Restoration and expansion of the city's urban forest to reach 50 percent tree canopy by 2030	2.C. Promote tree preservation and planting on private property.	1. Include trees in landscape standards in the new CZO.	GPC	First five years	CZO rewrite	7.17
		2. Work with non-profits and neighborhood organizations to encourage private tree planting on vacant properties.	Parks & Parkways; Parkway Partners	First five years	Staff time; nonprofit partners; volunteers	7.17
		3. Encourage homeowners and other property owners to plant trees on their property.	Parks & Parkways; Parkway Partners	First five years	Staff time; nonprofit partners; volunteers	7.17
	2.D. Establish storm water management planting practices in public green spaces.	1. Replace most lawn areas in neutral grounds and streets/walves with shrubs and ground cover.	Parks & Parkways; public education through Levee Board; Parkway Partners	Medium term	Staff education and training; grants for public awareness; grow plants in nursery	7.17
3. A commitment to no net loss of park land	3.A. Establish systems to ensure that the city does not lose acreage dedicated to parks.	1. Require enhanced public review of disposition of public parkland and apply any funds from sales of parkland to acquisition of new parkland.	Parks & Parkways; CPC; City Council; Real Estate & Records	ongoing First five years	Staff time	7.18
		2. Create a Parks Trust Fund within the Capital Projects Fund to receive funds for acquisition and improvement of parkland.	Parks & Parkways; CAO's Office; GPC/CAO; City Council; Real Estate & Records	First five years	Staff time	7.19
		3. Evaluate any public property identified for sale for suitability as a park or recreation site.	Parks & Parkways; City Attorney; City Council	Medium term ongoing	Staff time	7.19
4. A park within walking distance—approximately one-third mile—of every New Orleans resident	4. A. Balance passive and active uses of parks and public spaces.	1. Provide walking paths, seating, and programming (activities such as concerts, festivals, etc.) in parks and neutral grounds that are not managed by NORD in order to ensure that residents can and will use them.	Parks & Parkways; Dept of Public Works/NORDC; DPW; Capital Projects Administration; non-profit partners	ongoing First five years	Variable, according to project, activity or event	7.20

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FIRST FIVE YEARS: 2010-2015, 2016-2020
TERM: 2020-2025, 2030

MEDIUM TERM: 2015-2019, 2020-2025 **LONG**

GOAL	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS				
		HOW	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES	FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
4. A park within walking distance—approximately one-third mile—of every New Orleans resident	4.A. Balance passive and active uses of parks and public spaces.	2. Make improvements in safe walking routes to parks.	NOR: DPW organization; Parks & Parkways	Medium term	Seek grants from public health funders, such as Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	7.20
		3. Prioritize creation of new parks or playgrounds for under served areas where there is no park within walking distance and for access to resources of citywide importance, such as the waterfront.	CPC; NOR or successor organization; NOR: DPW; Parks & Parkways; Capital Projects Administration	Medium term	CDBG; general fund	7.20
		playgrounds for under served areas where there is no park within walking distance and for access to resources of citywide importance, such as the waterfront.	Parks & Parkways			
5. More public access to waterfronts	5.A. Create parks and public spaces along the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain.	1. Enhance parks and public access along the Mississippi River.	New Orleans Building Corporation	First five years	D-CDBG	7.21
		2. Enhance park land along Lake Pontchartrain, including Lincoln Beach, Pontchartrain, including Lincoln Beach.	Levee Board; OFICD Municipal Yacht Harbor	Medium term	D-CDBG	7.21
		3. Enhance the amenity value of canals and drainage facilities when possible.	Levee Board; OFICD	First five years	Levee resources	7.21
6. More green connections throughout the city	6.A. Create linear parks and green ways for multi-use pathways using the city's neutral grounds and other linear connections, such as levees, canaledges and rail lines.	1. Connect people to parks and neighborhood destinations by tree-lined "Green Streets" and coordinate the network with transit stops and bike boulevards. (See Chapter 13)	CPC planning with Parks & Parkways; DPW; RTA	Medium term	Variable, according to project	7.22
		2. Work with the	DPW; RPC; Capital Projects Administration	Medium	Staff time	7.22

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		Regional Planning Commission and other groups to connect with regional pathways such as the multi-state Mississippi Trail.				
		Regional Planning Commission and other groups to connect with regional pathways such as the multi-state Mississippi Trail.		term		
		3. Explore creation of "blueways" as designated water recreation routes and other boating opportunities. Inventory opportunities and work with local boating groups.	Levee Board; Sewerage & Water Board; private groups	Long term	Variable	7.22

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GOAL	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS				
		HOW	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES	FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
6. More green connections throughout the city	6.A. Create linear parks and green ways for multi-use pathways using the city's neutral grounds and other linear connections, such as levees, canal edges and rail lines.	4. Explore the feasibility of daylighting canals that have been covered over and creating additional canals for water storage and amenity.	See Volume 2, Chapter 12 and Volume 3, Chapter 12 for more detailed discussion.	Long term	Variable	7.23
		5. Use neutral grounds, levees, canal edges and rail lines as potential greenway connectors	Parks & Parkways; Levee Board; DPW; NORA; SWBNO	Medium term	Variable according to project	7.23
7. Maintenance of existing parks, green spaces, and recreational sites at a high level	7.A. Establish expanded maintenance criteria.	1. Create a committee with staff and citizens to develop goals and criteria and a photo system as in San Francisco criteria.	Parks & Parkways; NORD or successor; NORDC; SWBNO; Levee Board; DPW; NORA	First five years	Staff time	7.23
		2. Work with partnership groups to enhance maintenance. Encourage partnership groups to assist in with maintenance.	Parks & Parkways; NORD or successor; NORDC; SWBNO; Levee Board; DPW; NORA	Medium term	Staff time	7.24
		3. Encourage partnership groups and criteria and a photo system as in San Francisco.	Parks & Parkways; NORD or successor	Medium term	Staff time	7.24
	7.B. Establish clear and permanent policies and procedures for accepting, placing and maintaining public art in parks, green spaces and recreation sites.	1. Adopt a Public Artwork Donation Policy that sets specific policies and procedures for all aspects of accepting, installing and maintaining public art.	City Planning; CPC; Arts Council; Parks and Parkways; Property Management; Capital Projects; Historic Districts & Landmarks; Commission; HDLC; DPW	Ongoing	Staff time	7.24
		7.C. Establish green infrastructure planting practices and staff resources for green infrastructure in public spaces.	1. Prepare comprehensive manual for use by city departments and the general public.	Parks & Parkways; DPW; NORA; SWBNO; Office of Sustainability	First five years	Staff time; general fund
			2. Fund and staff green infrastructure maintenance team(s) with specialized training to manage and develop green infrastructure elements on public lands.	Parks & Parkways; DPW; NORA; SWBNO; Office of Sustainability	First five years	Staff time; general fund
8. Multi-use indoor/outdoor recreation centers within 5 miles of every resident	8.A. Create 10 indoor pools at existing centers.	1. Identify sites and invest in pools.	NORD or successor; NORDC	First five years	D-CDBG; FEMA; millage; for operating costs	7.24

