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Vacant, Youth Member

Burlington Planning Commission

REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, June 10, 2014 - 6:30 P.M.
Conference Room #12, Ground Floor, City Hall, 149 Church Street

AGENDA

Note: times given are approximate unless otherwise noted.

I. Agenda

II. Public Forum - Time Certain: 6:35 pm

The Public Forum is an opportunity for any member of the public to address the Commission on any relevant issue.

III. Report of the Chair (5 min) – Yves Bradley, Chair

IV. Report of the Director (5 min) – David E. White, Director

V. Parks Master Plan (60 min)

The Commission will hear a presentation from Parks & Recreation Department staff on the new DRAFT city-wide planBTV-Parks Master Plan.

VI. Committee Reports (5 min)

VII. Commissioner Items (5 min)

VIII. Minutes/Communications (2 min)

The Commission will review communications and approved minutes from the May 13 & 27, 2014 meetings.

IX. Adjourn (8:00 p .m.)

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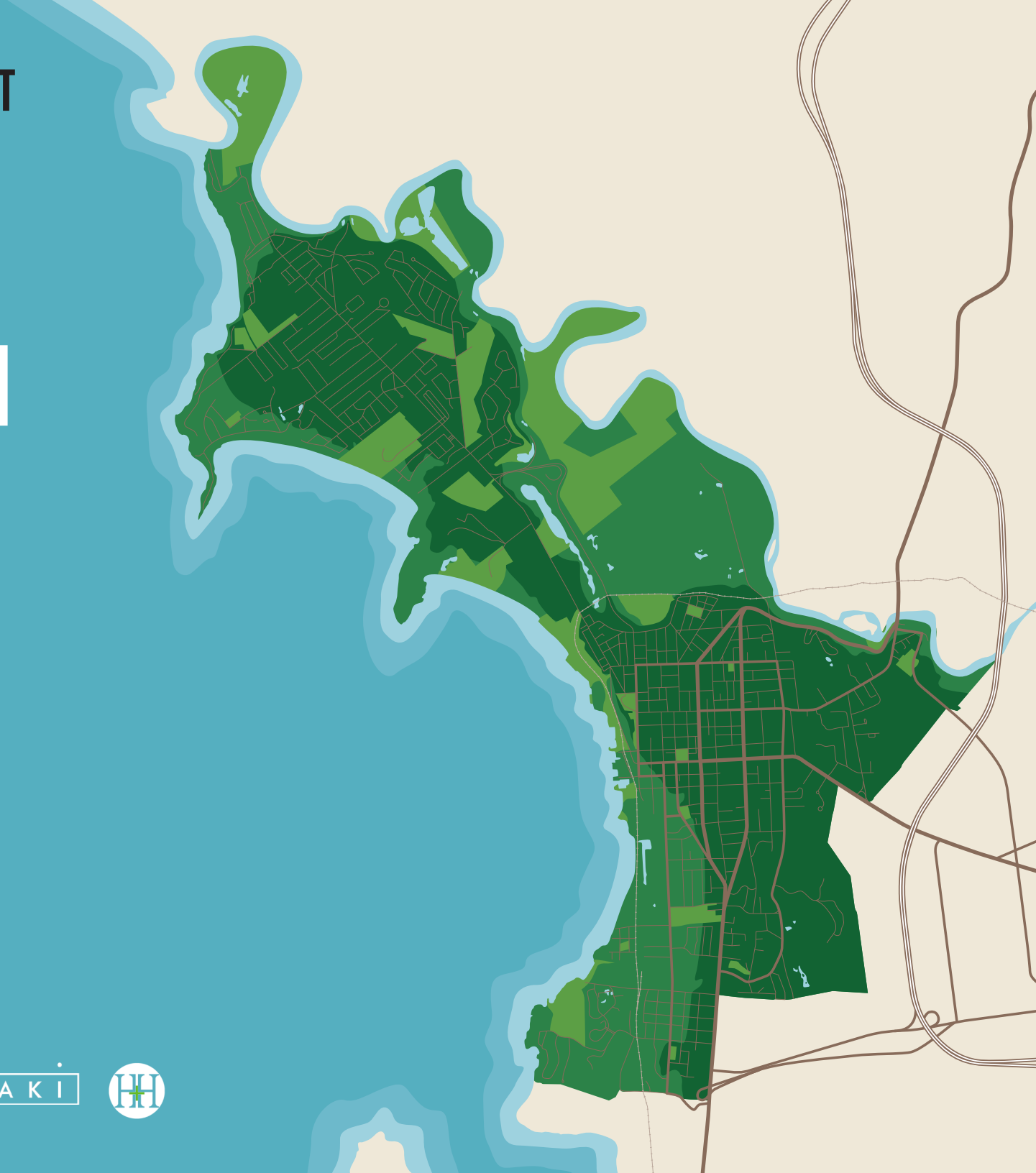
THE BURLINGTON VERMONT

PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN



MAY 2014

BURLINGTON
PARKS
RECREATION
WATERFRONT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE MASTER PLAN

38 A Framework For Action

42 Assessing The Park System

48 The BTV Community

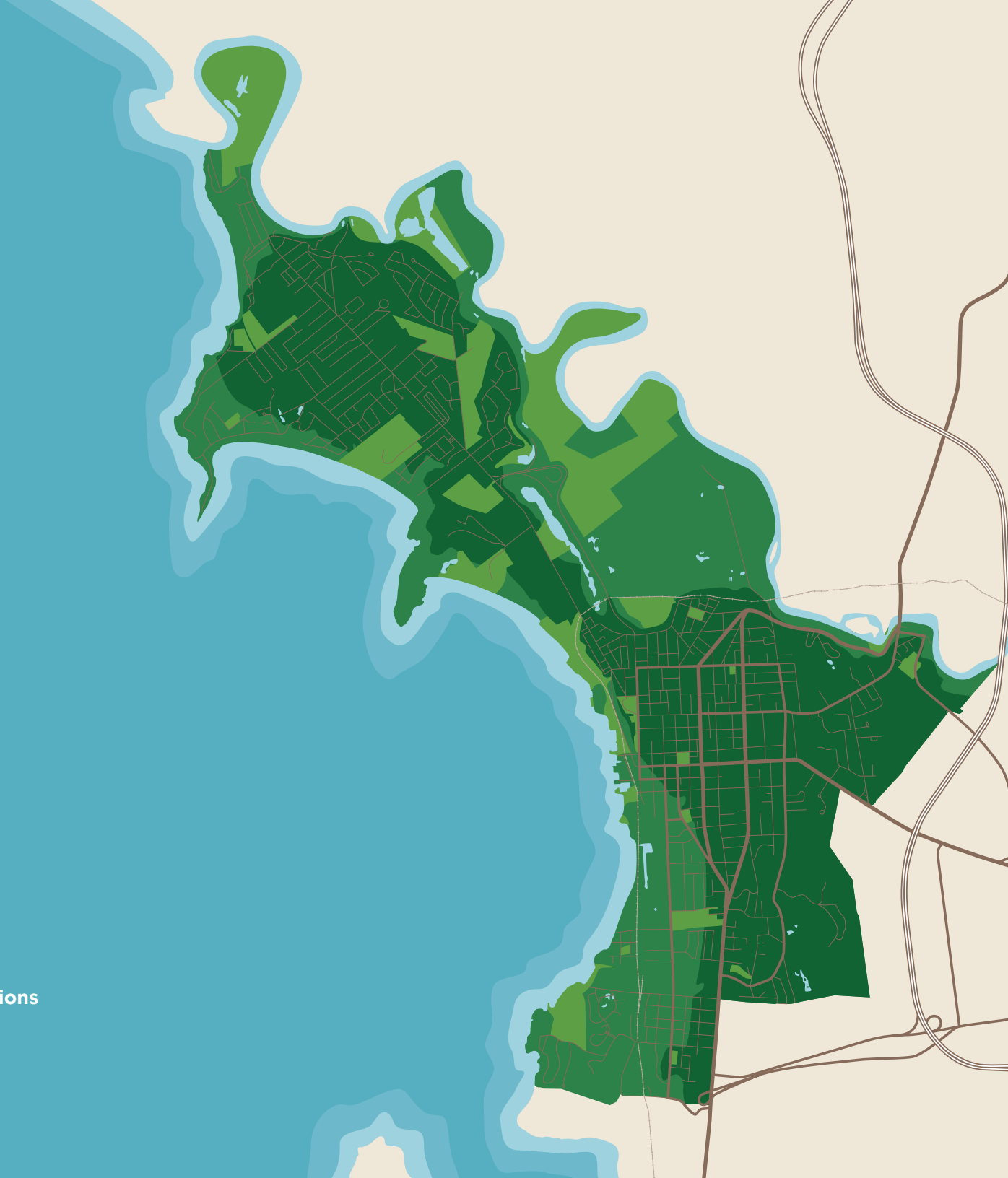
62 Demographic And Trend Report

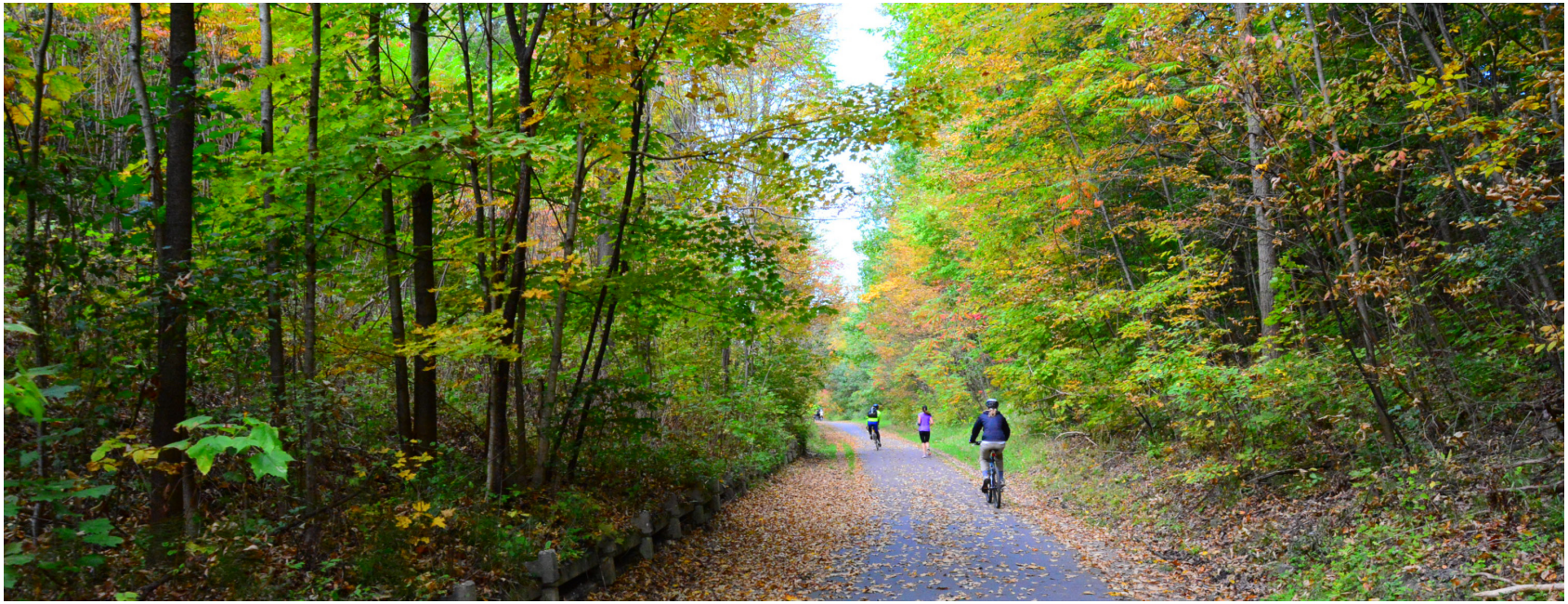
74 Recreation Program Assessment

96 Visioning Themes

106 Strategic Initiative Recommendations

TECHNICAL APPENDICES





WHY THIS PLAN NOW?

Fresh vision and collaborative approach

Burlington Vermont's diverse system of parks, trails, open spaces, and recreation spaces serve myriad roles for the city. Today, the waterfront parks serve as a source of pride for residents, the community gardens as a gathering space for new members of the community, and the urban wilds as a reminder of the city's commitment to sustainability and an environmental ethic. The 2014 Parks and Recreation Master Plan seeks to honor and enhance the role of Burlington's parks and recreation spaces within the city, and the region. An engaged, collaborative process ensured that community input influenced the ultimate vision and recommendations. The plan focuses on a set of five themes which are summarized in this document:

1. Meeting the needs of the community
2. Inclusive social spaces
3. Connected parks and neighborhoods
4. Programming and operations
5. Sustainability and stewardship

CONTEXT FOR THE PLAN

Burlington's Parks and Recreation Master Plan is well positioned to create a lasting impact on the city and the department. The plan has been undertaken in a moment of new leadership, recent planning achievements, and a strong potential for action and implementation.

The Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department is poised at a moment of change and transformation - seeking both to build on the park system's strong legacy and to create a fresh start that aligns with twenty first century goals and ambitions. With recent momentum around the Plan BTV master plan for downtown and the waterfront and a collective, community appreciation for the richness of Burlington's parks, the parks and recreation master plan attempts to create an achievable set of actions to guide the department for the next decades. The plan is intended to help the department efficiently maintain its assets, strive for sustainability, and set design aspirations to create better social spaces for Burlington's role as the urban heart of the state.

Key leadership positions within and in coordination with the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department have been recently filled by fresh voices. The plan takes advantage of this new perspective, aiming to create a unified voice for the multiple roles that parks fill in contemporary cities. At the same time, the plan coordinates with the many related activities going on in the city, from implementation of Plan BTV to the community engaged PIAP process to re-design of the waterfront bike path. The expansive role of parks in Burlington's urban environment is described on the next pages.

CULTURE

Regional Destination and Local Pride

As the state's most populated city, Burlington plays an important role as the urban and civic heart for the region. Its parks and recreation offerings reinforce this role through their physical attributes and programming. For residents and visitors, Burlington's parks are important social gathering spaces in the city, playing host to concerts on the waterfront, farmers' markets for downtown employees, and a means to access the city's generous waterfront for all who visit.

COMMUNITY

Diverse Community

Burlington's population grew nearly ten percent between 2000 and 2010. This growth was coupled with increasing racial diversity and projections for a growing senior population. At the same time, four educational institutions make their home within the city, enrolling 10,163 in 2000 and growing. This creates vitality and a core of young adults, but also puts pressure on quality of life in some neighborhoods. In the coming years, the parks and recreation system needs to evolve to changing trends, ensuring the system remains relevant to all, supporting families, seniors, and students alike, and creating inclusive spaces where all are welcome.

ECONOMY

A Wise Investment in Burlington's Future

A framework for a park system with a strong identity and enduring amenities provides a foundation for Burlington to catalyze new investment and foster long-term growth. Economists in the United States and abroad are recognizing the dollar value of urban open spaces and recreational amenities in terms of adjacent land values, tax revenues, health and recreation benefit . As the city reinvests in its open spaces, from City Hall Plaza to the waterfront bike path or marina, it is reinforcing its competitiveness and ability to continue to attract and retain a skilled workforce through a high quality of place.

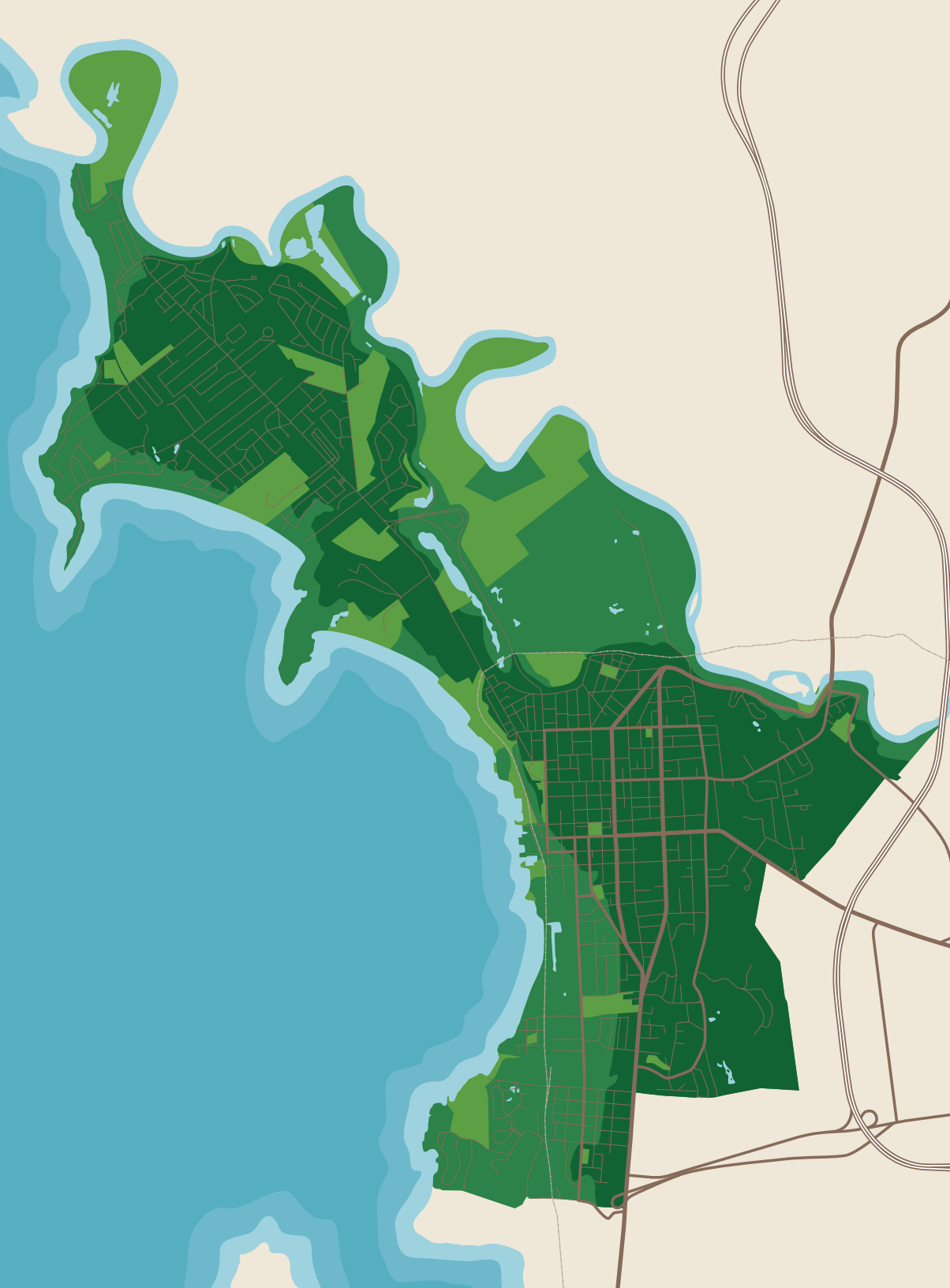
ECOLOGY

Burlington's Green Infrastructure

Burlington's parks and greenways perform essential ecological functions for the city. Trees reduce water and air pollution and their shade helps mitigate urban heat island effect. Along waterfronts and other floodplain areas parks capture stormwater runoff, prevent soil erosion, and reduce the impact of floods. Parks and greenways provide habitat and migration routes for wildlife, which strengthen species resilience and foster biodiversity. Lastly, when city residents have access to environmental education opportunities in natural areas they form a personal connection to the natural world from which they often feel isolated.

