



## DRAFT OUTLINE - PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN 2011

### I. Introduction

*What is a Parks & Recreation Master Plan, Why Update the Plan, Plan Organization, Planning Process (Technical Analysis, Public Participation), Using the Plan, Public Participation*

### II. Executive Summary

*Overview, Key Themes of the Plan, Key Technical Findings, Policy Foundations, Implementation*

### III. Plan Elements

#### 1. Background, Context, Trends & Growth Framework

*Regional context, Planning area boundaries, Demographics, Market trends, Growth framework and development projections, Application of Characteristics*

#### 2. Parks and Open Space

*Parkland definitions, Descriptions and inventory of parks and open space, Existing conditions analysis.*

**G1. A community knowledgeable of the City's parks and open space system.** Grove City currently publishes information in a variety of forms about the parks system for its residents. As the system expands, it will continue to be important to keep the public informed of the variety of parks available in the city and the recreational opportunities available in them.

**O1. Promote public open space within the community and make the community aware of current parks, their sizes and components.** In order to ensure that the parks are being utilized to their fullest, it will be important for the Parks and Recreation Department to continue to educate the community on what is available in the parks system. Keeping the public informed through a variety of tools will increase the chances of more residents having access to the information.

**A1. Continue to publish seasonal newsletters about the parks system**

**A2. Keep the website updated with park information**

**A3. Provide the community with up-to-date maps and descriptions of parks**

**A4. Adopt Code revisions for park definitions, such as Greenway, Community Park, Neighborhood Park, and Pocket Park**

**A5. Update the rules and regulations for public parks, outlined in Chapter 903 of the Grove City Code of Ordinances.**

**G2. A park system offering the community a variety of park and open space options.** A successful park system has something for everyone. Grove City's parks are very popular and offer residents a great variety of recreational opportunities. As the city grows, it will be very important for the department to continue to develop parks for all potential users and facilities for a variety of activities.

**O2. Make all parks welcoming and accessible for all levels of users.** Having parks usable for all levels of users will ensure that the parks are utilized to their full potential. Parks should be welcoming for children and adults of all ages and physical abilities, creating spaces people want to spend time in.

**A6. Provide clean restroom facilities in the parks when feasible**

**A7. Provide park features usable for citizens of all abilities in every park.**

- O3. Pursue and encourage joint uses with schools.** The Parks and Recreation department currently holds an agreement with the South-Western City School district to utilize select ball fields for city use. In the future, the city should consider expanding the facilities shared to offer more opportunities for residents.
- A7. Maintain a working relationship with schools for the use of select ball fields.**
  - A8. Draft a formal agreement for the utilization of the currently rented South-Western City School facilities / building use.**
  - A9. Explore the possibility of using school facilities for a wider variety of recreation and educational offerings.**
- O4. Facilities should be able to support multiple activities.** Grove City is growing quickly and as the population expands it will be important to have facilities that can accommodate a variety of activities to offer the growing population. Throughout the public input process, the public voiced their strong desire to have a public recreation center to house the growing recreational demands of the community.
- A10. Create a public recreation center in Grove City**
- O5. Create areas in the parks system for peaceful, passive, non active recreation.**
- A11. Create areas in all new parks with no designated programming, for passive, non active recreation.**
  - A12. Target areas for passive recreation in existing parks and city owned property**
- O6. Create parks appropriate for the population they serve, while keeping in mind the greater parks system.** While it is important to view the park system at a macro level to ensure that the community is served properly, it is also important to target each park individually and examine specific improvements for each park. By examining the information at the neighborhood – level, specific recommendations can be made about each park to better serve the users of the park.
- A13. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EACH PARK (subject to change)**

### **3. Natural Resources and Management**

*Inventory of natural resources, Habitat and nature education, Existing conditions analysis, Stream protection policy analysis, Public and private pond design.*

- G1. The protection of the City's natural resources.** Grove City has many unique natural resources. As the city grows, it is important that these resources are protected and that future development is conducted in a sustainable manner. Developing parks and following policies mindful of environmental stewardship will aid in the protection of our resources and ensure that they will be protected for future generations.
- O1. Follow the principles outlined in the Central Ohio Green Pact through the sustainable development of parks.** The Central Ohio Green Pact is a document signed by local governments (including Grove City) and organizations pledging to follow 10 principles to set an example for their jurisdictions on how to grow greener.