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FIRST FIVE YEARS: 2010-2014		MEDIUM TERM: 2015-2019		LONG TERM: 2020-2030		
	8.B. Coordinate recreation resources with schools and other community and human services.	1. Meet regularly with non-NORDC providers to streamline services.	NORDC or successor	Medium term	Staff time	7.24
		2. Explore collaborations with school districts and other organizations to establish joint use of facilities agreements.	School Districts, NORDC	First five years	Staff time, Cooperative agreements	7.25
9. Year-round recreation opportunities for children, seniors, and adults	9.A. Provide recreational opportunities appropriate to the demographics of the surrounding neighborhoods.	1. Focus child and youth-oriented activities in neighborhoods with higher numbers of family households.	NORDC or successor	First five years	Staff time	7.25

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FIRST FIVE YEARS: 2010-2015 **TERM:** 2020-2025-2030 **MEDIUM TERM:** 2015-2019-2020-2025 **LONG**

GOAL	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS				
		HOW	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES	FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
9. Year-round recreation opportunities for children, seniors, and adults	9.A. Provide recreational opportunities appropriate to the demographics of the surrounding neighborhoods.	2. Continue to focus on 40 supervised playgrounds to be sports program hubs.	NORD or successor NORDC	First five years	D-CDBG	7.25
		3. Work with private programs and the Council on Aging to develop more senior programs.	NORD or successor NORDC; Council on Aging	First five years	Fees, where appropriate	7.25
		4. Promote youth and adult fitness through facilities and programs.	NORD or successor NORDC	First five years	Fees, where appropriate	7.25
		5. Provide dog parks through a community process where there is high demand.	Parks & Parkways NORDC; Capital Projects Administration	First five years	In existing park land	7.25
		10. Recreation offerings that meet changing citizen needs	10.A. Regularly monitor the recreation needs of all segments of the population.	1. Survey residents through the internet and more rigorous methods on a regular basis to keep up with changing recreation needs and desires.	NORD; Parks & Parkways NORDC	Every 5 years
		2. Provide for individual activities as well as team sports and classes.	NORD NORDC	Medium term	Fees, where appropriate	7.26
11. More effective coordination and cost-effective management of park and recreation resources and programs	11.A. Coordinate park and recreation resources and activities throughout the city.	1. Establish an inter-agency parks and recreation coordinating group for all relevant city, nonprofit, private, and parish agencies.	Convened by CPC; all park management groups; private recreation providers	First five years	Staff time	7.26
12. Neighborhood participation in decision-making about parks and recreation	12.A. Survey both park and recreation users on a regular basis.	1. Require instructors to use evaluation forms in classes.	NORD NORDC	First five years	Staff time	7.27
		2. Use the web page for surveys; free web-based survey utilities are available.	NORD NORDC; City IT	First five years	Staff time	7.27
		3. Conduct a scientific survey every 10 years.	NORD NORDC	Long term	\$30,000	7.27
	12.B. Establish a system for community input in park and recreation design and improvements.	1. Integrate a system with the NPP district council system to be developed.	CPC working through NPP organization to be developed	First five years	Staff time	7.27
	12.CB. Prepare and update a full parks and recreation master plan.	2. Update the plan every 10 years, including a full public participation element.	CPC, working with NORD and Parks & Parkways CPC; NORDC	Long term	General Fund; grants; approx. \$5-600,000	7.28

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FIRST FIVE YEARS: 2010-2014 **MEDIUM TERM: 2015-2019** **LONG TERM: 2020-2030**

GOAL	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS				
		HOW	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES	FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
13. Consistent and adequate level of maintenance, operations and programming on a per capita basis.	13.A. Provide a consistent and adequate per capita operating budget and work towards establishing a dedicated funding source for municipal park and recreation resources and programs.	1. Provide a consistent and adequate per capita operating budget.	Voters	First five years	Millage vote	7.28
		2. Continue to work with partnership groups and grant makers to supplement funding.	NORDC; Parks & Parkways; non-profits	First five years	Grants; volunteer activities	7.28
		3. Pursue joint use agreements with public and private entities who own land that could add to park and recreation opportunities.	Parks & Parkways; NORDC; private groups	Medium term	Variable	7.29
		4. Establish fees appropriate to the program and level of individual benefit and reserve fees for park and recreation uses.	Parks & Parkways; NORDC	Medium term	Variable according to activity	7.29
14. Expanded partnerships to support park and recreation resources and programs	14.A. Continue to support and expand partnerships with Parkway Partners and support expansion of non-profit partners, park and neutral ground Friends groups, as well as existing NORDC and NORDC Booster and Friends groups.	1. Expand park and neutral ground Friends, Friends groups, and Booster groups, and hire a volunteer coordinator.	Parks & Parkways; NORDC or successor NORDC	Medium term	Staff position; non-profit organizations, and community groups	7.29
15. Effective marketing of the municipal park and recreation system to citizens and visitors	15.A. Provide user-friendly communications, including an interactive website, an annual report, consistent signage and similar efforts.	1. Improve the web pages, provide an annual report, and consistent signage.	Parks & Parkways; NORDC; City IT Department; consultants	Medium term	Staff time; consultants; capital budgeting; general fund	7.29

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Getting Started

These items are short-term actions that can be undertaken with relatively little expenditure, and will help lay the groundwork for the longer-term actions that follow.

- Use the Lafitte Greenway, now under design, as a model for future greenway projects.
- Prepare a tree & vegetation master plan with GIS based tree inventory.
- Convene an inter-agency parks and recreations coordinating group including all city, nonprofit, private, and parish agencies.
- **Develop a local wetlands protection ordinance.**

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Narrative

Below is a more detailed narrative of the various goals, strategies and actions highlighted in the "Summary" chart.

1. GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND NATURAL OPEN SPACE

GOAL 1

Protection of remaining wetland areas inside and outside the levee system

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Under the authority of the Louisiana State and Local Coastal Resources Management Act of 1978, as amended (Act 361, La. R.S. 49:214.21 et seq), the state of Louisiana defines wetlands. Furthermore, the state defines a coastal zone in which jurisdiction is based on elevation and hydrologic characteristics.



The state of Louisiana does not define wetlands for regulatory purposes, but does define a coastal zone in which jurisdiction is based on elevation and hydrologic characteristics. The state's Coastal Wetlands Conservation Plan, adopted in 1997, has what is effectively a no net loss policy for

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wetlands (replacement required for wetlands loss). Although the entire City of New Orleans is part of the regulated coastal zone, all of the city within the levees is designated as "fastland" for which there is no regulation relating to wetlands. Activities that affect wetlands outside the levees are regulated by the city's Coastal Management Program, which is

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required to be compatible with the state's program.

