

Chapter 7

PARKS, OPEN/GREEN SPACES AND RECREATION

GOAL	POLICIES FOR DECISION MAKERS		FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
PRESERVATION/RETENTION			
1	Protection of remaining wetland areas inside and outside the levee system	1.A. Review and revise as needed regulations, land use and zoning categories for wetlands and coastal areas to promote wetland preservation.	
		1.B. Seek conservation solutions for wetlands through permanent protection or acquisition by conservation organizations.	
2	Restoration and expansion of New Orleans’ urban forest to reach 50 percent tree canopy by 2030	2.A. Promote tree planting on public property.	
		2.B. Promote tree preservation and planting on private property.	
		2.C. Restore and plant new trees in parks, open/green spaces and neutral grounds.	
		2.D. Develop and establish storm water management practices in public parks, open/green spaces and neutral grounds.	
PARK SYSTEM			
3	A commitment to no loss of public parkland	3.A. Establish systems and funding to ensure that the city does not lose acreage dedicated to parks.	
4	A park within walking distance—approximately 1/3 mile—of every New Orleans resident	4.A. Balance passive and active uses of parks and public spaces while keeping them accessible to all residents.	
		4.B. Prioritize creation of new parks or playgrounds where there is no park within walking distance and provide access to resources of citywide importance, such as the waterfront.	

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5	More public access to waterfronts	5.A. Create parks and public spaces along the Mississippi River, Lake Pontchartrain and other waterways and wetlands and ensure access is kept open to general public and not dominated by specialized use facilities, particularly those which could be placed in other areas.	
6	More green-connectors throughout city	6.A. Create linear parks and greenways for multi-use pathways using the city's neutral grounds and other linear connections, such as levees, canal edges and railines.	
7	Maintenance of existing parks, open/green spaces, and recreation sites to a high level through restoration, redesign and reconstruction	7.A. Establish expanded maintenance criteria for parks open/green spaces and recreation sites in partnership with citizen parks groups.	
		7.B. Establish clear and permanent policies and procedures for accepting, placing and maintaining public art in parks, green spaces and recreation sites.	
		7.C. Establish and maintain stormwater infrastructure in public spaces.	
		7.D. Research the history and design of parks, and open/green spaces and develop plans to restore, redesign, reconstruct, and maintain these areas.	
RECREATION			
8	Multi-use indoor/ outdoor recreation centers within 5 miles of every resident	8.A. Create 6 indoor pools at existing centers.	
		8.B. Coordinate recreation resources with schools and other community and human services.	
9	Year-round recreation opportunities for children, seniors, and adults	9.A. Provide recreational opportunities appropriate to the demographics of the surrounding neighborhood.	
10	Recreation offerings that meet changing citizen needs	10.A. Regularly monitor the recreation needs of all segments of the population.	
FINANCING AND MANAGEMENT			
11	More effective coordination and cost-effective management of parks, open/green spaces, and recreation resources and programs, and the public art in those spaces	11.A. Coordinate parks, open/green spaces and recreation resources and activities throughout the city.	
12	Neighborhood participation in decision making about parks and recreation	12.A. Survey both park and recreation resources users on a regular basis.	
		12.B. Enhance the planning processes for parks by incorporating greater community input in the use, design, maintenance, and general improvements for all parks, open/green spaces and recreational spaces.	

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		12.C. Prepare and update a city wide parks, green/open space and recreation master plan and regional park master plans regularly.	
13	<i>Consistent and adequate level of maintenance, operations and programming on per capita basis</i>	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.	
14	<i>Expanded partnerships to support parks open/green spaces and recreation resources and programs</i>	14.A. Continue to support and expand partnerships with private partners, non-profit partners, park, open/green space, and neutral ground Friends groups, as well as existing NORDC Booster and Friends groups for parks, open/green spaces and recreation resource program.	
15	<i>Effective marketing of the municipal park and recreation systems to citizens and visitors</i>	15.A. Utilize the arts when providing user-friendly communications, including an interactive website, annual reports, consistent signage, and similar efforts.	



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-neighborhood parks including 9 stadiums pre-Katrina]
 - 10 stadiums currently
- 83 neighborhood parks and playgrounds pre-Katrina
 - 73+ playgrounds currently restored
- 64 pocket parks
- 19 public swimming pools pre-Katrina
 - 16 currently restored
- 10 recreation centers pre-Katrina
 - 9 currently restored
- 4 public and 4 private golf courses
- 7 historic urban squares

Neighborhood parks are the primary building block of neighborhood oriented recreation. They are intended for both passive and active forms of recreation. They should be a minimum of 1.3 acres, and ideally 2 to 5 acres.

Multi-neighborhood parks function as major recreation facilities with multiple venues for activities such as baseball and football. They are primarily oriented to active programmed recreation and league playing where many teams may be competing at the same time, day, or night. The park should be at least 3 acres up to around 30 acres, depending on the facilities needed.

Park and Recreation Management

- Divided among four entities with different funding sources:
 - New Orleans Department of Parks and Parkways
 - New Orleans Recreation Development Commission (NORDC)
 - 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.

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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 a large inventory of park lands that are generally well-distributed throughout the city. Excluding Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge, New Orleans had approximately 340 acres of park land in 2015, giving it more than many southern cities.
- New Orleans lost approximately 100,000 trees as a result of Hurricane Katrina. About 50,000 new trees have been planted as of 2016.
- Management of the city's park and recreation system is 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.
- New Orleans has expanded designated walking 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.

Acronyms

To aid in reading this section, below is a list of acronyms used within the text:

CAO	Chief Administrative Officer	GIS	Geographic Information Systems
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant	LUFC	Louisiana Urban Forestry Council
CPC	City Planning Commission	NEO	Neighborhood Engagement Office
CPIA	City Park Improvement Association	NOBA	New Orleans Building Corporation
NPP	Neighborhood Participation Program	NORDC	New Orleans Recreation Development Commission
CZO	Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance	NORA	New Orleans Redevelopment Authority
D-CDBG	Disaster Community Development Block Grant	OFICD	Office of Facilities, Infrastructure and Community Development
DPW	Department of Public Works	RPC	Regional Planning Commission
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency	RTA	Regional Transit Authority
FEMA	Federal emergency Management Administration		

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 4,340 acres of park land in 2015, more than many southern cities, with parks generally well-distributed throughout the city. This chapter includes the traditional elements of park and recreation planning including the connector 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' parks, open/green spaces and recreation resources are divided among a number of public and nonprofit entities, making coordination a challenge.