THE VISION

"I have never been more excited about the future of our great City." - Mayor Miro Weinberger



CREATING A SHARED VISION

PROJECT TIME LINE

The 2014 Burlington Parks Master Plan is the first Master Plan for the Burlington Parks and Recreation Department. The Plan provides a framework for decision making for future service delivery and resource allocation. The planning process began in May 2013 and concluded in February of 2014. The Plan creates a vision for a 10 year period, 2014 through 2024.

The planning process began with an in depth analysis of the City's park system, including a comprehensive inventory of the park amenities. In concert with this physical analysis, the team studied the existing framework of planning documents in place. Next, a statistically valid household survey was sent to the community. There was a high level of participation with nearly 28% response. The planning effort concluded with a visioning session with department staff. The result of the visioning session forms the final framework for this master plan.

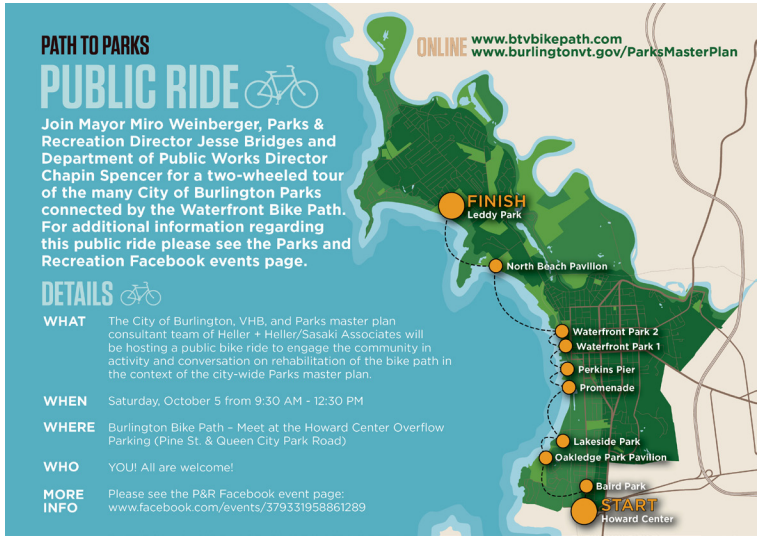
OUTREACH STRATEGY

An ongoing component of the Master Plan development was the community input process, which included a series of public input methods. These methods ranged from an online mapping survey that led to suggestions for improvement from the public; a community bike ride, a household survey, and three public meetings.

Internal departmental engagement with the plan was also critical. Throughout the process parks and recreation staff, key leaders, and city administration participated in multiple ways. Burlington staff members joined a series of focus groups early in the process, and interviews with community groups supplemented the feedback. The input and review summary used to influence ideas for future programming and facility opportunities, potential partnerships, opportunities for improvement, and challenges the Department will face in the next five years.

Right & Bottom:

In collaboration with the Mayor, Parks and Recreation Department, and a Bike Path Consultant Team at VHB, the master plan team led a public tour of the bike bath to discuss the future design of the path and its integration with major city parks.



Far right:

The master plan team met with Parks and Recreation staff to learn how the plan's recommendations can improve daily operations.

SURVEY INPUT

HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

A statistically valid community survey was administered to help identify community priorities and guide recommendations for resource allocation or recreation management. The survey was conducted by phone and mail and given to a random sample of 2,000 people. The survey assessed satisfaction levels, facility use information, program and facility needs, and use of the parks and recreation programs. Over 550 households returned the survey, which exceeded the minimum number of surveys required for meaningful analysis, yielding a 95% confidence level.
Some of the key findings include ...

ONLINE MAPPING TOOL

The statistically valid household survey was complemented by the launch of an online mapping tool, which invited community members to weigh in qualitatively on the park system. Community participation in the "MyBurlington" survey remained lower than the household survey, reaching 70 by the end of the project. However, the data received helped to illuminate issues within individual parks and reinforced the strength of the waterfront.

Left:

The MyBurlington mapping tool generated maps of resident feedback. This map shows the parks visited by respondents in the past 12 months.

Left:

The MyBurlington online interface was easy to use with drag-and-drop icons. The thumbs up and thumbs down option was intended to build on the PIAP online feedback interface.

TOP 3 FACILITIES USED IN THE PAST YEAR

1. LAKE VIEWS
2. BIKE PATHS
3. BEACHES

550 OUT OF **2000** HOUSEHOLDS REPLIED TO THE SURVEY

PARTICIPATION IN REC PROGRAMS IS DRIVEN BY:

LOCATION, QUALITY OF INSTRUCTORS, & TIME

VIEWS, PATHS, BEACHES, EVENT SITES, PICNIC AREAS, SHELTERS, & PLAYGROUNDS TOP THE LIST OF POPULAR FACILITIES.

5 SYSTEM THEMES

The Master Plan process resulted in the development of overall system themes, or key areas of focus and recommendations for the next 10 years.

2 INCLUSIVE SOCIAL SPACES

The Parks and Recreation Department has a significant role in creating opportunities for people to gather and interact, an especially important function given the city's role as a regional cultural hub. This is aligned with themes from Plan BTV and the Chittenden ECOS Plan of Sense of Place and Social Community.

1 MEETING THE NEEDS

Both Gaps And Surpluses Were Identified In The Planning Process. Gaps Include Specific Sports Facilities, Indoor Recreation Space And Participation In Recreational Programming. This Plan Identifies Strategies To Address Current Need And Recommends A Future Process To Adapt To Changing Demographics.

3 CONNECTED PARKS + NEIGHBORHOODS

Burlington has adequate total park acreage, but not all types or neighborhoods are well served. The majority of the city has access to a park within a 10 minute walk, however there is limited access in wards one and six. This plan seeks to better link parks into the existing trail system and build on the existing trails.

4 PROGRAMMING + OPERATIONS

Burlington is an active community with a robust recreation and programming component, yet participation in available programming lags behind national averages. This plan addresses both the tailoring of programming to community need as well as the need increased visibility, marketing and communications.

5 SUSTAINABILITY + STEWARDSHIP

Urban parks offer more than simply a place to play and relax. As cities grow greener, the study and management of urban ecologies is becoming critical to understanding the way natural systems interact with the built city. This plan addresses stormwater and maintenance practices as critical to the long-term sustainability of the park system.