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For the purposes of this chapter, and following the Clean Water Act, wetlands will be defined as those areas that are saturated by water (surface water or groundwater) sufficiently to support vegetation that is adapted to living in saturated soils. (EPA Regulations 40 CFR 230.3(t). This is not the same thing as areas that may be subject to periodic flooding from storms.

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FIRST FIVE YEARS: 2010–2014

MEDIUM TERM: 2015–2019

LONG TERM: 2020–2030

1.A Ensure Review that regulations, land use and zoning categories for wetlands and coastal areas promote wetland preservation.

Establishment of a Continue to enforce land-use category and zoning categories for conservation of natural areas that will enhance existing programs aimed at wetland preservation. Any isolated wetlands within the city should be protected for their value for water storage and pollution control.

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RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Prohibit further drainage of wetlands for development both inside and outside the levees.

Who: CPC
When: First five years
Resources: CZO rewrite

Remaining wetland areas should be reserved for storm water storage and protected from further development.

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2. Establish/Maintain regulations and enforcement systems to protect wetlands, such as a city wetlands protection ordinance.

Who: Office of Coastal and Environmental Affairs; City Attorney; City Council
When: First five years
Resources: Stafftime

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A city wetlands protection ordinance would in alignment with its stormwater management program should allow the City to define wetland areas for protection and regulation and create a system whereby development activity within a specified distance of wetland areas (such as 25 feet) must meet certain requirements. Lafourche Parish has a section in its zoning code (Chapter 19.H) that requires a "Letter of No Objection" for construction of pipelines and canals, that could serve as a partial model. Where there is existing development in close proximity to wetlands or coastal areas, a regulatory system should be established to review petitions for alteration of the wetlands with mitigation requirements should the alteration be allowed.

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1.B Seek conservation solutions for wetlands.

Natural areas in private hands can be protected through voluntary conservation servitudes (easements). The property owner agrees to permanently give up the development rights on the land, often in return for a payment through a government program, or simply to benefit from a reduction in taxes on the land, and retains title to the property. Conservation servitudes are part of the Louisiana Coastal Wetland Reserve Program, which works with farmers to restore lands to wetlands, making a payment for the agricultural development rights in return for establishment of a conservation servitude on the land. Although wetland property owners in New Orleans are not farmers, this program could provide a precedent.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Discuss options with Bayou Sauvage and environmental organizations.

Who: Office of Coastal and Environmental Affairs; Trust for Public Land; U.S. Department of Interior
When: Medium term
Resources: Staff time; federal or non-profit funding

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A future opportunity may lie in climate change policy because of wetland's exceptional role as "carbon sinks." With the establishment of a cap and trade system of carbon credits, New Orleans wetlands will become valuable as sources of carbon credits because they are excellent vehicles for carbon sequestration.

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GOAL 2

Restoration and expansion of New Orleans' urban forest to reach 50 percent tree canopy by 2030

Tree planting is one of the easiest ways to enhance quality of life. Flooding and winds from Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans' urban forest, but even before Hurricane Katrina, some neighborhoods had fewer trees, for example, Tremé, the French Quarter, Marigny, Bywater, Central City, Algiers Riverside

3.2.B Promote tree preservation and planting on private property,

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Work with non-profits and neighborhood organizations to encourage homeowners and other private property owners to preserve and plant trees on private property.

Who: CPC, Parks and Parkways; City GIS unit; Louisiana Urban Forestry Council (LUFCC); NORA; SWBNO; DPW; Communications; non-profit partners

When: Medium term

When: ongoing

Resources: La-LA Department of Agriculture and Forestry; Urban and Community Grants; Alliance for Community Trees Grant; Chevron Grants; grants; general fund

Standards for new development should include requirements for planting trees, shrubs and ground cover, where appropriate. Large trees should be preferably preserved, but if they must be removed, several new trees equal in total caliper to the tree removed should be planted to replace them. Methods to help provide and promote tree preservation and planting can include continuing the ReLeaf program already operated by Parkway Partners and creation of community based or city led tree nurseries in vacant lots, with seedlings distributed in neighborhoods. A small tree nursery was established in City Park after Hurricane Katrina with assistance from the Louisiana Urban Forestry Council and Chevrons should be promoted through partnerships with local non-profit, community and volunteer organizations.

4.2. Improve the city's tree and vegetation protection ordinance.

Who: Parks and Parkways; CPC; City Attorney; City Council

When: Medium term First five years

Resources: Staff time

The city has an ordinance for "Protection of vegetation" (Chapter 106, Article IV). This ordinance regulates activities that can affect city-owned trees, particularly street trees. Many

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communities also have ordinances that protect trees on private and public property that are of special significance because of their species, size or historic character, in both private and public property. These ordinances typically require an administrative review or a public hearing before trees of special significance can be removed.

5.3. Require tree planting in the public right-of-way as part of commercial or mixed-use any new development, where appropriate.

Who: CPC

When: First five years

Resources: CZO rewrite amendment

6. Inventory the city's public trees and overall tree canopy.

Who: Parks and Parkways

When: Medium term

Resources: La. Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry and Community Grants; Alliance for Community Tree Grants; Chevron Grants

7. Prepare a GIS layer with street trees and neutral grounds vegetation.

Who: Parks and Parkways; City GIS unit; Louisiana Urban Forestry Council (LUFCC)

When: Medium term

Resources: La. Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry and Community Grants; Alliance for Community Tree Grants; Chevron Grants

8. Work with utility companies to develop a protocol for conflicts and to develop a public information document.

Who: Parks and Parkways; LUFCC

When: Medium term

Resources: Staff time

9. Identify priority areas for planting, species, best practices, etc.

Who: Parks and Parkways

When: Medium term

Resources: Staff time; possible consultant (approx. \$200 K, depending on scope)

2.B2.C Restore and plant new trees in parks and neutral grounds.

Many neutral grounds and parks have very little tree cover. A tree plan should be developed to guide replanting in terms of species and location. Once in place, the tree plan can be used to attract private funding by individuals and others who want to plant trees in memory of family members or for other reasons.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS
RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Continue to work with non-profits who donate trees to the city and develop a program with attractive markers to indicate the donations.

Who: Parks and Parkways; SWBNO; NORA

When: First five years

Resources: Donations

2. Create tree nurseries on city-owned vacant land for public plantings and if feasible, for donation to property owners.

Who: Parks and Parkways; Parkway Partners; NORA

When: First five years

Resources: Staff time; non-profit partners

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2.C — Promote tree preservation and planting on private property.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Include trees in landscape standards in the new CZO.