The Master Plan focuses on maintaining and enhancing the city's parks, open/green spaces and recreation resources 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 available for community use. Public transportation must increase access to parks and open space by offering multiple modes of transit, such as buses and bicycles. Our parks must also accommodate a wide variety of activities by providing multi-use recreation spaces.

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: 2016-2020

MEDIUM TERM: 2020-2025

LONG TERM: 2025-2030

GOAL	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS				
		HOW	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES	FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
1. Protection of remaining wetland areas inside and outside the levee system	1.A. Review and revise as needed regulations, land use and zoning categories for wetlands and coastal areas to promote wetland preservation.	1. Prohibit further drainage of wetlands for development both inside and outside the levees.	CPC	First five years	CZO amendment	
		2. Maintain 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	
	1.B. Seek conservation solutions for wetlands through permanent protection or acquisition by conservation organizations.	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	
2. Restoration and expansion of the New Orleans's urban forest to reach 50 percent tree canopy by 2030	2.A. Promote tree planting on public property.	1. Inventory and prepare a city-wide tree-canopy and vegetation (including public right-of-way and neutral ground areas) GIS layers, documenting value attributes etc., in a digital format to allow analysis using software that tracks vegetative values changes over time.	Parks & Parkways; City GIS Department, DPW; consultant	First five years	Louisiana Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry; U.S Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; grants; general fund; Staff time	
		2. Prepare a tree and vegetation master plan to address public lands throughout the city.	Parks & Parkways; City GIS Department; CPC; consultant	First five years	Louisiana Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry; U.S Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; grants; general fund	

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GOAL	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS				
		HOW	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES	FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
		3. Identifying priority areas for planting, species selection palettes, BMPs, etc.	Parks & Parkways; NORDC; DPW; SWBNO	Medium term	Staff time	
		4. Work with utility companies to develop & refine a protocol for conflicts and to develop a public information document.	Parks & Parkways; SWBNO; DPW; Utility Companies; Communications	First five years	Staff time	
		5. Create a no net loss of tree canopy strategy for public and private property	Parks & Parkways; NORDC; CBDG	First five years	Staff time; non-profit organizations	
		6. Establish criteria for "Heritage Trees" to inform future development; Identify as "heritage trees" as those trees of native species, significant size (e.g. top 20% by caliper), located along public corridors. Use additional criteria as appropriate. Consider additional protections for qualifying trees and appropriate incentives for their retention.	Parks & Parkways; NORDC; CBDG	First five years	Staff time; non-profit organizations	
		7. Improve the City's tree and vegetative ordinance to require retention, replacement and enhancement of the landscaping and live oak canopies characteristic of New Orleans, providing for complete protection of trees and landscaping during private and public construction, and power line maintenance and construction work by public utilities.	City Council, Parks & Parkways, DPW	First five years	Staff time	
	2.B Promote tree preservation and planting on private property.	1. Work with non-profits and neighborhood organizations to encourage homeowners and other private property owners to preserve and plant trees on private property.	Parks & Parkways; DPW; SWBNO; NORA; Communications; Non-profit partners	Ongoing	Staff time; non-profit partners; volunteers; grants; donations	

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GOAL	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS				
		HOW	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES	FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
		2. Improve the city's tree and vegetation protection ordinance (Chapter 106, Article IV).	Parks & Parkways; CPC; City Attorney; City Council	First five years	Staff time	
		3. Maintain tree planting in the public right of way as part of any new development, where appropriate.	CPC, Parks and Parkways	Ongoing	CZO	
	2.C. Restore and plant new trees in parks, green spaces, and neutral grounds.	1. Continue to work with non-profits who donate trees to the city.	Parks & Parkways; DPW; SWBNO; NORA	Ongoing	Donations	
		2. Assist with the creation of tree nurseries on city-owned vacant and private land for public plantings and, if feasible, for donation to property owners.	Parks & Parkways; NORA; Non-profit Partners	First five years	Staff time; nonprofit partners	
	2.D. Develop and establish storm water management practices in public parks, open/green spaces, and neutral grounds.	1. Prepare a comprehensive manual to include BMPs for use by city departments and the public to meet the city's storm water management and Resilience goals.	City Council, CAO's Office; CPC; Parks & Parkways; DPW; NORA; SWBNO; Office of Sustainability	First five years	Staff time; general fund	
		2. Replace most lawn areas in neutral grounds and street sides with bioswales, plantings and appropriate green infrastructure, when necessary amending the soil to accommodate increased rainwater detention.	Parks & Parkways	Medium term	Staff education and training; grants grow plants in nursery	
3. A commitment to no loss of parkland	3.A. Establish systems and funding 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; NORDC	Ongoing	Staff time	
		2. Create a Parks Trust Fund or similar accounts within the Capital Projects Fund to receive funds for acquisition, improvement and maintenance of parkland.	Parks & Parkways; CAO's Office; CPC; City Council; Real Estate & Records	First five years	Staff time	