MEETING THE NEEDS

For the CIty of Burlington and the Region

BURLINGTON'S PARK RESOURCES

Burlington is home to approximately 520 acres of City owned and operated parks. This translates to 12.2 acres per thousand residents, which is just above the national standard of cities with a similar population (12 acres per thousand residents). Most of the City's parkland (55%) is within large regional parks like Oakledge and Leddy. The remaining acreage is in community parks (32%), neighborhood parks (13%) and mini parks (<1%). Ideally, neighborhood parks would represent a larger percentage of the overall parkland (29%), but regional parks like Ethan Allen Park serve double-duty as neighborhood parks by offering amenities like playgrounds. Overall, Burlington has a robust and diverse park system.

LEVEL OF SERVICE

Park amenities are the built elements within a park that support various forms of recreation (both active and passive). For many users these are the primary reason they visit parks. It is critical that the parks supply the right number and types of amenities to meet the needs of their users. Additionally, as the demographics of a city change over time (race, age, population, etc) park amenities need to be assessed for their relevance to the changing user groups. Level of Service (LOS) standards provide metrics for this assessment.

SURPLUS AND DEFICIT

The primary gaps in service are in field sports, specifically adult baseball, adult softball and regulation size soccer/football/lacrosse, and indoor recreation such as a fitness center and indoor swimming. Providing additional amenities will require careful planning and design - and should be proactive about anticipating future demographic changes.

Several amenity types are in surplus. The significance of such a surplus varies by amenity. Community gardens, for example, reflect the culture of local food production that is central to the Burlingtonian psyche. In fact, there is capacity for additional community gardens in the future. On the other hand, the surplus of outdoor tennis courts indicates an inefficient use of resources to maintain under-used amenities.

Table (Right): The level of service standards were generated by benchmarking Burlington against 112 peer cities (populations between 25,000 - 75,000). The benchmarks were then adjust to reflect Burlington's unique population

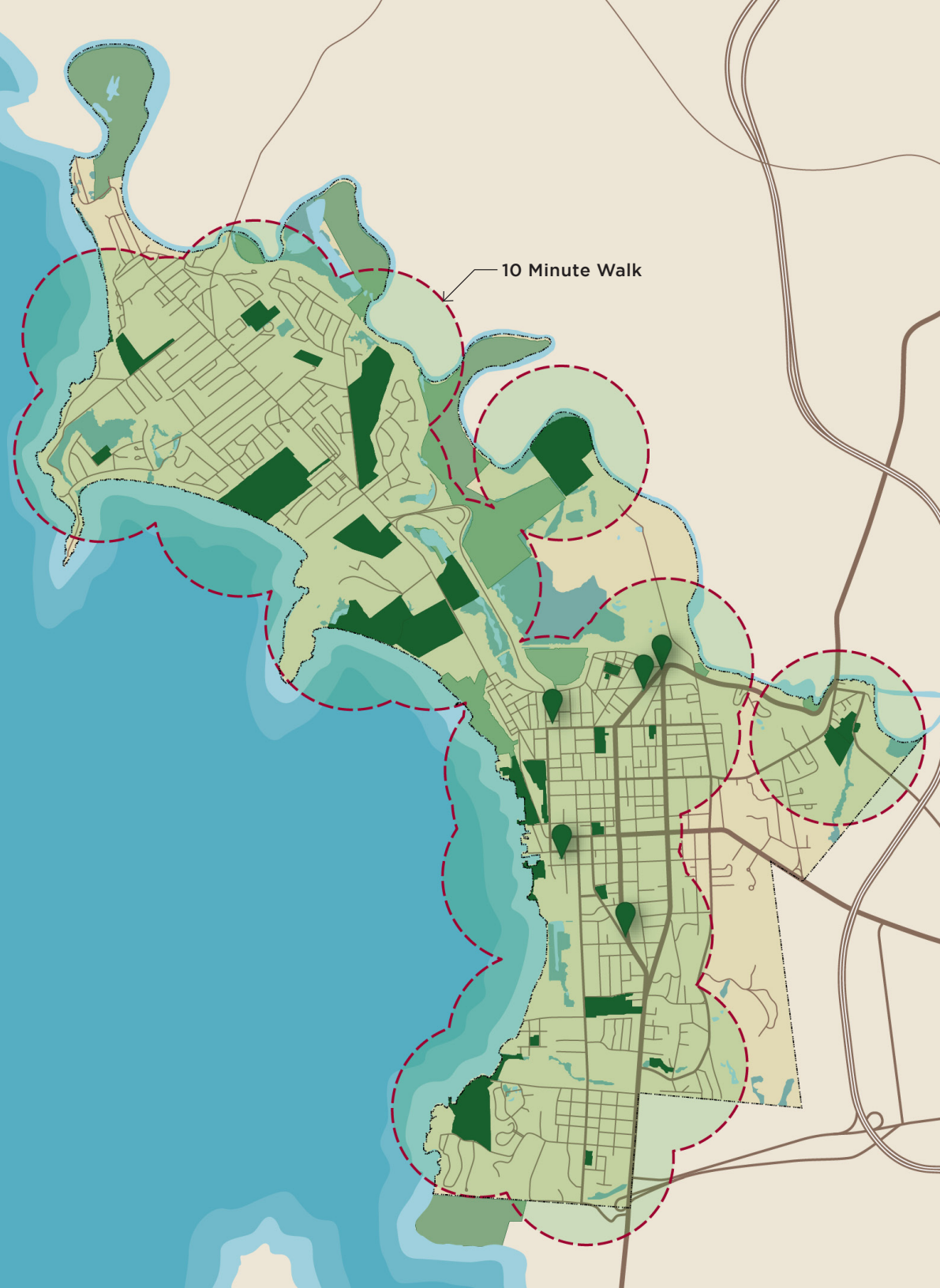
Photo (Left): The Calahan Park Community Garden

PARK WALKABILITY

Park access and walkability in Burlington is good, though most of the parks are located along the lakefront. As a result, residents on the east side of town have fewer nearby options. Rather than adding more parks on the east side, the City should focus on strengthening east-west connections.