Who: CPC

When: First five years

Resources: CZO rewrite

2. Work with non-profits and neighborhood organizations to encourage private tree planting on vacant properties.

Who: Parks and Parkways; Parkway Partners

When: First five years

Resources: Staff time; non-profit partners; volunteers

3. Encourage homeowners and other property owners to plant trees on their property.

Who: Parks and Parkways; Parkway Partners

When: First five years

Resources: Staff time; non-profit partners; volunteers

2.D — Establish storm water management planting practices in public green spaces.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Replace most lawn areas in neutral grounds and street swales with shrubs and ground cover.

Who: Parks and Parkways; public education through Lovee Board; Parkway Partners

When: Medium term

Resources: Staff education and training; grants for public awareness; grow plants in nursery

2. PARK SYSTEM

GOAL 3

A commitment to no net loss of public parkland

Cities that give up park land end up regretting it. A robust network of green space and parks is a critical asset for quality of life and urban success. It helps retain existing residents and attracts new ones. When cities looking for “free land” establish other public facilities on park land, they are chipping away at the community’s overall inventory of park land. Often, it is more costly or otherwise more difficult to acquire new park land. For this reason, it is important to make sure that, at a minimum, the city maintain a commitment to keeping the same overall amount of park land that it has at present. In addition, as needed, additional park resources (whether directly owned by the city or by others) should be made available in areas of the city that are currently under served.

In post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans, some people have argued that the City cannot support many parks or that it is finding it difficult to maintain the large number of parks, especially smaller parks. There are subdivisions where designated park land was never developed into usable parks, either because the land was unsuitable or better-located spaces are nearby. As long as there is an overall commitment to keeping the overall park acreage and to criteria for the location of parks to serve neighborhoods and the city as a whole, adjustments can be made. A no net loss policy must be the foundation to restore, rebuild, enhance and expand the park system for the whole city.

A. — Establish systems to ensure that the city does not lose acreage dedicated to parks.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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REVISE MAP TO INCLUDE PARKS AND TRAILS ALONG RIVER ON BOTH SIDES AND BAYOU ST JOHN



Access to excellent parks, recreational facilities, and natural areas are key ingredients of quality of life. Like the "gray infrastructure" of roads and water lines, this "green infrastructure" requires a planned, created, maintained and restored coordinated system.

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A. Establish systems to ensure that the city does not lose acreage dedicated to parks.

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RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Require enhanced public review of disposition of public parkland; apply any funds from sales of parkland towards acquisition of new parkland.

Who: Parks and Parkways; CPC; City Council; Real Estate & Records

When: First five years ongoing

Resources: Staff time

Resources: Staff time

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Because it is often difficult to acquire land to create new parks, the overall amount of city land devoted to parks should, at a minimum, remain the same. That means that no park land should be transferred to another use or sold without provision for the same amount or more land being designated as new park land. State Act 378 provides that designated park land (what constitutes "designation" is not described) cannot be taken out of park uses without the written approval of 70 percent of the property owners within a radius of 300 feet

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of the park. The CPC's existing role is to decide whether any public land or building is to be sold or acquired. To enhance this process, the Planning Commission, working with the park and recreation departments, should establish a set of criteria and a deliberative process before any public park land is designated to be taken out of park and recreation use. This process should be included or referenced in the zoning code. The process should include elements such as:

> *A requirement for a public hearing.* The City Planning Commission should hold a public hearing on the proposed sale or conversion of park land, at a time and place convenient for public comment.

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for public comment. Each agency should make a written recommendation to the Mayor and the City Council.



IMAGE: BOGDAN MIGULSKI

> A requirement for replacement. Any park land sold or taken for other uses, including other municipal uses, must be replaced by land with similar park, recreation or conservation value in terms of usefulness and location. If the land is not available, funds must be deposited in a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund or similar dedicated account (described below) that would be sufficient to buy replacement land at fair market value. The land taken for other uses must be rezoned and taken out of the Parks category.¹

2. Create a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund or similar account within the Capital Project Fund to receive funds for acquisition and improvement, and maintenance of parkland.

Who: Parks and Parkways; CAO's Office; CPC City Council; Real Estate & Records; Parks & Parkways

When: First five years

When: First five years

Resources: Stafftime

The City should create a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund within the Capital Projects Fund to receive funds from a percentage set-aside of major park construction projects for maintenance, sale of any decommissioned parks, developer funds resulting from Community Benefits Agreements, or other donations for the park and recreation system. The percentage set-aside should be similar to the One Percent for Art program, where a set percentage of any new major park construction project would be retained for the expanded maintenance demand the new park creates within the park system. Creation of such a trust fund, restricting the use of funds to park and recreation purposes, would provide a stabilized, long term and focused repository for funds dedicated to the development, enhancement, and maintenance of parks and recreation.

3. Evaluate any public property identified for sale to identify suitability as a park or recreation site.

Who: Parks and Parkways; NORDC; City Attorney; City Council

When: Medium term ongoing

Resources: Stafftime

Resources: Stafftime

Before public land is put up for sale, it should be reviewed by the CPC, NORDC, and Parks and Parkways to see if it is suitable for an identified park or recreation need in that location.

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GOAL 4

A park within walking distance—approximately 1/3 mile—of every New Orleans resident

In urban situations, park acreage is less important than park access. Research has repeatedly shown that the most important variable in how much and how often people use a green space is distance—especially walking time—from home.² They will travel from time to time to use large, unique open spaces of regional

importance, but for everyday use, parks need to be close by. From the point of view of the park user, it does not matter who manages public open space, as long as it is accessible. In New Orleans, that means that a resident could be within walking distance of a park managed by Parks and Parkways or NORDNORDC, by the Levee Board, by the CPIA, by the Audubon Commission, by the French Market Corporation, by the School District or by others. The important thing is to have a public green space within walking distance.

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¹ Recommended procedures based on the discussion by Robert H. Levin, "When Forever Proves Fleeting: The Condemnation and Conversion of Conservation Land," *NYU Environmental Law Journal*, 9 (2001), 592-637.

² Ann Forsyth, "People and Urban Green Areas: Perception and Use," University of Minnesota *Design Center for American Urban Landscape Design Brief*, 4 (June 2003) pp. 2, 5.



4.A Balance passive and active uses of parks and public spaces.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Provide walking paths, seating, and programming (activities such as concerts, festivals, etc.) in parks and neutral grounds that are not managed by NORD in order to ensure that residents can and will use them.

Who: Parks and Parkways; Department of Public Works; NORDC; DPW; Capital Projects Administration; non-profit partners

When: First five years ongoing

Resources: Variable, according to project, activity or event

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All park systems need to provide a balance of passive and active green spaces. Finding the proper balance can be difficult as multiple user groups vie for the same spaces. Organized sports leagues and similar groups tend to be more effective in expressing their park and recreation needs on a regular basis than people who are looking for a passive park experience or members of the general public overall. For that reason, it is always important to make room for passive park experiences in park designs. Careful design of parks coupled with efforts to share playing fields and other resources for active sports and new technologies, such as artificial turf that allows for more intensive use of sports fields, can help balance demands for active and passive activity areas. Even small parks can be designed to include quiet, landscaped sections, as well as areas for children’s play equipment or a half-basketball court.



