



CHAPTER 5 OUTLINE

1. **History of Recreation**
2. **Recreational Programs**
3. **Key Partnerships and Collaboration**
 - a. Public Communication
4. **Facilities**
 - a. Potential Recreation Space
5. **Administration**
 - a. Continuous Improvement
6. **Goals, Objectives and Actions**

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INTRODUCTION

The current economic climate, coupled with the predicted growth rate for Grove City presents the Grove City Parks and Recreation Department with a challenge to provide ample facility space and valuable programs for all Grove City residents.

OVERVIEW

The Grove City Parks and Recreation Department has set forth goals that will not only maintain the level of recreational service currently provided, but also guide the development of recreational programs based on residents' needs and desires. The following three goals are identified in this chapter:

1. **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**

The procurement of current partnerships and the development of new local and regional partnerships includes encouraging local business to donate their time and service, while coordinating efforts with partners to ensure recreational demands while avoiding overlap.
2. **A community with a wide variety of recreational opportunities available**

The Parks and Recreation Department currently provides services to all ages, incomes and physical abilities. The department aims to continue providing this range of service, but also offer the desired amount and variety of these programs.

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3. Facilities available for a variety of formal and informal recreational opportunities

In order to provide and grow these programs— the proper amount of recreational space needs to be found. The department is prepared to analyze existing facility space to determine how to best utilize such space as well as generate creative solutions to create new facilities that are designed with the capacity to serve the unique maturation of Grove City.

HISTORY OF RECREATION

Since 1973, the Grove City Parks and Recreation Department has been devoted to making Grove City a better place to live and raise a family. During its early years, the Parks and Recreation Department provided programs and activities that included softball and baseball leagues, tennis tournaments, hayrides, trips, fireworks, an arts and crafts exhibition, balloon launch, road race and dog show. Within its first couple of years of operation, the department served approximately 6,000 participants annually with the intention to provide recreational activities, opportunities and facilities for the community. Though updated to meet the needs and desires of today's residents, the department's primary objective remains to provide a variety of parks and recreation services and opportunities to the community. Today's department is committed to providing safe and enjoyable environments for its parks and open spaces, plus innovative and cost-effective programs that plan for the growth and diversity of current and future generations of Grove City.

The department currently maintains 18 parks and one retention area to be developed as a park for a total of 260 acres of public parkland. In addition to the acres of parkland located throughout the city, the department also manages a variety of recreational facilities including: an outdoor water park, herb garden, a senior center, renovated barn used for programming and a skate park.

The Parks and Recreation Department operates effectively with community partners and residents to ensure the best recreational experience is provided. The success of the department is reflected in its 2006 accreditation by The Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA). The Grove City Parks and Recreation Department was just the fifth department in Ohio to earn this status.

"Public park and playground use has increased 30 percent by families with children during the current period of economic difficulty"
- National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA)

More than half of all of Grove City and Jackson Township residents participated in a recreation service hosted by the Parks and Recreation Department in the year 2010.

Recreation Participation in 2010

| Program | Participants |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Preschool | 1,250 |
| P.A.R.K. | 1,773 |
| Youth Sports | 2,121 |
| Adult Sports | 1,992 |
| Evans Center Memberships | 1,249 |

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PUBLIC INPUT PROCESS

Through the public input process, residents voiced their desire to continue to expand the programs offered including more educational opportunities within the parks, making more sport leagues available for children and adults of all ages, and various other program ideas.

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Grove City Parks and Recreation Department provides recreation services to residents and non-residents for reasonable fees. The department offers more than 700 activities and programs, taught by more than 65 skilled instructors each year. In fact, more than half of all of Grove City and Jackson Township residents participated in a recreation service hosted by the Parks and Recreation Department in 2010. The combination of a dedicated department and a parks system with many amenities allows residents to participate in a variety of active and passive recreation.

The department offers a variety of programs year round and strives to maintain or increase the variety and amount of opportunities in the future. The following analysis categorizes recreation programs by age and examines the different types of classes offered, with a detailed look at some of the most popular programs offered to specific age groups.

YOUTH

Grove City offers many programs to children ages two to 12 such as gymnastics, dance, arts and holiday parties. The city is progressive in many of its program and facility offerings such as the Skate Park and classes on gardening and living green.