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GOAL	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS				
		HOW	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES	FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
		3. Evaluate any public property identified for sale for suitability as a park recreation site, or stormwater management.	CPC; NORDC; Parks & Parkways; City Attorney; City Council; SWBNO; DPW; NORA	Ongoing	Staff time	
4. A park within walking distance approximately 1/3 mile of every New Orleans resident	4.A. Balance passive and active uses of parks and public spaces while keeping them accessible to all residents.	1. Provide open fields, tree-shaded areas, paths for walking, running, biking, and/or similar uses, seating, water fountains and similar low impact amenities, and programming (activities such as concerts, festivals, etc.) in parks, open/green spaces and neutral grounds to ensure residential use.	Parks & Parkways; NORDC; DPW; Capital Projects Administration; non-profit partners, Regional Park Administrators	Ongoing	Variable, according to project, activity or event	
		2. Provide safe walking routes to parks utilizing artistic intervention.	NORDC; Parks & Parkways; DPW; Arts Council of New Orleans, other sanctioned government organizations	Medium term	Public health grants, Safe Routes to Schools funding program, grants (Federal, state, and private)	
		3. Establish systems to use vacant public lots and other public properties, such as schools, as full time or part time neighborhood parks.	NORDC, Parks and Parkways	First five years	Staff time	
	4.B. Prioritize creation of new parks or playgrounds where there is no park within walking distance and provide access to resources of citywide importance, such as the waterfront.	1. Build new parks for underserved areas by using vacant, publicly-owned parcels – especially parcels which were intended though never developed, for parks and/or community facilities.	CPC; NORDC; Capital Projects Administration; Parks & Parkways; DPW; Real Estate and Records	First five years	CDBG; general fund; Staff time	
		2. Restore vacant or closed neighborhood parks in underserved areas with programming to meet the needs of the residents.	Parks & Parkways; NORDC	First five years	Staff; non-profit organizations; CBDG	
5. More public access to waterfronts	5.A. Create parks and public spaces along the Mississippi River, Lake Pontchartrain and other water ways and	1. Enhance parks and public access along the Mississippi River allowing open/green space to dominate.	New Orleans Building Corp.; Port of New Orleans; USACE; French Market Corp.	First five years	D-CDBG; Staff time	

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GOAL	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS				
		HOW	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES	FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
	wetlands and ensure access is kept open to general public and not dominated by specialized use facilities, particularly those which could be placed in other areas.	2. Enhance park land along Lake Pontchartrain, including Lincoln Beach.	Levee Board; OFICD; Municipal Yacht Harbor	Medium term	D-CDBG; Staff time	
		3. Enhance the amenity value of canals and drainage facilities when possible.	Levee Board; OFICD; SWBNO; DPW; Parks & Parkways	First five years	Levee resources	
		4. Enhance the existing public edge along the Mississippi River	NOBC, CPC, NORDC, Parks & Parkways	Next Five Years		
		5. Link existing water assets	CPC; SWBNO; DPW; Office of Coastal and Environmental Affairs; NORA; Levee Board etc.	Medium term	General funds, private foundations, federal grants	
6. More green connectors 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.	1. Connect people to parks and neighborhood destinations by tree-lined implementing the City's "Complete Streets" and coordinate the network with transit stops and bike boulevards. (See Chapter 13)	CPC; Parks & Parkways; DPW; RTA	Medium term	Variable, according to project	
		2. Work with the Regional Planning Commission and other groups to connect with regional pathways such as the multi-state Mississippi Trail.	DPW; RPC; Capital Projects Administration	Medium term	Staff time	
		3. Explore creation of "blueways" as designated water recreation routes and other boating opportunities. Inventory opportunities and work with local boating groups.	Levee Board; SWBNO; private groups	Long term	Variable	
		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	
		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	
		6. Encourage private owners to develop short to medium term public creative common space throughout neighborhoods supporting the creative use of lots that are underutilized	CPC; CAO; NORA; Arts Council of New Orleans; Parks & Parkways	Medium term	Staff time	

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GOAL	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS				
		HOW	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES	FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
7. Maintenance of existing parks, open/green spaces, and recreational sites to a high level through restoration, redesign, and reconstruction	7.A. Establish expanded maintenance criteria for parks, open/green spaces and recreation sites in partnerships with citizen groups.	1. Create a committee with staff and citizens to develop goals and criteria	Parks & Parkways; NORDC; SWBNO; Levee Board; DPW; NORA	First five years	Staff time	
		2. Work with partnership groups to enhance and assist with maintenance	Parks & Parkways; NORDC; SWBNO; Levee Board; DPW; NORA	Medium term	Staff time	
		3. Encourage partnership groups to assist with maintenance	Parks & Parkways; NORDC	Ongoing	Staff time	
		4. Develop partnerships to support the funding of a maintenance endowment for the City's parks, open/green spaces, and recreation sites based upon a City-approved 20-year maintenance plan	Parks and Parkways; NORDC; Mayor's Office, City's Law Department	First five years	Staff time	
	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 Policy that sets specific policies and procedures for all aspects of accepting, installing and maintaining public art.	CPC; Arts Council; Parks & Parkways; Property Management; Capital Projects, HDLC; DPW	Ongoing	Staff time	
	7.C. Establish and maintain storm water infrastructure in public spaces.	1. Fund and staff storm water infrastructure and maintenance team(s) with specialized training to manage and develop storm water infrastructure on public lands.	Parks & Parkways; DPW; NORA; SWBNO; Office of Sustainability	Ongoing	General fund; grants; Staff time	
	7.D. Research the history and design of parks, open/green spaces, and recreation sites to develop, restore, redesign, reconstruct, and maintain the areas.	1. Inventory and analyze any existing original landscape designs and any recently implemented or proposed restorations of neighborhood parks, open/green spaces and recreation sites.	Parks & Parkways; NORDC	First five years	Staff; non-profit organizations; CBDG	
		2. Gather research of each individual park, open/green space, and recreation site including history, architectural and horticultural styles, and include the social, economic and environmental development role of each.	Parks & Parkways; NORDC	First five years	Staff; non-profit organizations; CBDG	

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GOAL	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS				
		HOW	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES	FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
		3. Hold workshops on park, open/green space, and recreation site usage, restoration, redesign, reconstruction, and maintenance with nearby residents and property owners	Parks & Parkways; NORDC	First five years	Staff; non-profit organizations; CBDG	
		4. Prepare a preliminary design that takes into account Smart Growth principles and sustainability issues, and includes a discussion of storm water management priorities	Parks & Parkways; NORDC	First five years	Staff; non-profit organizations; CBDG	
		5. Implement plans to restore, redesign, and reconstruct parks, open/green spaces and recreation sites using an annual 'phased' approach, taking into consideration: a. Extant plant materials, their preservation and nurturance; b. The addition of lower maintenance plant materials; c. Recreational and open space use priorities (i.e., passive and active recreational uses); d. Landuse changes impacting the nature of each adjacent neighborhood; e. The traditional character and history of each site	Parks & Parkways; NORDC	First five years	Staff; non-profit organizations; CBDG	
8. Multi-use indoor/outdoor recreation centers within 5 miles of every resident	8.A. Create 6 indoor pools at existing centers.	1. Identify sites and invest in pools.	NORDC	First five years	D-CDBG; FEMA; millage for operating costs	
	8.B. Coordinate recreation resources with schools and other community and human services.	1. Meet regularly with non- NORDC providers to streamline services.	Parks & Parkways; NORDC; School Districts; human services providers	Medium term	Staff time	
		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	
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	First five years	Staff time	
		2. Continue to focus on 40 supervised play-grounds to be sports	NORDC	First five years	D-CDBG	