2. Make improvements for safe walking routes to parks.

Who: NORD or successor organization; NORDC; Parks and Parkways; DPW

When: Medium term

Resources: Seek grant from public health funders, such as Robert Wood Johnson Foundation grants, Safe Routes to Schools funding program

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Safe and comfortable walking routes to parks are needed to make “walk-to” parks successful. Planning and creating a set of neighborhood routes to parks, as part of a combined public health and street improvement initiative can focus resources to enhance residents’ access to parks. Neighborhood residents and park user groups can identify appropriate routes to be upgraded with trees, sidewalks, lighting, and intersection safety and beautification improvements at pedestrian crossings. Good lighting that enhances safety while remaining appropriate to a neighborhood context is essential. This program could be coupled with the development of neighborhood walking clubs. Framed as a public health program, the park routes initiative and neighborhood walking clubs could attract funding for community process, design, improvements, maps and signage. This is what happened in a low-income neighborhood of Providence, RI, where a nonprofit alliance received foundation funding to develop signed pedestrian routes, maps, and walking clubs to encourage walking for health.³ There are now eight “Path to Health” walkable corridors in Rhode Island.

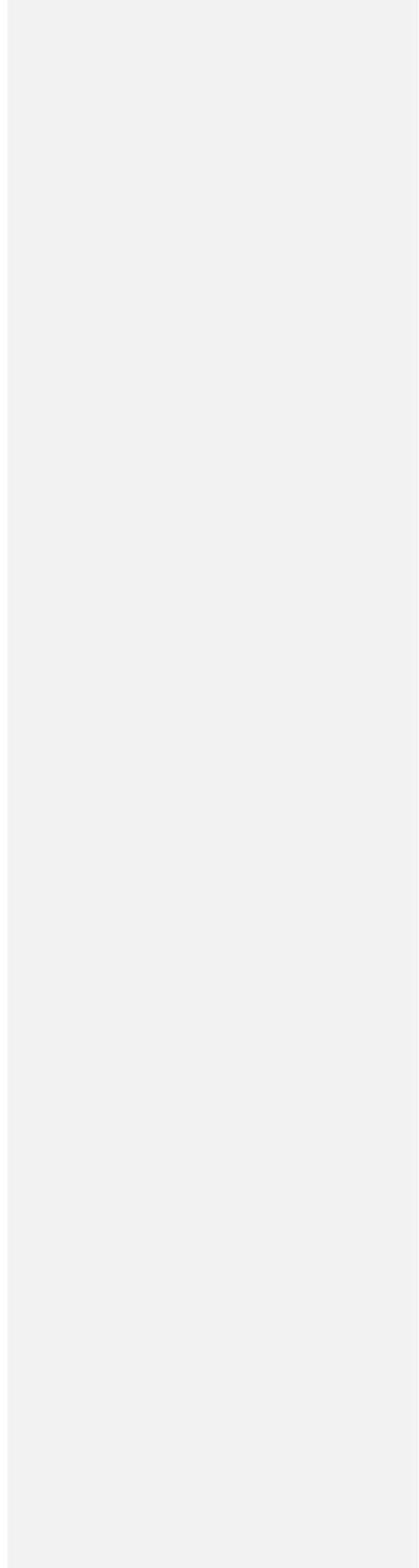
3. Prioritize creation of new parks or playgrounds for under-served areas where there is no park within walking distance and for access to resources of citywide importance, such as the waterfront.

Who: CPC; NORD or successor organization; Park and NORDC; Parks & Parkways; Capital Projects Administration

When: Medium term

Resources: *CDBG; general fund*

³ See www.sprnm.org/about/services/healthpromotion.shtml



Under-served areas exist in many areas, including parts of Planning Districts 3, 4, 7,8, and New Orleans East and Algiers—residential areas that are not within walking distance of a park or where barriers (such as highways) preclude easy access. ~~The existence of so many vacant lots during the recovery period is~~ Vacant lots are an opportunity to identify and preserve future neighborhood parks. Non-profit organizations and neighborhood groups could be invited to seek grant funding for play equipment and landscaping and to assist in upkeep until ~~the~~ city allocates regular funding. The future parks could also be offered as community gardens or community orchards, with an annual process to register for plots and with notice that the area might be transformed into a public park in the future.

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GOAL 5

More public access to waterfronts

For a city surrounded by water, New Orleans has a limited amount of public open space at its waterfronts for general enjoyment by the population. More access to the waterfront has been a goal for almost 20 years.

5.A Create parks and public spaces along the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. *Enhance parks and public access along the Mississippi River.*
Who: New Orleans Building Corp.; Port of New Orleans; USACE; French Market Corp
When: First five years
Resources: D-CDBG

The City's Riverfront Vision 2005 Plan called for more parks and public spaces along the Mississippi River: a park in Lower Garden District and one in Bywater/Marigny; a promenade from Jackson Avenue to the Industrial Canal to be matched by a similar linear park along the West Bank; and open space improvements near the levee at Algiers Point. The Reinventing the Crescent Plan developed some of these ideas in more detail and a new "Downriver Park" is currently under design.

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2. *Enhance park land along Lake Pontchartrain, including Lincoln Beach.*
Who: Levee Board; OFICD; Municipal Yacht Harbor
When: Medium term **Resources:** Stafftime
Resources: Stafftime

Renovation Lincoln Beach was once a recreational beach front; renovation and reopening of Lincoln Beach has long been a city objective. The 2009 budget allocates allocated \$1M in disaster CDBG funds for this project. West of the Industrial Canal, the park along the lake, but the project has not yet initiated. Lakeshore/Lakefront Park, along Lake Pontchartrain west of the Industrial Canal, is owned and managed by the Orleans Levee Board. Live Lincoln Beach, this area was once a recreational beach front. To reach its potential as a citywide amenity, Lakeshore Park needs to be has been recently redesigned to provide more space between the lake and the roadway, as well as pathways and active and passive recreational areas across the road.

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3. *Enhance the amenity value of canals and drainage facilities when possible.*
Who: Levee Board; OFICD; SWNBO
When: First five years
Resources: Levee resources

Today, most of the canals and drainage facilities in New Orleans are unattractive, if they are visible at all, and residents experience water more as a threat than as an amenity. As noted earlier, the PLAN FOR THE 21st CENTURY: NEW ORLEANS 2030, ADOPTED AUGUST 2010 [AS AMENDED THROUGH 2012] | 7.39

Levee Board is preparing a study on day lighting (opening underground or covered canals to the surface) and adding to the number of canals. In addition to making sure that any canals function

correctly for water management, it is important that they be designed as an attractive addition to the city's open space. The Sewerage and Water Board must also be involved in any analysis of this potential as the canals can be dangerous places when the pumps are turned on. *(See Volumes 2 and 3, Chapter 14.)*

4. Enhance the existing public edge along the Mississippi River.

Who: NOBC, CPC.