Preschool

Toddlers to six-year-olds may participate in variety of programs that include arts and crafts and structured play groups. The most popular programs for the preschool-age children are currently gymnastics and other early childhood development activities. Preschool activities teach young children numerous skills in art, music, science and physical and social situations to prepare them for grade-school activities. These programs also offer a launching point to prepare children for the more developed activities that are offered to the older children who fall under the youth category. Several of the programs are:

Gymnastics

The Parks and Recreation Department offers a Tumble Bear series of gymnastics skills for a variety of ages and abilities: Bear Cubs (age 2), Pandas (ages 3-4), Grizzlies (ages 5-7) and Koalas (ages 8-10). These gymnastic classes teach the major components of physical fitness in a high-energy atmosphere by developing skills in climbing, jumping and flipping in order to eventually use the vault, trampoline and beams for the more advanced students.

RecSchool

The Parks and Recreation Department offers a child-centered early childhood program for pre-kindergarten children ages three years and older. RecSchool is committed to fostering each child's competence, early social skills, independence, creativity and love of learning by offering numerous art, literacy, music, science, physical and social experiences.



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JumpBunch

The Parks and Recreation Department partners with JumpBunch to offer a series of fitness classes for young children to develop agility, coordination, self-confidence and a healthy lifestyle. Children have a chance to experience a different sport during each season.

Explorer's Club

A variety of open-ended materials and art activities are explored by two-year-olds and their parents in a classroom designed just for young children. Each class ends with circle time, singing and a book.

Youth

Children in kindergarten to fourth grade may participate in the before- and after-school Programmed After-School Recreation for Kids (P.A.R.K.) childcare programs as well as Summer P.A.R.K. These programs provide children with a structured but flexible learning and recreational environment by offering planned cooperative games, fitness, indoor and outdoor activities, free art, special interest activities and free-choice activities. Several day camps are also offered during the summer.

A wide range of programs are offered for children, including Skateboarding Camp (ages 6-11), Young Artist Art Camp (ages 8-12) and Kids in the Kitchen (ages 6-9). The most popular programs for the grade school aged youth are baseball, basketball and volleyball, but unique programs such as youth fencing, golf lessons and kite making and flying are also available. Below is a more detailed look at some popular youth programs:

Young Artist Camp

This program nurtures a love of art and encourages individual expression by exploring a variety of mediums and techniques including drawing, painting, sculpting, print making and creating artwork from recycled and natural resources.

Youth Volleyball

This volleyball league for youth in grades four to 12 is available for the following age divisions: junior (grades 4-5), intermediate (grade 6), middle (grades 7-8) and senior (grades 9-12).

Youth Fencing

This sword fighting class combines a great mental workout with physical fitness. All fencing equipment is provided by the instructor.

Youth Baseball Program

The Grove City Parks and Recreation Department offers a recreational baseball program for children ages five to 18. This program teaches basic skills, sportsmanship and teamwork.



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Like anywhere, Grove City youth have unique recreational preferences. However, a popular trend is community programs that capture the creativity of young minds and structure it with “real life” applicability. Other central Ohio communities do this through programs such as Lego building clubs, digital art, website and video game design, robotic science, garden and pond science, nature tours and adventures, foreign language classes, cartooning and field trips. Grove City does not currently offer these exact programs, but should explore the possibility of offering more educational-based programs that fit the needs and desires of residents of Grove City.

Teenagers

Teens are often the hardest population to serve since they are usually involved in recreational opportunities through school. However, Grove City offers several programs for teens. For example, the Volunteer Involvement Program (V.I.P.) is available to teens in grades seven to 12 who want to volunteer their time while gaining service hours and helping others. Participants in the V.I.P. program often assist at City functions, but are also involved with service opportunities throughout the community.

Comparable cities offer classes on manners to prepare young adults for interaction with peers and professionals.

While the city currently offers many programs for teenagers, it will be important to remain cognizant of current trends in recreation. The Parks and Recreation Department intends to continually communicate with area teens to identify the types of opportunities they would utilize.