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GOAL	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS				
		HOW	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES	FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
		program hubs.				
		3. Work with private programs and the Council on Aging to develop more senior programs.	NORDC; Council on Aging	First five years	Fees, where appropriate	
		4. Promote youth and adult fitness through facilities and programs.	NORDC	First five years	Fees, where appropriate	
		5. Provide dog parks through a community process where there is high demand.	NORDC; Capital Projects Administration	First five years	In existing public or park land	
		6. Provide recreational facilities/attractions such as fountains/spray parks and play equipment as amenities for children and teens.	NORDC; Capital Project Administration	First five years	Staff time; Existing/new park land; fees, where appropriate	
		7. Promote and provide a space for community-led cultural programming in all city-run recreation and community centers	NORDC; cultural organizations	First five years	Staff time; Existing/new NORDC facilities; fees, where appropriate	
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.	Parks & Parkways; NORDC	Every 5 years	Survey—approx. \$30,000	
		2. Provide for individual activities as well as team sports and classes.	NORDC	Medium term	Fees, where appropriate	
11. More effective coordination and cost-effective management of parks, open/green spaces and recreation resources and programs, and the Public Art in those spaces	11. A. Coordinate parks, open/green spaces and recreation resources and activities throughout the city.	1. Establish an interagency 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	
12. Neighborhood participation in decision-making about parks and recreation	12.A. Survey both park and recreation resource users on a regular basis.	1. Require instructors to use evaluation forms in classes.	NORDC	First five years	Staff time	
		2. Use the web page for surveys; free web-based survey utilities are available.	NORDC; City ITI	First five years	Staff time	
		3. Conduct a scientific survey every 10 years.	NORDC	Long term	\$30,000	

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GOAL	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS				
		HOW	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES	FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
		4. Creatively survey users of parks and recreation through creative place-making practices, on a regular basis	Arts Council of New Orleans; other similar organizations; Parks & Parkways; NORDC	First five years	Staff time	
	12.B. Enhance the planning processes for parks by incorporating greater community input in the use, design, maintenance, and general improvements for all parks, open/green spaces and recreational spaces.	1. Integrate system with the Neighborhood Participation Plan.	NORDC; Parks & Parkways with neighborhood/community participation; NEO	First five years	Staff time	
	12.C. Prepare and update a city wide parks, green/open space and recreation master plan and regional park master plans regularly.	1. Update the plan every 10 years, conduct an amendment process every five years which includes a full public participation element.	NORDC; Parks & Parkways; Regional Parks Administration, Neighborhood/community input	Ongoing	Staff time; General Fund; grants; approx. \$500-600,000	
		2. Integrate community and cultural assets in public spaces through public art and design intervention while including public/community input.	Arts Council of New Orleans; Parks & Parkways; DPW	Medium term	Staff time	
		3. Amend the CZO to incorporate Master Plan regulations for regional parks similar to the existing Institutional Master Plan regulations in the CZO.	CPC; City Council	First five years	Staff time	
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	
		2. Continue to work with partnership groups and grant makers to supplement funding.	NORDC; Parks & Parkways; non-profits; CAO; City Council	First five years	Grants; volunteer activities	
		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	
		4. Establish fees appropriate to the program and level of community or individual benefit and reserve fees for park and recreation uses.	Parks & Parkways; NORDC	Medium term	Variable according to activity	

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GOAL	RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES	RECOMMENDED ACTIONS				
		HOW	WHO	WHEN	RESOURCES	FOR MORE INFORMATION, SEE PAGE:
14. Expanded partnerships to support parks, open/green spaces and recreation resources and programs	14.A. Continue to support and expand partnerships with private partners; non-profit partners, park, open/green space and neutral ground Friends groups, as well as existing NORDC Booster and Friends groups for parks, open/green spaces, and recreation resources and programs.	1. Expand park and neutral ground friend and Booster groups; open/green space friends groups and non-profit partnerships	Parks & Parkways; NORDC	Medium term	Staff time; non-profit organizations and community groups	
		2. Establish a not-for-profit org., operating under an authorizing MOU with the City of New Orleans, to develop a series of partnerships among City, Parish, State, Federal, Private Foundation, Corporate Foundation and Corporate Resources to restore, redesign, reconstruct and maintain parks, open/green spaces and recreation resources and programs	Parks and Parkways; NORDC; Mayor's Office, City's Law Department	First five years	Staff time	
15. Effective marketing of the municipal park and recreation system to citizens and visitors	15.A. Utilize the arts when providing user-friendly communications, including an interactive website, annual reports, consistent signage and similar efforts.	1. Improve the web pages, provide an annual report, and consistent signage.	Park & Parkways; NORDC; City ITI Department; consultants	Medium term	Staff time; consultants; general fund	
		2. Utilize the creative assets of the city to provide art and design that enhances public spaces. Work with the city's designated arts organizations to develop creative way-finding and signage initiatives throughout the city.	Arts Council of New Orleans; CPC; DPW; New Orleans Downtown Development District	Medium term	Staff time	

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.

- 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.

Narrative

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

1. PARKS, NATURAL OPEN/GREEN SPACES AND RECREATION

GOAL 1

Protection of remaining wetland areas inside and outside the levee system

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.

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 referring to areas that may be subject to periodic flooding from storms.

1.A

Review and revise as needed regulations, land use and zoning categories for wetlands and coastal areas to promote wetland preservation.