When: Next Five Years Resources: Staff Time

Given the investment from the Moon Walk to the Spanish Plaza, the city has a great opportunity to improve the connection of the amenities to each other and to the city neighborhoods and districts on the landside of the levee walls.

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GOAL 6

More green connections throughout the city

Without New Orleans has made considerable progress in the last five years building the connections, that allow our parks and open spaces do to not really function as a holistic system. The connective tissue of a park system is made up of the streets, paths, trails and waterways that let people reach their parks and other open spaces. People need comfortable connections, protected from traffic, with safe intersection crossings, shady during the heat of the day, and well lit in the evening and at night. New Orleans' has restored and renovated may of its streets, paths, trails, waterways and neutral grounds are the as the original connecting tissue of for its the green infrastructure system but more linkages can be created. While the city has made considerable progress in this regard, there are still opportunities to enhance its connective network by extending it to parks that remain disconnected.

6.A Create linear parks and green ways for multi-use pathways using the city's neutral grounds and other linear connections, such as levees, canal edges and rail lines. Several multiuse multi-use pathways and linear parks have already been created —, including the St. Anthony Avenue and Wisner Boulevard paths— Lakefront Park along Lake Pontchartrain as well as Woldenberg Park, the Moon Walk, Crescent Park, and the Lafitte Greenway will be the first of a network of green ways in Holy Cross levee path along the city. Several multiuse Mississippi River. The network of greenways with multi-use paths needs better connections between existing pathways have already been created — the Lafitte Greenway, Wisner Boulevard along Bayou St. John, St. Anthony Avenue and Wisner, West End/Pontchartrain Boulevard paths, Galvez Street, Napoleon Avenue, Lake Forest Drive, and Jefferson Davis Parkway – as well as new linear parks and the planned Lafitte Greenway will pathways to form part of and expand the network of greenways and neutral grounds that will connect connecting green spaces throughout the city.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Connect people to parks and neighborhood destinations by “Green implementing the City’s “Complete Streets” policy and coordinate the network with transit stops and bike boulevards.
Who: CPC planning with; DPW; Parks and Parkways; DPW; RTA
When: Medium term
Resources: Variable, according to project
 Tree-lined, “Green Complete Streets” should be prioritized for pedestrian and bicycle routes. In addition to the streets already graced by neutral grounds, other important corridors can be designated for redesign as green boulevards, for example, Tulane Avenue and the Earhart Boulevard corridor.
2. Work with the regional Regional Planning Commission and other groups to connect with regional pathways such as the multi-state Mississippi Trail.
Who: DPW; RPC; Capital Projects Administration
When: Medium term
Resources: Stafftime
 Support extension of city green ways and trails to connect with regional pathways, such as the multi-state Mississippi Trail. As green ways and trails are designed and constructed, connections with regional greenway projects should be supported.
3. Explore the creation of “blueways,” designated water routes, to provide water-based recreation connected to parks, open spaces and recreation areas.
Who: Levee Board; Sewerage and Water Board; private groups
When: Long term
Resources: Variable

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There are two marinas on Lake Pontchartrain, the South Shore Harbor Marina and Orleans Marina, both owned by the Orleans Levee District. Tulane University operates a rowing program in the Orleans Canal in City Park. Canoes and kayaks can be seen on Bayou St. John but bridges might have to be raised to make the entire bayou navigable. Expansion of water-based recreation can occur through more recreational boating programs in canals; more boat

launches on Lake Pontchartrain; enhanced marketing of boating excursions in Bayou Sauvage and elsewhere; and support for the boating community and excursion industry to map blueway routes. Because Lake Pontchartrain is at a higher elevation than Bayou St. John and interior canals, and pumping systems affect the waterways, a blueways program needs a feasibility study.

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- 4. Explore the feasibility of "daylighting" canals that have been covered over and creating additional canals.

Who: S&WB; Corps; Levee District; RPC
When: Long term
Resources: Variable

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"Daylighting" of below-ground urban streams and canals means removing the cover materials and restoring the water to the surface. Seoul, Korea, Seattle (WA) and Yonkers (NY) are among the communities that have daylighting projects of different types. In New Orleans, canals can serve as neighborhood amenities as well as water management elements. If properly designed, and where groundwater levels are not a problem, more canals can provide additional water storage area during storm events as well as attractive neighborhood amenities with linear parks on each side. The Orleans Levee Board expects to have a completed study of the options by 2011. (See Chapter 12 - Resilience for more discussion of canals and water storage strategies.)

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- 5. Use neutral grounds, levees, canal edges and rail lines as potential greenway connectors.

Who: Parks and Parkways; SWBNO; NORA; Levee Board; DPW
When: Medium term
Resources: Variable according to project

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Explore the possibility of using sufficiently wide neutral grounds as greenways. These could connect to linear, neighborhood, and regional parks to enhance the connection of green spaces throughout the city and facilitate access via walking and cycling. The use of the Basin Street neutral ground to connect the Lafitte Greenway to Canal Street and Duncan Plaza could serve as an ideal project for future study, in addition to other appropriate neutral grounds across the city.

GOAL 7

Maintenance of existing parks and green spaces to a high level

7.A Establish expanded maintenance criteria for parks and open space.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- 1. Create a committee with staff and citizen to develop goals and criteria and a photo system as in San Francisco.

Comment [WAG1]: Has this already been done and if not, then is it still needed? Is this what NORD-C is effectively?

Who: Parks and Parkways; NORD; or successor NORD; SWBNO; Levee Board; DPW; NORA
When: First five years
Resources: Stafftime

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Maintenance of a complex system of parks and open spaces has been difficult in the years of reduced funding since Hurricane Katrina and many residents think that green spaces do not receive sufficient maintenance. At present, the Department of Parks and Parkways has departments providing maintenance have some basic maintenance criteria. A number of cities have developed more detailed criteria in collaboration with citizen representatives, so that there is greater understanding of expectations and standards by the public, by management and by staff. San Francisco worked with a citizen committee to produce a manual with photographs showing acceptable and unacceptable situations for each criterion. Shared creation of criteria and understanding of costs helps build the constituency for adequate funding.