Recently, the Grove City Parks and Recreation Department cooperated with community groups such as South-Western City Schools, the Grove City Rotary Interact Club, Grove City Family Dentistry, Crosslink Church and the YMCA to establish the Young Adult Action Committee (Y.A.A.C.). The group is committed to helping identify activities and events for all teens and pre-teens in the area. One of the group’s initiatives is to identify and provide a central place for teenagers, especially those who are not involved in traditional school activities like band or athletics. The Parks and Recreation Department is committed to creating a parks system that attracts teens to participate in recreational opportunities that are tailored to their needs and desires.



Adults

Grove City currently offers more than 100 classes each season for adults, including a balanced mix of informal and formal activities in the areas of sports and fitness, gardening, arts, cooking, book discussions and more. Some of the most popular programs offered to adults are the yoga, euchre and a rain barrel classes.

Adult Cornhole

The Grove City Parks and Recreation Department partners with Tristano’s Pizza to offer summer and fall adult cornhole leagues. The league includes playoffs, and provides a competitive atmosphere for adults, in a passive and informal setting.

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Yoga Program

Grove City offers a variety of yoga classes including hatha, ashtanga and deep relaxation. Several new classes were even offered outdoors in Gantz and Fryer parks. These yoga classes relax the body, calm the mind and ease away tension and stress. Some of the classes are also designed to serve as strength and fitness training. The classes are led by certified instructors in yoga therapy.

Zumba

Zumba is a latin-inspired, dance-fitness class that incorporates international music and dance. This workout aims to strengthen and tone a variety of muscle areas through cardio-based dance movements.

Through the public input process of this plan, requests for additional adult programs were submitted for a variety of activities ranging from photography to horseback riding. Many other central Ohio communities offer a variety of personal and professional development courses such as teaching basic skills in social networking, Photoshop, and using digital cameras. Other offerings range from professional/career workshops, public speaking, grammar and vocabulary enhancement, GRE courses and effective writing/research classes.

Though the Parks and Recreation Department does not offer these courses, similar programs are offered at the South-Western Career Academy. Through a partnership with the Career Academy, professional development courses could be offered through the city.

Other central Ohio cities offer adult classes in the areas of home and garden, and health and wellness. Some of these programs include: home improvement series, backyard bird watching clinics (also expressed in the public input), prenatal yoga, therapeutic recreation, self defense for women and adult dating classes. Also, many cities partner with local universities and institutions to offer lectures on topics such as: contemporary world issues and lifelong learning programs, star gazing, dog obedience, antique collecting and retirement planning.

During the public input portion of the plan, many residents voiced a desire to have an adult aquatic facility. While the Big Splash offers a six-lane lap pool, residents stated they wanted a separate swimming facility. Having an additional swimming facility would not only provide an additional opportunity for recreation, it would allow the city to offer additional programs and classes related to swimming and water safety.

Seniors (55+)

The Parks and Recreation Department currently offers Grove City seniors a wide variety of recreational opportunities and other services. Residents who are at least 55 years old are able to join the Evans Center for \$5 a year. The Evans Center is a centrally located facility in Windsor Park that provides easy access to a wide variety of recreational opportunities. Members may participate in an array of arts and crafts activities, card games, support groups and health check-ups. A variety of physical activities such as chair volleyball, senior golf leagues and bowling are also made available through the

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A photography class would be nice, especially for photographing the outdoors.

- Planning Area E Resident

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Center. The most popular senior activities are Supper Club, Lunch Bunch, euchre and local trips that involve traveling by mini-bus. Below are brief descriptions of these popular programs:

Card Games

Various card games are held at the Evans Center on a daily or weekly basis. There are also special events such as the Summertime Fun Daytime Progressive Euchre Party where seniors get together for food, prizes and cards.

Lunch Bunch

The Lunch Bunch offers seniors the opportunity to travel to local restaurants without the hassle of driving. The city provides transportation to and from the restaurant, but participants pay for their own meals.

Supper Club

The Supper Club heads to different local restaurants twice a month for a variety of dining experiences. Door-to-door mini-bus transportation is provided and departs from the Evans Center, but individuals pay for their own meals.

Local Trips

The city offers seniors trips to local and regional destinations such as the Ohio State Fair Senior Day, and various shows at LaComedia Dinner Theater, in southwest Ohio. Also, mini-bus shopping trips are offered on a monthly basis to popular shopping destinations.