Land-use and zoning categories for conservation of natural areas 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 amendment

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

2. 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

A city wetlands protection ordinance 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.

1.B Seek conservation solutions for wetlands through permanent protection or acquisition by conservation organizations.

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: Stafftime; federal or non-profit funding

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.

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 and some parts of the 9th Ward. Although American Forests suggests a 40 percent goal for tree canopy, its 2002 report did

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not include Bayou Sauvage. With the wildlife refuge included, a 50 percent canopy goal for the city is reasonable. Within different parts of the city, different goals should be set, for example: 15 percent for the CBD; 25 percent for higher density areas; 50 percent for lower-density areas.

2.A Promote tree planting on public property.

[To be reconsidered by City Council]

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Inventory and prepare a city-wide tree-canopy and vegetation (including public right-of-way and neutral ground areas) GIS layers, documenting value attributes etc., in a digital format to allow GIS analysis using software that tracks vegetative value changes over time.

Who: Parks & Parkways; City GIS Department, DPW; consultant

When: First five years

Resources: Louisiana Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry; U.S Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; grants; general fund; staff time

2. Prepare a tree and vegetation master plan to address public lands throughout the city.

Who: Parks & Parkways; City GIS Department; CPC; consultant

When: First five years

Resources: Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry; U.S Department of Agriculture, Forest Service; grants; general fund

Public streetscape projects, commercial or mixed-use development, multi-family and redevelopment projects should be required to provide street trees, where feasible. Street tree criteria should be updated for different kinds of streets. The city needs to have an updated and complete inventory of all street trees in GIS, which will help in maintenance and replacement of trees.



The location of tree wells and landscape species, design documents for these projects should demonstrate adequate root growth area and rainwater supply available for each tree. When appropriate, technologies such as tree cells and pervious paving systems should be used to create conditions in which street trees thrive.

3. Identifying priority areas for planting, species selection palettes, best practices BMPs, etc.

Who: Parks & Parkways; NORDC; DPW; SWBNO

When: Medium term

Resources: Staff time

4. Work with utility companies to develop & refine protocol for conflicts and to develop a public information document.

Who: Parks & Parkways; SWBNO; DPW; Utility Companies; Communications

When: First five years

Resources: Staff time

5. Create a no net loss of tree canopy strategy for public and private property

Who: Parks & Parkways; NORDC; CBDG

When: First five years

Resources: Staff time; non-profit organizations

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6. Establish criteria for "Heritage Trees" to inform future development. Identify as "heritage trees" (as) those trees of native species, significant size (e.g. top 20% by caliper), located along public corridors. Use additional criteria as appropriate. Consider additional protections for qualifying trees and appropriate incentives for their retention.

Who: Parks & Parkways; NORDC; CBDG

When: First five years

Resources: Staff time; non-profit organizations

Trees play a vital role in parks and green spaces. Public parks and green spaces, open spaces and other landscape features retain and infiltrate stormwater, mitigate flood risk, slow/halt subsidence, and save energy, amongst many other benefits. The protection of valuable trees and creating funding mechanisms to plant new trees are important. It is also important to protect and encourage "heritage trees". Heritage trees indicate valuable (usually native water loving trees) trees with a caliper of 24" or more.

7. Improve the City's tree and vegetative ordinance to require retention, preplacement and enhancement of the landscaping and live oak canopies characteristic of New Orleans, providing for complete protection of trees and landscaping during private and public construction activities, especially including street and sidewalk construction, and power line maintenance and construction work by public utilities.

Who: City Council; Parks & Parkways; DPW

When: First five years

Resources: Staff time

2.B. Promote tree preservation and planting on private property.

Large trees should be preferably preserved, but if they must be removed, new trees equal in total caliper to the tree removed should be planted to replace them. A compensatory mitigation program should be established to guarantee replanting of tree caliper equal or greater to that lost. This model could fund offsite plantings when appropriate. It could also be adapted to encompass heritage trees on properties not slated for development. Methods to help provide and promote tree preservation and planting should be promoted through partnerships with local non-profit, community and volunteer organizations.

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: Parks & Parkways; DPW; SWBNO; NORA; Communications; Non-profit partners

When: ongoing

Resources: Staff time; non-profit partners; volunteers; grants; donations

2. Improve the city's tree and vegetation protection ordinance (Chapter 106, Article IV)

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

When: 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 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. These ordinances typically require an administrative review or a public hearing before trees of special significance can be removed.

3. Maintain tree planting in the public right-of-way as part of any new development, where appropriate.

Who: CPC, Parks and Parkways

When: Ongoing

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Resources: CZO

2.C Restore and plant new trees in green spaces, 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

1. Continue to work with non-profits who donate trees to the city.

Who: Parks & Parkways; DPW; SWBNO; NORA

When: Ongoing

Resources: Donations

2. Assist with the creation of tree nurseries on city-owned vacant land and private land for public plantings and if feasible, for donation to property owners.

Who: Parks and Parkways; NORA; non-profit partners

When: First five years

Resources: Staff time; non-profit partners

2.D. Develop and establish storm water management practices in public parks, open/green spaces, and neutral grounds.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Prepare a comprehensive manual to include BMPs for use by city departments and the public to meet the city's stormwater management and resilience goals

Who: City Council; CAO's Office; CPC; Parks & Parkways; NORA; SWBNO; Office of Sustainability

When: First five years

Resources: Staff time; general fund

2. Replace most lawn areas in neutral grounds and street sides with bioswales, plantings and appropriate storm water elements, when necessary amending the soil to accommodate increased rainwater detention.

Who: Parks and Parkways; S&WB; DPW; nonprofit partners

When: Medium term

Resources: Staff education and training; grow plants in nursery

2. PARK SYSTEM

GOAL 3

A commitment to no 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.

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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.

MAP 7.1: 2009 ACCESS TO PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES



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, these areas require a planned, created, maintained and restored coordinated system.

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

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; NORDC

When: Ongoing

Resources: Stafftime

Because it is often difficult to acquire land to create new parks, the overall amount of city land devoted to

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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. Adapting park land for improved stormwater management through landscape design is not to be considered a new use, as this is an historic function of open space in the city. 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 of the park.