Many of the City's long-term environmental goals can be founded in the principles outlined in the Pact, including creating walkable / bikeable communities, protecting our natural resources, and using environmentally-friendly products.

**A1. Use sustainable materials and practices in park development when feasible to do so.**

**A2. Encourage recycling by placing recycling containers in convenient locations in all parks and along public trails.**

**O2. Preserve natural resources on land to be developed.** Natural resources can be found throughout the city, not just in city-owned parkland. By reviewing our existing policies aimed to protect natural resources and comparing them to that of other cities', we can ensure that our policies are as effective as possible in protecting our natural resources.

**A3. Stream protection policy review findings / revisions.**

**A4. Public and private pond design review findings / revisions.**

**A5. Tree preservation policy review findings / revisions**

**A6. Adopt Code revisions for natural resource definitions, such as wetlands and bioretention area.**

**G2. A community aware of the natural resources found in and around the City.** The protection of natural resources and the environment starts with awareness and education. By providing educational opportunities in the parks, the community will have the opportunity to learn more about the unique environment found in Central Ohio as well as have an additional opportunity to interact with the city's park system.

**O3. Provide the community with natural resource education opportunities.** Educational opportunities can come in a variety of forms, particularly in terms of environmental education. Having learning opportunities catering to multiple learning styles will ensure that everyone has the opportunity to learn in their own manner.

**A6. Provide educational links / facts on the City's website**

**A7. Provide naturalists in parks, where applicable**

**A8. Create handouts and signage to place in parks explaining educational opportunities**

**A9. Install and promote community gardens as educational opportunities**

#### **4. Trails and Connectivity**

*Trail descriptions/definitions, Inventory and rating of trail and bike routes, Park connectivity / existing conditions analysis, Trail safety, Impact on adjacent property values, Regional context, Design standards for trails, Trail map(existing and proposed), funding/grant opportunities.*

**G1. A network of trails providing residents with connectivity to important elements throughout the community and surrounding region.** Residents appreciate the small town atmosphere of Grove City and the variety of entertainment and recreational opportunities available in the city and in the greater Columbus region. Expanding the inter-city trail network and connecting Grove City's network to the regional network will allow residents to safely travel to destinations both in Grove City as well as the central Ohio area.

- O1. Create a dynamic system that integrates easily into the surrounding regional systems.** Central Ohio is home to a great variety of regional parks and trails. Making connections to the regional trail network will give residents more opportunities to travel to these destinations in a non-motorized manner and experience the recreational opportunities offered through a regional trail network.
- A1. Connect to the Scioto River trail**
  - A2. Connect to the Darby Creek trail system**
  - A3. Maintain dialogue between other local trail agencies such as MORPC, City of Columbus Recreation and Parks, Franklin County Metro Parks, ODNR, ODOT and the Central Ohio Greenways Committee.**
- O2. Strengthen inter-neighborhood connectivity and connect parks through the city's trail network.** The Parks and Recreation Department strives to provide safe access to parks for all residents. The city's trail network is steadily growing and many of Grove City's parks contain trails or are currently connected to the trail network; however there is still room to grow. The variety of parks and neighborhoods developed in the city over time will require a unique blend of trails to provide non-motorized transportation options to all residents.
- A4. Adopt a complete streets policy and standards**
  - A5. Adopt Code revisions for bikeway definitions**
  - A6. Connect all parks with the trail network**
- G2. A community knowledgeable of the City's trail network.** As the city's trail network expands, it will be important to keep the community informed of where the trails currently exist, where they are growing, and how they can help in future trail planning. It is also important that the trails are used properly to ensure that the community feels safe using the expanded network.
- O3. Keep the public informed and involved in the trail planning process.** Keeping the public involved in the trail planning process will be key to the success of the trail network's expansion. Allowing the public to give input will give them a feeling of ownership in the network and will likely improve the utilization of the trails.
- A7. Keep the trails portion of the city website and other electronic and social media updated with news and public input options**
  - A8. Have the Grove City Trails Map available for distribution at City Hall and in select parks**
  - A9. Involve the Park Board and Planning Commission in the review of trails**
  - A10. Initiate an "Adopt a Trail" program allowing citizens or organizations to get involved in the trail network.**
- O4. Provide bicycle and trail safety education opportunities.** As the trail network expands, it will be important to provide educational opportunities for residents utilizing the trails. Safe riding habits will help the community feel more confident in the trails and will ensure that the trails are used properly.
- A11. Offer classes for bicycle safety**
  - A12. Install signage along trails with safety tips**