The Grove City Senior Transportation Services are accessible and efficient when compared to surrounding central Ohio communities in terms of costs and range of service. Evans Center members are eligible for van/mini-bus transportation to grocery stores, banks or medical appointments for the cost of \$2 per round trip. The buses, including two equipped with wheelchair lifts, provide non-driving members with transportation to and from the Evans Center for activities. These services are extended to residents of Grove City and Jackson Township for Grove City-area destinations.

The senior population is growing quickly and will require different types of recreational activities. The median age of Grove City residents is estimated to have increased by almost three years between the years 2000 and 2010. In 2010, approximately a quarter of all Grove City residents were 55 years old or older. This number is expected to increase in coming years.

Considering the projected increase in the senior population and the inherently different habits of future seniors of the baby boomer generation, the Parks and Recreation Department is conscientious of the need to provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities. In fact, many other central Ohio communities have begun to prepare for this change by offering a more expansive physical programs for their seniors. Some of these types of programs that the growing senior population of Grove City might enjoy are: fishing clubs, more expansive fitness classes, billiards clubs, table

ACCOMMODATING A GROWING SENIOR POPULATION

According to National Recreation and Parks Association, the number of Americans older than 65 is expected to reach 71.5 million by 2030. This projection represents double the number of senior citizens recorded in 2000.

The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging states that only 46 percent of American communities have begun to address the needs of the rapidly increasing aging population.

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tennis, bocce, shuffleboard, backyard bird watching workshops, a book of the month club, woodcarving classes, cookouts, aquatic classes and walking clubs.

Families

While Grove City offers programs for young children in which parents can participate, the Parks and Recreation Department plans to provide a greater variety of recreational and educational opportunities for families to attend together in the future. For example, Grove City residents would likely enjoy community book swaps, movie exchange nights and classes on child safety when left home alone.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Grove City has a rich history in providing community events enjoyed by residents young and old. Some of these events include the Amazing “Grove City” Race, Blast at Beulah Independence Day Celebration, Mud Volleyball Tournament, Homecoming Celebration, Community Environmental Day, Family Fishing Day and the Summer Sizzle Concert Series. These events are carefully planned and organized through the Parks and Recreation Department and Community Relations Office. Through strong partnerships with other city departments, non-profit organizations and businesses, residents of Grove City are able to enjoy these events at little or no cost. As the city’s population continues to grow, the Parks and Recreation Department will strive to offer more community events on a city-wide level.

Descriptions of some of the community events currently provided by the Parks and Recreation Department are as follows:

The Encampment

History comes to life each April at Grove City’s Encampment. Children and history buffs alike enjoy speaking with re-enactors who represent life between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Participants immerse themselves in historical experiences such as throwing a tomahawk, creating period crafts, watching soldiers shoot a canon and more. Additionally, the Ohio Village Muffins baseball team plays in period uniforms. A live outdoor concert kicks off the event, and an outdoor church service concludes it. This educational event is presented by the City of Grove City and the Southwest Franklin County Historical Society.

This three-day event attracts more than 100 participants and roughly 1,000 to 2,000 residents (weather dependent). Many participants will even camp at Century Village through the weekend.

Mayor’s Cup Golf Outing

The city works with many community sponsors and donors for Grove City’s annual Mayor’s Cup Golf Outing. The outing is held at Oakhurst Country Club in May, and all proceeds benefit the local non-profit LifeCare Alliance. Golfers can sign up by team or individually to be assigned a team. This event typically raises \$6,000 to \$10,000 for LifeCare Alliance’s Meals-on-Wheels program.



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Summer Sizzle Concert Series

The Summer Sizzle Concert Series takes place Friday and Saturday evenings June through August. Concerts are free of charge and are held at the Town Center Plaza in historic downtown Grove City. In addition to great music, attendees enjoy free children's games on Family Fridays and up-close encounters with local and regional artists during Saturdays in the Grove. The city works with Grove City Tomorrow to host these 20 well-attended concerts.



Family Fishing Day

The city cooperates with Walmart to offer the opportunity to fish at Rotary Lake in Fryer Park the first weekend in June. Participants receive free worms and may borrow fishing poles at this family-friendly event. All ages and skill levels are welcome. A fishing license is not required, but there is a limit of one pole per person at this catch-and-release event.