LEVEL OF SERVICE

Amenity	# Recommended	# in BTV	
Recreation Center	1.33	1.0	-0.3
Fitness Center	0.93	0.0	-0.9
Playground	14.17	17.0	2.8
Outdoor Tennis Court	8.50	18.0	9.5
Outdoor Basketball	5.67	12.5	6.8
Indoor Comp Swimming	0.92	0.0	-0.9
Indoor Non Comp Swimming	0.89	0.0	-0.9
Outdoor Comp Swimming	1.10	0.0	-1.1
Outdoor Non Comp Swimming	1.21	4.0	2.8
Indoor Skating Rink	1.44	1.5	0.1
Outdoor Skating Rink	2.18	5.0	2.8
Open Play Field	2.43	14.0	11.6
Regulation size Soccer/Football/ Lacrosse	5.00	4.0	-1.0
Youth size Soccer	3.70	12.0	8.3
90 ft. Baseball Field	1.98	1.0	-1.0
60 ft. Baseball Field	5.67	10.0	4.3
Adult Softball	3.40	2.0	-1.4
Dog Park	1.15	2.0	0.9
Gymnasium	1.52	2.0	0.5
Community Garden	1.55	14.0	12.5



CASE STUDY: EVOLVING AMENITIES

EVOLVING AMENITIES

Like Burlington, many communities experience demographic changes. With these changes, a community's needs for amenities and programs change. An effective Parks and Recreation department must understand their evolving constituency and be nimble enough to accommodate their needs.

WAUKEGAN, IL

In Waukegan Illinois, the percentage of residents identifying as Hispanic or Latino has grown by nearly 10% over 10 years (from 44.8% in 2000 to 53.4% in 2010). With this shift, there has been a growing demand for soccer fields and other field sports. In 2010, the Waukegan Park District department responded by converting an existing golf course into a state of the art soccer and field sport complex called the Waukegan SportsPark. The resulting park won the 2012 National Field of the Year Award.

CAROL STREAM, IL

In Carol Stream, the past decade saw a 48% increase in residents over 64. In response to their aging constituency, in 2013 the Carol Stream Parks District built a new 90,846-square-foot, multi-generational facility. The facility offers programs geared toward older uses such as aquatic exercises and pickleball.

Photo (Left): The Waukegan SportsPark in Waukegan, IL.

Photo (Left): The complex includes 14 soccer fields (13 grass fields and one artificial field) and four 90' baseball fields.

Right:

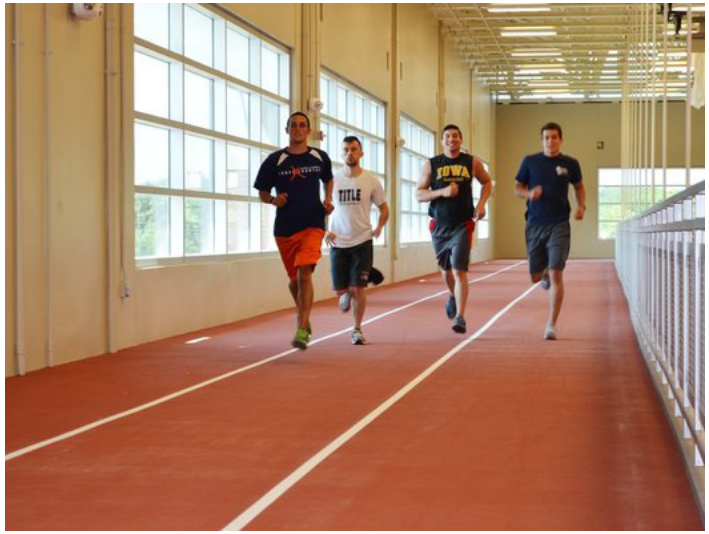
Multiuse rooms have flexible workoutequipment

Far right:

The indoor track helps enable year-round fitness

Bottom right:

The facility includes several sustainable design features. It is expected to be rated as a LEED silver building.



THE FOUNTAIN VIEW RECREATION CENTER

This 90,846-square-foot facility is home to Fountain View Fitness. Members have access to the fitness center, an indoor running track, lap swim, fitness classes, aqua fitness classes, open gym, saunas, premium locker rooms and child care. The facility is also home to the Western DuPage Special Recreation Association, which offers programs for individuals with special needs.

INCLUSIVE SOCIAL SPACES

For the CIty of Burlington and the Region

How can Burlington's parks better support the community's need for accessible, functional and diverse social spaces?

A PLACE FOR COMMUNITY

The urban park is often seen as a place for residents to step away from city life and reconnect with nature. However, Burlingtonians have a unique relationship to their city parks. Rather than strictly respite from urban life, the parks are also a place to participate in urban life and culture. Among Burlington residents surveyed for this master plan, 64% of respondents requested additional events like concerts, farmers markets, and festivals. In fact, special events lead the list of park needs among respondents. This service should be expanded through careful planning and design.

THE ROLE OF THE WATERFRONT

Among all of Burlington's parks the waterfront parks stand out as the primary social spaces. The waterfront supports large seasonal events, daily tourism, and a great deal of recreational opportunities for both residents and visitors. Among survey respondents, six of the most visited parks were along the lake. Additionally, 41% of respondents felt the beaches and lake areas should receive the most attention.

CITY HALL PARK

In order to support additional programming and activity the current and future uses of each park must be understood and vetted with the community. The recent planning for City Hall Park is an excellent example of how a park can be re-envisioned through collaboration and public outreach. A partnership between Burlington City Arts and the Department of Parks and Recreation and Wagner Hodgson Landscape Architecture has generated a vision for the park that foregrounds public art and flexible gathering space. Similar collaborative efforts could help breathe new life into many of the City's underutilized parks.

Image (Right): Special event and the waterfront consistently scored high among survey respondents in terms of need.

Photo (Left): The annual Vermont Brewers Festival in Waterfront Park

SURVEY FEEDBACK

#1 SPECIAL EVENTS
RANK HIGHEST IN THE LIST OF PARK NEEDS

61% OF RESPONDENTS REQUESTED MORE **SPECIAL EVENTS**

6 OF THE 7 MOST VISITED PARKS ARE ON THE **WATERFRONT**

41% OF RESIDENTS THINK **BEACHES AND LAKE AREAS** SHOULD RECEIVE THE **MOST ATTENTION**

TOP 7 MOST POPULAR **FACILITIES**

- **BEACHES**
- VIEWS & PATHS
- PLAYGROUNDS
- **EVENT SITES**
- PICNIC AREAS
- **SHELTERS**

CASE STUDY: WATERFRONT PIAP PROPOSALS

VISIONS OF PUBLIC SPACE ON THE LAKE

During this process, the master plan team assisted the department in developing proposals for three waterfront projects as part of the City's Public Investment Action Plan (PIAP). While each design was different, as a whole they illustrate the department's vision for a waterfront that includes a diverse range of public spaces.