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2. *Work with partnership groups to enhance and assist with maintenance.*

Who: Parks and Parkways; NORD; or successor NORDC; SWBNO; Levee Board; DPW; NORA
When: Medium term
Resources: Stafftime

The large parks in New Orleans have "Friends" groups—membership organizations that raise money and otherwise help City Park, Brechtel Park, and Audubon Park. Many cities have Friends groups for neighborhood parks. Just as recreation programs at specific parks have Booster Clubs, Friends groups drawn from the surrounding neighborhoods could assist the city in taking care of smaller parks and green spaces.

3. *Encourage partnership groups to assist in maintenance.*

Who: Parks and Parkways; NORD; or successor
When: Medium term

Resources: Stafftime

7.B Establish clear and permanent policies and procedures for accepting, placing and maintaining public art in parks, green spaces and recreation sites.

1. *Adopt a Public Artwork Donation Policy that sets specific policies and procedures for all aspects of accepting, installing and maintaining public art.*

Who: City Planning, Arts Council, Parks and Parkways, Property Management, Capital Projects, Historic Districts & Landmarks Commission; DPW
When: Ongoing
Resources: Stafftime

7.C Establish green infrastructure planting practices and staff resources for green infrastructure in public spaces.

1. *Prepare comprehensive manual for use by city departments and the general public.*

Who: Parks & Parkways; NORA; SWBNO; Office of Sustainability
When: First five years
Resources: Stafftime, consultant(s)

2. *Fund and staff green infrastructure maintenance team(s) with specialized training to manage and develop green infrastructure elements on public lands.*

Who: City Council; CAO's Office; Parks & Parkways; NORA; SWBNO; Office of Sustainability
When: Ongoing
Resources: General fund, grants, staff time

3. RECREATION

GOALS

Multi-use indoor/outdoor recreation centers within 5 miles of every resident

8.A Create 10 indoor pools at existing centers.

Many of New Orleans' pre-Hurricane Katrina public swimming pools were extremely antiquated. Creation of a smaller number of state of the art year-round swimming pools can begin to build aquatics programs for children and adults.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. *Identify sites and invest in pools.*

Who: NORD; or successor NORDC;
When: First five years
Resources: D-CDBG; FEMA; millage for operating costs

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8.B Coordinate recreation resources with schools and other community and human services.

Recreation centers should be part of neighborhood hubs that offer a variety of fitness, education and human services to neighborhood residents, as discussed in other chapters of this Master Plan.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 1. Meet regularly with non-NORD/NORDC providers to streamline services.**

Who: Parks and Parkways; NORD; or successor

Who: NORDC; School Districts; human services providers

When: First five years

Resources: Stafftime

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Comment [WAG2]: By the time this is adopted, the city and OPSB may already have this lined up.

2. Explore collaborations with school districts and other organizations to establish joint use of facilities agreements allowing playing fields, playgrounds and recreation centers used by community residents when schools are closed; if necessary, adopt regulatory and legislative policies to address liability issues that might block implementation.
Who: School Districts, NORDC
When: First five years
Resources: Staff time, cooperative agreements

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GOAL 9

Year-round recreation opportunities for children, seniors and adults

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9.A Provide recreational opportunities appropriate to the demographics of the surrounding neighborhoods.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Focus child and youth-oriented activities in neighborhoods with higher numbers of family households.

Who: NORDC or successor
NORDC
When: Medium term
Resources: Staff time

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New Orleans neighborhoods vary significantly in terms of the percentage of family households. While youth-oriented services should be available to some degree in all neighborhoods, they should be focused where the clientele lives, while more adult-oriented recreation programs should be focused in neighborhoods with fewer children.

2. Continue to focus on 40 supervised playgrounds to be sports program hubs.

Who: NORDC or successor
NORDC
When: First five years
Resources: D-CDBG

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Rather than spread resources thinly throughout a very large number of playgrounds, NORDC is focusing on 40 well-distributed playgrounds to be the hubs of athletic activities.

3. Work with private programs and the Council on Aging.

Who: NORDC or successor
NORDC; Council on Aging
When: First five years
Resources: Fees, where appropriate

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Aging baby boomers are likely to increase demand for senior recreation. Coordination with existing programs and the Council on Aging can help to fill that need in a cost-effective way.

4. Promote fitness through facilities and programs.

Who: NORDC or successor
NORDC
When: First five years
Resources: Fees, where appropriate

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Well-run fitness facilities and classes for adults can be a source of fees that enhance departmental revenues while at the same time meeting the needs of a part of the population that today does not participate widely in NORDC programs.

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5. Provide dog parks where there is high demand.

Who: Parks and Parkways
Who: NORDC; Capital Projects Administration
When: First five years
Resources: In existing public and/or park land

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Neighborhoods with a high percentage of adults and one-and two-person households typically have demand for dog parks. **Currently, the city's only dog park is located in City Park.**

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GOAL 10

Recreation offerings that meet changing citizen needs

10.A Regularly monitor the recreation needs of all segments of the population.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Survey residents through the internet and more rigorous methods in order to keep up with changing recreation needs.

Who: ~~NORD; Parks and Parkways~~ NORDC

When: First five years

Resources: Survey-approximately \$30 K

Recreation needs are not static. For example, surveys show that throughout the country there has been a tremendous increase in the desire for walking paths as compared with previous decades. As populations change, their park and recreation needs and desires change, so it is important to survey them regularly. In addition to surveying people who are already users of park and recreation resources, it is also important to reach those who do not go to the parks or participate in recreation programs and find out what keeps them away or what they would like to do. That is why a scientific survey designed to reach all areas of the city is important at least once every ten years.

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2. Provide for individual activities as well as team sports and classes.

Who: ~~NORD or successor~~ NORDC

When: Medium term

Resources: Fees, where appropriate

Team athletics are important and very organized, and classes can be very popular. However, many people are looking for ~~unscheduled, individual~~ individualized activities, such as arts and crafts, as well as solo physical activity in passive park areas.

4. FINANCING AND MANAGEMENT

GOAL 11

More effective coordination and cost-effective management of park and recreation resources and programs

11.A Coordinate park and recreation resources and activities throughout the city.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. Establish an inter-agency parks and recreation coordinating group including all relevant city, nonprofit, private, and parish agencies.

Who: Convened by CPC; all park management groups; private recreation providers

When: First five years

Resources: Stafftime

Because the New Orleans park, open space and recreation system is managed by multiple entities, it is essential that a coordinating group be established to share information and plans to serve the city's residents and visitors. No matter how conscious the different agencies may be of their independent existence and varying funding levels, from the point of view of a person who wants to take advantage of the outdoors, play sports, or enjoy the lakefront or riverfront, it is all part of the public realm and green infrastructure of the city. Efforts to coordinate

programming and activities will stretch the funding for park and recreation programs across the board, providing cost-effective services and resources to the community. As a group, the agencies can also work on building a common constituency for parks and recreation and raising public awareness about their importance for quality of life and economic prosperity. At a minimum the coordinating group should include ~~NORD and Parks and Parkways (or any successor organization),~~ NORDC, City Park Improvement Association, Audubon Institute, the Orleans Levee Board, and the School District, ~~but ideally,~~ private recreation providers should ~~ideally~~ also participate. The City Planning Commission could convene the group two to four times a year to exchange information. One of those times should be when departments are preparing their capital budget requests. ~~This, at which this meeting should~~ could also function as an annual public meeting to review progress and hear from the public on park and recreation issues.