K-9 Carnival

The city works with a variety of local rescue groups, veterinary offices and pet retailers to host this annual event for residents and their dogs at Fryer Park. Two temporary off-leash areas are created, one with access to swim in Rotary Lake. Pet care groups and rescue organizations set up tents to sell pet-themed merchandise as well as share health and adoption information.

Blast at Beulah

Grove City's annual Independence Day celebration at Beulah Park features one of central Ohio's finest fireworks displays, live music and plenty of activities for kids. Children's activities, including free bounce houses, are available. A special ceremony is held to honor active military personnel and veterans. This event typically attracts a crowd ranging from 6,000 to 15,000, depending on weather.



The Amazing Grove City Race

Teams of two to four people travel around the city, following clues and completing challenges at various city locales, similar to the popular television show. Tasks vary, providing opportunities for the brainy and brawny to shine.

Homecoming Celebration

The city hosts a celebration for Grove City High School alumni and their families in historic Town Center to kick off the annual alumni softball tournament. In addition to live entertainment, Grove City Tomorrow hosts a cornhole tournament and the local Rotary Club organizes a car exhibition. Homecoming Celebration has a large impact on the local economy thanks to crowds that range anywhere from 4,000 to 8,000 participants who travel from all over the country.

Mud Volleyball Tournament

The annual Mud Volleyball Tournament is held in August at Beulah Park and serves as a fundraiser for LifeCare Alliance's Meals-on-Wheels program. The Parks and Recreation Department typically raises between \$3,000 and 6,000 annually for the charity with this event.

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Grove City's Balloons & Tunes

The Grove City Parks and Recreation Department partners with Beulah Park for this unique hot air ballooning event in August. In addition to multiple lift-offs and glows, live entertainment, children's activities and vendors provide plenty to do for the 5,000 to 20,000+ guests it attracts annually.

Old-Time Harvest Day

Old-Time Harvest Day gives today's generation a look into the past. Demonstrations such as leather tooling, soap making, blacksmithing, butter churning and two-man sawing are presented throughout the day along with period-appropriate harp and dulcimer performances. Most activities are hands-on and appropriate for all ages. This event is presented by the Southwest Franklin County Historical Society City and the City of Grove City. Old-Time Harvest Day brings anywhere from 1,000 to 1,500 participants into town for this five- to six-hour event.

Winter Lights Christmas Celebration

This celebration kicks off the start of winter with a Christmas lights parade and the lighting of the official Grove City tree. Select roads in Town Center are closed during the event, allowing attendees to safely enjoy decorated store fronts and other decorations. Attendees have the opportunity to interact with live reindeer, view ice sculptures, take a horse-drawn carriage ride, listen to carolers and even meet Santa Claus. The city works with T.W.I.G. 184 to raise money for Nationwide Children's Hospital as well as the Grove City Food Pantry and Jackson Township Fire Department to collect nonperishable food, toy and monetary donations. This event typically attracts between 2,000 and 6,000 participants.

Fryer Flicks on the Hill

Select Thursdays in June through August, the Parks and Recreation department presents a free, family-friendly movie shown outside at Fryer Park. Patrons are encouraged to bring a blanket or lawn chair to enjoy the movie from the park's sledding hill.

Soggy Dog Swim

The weekend after the Big Splash closes for the season, the pool opens for a supervised afternoon of swimming strictly for dogs. Humans are admitted for free, and one pet is permitted per person. All breeds and sizes are welcome as long as the animal is spayed or neutered and sociable with people and other dogs. Proceeds benefit a local rescue shelter.



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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND SPECIAL POPULATIONS

The Grove City Parks and Recreation Department is committed to serving the whole community. All persons regardless of age, sex, race, color, national origin or religion are encouraged to participate. The goal of the department is to include individuals with special needs in existing programs based on their need and ability. Groups or individuals serving special populations are welcome to contact the department to make program arrangements.

The Parks and Recreation Department is also committed to designing and building new park facilities to be fully ADA compliant to ensure the best possible service to all individuals with disabilities.

ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATION IN THE PARKS

The Parks and Recreation Department currently oversees the operations of 19 parks, consisting of approximately 260 acres, providing residents a chance to experience a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities. Some of these recreational opportunities stem from the 11 baseball diamonds at Windsor Park, the basketball courts in neighborhood parks and the many playgrounds found throughout the city. A few of the most popular active recreation venues in the city are the Big Splash as well as Discovery Frontier playground, the sledding hill and Rotary Lake, all located in Fryer Park. Many opportunities for passive recreation can also be found in city parks, such as the wooded trails through Fryer and Henceroth parks and the Gardens at Gantz.