## 5. Recreation

*History of recreation, Generalities of recreation, Existing conditions analysis, Administration*

- G1. A Parks and Recreation department engaged in partnerships with agencies throughout the community to ensure a variety of recreational and leisure opportunities are available for residents.** There are a number of local and regional agencies that have been involved in programs for the Parks and Recreation Department and provide their own unique recreational opportunities utilized by Grove City citizens. Keeping these agencies and their impact on the parks and recreation system in mind will help the city ensure that it is meeting the desires of the community.
- O1. Encourage local businesses to donate services and/or provide sponsorships.** Getting businesses involved in recreational programs will not only help the city provide more recreational opportunities to residents, but will also help the businesses establish themselves in the community and potentially attract new customers.
- A1. Prepare brochures or explanatory handouts for distribution to local businesses explaining the opportunities to donate services or provide sponsorships**
- O2. Remain aware of other recreational offerings provided by other agencies and continue to partner with other associations to provide a greater variety of recreational opportunities to residents.** Many agencies in the central Ohio area provide recreational opportunities in which Grove City residents participate. Going forward, it will be important to coordinate our actions with these agencies to ensure that the community's recreational demands are met.
- A2. Partner with associations including the YMCA, Southwest Franklin County Historical Society, and South-Western City School District to provide programming for residents.**
- A3. Keep in contact with agencies providing additional recreational opportunities, including Grove City Kids Association, Upward, Franklin County Metro Parks, and other recreation-based businesses to ensure that programs do not overlap and that the community's recreational desires are met.**
- G2. A community with a wide variety of recreational opportunities available.** As the city grows, it will be very important to provide the greatest variety of recreational opportunities possible. Recreational offerings should be available for all residents in the city, regardless of age, income, or physical ability.
- O3. Continue to provide recreation and educational opportunities for an aging population.** The median age of Grove City residents is expected to increase in the coming years. In preparation for this, the city should be prepared with a variety of recreational and educational opportunities for an older population.
- A4. Continue to offer a variety of courses for seniors**

- O4. Provide a greater variety of classes for adults.** The city currently offers a variety of programs and recreational opportunities for adults; however the public stated during the public input phase of the plan that they wanted to see a greater variety of courses for adults.
- A5. Provide nature based programs, such as outdoor photography, gardening, and bird watching.**
  - A6. Create more adult recreational programs, such as general fitness programs and adult sports.**
  - A7. Expand outdoor recreation offerings in all seasons, particularly winter sports**
  - A8. Develop a variety of professional development courses for adults (writing, public speaking, etc)**
- O5. Provide more recreational opportunities for teens.** While the city currently offers many programs for teenagers, it will be important for the city to remain aware of current trends in recreation in which teenagers may wish to be involved. The city should also explore the possibility of offering more educational courses useful for teens.
- A9. Provide a greater variety of sports, such as lacrosse, volleyball, and wrestling for teenagers**
  - A10. Make select sports or recreational offerings for teenagers more informal**
  - A11. Provide more winter sports for teenagers**
  - A12. Provide educational opportunities for teenagers (ACT/SAT prep)**
- O6. Provide more opportunities for families to participate in programs together.** The city currently offers programs for young children in which parents also participate; however structured opportunities for families to participate together are limited.
- A13. Provide a variety of opportunities for families to participate in programs together such as “Family Fun Nights” and book or movie swaps.**
  - A14. Provide educational courses for families to attend together such as safety classes (children at home alone, etc) and classes on assisting aging parents**
- G3. Facilities available for a variety of formal and informal recreational opportunities.**
- O7. Provide facilities and classroom spaces that are able to accommodate a variety of programs to meet the needs and desires of the community.** Lack of space limits recreational opportunities the city is able to provide. Although the community has expressed a desire to have more programs available to them, it is often difficult to provide the opportunity due to lack of space. Furthermore, some of the facilities currently housing city programs are not ADA complaint, creating barriers for some to participate in programs.
- A15. Analyze existing facilities and their utilization to determine the possibility of additional course offerings in existing facilities.**

- A16. Design new park facilities to be fully ADA complaint.
- A17. Create a public recreation center in Grove City

## 6. Impact of Parks and Open Space on Economic Development

### G1. Grove City benefits economically from parks, recreation, and open space amenities.

#### O1. Demonstrate a positive return on major park investment

- A1. Prepare a report (annually or every three years) that assesses the short-term and long-term fiscal returns on park investment through local changes in rents and property values.
- A2. Use community opinion surveys to assess the value Grove City residents attribute to various park and recreation amenities. Could involve surveys of real estate professionals and property owners to determine their perceptions about the impact specific parks or types of amenities have on property values.