WATERFRONT PARK UPGRADES

In addition to being a scenic park for everyday use, Waterfront Park is Burlington's premier event space. The park supports 13 major events each year including the Vermont City Marathon, the Maritime Festival and Discover Jazz. Currently, the infrastructure that supports these events is outdated and a limiting factor in the site's growth potential. The department's proposal called for upgrading these utilities as well as improving the bike path entrances and alignment. The proposals also suggested a reconfiguration of the current boardwalk to create an ADA accessible path to the water's edge.

MARINA SERVICES EXPANSION

This proposal called for the creation of a public marina at Perkins Pier that would accommodate transient and seasonal boaters. The proposal included waterfront access for various types of vessels and a landside facility that included a restaurant, department offices, small boat storage, laundry and restrooms. The site was designed to provide a number of other amenities including a new playground, a waterfront path with seating, ornamental planting and a link to the bike path.

URBAN RESERVE INTERIM MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENTS

This proposal focused on interim solutions to some of the issues limited public access and enjoyment of the Urban Reserve. The core of the proposal was a new waterfront trial weaving through the site with scenic vista points perched over the water. Lining this path were wide swaths of phytoremediation planting to remove contaminants from the soils. As they moved along the path visitors would come upon several public art installations including a relocated piece called "Eqinox."

Image (right): Perspective rendering of the proposed facility at Perkins Pier and the public path along the water.

Image (Far right): Perspective rendering of the proposed boardwalk renovation at waterfront park

Image (Bottom) The proposed waterfront trail and scenic vistas at the Urban Reserve

CONNECTED PARKS + NEIGHBORHOODS

Trails, links, and ecological connections

How can existing parks and trails be better connected to help meet neighborhood park needs?

Biking, Trails, and Walkability

As the park needs assessment demonstrated, Burlington has adequate total park acreage, but not all types or neighborhoods are well served. The majority of the city has access to a park within a 10 minute walk, however there is limited access in wards one and six. Moreover, the city's long, linear shape restricts connectivity between the north and south areas of the city. Both the congestion of downtown and areas of steep topography make connections through downtown difficult. The parks and recreation master plan seeks to better link parks into the existing trail system and build on the existing trails.

Photo (Left): The bike path highlights the wide range of environments along Burlington's lakefront, ranging from woodlands to designed spaces such as Waterfront Park (shown here).

The waterfront bike path provides excellent north-south connectivity, connecting into 48 total miles of trails (34 miles of public trails). The path links directly into many of the most well-used parks in the system: Oakledge, Perkins, Pier, Waterfront Park, North Beach, Leddy Park, and the Urban Reserve. Other locations, like Lakeside Park or much of downtown, are located immediately off of the trail. While the bike path is a major asset, additional streetscape improvements and complete streets need to be implemented to augment and supplement the network, focusing on east-west links (considering topography) as well as north-south bike lanes. These secondary connections will also improve access to the neighborhoods and to the regional trail network.

BURLINGTON BIKE PATH

The Burlington Bike Path is an important local and regional amenity. In fact, among survey respondents trails rank highest (88%) in necessity, and 86% of respondents support creation of new trails. The bike path links together several of the City's most popular parks including, North Beach, Leddy Park, the Urban Reserve, Waterfront Park, Perkins Pier and Oakledge Park.

80% OF RESPONDENTS ARE **SATISFIED WITH BIKE ACCESSIBILITY** TO PARKS & FACILITIES.

CASE STUDY: BURLINGTON BIKE PATH IMPROVEMENTS

Bike Path Rehabilitation Project

During this process, the city has been working with Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (with GeoDesign, Inc. and SE Group) on a concurrent study to redesign segments of the waterfront bike trail to improve difficult trail links and amenities. The Bike Path Rehabilitation Project proposes the rehabilitation of the approximate 7.5 mile multi-use path that runs through downtown Burlington and along the Lake Champlain waterfront. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan coordinated with this effort, collaborating on a public bike trail ride, "Path to Parks," in October 2013. Integration with the PIAP process also enabled the plan to study ways to improve waterfront parks and the trails within them to better link to the renewed bike trail.

Seasonal Trail Use

Given Burlington's active population, the popularity of the waterfront trail and current investments in improving it, maximizing year-round trail use is a key opportunity. Many other peer cities, such as Bozeman, Montana, pictured here, have adapted their trails to be usable in winter months. The recreation needs assessment demonstrated that there is an existing deficit in indoor recreation space, which is often used to support year round activity in cold climates. Similar to the city's approach to seasonal ice rinks in several of its parks, additional maintenance and amenities would be required to support this effort.

Above:

In Bozeman, MT multi-use trails that are beloved for running or biking in the summer are groomed as ski trails during winter months. In Burlington a similar program would help bring users to the lake and between the parks year round. Amenities such as warming huts could help extend winter visitor stays.

Image (Right) The bike path links many significant parks. At each park cyclist should have the option to "peel off" and enjoy the park amenities. This image from the Urban reserve PIAP proposal shows a secondary path that would leads riders off the path toward the water's edge.

BIKE PATH GATEWAYS

The bike path has great potential to draw visitors off the water and into the City. In many cases the connection from the path the City's neighborhoods and businesses is through a park. At these moments it is critical to provide clear and welcoming thresholds. These can be simple signage elements or more elaborate gateway structures , as was proposed at Waterfront Park (pictured to the right).

PROGRAMMING AND OPERATIONS

Maximizing recreation programs, special events, branding and marketing

The success of Burlington's recreation programs or special events program relies on marketing and information sharing.

RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Burlington is an active community with a robust recreation and programming component. The city's diversity and changing demographic trends, both locally and nationally should be considered as changes are made to programming and services in coming years.

The household survey demonstrated the importance and success of Burlington's recreation offerings. The City was rated as the number one provider for parks and recreation programs and facilities, with 68% ranking it first (well above the national average of 48%). Additionally, satisfaction is high with 68% of households expressing satisfaction with the offerings and 89% calling them high quality. Given the high use and satisfaction, it is interesting to note, however, that overall participation, at 23%, lags behind the national average. This may demonstrate a possibility to capture greater participation in city recreation programs.

To increase participation and continue satisfaction, the right programs must be tailored to community requests, prioritizing future program offerings accordingly, such as adult fitness and wellness, nature and winter time outdoor programs. Areas such as adult fitness and wellness, adult continuing education, special events, outdoor winter recreation, and nature programming are high priorities for the community. Special events are not only community priorities, but they also experienced an increase in revenue in 2011 and 2012; renovations to the Waterfront Park will increase the efficiency and opportunities to stage large, community events. Detailed recommendations for recreation and programming improvements and priorities are found in the technical report.