The maintenance and expansion of the city's parks system is vital to the success of recreational opportunities in Grove City. Facilities such as a dog park, disc golf course and ice skating rink were all requested from the public during the public input phase of the plan.

Certain amenities such as running water for permanent restroom facilities and drinking fountains would make parks more comfortable to residents when visiting the parks. Many parks are equipped with amenities for outdoor picnics such as grills, water fountains and pavilions with electrical outlets. Additional amenities that would enhance a park and engage residents are public art and water features, both of which were commonly suggested from the public during the planning process. While Gantz Park does offer public art in the Gardens at Gantz, the city should continue to explore creative ways to market its parks, highlight its unique history and engage residents. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 of this plan, where recommendations for installation of potential amenities for each park are discussed.

Another popular request from the public was a performance or concert stage. Grove City currently has a small stage at the Town Center Plaza that hosts the Summer Sizzle Concert Series. The space is somewhat small and fills quickly during public events. The installation of a larger performing space would serve more residents.

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KEY PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Grove City relies on effective partnerships to provide a quality parks system. Due to limited facility space, the city currently has formal and informal agreements with a variety of service providers within the community, including: South-Western City Schools (SWCS), Jackson Township, LifeCare Alliance, the Grove City Kids Association (GCKA), YMCA, Southwest Franklin County Historical Society, Southwest Ministerial Association/Grove City Food Pantry and Grove City Rotary.

These partnerships create collaborative opportunities for recreational programs, facility space and instructors, which enables Grove City to maximize existing resources, expand the offerings scope and eliminate service duplications. While the search for more facility space designated for recreation continues, the network of current partnerships must be sustained and expanded in order to provide the most enjoyable recreational experience for residents. This will be achieved by engaging in partnerships with agencies throughout the community to ensure the desired variety of recreational and leisure opportunities are available for residents.

A number of private and public organizations offer similar programs, but the Grove City Parks and Recreation Department strives to alleviate competing programs when possible. In most cases when similar classes are offered, the Parks and Recreation Department is not competing but rather offering recreational opportunities to the entire community. For example, several churches in the area offer Upward Sports basketball programs for youth. While the Parks and Recreation Department also offers basketball, both programs can easily co-exist because of the high volume of interested participants in the community. Without either program the community would not be completely served. Other organizations that offer recreational opportunities to residents include the Grove City Kids Association, the Grove City YMCA, Vaughn E. Hairston Southwest Community Center and the Franklin County Metro Parks.

The absence of a central community center puts more value on these local public and private partnerships to offer the adequate programming for the community.

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PUBLIC COMMUNICATION

Residents are currently kept informed of recreational opportunities through the city website, press releases to local newspapers and news stations, direct mail postcards, e-newsletters, social media outlets, the Source and traditional newsletters. Events and other local news are publicized on large entry signs at the entrances to the city from both I-270 (Broadway and Home Road) and I-71 (Stringtown Road and Marlane Drive). Grove City has recently started to utilize Twitter and Facebook. These outlets have allowed the city to reach a different demographic than more traditional communication methods. Additionally, these sites allow for a more conversational delivery of information. Word of mouth is a very important aspect of keeping the community informed. Many residents attend classes or events because they know someone who has participated in the past and was pleased with the experience.

FACILITIES

The Parks and Recreation Department strives to provide suitable indoor and outdoor space for a variety of recreational activities. Program facilities are located throughout the city, primarily in parks and in and around the Town Center.