The City Planning Commission, as required by the City Charter Sections 6-302 and 6-306, has establish rules and procedures used to decide whether any public land or building should be sold or acquired. The City Planning Commission must work with NORDC and Parks & Parkways when utilizing the criteria found in its Administrative Rules, Policies, & Procedures (3. Policy for City Purchase of Land and for Disposition of City Immovable Public Property) along with a deliberative process before any public park land is designated to be taken out of park and recreation use. The process should include:

> *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. Each agency should make a written recommendation to the Mayor and the City Council.

> *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

It is equally important to note that when open space is developed for a beneficial or recreational use (e.g. park office, rec center, etc.), its conservation value may be lost or degraded. In some cases, the city should seek to replace the acreage in order to retain a net balance of public open /green spaces.

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

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

When: First five years

Resources: Staff time

The City should create a Parks Trust Fund within the Capital Projects Fund to receive a percentage of funds set-aside from major park construction projects for maintenance, sale of any decommissioned parks, developer funds resulting from Community Benefits Agreements, or other donations for the park 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 purposes, would provide a stabilized, long term and focused repository for funds dedicated to the development, enhancement, and maintenance of parks.

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

Who: CPC; NORDC; Parks & Parkways; City Attorney; City Council; SWBNO; DPW; NORA
Neighborhood/Community Participation

When: Ongoing

Resources: Stafftime

Before public land is put up for sale, it should be reviewed by the CPC, NORDC, and Parks & Parkways to see if

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.

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it is suitable for an identified park or recreation need in that location or for stormwater retention to benefit neighborhood drainage or flood-risk reduction.

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 & Parkways or NORDC, 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.

4.A. Balance passive and active uses of parks and public spaces while keeping them accessible to all residents.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Provide open field, tree-shaded areas, paths for walking, running, biking, and/or similar uses, seating, water fountains and similar low impact amenities, and programming (activities such as concerts, festivals, etc.) in parks, open/green spaces and neutral grounds to ensure residential use

Who: Parks & Parkways; NORDC; DPW; Capital Projects Administration; non-profit partners; Regional Park Administrators

When: Ongoing

Resources: Variable, according to project, activity or event

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. Provide safe walking routes to parks utilizing artistic intervention.

Who: NORDC; Parks & Parkways; DPW; Arts Council of New Orleans; other sanctioned government organizations

When: Medium term

Resources: Safe Routes to Schools funding program; Public Health grants (Federal, state, and private)

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 of safety

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.

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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. Establish systems to use vacant public lots and other public properties, such as schools, as full time or part time neighborhood parks.

Who: NORDC, Parks and Parkways

When: First five years

Resources: Staff time

- 4.B. Prioritize creation of new parks or playgrounds where there is no park within walking distance and provide access to resources of citywide importance, such as the waterfront.**

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Build new parks for underserved areas by using vacant, publicly-owned parcels as well as sites of citywide importance, such as the waterfront.

Who: CPC; NORDC Parks & Parkways; Real Estate and Records; Capital Projects Administration

When: First five years

Resources: CDBG; general fund; Staff time

Underserved 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. 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.

2. Restore vacant or closed neighborhood parks in underserved areas with programming to meet the community's current needs.

Who: Parks & Parkways; NORDC

When: First five years

Resources: Staff; non-profit organizations; CDBG

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 Lake Pontchartrain, and other waterways and wetlands and ensure access is kept open to general public and not dominated by specialized use facilities, particularly those which could be placed in other areas.**

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

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RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. *Enhance parks and public access along the Mississippi River allowing open/green space to dominate.*
Who: New Orleans Building Corp.; Port of New Orleans; USACE; French Market Corp
When: First five years
Resources: D-CDBG; Staff time

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 the new downriver "Crescent Park" is open.

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

Lincoln Beach was once a recreational beach front; renovation and reopening of Lincoln Beach has long been a city objective. The 2009 budget allocated \$1M in disaster CDBG funds for this project, but the project has not yet been initiated. Lakeshore/Lakefront Park, along Lake Pontchartrain west of the Industrial Canal, is owned and managed by the Orleans Levee Board. Lakeshore Park 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.

3. *Enhance the amenity value of canals and drainage facilities when possible.*
Who: Levee Board; OFICD; SWNO; DPW; Parks & Parkways
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 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. 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. Likewise, a new generation of drainage assets should contribute to urban design goals. 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.)

While some progress has been made, great potential remains. In addition to the Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain, New Orleans' bayous, canals and wetlands represent important water assets. Landscape features for water management, such as along Lafitte Greenway and in NORA Stormwater Lots, are similarly valuable. Linking people to these water assets with trails, pocket parks, overlooks, etc. and linking these assets together with greenways, bike lanes, pedestrian bridges, etc. enhances quality of life. In many cases, such linkages can be paired with parks, open/green spaces and recreation areas to recharge groundwater and improve water quality.

4. *Enhance the existing public edge along the Mississippi River.*
Who: NORDC; 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.

5. *Link existing water assets.*

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Who: CPC; DPW SWBNO; Office of Coastal and Environmental Affairs; NORA; DPW; Levee boards etc.

When: Medium term

Resources: General fund, private foundations, federal grants

Connecting water assets to open space and each other through trails, bike lanes, pedestrian bridges, etc. not only improves accessibility but also fosters stewardship and creates new opportunities for economic investment in adjacent parcels. Furthermore these linkages can provide valuable forums for interpretive signage and educational events that enhance citizens understanding of water systems and their own role in water management. Crescent Park, Lafitte Greenway and Lakeshore Drive provide useful models that should be adapted to suit the water assets in East New Orleans and Algiers. Interconnectivity among these waterside corridors should be a long-range goal.