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GOAL 12

Community participation in decision making about ~~parks and recreation~~

12.A Survey ~~park and recreation resource~~ users on a regular basis.

Information should be collected regularly on ~~park and recreation~~ program users, their current level of satisfaction, and needs for new ~~park recreation~~ resources or programs. Surveys at the end of recreation programs; focus groups; and informal, web-based surveys can provide direction in between more scientific surveys every ten years.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Require instructors to use evaluation forms in classes.

~~Who: NORD or successor~~

NORDC

~~When: First five years~~

~~Resources: Stafftime~~

2. Use the web page for surveys; free web-based survey utilities are available.

~~Who: NORD~~ NORDC;

~~City IT~~ When: First

~~five years~~ Resources:

Stafftime

3. Conduct a scientific survey every 10 years.

~~Who: NORD or successor~~

NORDC

~~When: Long term~~

~~Resources: \$30 K~~

12.B ~~Establish a system for community input in park design and convene public meetings to provide input on major improvements, new park designs, and/or new recreation facilities and programs.~~

~~Whenever design starts on improvements to parks, neutral grounds, or new parks, park users and community members should be invited to a series of meetings: the first to gather information on issues and concerns; the second to present a conceptual design for discussion; and the third to present the detailed design for discussion.~~

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. ~~Integrate a system with the NPP system to be developed.~~

~~Who: CPC, working through NPP organization to be developed~~

~~When: First five years~~

~~Resources: Stafftime~~

12.C.12.B Prepare and update a full parks and recreation master plan regularly.

A full parks and recreation master plan separate from the city master plan should be updated every 10 years. Since the last one was completed in 2002, the next one should be readied in 2012. As the city meets some of its goals and as conditions change, the plan will need to be modified to continue to guide decision making about the park and recreation system. The master plan should be sponsored jointly by the Parks and Recreation agency or agencies and by NORDC and the City Planning Commission.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. Update the plan every 10 years, including a full public participation element.
Who: CPC, working with NORD and Parks and Parkways; NORDC
When: Long term
Resources: General Fund; grants; approx. \$500 - 600 K

GOAL 13

Consistent and adequate level of maintenance, operations and programming on a per capita basis

13.A Provide a consistent and adequate per capita operating budget and work towards establishing a dedicated funding source for municipal park and recreation resources and programs.

The best-funded parks and recreation departments have dedicated funding sources, generally a portion of property taxes or sales taxes. In Minneapolis, \$1.20 per \$1,000 of tax revenue in 2005 went to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, a semi-autonomous, elected board created in 1883 to maintain and develop the city's extensive park system. In 2005, the Park Board received 9 percent of tax revenue. In Seattle, a 2000 parks levy was approved at \$0.35 per \$1,000 additional property tax to be used mainly for acquisition and development of 18 new neighborhood parks in under-served/underserved neighborhoods. The Chicago Parks District receives dedicated property tax funds, which account for over 50 percent of the government revenues that go to its parks. In Florida, Pinellas County uses a portion of its sales tax to fund parks and estimates that 40 percent of sales taxes are paid by seasonal residents and tourists. Boulder, Colorado, has both a sales tax-supported Open Space Fund and a property tax-supported Parks and Recreation Fund.

The proposal for a new Playgrounds and Recreation Commission calls for a dedicated 7.5 millage by 2020, creating a budget of \$20 million annually, almost five times NORDC's NORDC's 2009 budget.

The Department of Parks and Parkways also requires more consistent and increased funding so it can provide enhanced maintenance, landscape design, and planting services to improve the City's green spaces.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Provide a consistent and adequate per capita operating budget.
Who: Voters
When: First five years
Resources: Millage vote
2. Continue to work with partnership groups and grant makers to supplement funding.
Who: NORDC City Council; CAO's Office; NORDC; Parks and Parkways; non-profits
When: First five years
Resources: Grants; volunteer activities; staff time

The creation of neighborhood activity hubs were schools, clinics, libraries and other facilities to serve surrounding residents is a centerpiece of this Master Plan. Joint use agreements help

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codify expectations and criterion for use maintenance contributions and other services.

In addition to continue working partnerships with non-profit organization, expand staffing to include a professional grant writer to greatly enhance departmental abilities to pursue multiple grant opportunities.

- 3. Pursue joint use agreements with public and private entities who own land that could add to park and recreation opportunities.

Who: ~~NORD~~NORDC: Parks & Parkways; private groups
When: Medium term
Resources: Variable

Booster Friends groups and private companies already support some activities, especially youth sports programs. More partner groups should be sought for greens pace projects and passive parks. Joint use agreements help codify expectations and criterion for use maintenance contributions and other services.

- 4. Establish fees appropriate to the program and level of community or individual benefit and reserve fees for park and recreational uses.

Who: ~~NORD~~NORDC: Parks & Parkways
When: Medium term
Resources: Variable according to activity

Programs with overwhelming social benefit such as youth programs, should remain free or at very low cost. However, by developing fee-based programs for adults, or specialty programs, the city can gain new revenues to support the community-wide programs.

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GOAL 14

Expanded partnerships to support park and recreation resources and programs

- 14.A Continue to support and work with Parkway Partners existing and support expansion of park non-profit partnerships and neutral ground green space Friends groups, as well as existing NORDC Booster and Friends groups, and hire a volunteer coordinator to develop and manage a network of "Friends" groups for individual parks.

14.A The cost of a coordinator will be repaid by activities and funding benefitting the parks.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 1. Expand park greenspace and neutral ground Friends recreation based Friends and Booster groups and hire a volunteer coordinator as well as non-profit partnerships.

Who: Parks and Parkways; NORDC
When: Medium term
Resources: Staff position; time; non-profit organizations; community groups

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GOAL 15

Effective marketing of the municipal park and recreation system to citizens and visitors

- 15.A Provide user-friendly communications, including an interactive web site, an annual report, consistent signage, and similar efforts.

Audubon Institute and increasingly, City Park, do a good job of marketing themselves to park users. NORDC and Parks and Parkways, with much more constrained funding, have not. However, investment in marketing to the public is a way to increase the constituency for parks and for recreation programs. Startup funding for a public communication program could be sought from corporate partners or foundations.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

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1. Improve the web pages, provide an annual report, and consistent signage.

Who: Parks and Parkways; ~~NORD~~ NORDC

When: Medium term

~~When:~~ Medium term

Resources: Stafftime; consultants; capital budgeting; general fund

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