The Parks and Recreation Department is dedicated to providing facilities and classroom spaces that are able to accommodate a variety of programs to meet the needs and desires of the community. In order to determine the possibility of providing additional courses in existing facilities, an analysis of the capacity and utilization of these facilities is necessary.

| Facility Name | Square Footage | Location | Use |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Fryer House | 1,132 | Fryer Park 3899 Orders Road | Program space for many youth programs |
| Gantz Farmhouse | 862 | Gantz Park 2255 Home Road | Home to the Gardens at Gantz volunteers and workshops for adults and children. |
| Gantz Barn | 3,709 | Gantz Park 2255 Home Road | Hosts a variety of youth programs including RecSchool and enrichment classes. |
| Evans Center | 12,649 | Windsor Park 4330 Dudley Ave. | Program space for 55+ classes and events |
| Park Annex | 2,021 | 4034 1/2 Broadway | Karate instruction, tap dance and other programs |
| Total | 20,373 | | |

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Space limitation can limit growth both in the amount and variety of recreational programs offered. Families are faced with an inconvenience when attempting to transport their children to and from recreational activities when it is not centrally located. Families are frequently forced to travel to two or three different locations, on two to three different nights, in order to satisfy the separate recreational needs for the children and parents. Instructors are also inconvenienced when required to transport their materials and equipment several times per week.

The Parks and Recreation Department is determined to provide more recreational opportunities for families to not only participate in together, but also to participate in opportunities at the same location or on the same nights. This effort to achieve coordinated growth requires the proper partnerships and a thorough analysis of existing and potential facility space.

Perhaps no partnership is more important than the one shared between the Grove City Parks and Recreation Department and the Grove City YMCA in Fryer Park. The YMCA helps alleviate some of the demand for more recreation space in the community.

Also serving area residents is the Vaughn E. Hairston Southwest Community Center YMCA located on First Avenue in Urbancrest. This YMCA offers an outdoor walking track, basketball courts, volleyball courts, strength and cardiovascular equipment, baseball and softball diamonds and special facilities such as a childcare/preschool room, art room, kiln room, kitchen and a library. This community center is also home to a community garden that is used by local residents. Similar to the Grove City YMCA located in Fryer Park, the Urbancrest YMCA provides important recreational opportunities for area residents.

The Grove City Parks and Recreation Department does not aim to compete with the YMCA, but as the population and size of Grove City continue to grow, more space may be needed to offer recreational opportunities to all residents of Grove City, regardless of age or income level.

Considering Grove City's current population, the amount of park space and recreational facilities is lower than comparable cities throughout central Ohio. With roughly 260 acres of park space, and approximately 22,000 total square feet of facilities—there is chance to identify and utilize existing space, as well as, discover ways to create new space for recreation use.

Community pools, both indoor and outdoor, are essential to host community events and community recreation. The Grove City Parks and Recreation Department currently operates one public swimming facility, the Big Splash. While the Big Splash offers a great recreational opportunity for families with young children, it does not offer facilities attractive for teenagers and young adults. Not only could an additional aquatics facility create recreational opportunities for a currently underserved population, it could also serve as an additional revenue source for the department.

FACILITY SPACE

"The problem of our department not possessing its own facilities is a situation that we hope to correct in the near future with the addition of a Community Recreation Center."

– 1974 Parks and Recreation Annual Report

Michael W. Buckingham,
Parks and Recreation Director

Even though the vision of a community recreation center has not been realized, the department has been successful in creating a variety of facility space to accommodate the growing recreational needs of the community.

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POTENTIAL RECREATIONAL SPACE

The Parks and Recreation Department intends to provide facilities and classroom space that accommodate a variety of programs to meet the recreational needs and desires of the community. The current programs are efficiently operated considering the amount of existing facility space that is available. However, more space will be required in the future to meet the demands of a growing community. Through a thorough analysis of existing space and a focused search for new space, the department intends to ensure an effective amount of facility space is provided in order to offer the appropriate number and variety of recreational programs and activities. To accomplish this goal, the Parks and Recreation Department aims to create a public community recreation center that can house multiple social, cultural, educational and recreational activities.

COMPARABLE FACILITY SPACE IN CENTRAL OHIO

The City of Groveport, which has a considerably smaller population, has a recreation center with 67,000 total square feet—substantially larger than all of Grove City's facilities combined.

Existing Space

Creating a new recreation center in the city does not necessarily mean that a new facility must be constructed. A variety of existing facilities exist that could provide either temporary or permanent recreational facility space.

The Kingston School, located on Kingston Avenue behind Park Street Intermediate, is one example of an existing facility that could be utilized as a facility for the Parks and Recreation Department. The facility offers more than 14,000 square feet of potential recreational space and could provide ample space for a variety of recreational or educational programs.