GOAL 6

More green connectors throughout the city

New Orleans has made considerable progress in the last five years building the connections that allow our parks and open spaces to 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 many of its streets, paths, trails, waterways and neutral grounds as the connecting tissue for its green infrastructure system. 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 multi-use pathways and linear parks have already been created, including the Lakefront Park along Lake Pontchartrain as well as Woldenberg Park, the Moon Walk, Crescent Park, and the Holy Cross levee path along the Mississippi River. The network of greenways with multi-use paths needs better connections between existing pathways – Lafitte Greenway, Wisner Boulevard along Bayou St. John, St. Anthony Avenue, West End/Pontchartrain Boulevard, Galvez Street, Napoleon Avenue, Lake Forest Drive, and Jefferson Davis Parkway – as well as new linear parks and pathways to form and expand the network of greenways and neutral grounds connecting green spaces throughout the city.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. Connect people to parks and neighborhood destinations by implementing the City's "Complete Streets" policy and coordinate the network with transit stops and bike boulevards (see Chapter 13).

Who: CPC; Parks & Parkways; DPW; RTA

When: Medium term

Resources: Variable, according to project

Tree-lined, "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 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

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Support extension of city greenways 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; private groups

When: Long term

Resources: Variable

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.

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

“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 daylighted 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 complete a study of the options. (See Chapter 12 - Resilience for more discussion of canals and water storage strategies.)

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

Who: Parks & Parkways; SWBNO; Levee Board; DPW; NORA

When: Medium term

Resources: Variable according to project

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.

6. *Encourage private owners to develop short to medium term public creative common space throughout neighborhoods supporting creative uses of lots that are underutilized.*

Who: CPC; CAO, NORA; Arts Council of New Orleans; Parks & Parkways

When: Medium term

Resources: Staff time

GOAL 7

Maintenance of existing parks, open/green spaces and recreational sites to a high level through restoration redesign and reconstruction

- 7.A **Establish expanded maintenance criteria for parks and open/green spaces and recreation sites in partnerships with citizen groups.**

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RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. *Create a committee with staff and citizens to develop goals and criteria.*

Who: Parks & Parkways; NORDC; SWBNO; Levee Board; DPW; NORA

When: First five years

Resources: Staff time

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 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. Shared creation of criteria and understanding of costs helps build the constituency for adequate funding.

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

Who: Parks & Parkways; NORDC; SWBNO; Levee Board; DPW; NORA

When: Medium term

Resources: Staff time

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 with maintenance.*

Who: Parks and Parkways; NORDC

When: Ongoing

Resources: Staff time

4. *Develop partnerships to support the funding of a maintenance endowment for the City's parks, open/green spaces, and recreation sites based upon a City-approved 20-year maintenance plan*

Who: Parks & Parkways; NORDC; Mayor's Office; Law Department

When: First five years

Resources: Staff time

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

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

Who: CPC; Arts Council; Parks & Parkways; Property Management; Capital Projects; HDLC; DPW

When: Ongoing

Resources: Staff time

7.C Establish and maintain storm water infrastructure in public spaces.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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

Who: Parks & Parkways; DPW; NORA; SWBNO; Office of Resilience and Sustainability

When: Ongoing

Resources: General fund, grants, Staff time

7.D Research the history and design of parks, open/green spaces, and recreation sites to

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develop, restore, redesign, reconstruct, and maintain the areas.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

1. *Inventory and analyze any existing original landscape designs and any recently implemented or proposed restorations of neighborhood parks, open/green spaces and recreation sites.*

Who: Parks & Parkways; NORDC

When: First five years

Resources: Staff; non-profit organizations; CBDG

2. *Gather research of each individual park, open/green space, and recreation site including history, architectural and horticultural styles, and include the social, economic and environmental development role of each.*

Who: Parks & Parkways; NORDC

When: First five years

Resources: Staff; non-profit organizations; CBDG

3. *Hold workshops on park, open/green space, and recreation site usage, restoration, redesign, reconstruction, and maintenance with nearby residents and property owners*

Who: Parks & Parkways; NORDC

When: First five years

Resources: Staff; non-profit organizations; CBDG

4. *Prepare a preliminary design that takes into account Smart Growth principles and sustainability issues, and includes a discussion of storm water management priorities*

Who: Parks & Parkways; NORDC

When: First five years

Resources: Staff; non-profit organizations; CBDG

5. *Implement plans to restore, redesign, and reconstruct parks, open/green spaces and recreation sites using an annual 'phased' approach, taking into consideration:*

- a. Extant plant materials, their preservation and nurturance;
- b. The addition of lower maintenance plant materials;
- c. Recreational and open space use priorities (i.e., passive and active recreational uses);
- d. Land use changes impacting the nature of each adjacent neighborhood;
- e. The traditional character and history of each site

Who: Parks & Parkways; NORDC

When: First five years

Resources: Staff; non-profit organizations; CBDG

3. RECREATION

GOAL 8

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

8.A Create 6 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.*

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Who: NORDC

When: First five years

Resources: D-CDBG; FEMA; millage for operating costs

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-NORDC providers to streamline services.

Who: Parks and Parkways; NORDC; School Districts; human services providers

When: Medium term

Resources: Staff time

2. Explore collaborations with school districts and other organizations to establish joint use of facilities agreements.

Allow playing fields, playgrounds and recreation centers to be 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

GOAL 9

Year-round recreation opportunities for children, seniors and adults

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

When: Medium term

Resources: Staff time

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

When: First five years

Resources: D-CDBG

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; Council on Aging

When: First five years

Resources: Fees, where appropriate

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.

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4. *Promote fitness through facilities and programs.*

Who: NORDC

When: First five years

Resources: Fees, where appropriate

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.

5. *Provide dog parks where there is high demand.*

Who: NORDC; Capital Projects Administration

When: First five years

Resources: In existing public and/or park land

Neighborhoods with a high percentage of adults and one-and two-person households typically have demand for dog parks. Currently, the city's only 2 dog parks are located in City Park and Crescent Park.

6. *Provide recreational facilities/attractions such as fountains/spray parks and play equipment for children and teens.*

Who: NORDC; Capital Projects Administration

When: First five years

Resources: Staff time; existing/new park land; fees where appropriate

7. *Promote and provide a space for community-led cultural programming in all city-run recreation and community centers.*

Who: NORDC; cultural organizations

When: First five years

Resources: Staff time; existing/new NORDC facilities; fees where appropriate

Neighborhood based cultural traditions are an integral part of the City's identity and a driving factor in youth development. Community led cultural programming held by either cultural organizations or respected culture bearers will be given a space in all city run recreation and community centers, with priority given to organizations and individuals from the area where the center is located.