#### O2. Review existing recreation development fees to determine if rates are appropriate and make necessary changes as needed to ensure that the park system will properly serve the growing population.

- A3. Create a separate Parkland Acquisition fund, for the sole purpose of acquiring land for parks.
- A4. Create a new Trail Development fund, delineating funds exclusively for trails.

#### O2. Identify and secure land for park creation, before adjacent land is developed in order to maximize the value of park investment.

- A5. Purchase park land in advance of development and use development fees collected in the future to pay for that park land.

## 7. Land Acquisition & Parkland Development

*Defining and differentiating between land acquisition and parkland development, Existing policy analysis, Review criteria, Land acquisition process, Sustainability*

### G1. Parkland is acquired and developed to meet the needs and desires of the growing community. As the city grows, it will be important for the city to be proactive in parkland acquisition and development to serve the growing needs of the community.

#### O1. Provide adequate amenities in parks to serve the community. Setting new standards for the development of parks will allow the city to provide more amenities sought by park-goers in new parks

- A1. **“Brand the parks” by creating standards for signage, lighting and site furnishings**
  - A2. **Draft and adopt policy for utility extension to parks (when deemed necessary / appropriate)**
- O2. Provide more opportunities for review and collaboration regarding land acquisition and development.** Many of the parks in Grove City’s park system are on land that was essentially unusable by developers and were donated to the city for parkland. Because of this, many of our parks are located in areas not easily accessible by many residents in the neighborhood the park serves. Creating a stricter review process and review standards will ensure that parks are developed where and how the city feels most appropriate for residents.
- A3. **Develop a review process between Development and Parks and Recreation staff to evaluate developer- granted land**
  - A4. **Involve Park Board and Planning Commission in review of dedicated land**
  - A5. **Adopt Code revisions to require / create stricter standards and implement review criteria for land dedication**
- O3. Encourage residents to donate property for open space uses throughout the community.** In addition to property deeded to the city through the development process, the city must also be aware of the possibility of land being gifted to the city for the creation or expansion of a park.
- A6. **Prepare brochures or explanatory handouts for distribution to property owners explaining the benefits of donating property for parks**

## **8. Organizational Analysis**

*History of parks and recreation department, organizational structure, Roles and responsibilities, Staff levels and training*

- G1. A Parks and Recreation Department that grows with the community.** A growing community will require a growing park system. In order to properly serve the community, it will be important to have a Parks and Recreation Department that grows with the park system.
- O1. Adequate staffing levels should be maintained for all departmental functions including administrative staff, program instructors, and parkland maintenance staff.**
    - A1. **Pursue additional volunteering opportunities for youth and elderly programs**
- G2. A Parks and Recreation Department that strives to provide the best possible service to the public.** Keeping informed of trends in parks and recreation will be important to ensure that the city is offering the best services possible to its residents.
- O2. Necessary training should be provided for department staff.**

- A2. Provide all levels of staff with necessary training to complete their jobs to the best of their ability.
- O3. A schedule of park maintenance should be outlined, prioritizing parks and trails for maintenance.
  - A3. Adopt policy on trail and park maintenance (plowing, clearing of debris, painting, equipment replacement, etc)
- G3. **The creation of a Grove City Parks Foundation.** Park foundations are organizations created to support the area's Parks and Recreation Department. Through fund raisers and donations, park foundations are able to offer additional support for city parks and programs.
  - O4. Encourage and provide support to community members interested in establishing a Grove City parks foundation.
    - A4. Create a park foundation portion of the website, explaining the benefits of a park foundation

**9. Goals, Objectives and Implementation Plan**

*Outline of all Goals, Objectives, and Actions; timeline for implementation / prioritization of actions with responsible parties targeted*

**GOAL** – A broad policy statement expressing a desired outcome in simple terms.

**OBJECTIVE** – A refinement of the goal necessary to give more detailed policy direction to strategies to implement the goal.

**ACTION** – A detailed action step, program, project, or policy necessary to initiate and complete an objective.