Another existing space being considered is the Grove City Recreational Center located behind Grove City High School on Hoover Road. This site currently offers residents who live within the South-Western City School District limits access to the site's gym, walking track, basketball court and sauna. Residents who live within SWCS district limits are not required to have children attending one of the district's schools.

Grove City is home to many large warehouses. A potential solution to a lack of facility space is to utilize a portion of these warehouses to provide a temporary facility for programs and recreational opportunities until a permanent facility is created.

New Space

During the public input process of this plan, 75 percent of those residents surveyed would likely use a community recreation center. While the approach to identify existing space needs to be aggressively pursued for budgetary and efficiency reasons, there are distinct advantages that come with building a new community recreation center that can serve multiple activities. With more than 60 unique comments generated about this topic during the public input process of this plan, the public voiced their strong desire to have a public recreation center to house the growing recreational demands of the community.

A public recreation center facility would provide the entire community a variety of services by housing the Parks and Recreation Department programs in one central location. This would not only improve the organizational efficiency of the Parks and Recreation Department, which will in turn improve services and expand the capacity

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for the department and its program to grow, but would also be more convenient for Grove City families.

Former Grovebrook Golf Course

The former Grovebrook Golf Course, located between Hoover Road and Interstate 71, was mentioned by many residents participating in the public input portion of the plan as an ideal location for a large park and potential location for a public recreation center. The property is more than 100 acres in size and offers scenic ponds, hills and an abundance of green space. The presence of two large ponds, streams and the fact that much of the property lies in the floodplain make much of this property undevelopable. Should the property be purchased for development, it is likely that much of it would remain as open space, likely dedicated to the city for parkland. Residents voiced a variety of desires for the park, aside from the potential location for the recreational center, including an off-leash dog area, fishing, playgrounds, shelter houses and natural green space with trails and the opportunity for hiking and passive play. Its location makes it accessible to many residents in the Meadow Grove and Quail Creek subdivisions, with the potential to service many more residents by tying into the city's trail network on the Holton Road Trail and the proposed Grant Run Trail.

ADMINISTRATION

The Grove City Parks and Recreation Department employs 18 full-time, 40 part-time and more than 100 seasonal staff members in order to provide residents with the recreational opportunities described in this chapter. The Source, the department's program and activity guide, is published both electronically and in hard copy form three times per year: April (spring/summer), August (fall) and December (winter). The current season's publication is made available electronically on the city's website. Each season, 14,000 copies of the Source are printed and distributed. More than 11,000 are mailed through the US postal service and the rest are available for pick-up at City Hall, the Jackson Township Administrative offices, Evans Center, Grove City Public Library, Grove City YMCA, Grove City Area Chamber of Commerce and Grove City Welcome Center and Museum, as well as a number of small businesses.

Continuous Improvement

The city is constantly monitoring its programs and looking for ways to grow and improve recreational offerings for residents. At the end of all programs, participants are asked to complete an evaluation of the program, describing their experiences. Public input is also always welcome and encouraged at Park Board meetings, which are held bimonthly. Additional public input is sought through hearings and focus groups on special projects or when new facilities are being considered. In order to improve public knowledge of parks and recreation, news and current events, the department should consider making the minutes and agendas of the Park Board meetings available online and in the newspaper to ensure that residents understand the issues and ideas being considered for the parks.

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POLICY FOUNDATION DEFINITIONS

Goal

A goal is a broad policy statement expressing a desired outcome in simple terms.

Objective

An objective is a refinement of the goal necessary to give more detailed policy direction to strategies to implement the goal.

Action

An action is a detailed action step, program, project, or policy necessary to initiate and complete an objective.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS FOR RECREATION

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

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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. Continue to actively participate in the Grove City Teen Initiative to create a Parks and Recreation system attractive to teen residents

O6. **Provide more opportunities for families to participate in programs together.**

The city currently offers programs for young children in which parents also participate, but structured opportunities for families to participate together are limited.

A10. Provide a variety of opportunities for families to participate in programs together such as "Family Fun Nights" and book or movie swaps

A11. Provide educational courses for families to attend together such as safety classes (children at home alone, etc) and classes on assisting aging parents

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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 compliant, creating barriers for some to participate in programs.

A12. Analyze existing facilities and their utilization to determine the possibility of additional course offerings in existing facilities.

A13. Design new park facilities to be fully ADA compliant

A14. Create a public recreation center in Grove City