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: Parks & 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 recreation needs and desires change, so it is important to survey them regularly. In addition to surveying people who are already users of recreation resources, it is also important to reach those who do not go to 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.

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

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Who: 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 *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 parks, open/green spaces, and recreation resources and programs and the Public Art in those spaces.

11.A Coordinate parks, open/green spaces 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 open/green spaces 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 Parks & Parkways, NORDC, City Park Improvement Association, Audubon Institute, the Orleans Levee Board, and the School District; ideally, private recreation providers should 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, at which this meeting could also function as an annual public meeting to review progress and hear from the public on park and recreation issues.

GOAL 12

Neighborhood 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: NORDC

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When: First five years

Resources: Stafftime

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

Who: NORDC; City ITI

When: First five years

Resources: Stafftime

3. Conduct a scientific survey every 10 years.

Who: NORDC

When: Long term

Resources: \$30K

4. Creatively survey users of parks and recreation through creative place-making practices, on a regular basis.

Who: Arts Council of New Orleans; other similar organizations; Parks & Parkways; NORDC

When: Five years

Resources: Stafftime

12.B Enhance the planning processes for parks by incorporating greater community input in the use, design, maintenance, and general improvements for all parks, open/green spaces and recreational spaces.

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 system with the Neighborhood Participation Plan system

Who: NORDC; Parks & Parkways working with neighborhood/community participation; NEO

When: Ongoing

Resources: Stafftime

12.C Prepare and update a city-wide parks, green/open space and recreation master plan and regional park master plans regularly.

City-wide parks green/open space and recreation and regional parks Master Plans should be created and updated every 10 years. The plan should include overall priorities for the parks and recreation system and should provide a detailed, facilities-based assessment and plan for achieving the individual goals and objectives described in this Master Plan document. It should include a full assessment of parks and recreation facilities available, and provide priorities and locations where additional facilities are needed to provide equitable access to park facilities across the City of New Orleans.

The appropriate managing entity should conduct a systematic assessment of park users before each full Parks and Recreation Master Plan update and each amendment process, in order to inform the update and amendment processes. This assessment should incorporate on-site observation of park and recreation spaces at multiple times of the week and multiple times of day.

In addition, a full assessment should be conducted by the managing entity of park facilities as part of each Parks and Recreation Master Plan update and recommend needed facility changes for each park location.

The various master plans should be sponsored jointly by NORDC Parks and Parkways or the appropriate Regional Administrator with neighborhood/community input (NPP) or a similar system dictated by administrator's guiding appropriate regulations. Also a comprehensive design and investment plan should be developed for the Departments of Public Works and Parks & Parkways. This plan should detail stormwater

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best management practices for neutral grounds, intersections, rights of way, etc. as well as long-term maintenance protocols for the prescribed green infrastructure installations. The plan should include specific project commitments and establish new default designs for road or utility projects that disrupt neutral grounds.

In order to account for changes of a Master Plan it is important the regional Master Plans establish a process similar to the existing Institutional Master Plan requirement in the Comprehensive Ordinance.

As the City/Regional Administrators meet some of its goals and as conditions change, their plans will need to be modified to continue to guide decision making about the park and recreation system neighborhood community input should be part of their updating or amending process.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. *Update the plan every 10 years, conduct an amendment process every five years which includes a full public participation element.*
Who: NORDC; Parks & Parkways; Regional Park Administrators Neighborhood/community input
When: Ongoing
Resources: Staff time; General Fund; grants; approx. \$500 - 600K
2. *Intergrade community and cultural assets into public spaces through public art and design intervention with public/community input.*
Who: Arts Council of New Orleans; Parks & Parkways; DPW
When: Medium term
Resources: Staff time
3. *Amend the CZO to incorporate Master Plan regulations for regional parks similar to the existing Institutional Master Plan regulations in the CZO.*
Who: CPC; City Council
When: First five years
Resources: Staff time

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 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 2009 budget. The Department of Parks & Parkways requires consistent and increased funding, so it can provide enhanced maintenance, landscape design, and planting services to improve the City's green spaces.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

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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; Parks & Parkways; non-profits; City Council; CAO
When: First five years
Resources: Grants; volunteer activities; Staff time

In addition to continue working with partnerships and non-profit organizations, 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: 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 green space 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 recreation uses.*
Who: 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.

GOAL 14

Expanded partnerships to support parks open/green spaces and recreation resources and programs

- 14.A. **Continue to support and expand partnerships with private partners, non-profit partners, park, open/green space and neutral ground Friends groups, as well as existing NORDC Booster and Friends groups for parks open/green spaces, and recreation and programs.**

RECOMMENDED ACTION

1. *Expand park and neutral ground friends and Booster groups, open/green space friends groups and non-profit partnerships.*
Who: Parks & Parkways; NORDC
When: Medium term
Resources: Staff time; non-profit organizations; community groups
2. *Establish a not-for-profit org., operating under an authorizing MOU with the City of New Orleans, to develop a series of partnerships among City, Parish, State, Federal, Private Foundation, Corporate Foundation and Corporate Resources to restore, redesign, reconstruct and maintain parks, open/green spaces and recreation resources and programs*
Who: Parks and Parkways; NORDC; Mayor's Office, City's Law Department
When: First five years
Resources: Staff time

Attachment A

GOAL 15

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

15.A. Utilize the arts when providing 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 & 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

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

Who: Parks & Parkways; NORDC; City ITI Department; consultants

When: Medium term

Resources: Stafftime; consultants; general fund

New Orleans is an organically creative place that uses public space in a variety of ways to enhance the living conditions of its residents. The city should commit to actively include artists and designers in the more formal process of participation and public space development.

2. *Utilize the creative assets of the city to provide art and design that enhances public spaces. Work with the city's designated arts organizations to develop the creative wayfinding and signage initiatives throughout the city.*

Who: Arts Council of New Orleans; CPC; DPW; New Orleans Downtown Development District

When: Medium Term

Resources: Staff time