Finally, the success of Burlington's recreation or special events program relies on a marketing strategy that ensures people know how to use and attend programs. A new brand has been created for the Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department through this process. It should be translated to program guides, and to a better online experience (content, design and mobile devices). Additionally, it is recommended that the department create a marketing plan and dedicate staff resources to this effort.

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

CITY DEPARTMENTS

BTV SCHOOL DISTRICT
PUBLIC WORKS
WATER & WASTEWATER
CEDO
CITY ARTS

BUSINESS

BURTON
BEN & JERRY'S
SEVENTH GENERATION
BRUEGGER'S
G.S. BLODGETT

INSTITUTIONS

UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT
FLETCHER ALLEN HEALTH CARE
CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE
ECHO CENTER

CITIZEN GROUPS

FRIENDS GROUPS
COMMUNITY GARDENS
PRIVATE CLUBS
ATHLETIC CLUBS

MOBILITY

LOCAL MOTION
CATAMOUNT TRAIL ASSOC.
VT BICYCLE &
PEDESTRIAN COALITION

CONSERVATION

INTERVALE CENTER
AUDUBON
FISH AND WILDLIFE
WINOOSKI VALLEY
PARKS DISTRICT

CASE STUDY: A NEW DEPARTMENT BRAND

PARKS + RECREATION + WATERFRONT

Through the master plan visioning process, the central, overarching goal that arose is the department's wish to function and be perceived of as a cohesive group. The department performs many roles for the city: maintaining and developing parks, trails, and open spaces; programming special events and recreation classes; operating the waterfront marina; and maintaining city-owned buildings. This broad set of responsibilities can result in confusion for the public about the many critical tasks that the department covers. Additionally, the department's logo no longer conveys the fresh energy and contemporary approach that the leadership and staff bring.

A branding study was conducted in coordination with the master plan. Through this, the department was "re-branded" as the Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department to encompass all facets of the groups' efforts. A contemporary logo was designed, representing the union and integration of these three divisions, and harkening to the City of Burlington with a shape that also forms a "b." The logo can be re-interpreted to represent individual divisions as well.

The logo is part of a set of branding guidelines that will be deployed by the department as it implements the master plan. It will be used for internal and external communication in business cards, letterhead, apparel, signage, and website re-design.

Photo (Left)
Branding
Work Session,
December 2014

Images (Right)
The new
department logo

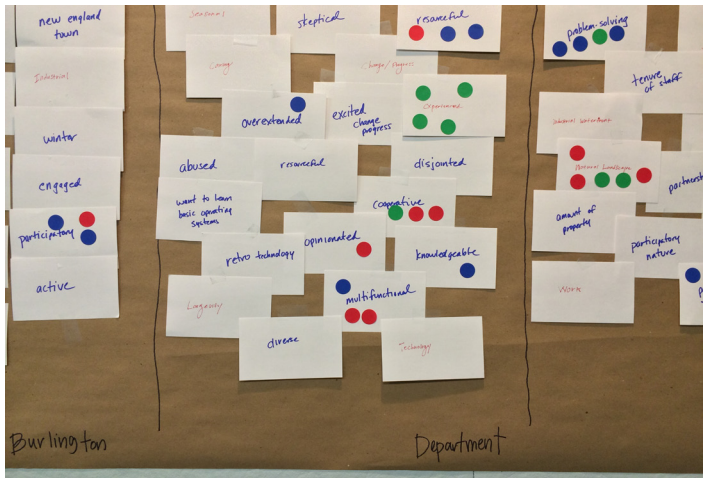


Photo (Left)
Branding exercises

BURLINGTON
PARKS
RECREATION
WATERFRONT

SUSTAINABILITY AND STEWARDSHIP

For the CIty of Burlington and the Region

Urban parks have the potential to perform many critical functions as the green infrastructure of the city.

SUSTAINABLE PARKS

Urban parks offer more than simply a place to play and relax. As cities grow greener, the study and management of urban ecologies are becoming critical to understanding the way natural systems interact with the built city. A parks system can perform powerful functions as a green infrastructure such as providing clean air, combating the urban heat island effect and mitigating the impacts of stormwater runoff. Natural areas also serve as stepping stones for migrating species. Another key service they perform is to create accessible classrooms where residents can learn about their region's ecology without having to leave the city.

STORMWATER

Burlington is a city defined by its relationship to water. To the West, Lake Champlain has long been a driver of industry and tourism. To the East, the Winooski River and its floodplain is a rich and productive agricultural and ecological corridor. The city occupies a high ridge line between these two hydrological systems - directing runoff toward both. There are a number of ways a park can help improve the water quality in surrounding landscapes, including infiltration, retention and purification. Additionally, if there is capacity, parks can intake stormwater from surrounding landscapes. This plan builds on a concept proposed in Plan BTV called the "Green Machine," which aims to create a system of interconnected civic spaces that perform critical stormwater management functions.

This plan establishes guidelines for stormwater management in parks. Deploying this strategy will require collaboration between multiple City departments.

Image (left)

The Derway Island wetlands are located at the confluence of the Winooski River and Lake Champlain. Areas like this are ecologically rich.

BTV HYDROLOGY

The city is flanked by two major water bodies. To the west, Lake Champlain is the scenic backdrop to the city and an important ecological corridor. It also is the one of the most active recreation corridors in the state. Balancing these roles is one of the Park and Recreation's primary tasks.

To the east, the Winooski River, and its wide floodplain has quite a different character. In addition to being incredibly ecologically rich, the fertile banks of the river are cultivated as farmland. Open space in this area is largely under the jurisdiction of the Winooski Valley Park District - a key partner for the City.

Street trees - particularly those designed with adequate soil zones and - perform a valuable role within the city's hydrological cycle. Tree pits can capture and store considerable stormwater that would otherwise flow into storm sewers. This reduces pressure on City infrastructure during storms and helps maintain healthy trees.

CASE STUDY: THE GREEN MACHINE 2.0

THE GREEN MACHINE

The Green Machine - a concept developed as part of Plan BTV - is an interconnected system of civic spaces designed to manage stormwater. Parks and plazas play a key role in this concept, serving to infiltrate and in some cases store stormwater. When guided by an over-arching strategy this concept can be expanded to all of Burlington's parks.

THE BIG PICTURE

Stormwater management focuses on two metrics: 1) controlling pollutants entering water bodies and groundwater (quality), and 2) controlling the risk of flooding and erosion caused by rapid flow of stormwater through the watershed (quantity). The management priorities for each park will depend on which water body is downstream of the park. Specifically, parks draining to Lake Champlain will prioritize quality, while parks upstream for the Winooski River will prioritize quality and quantity due to the risk of flooding. This plan establishes management guidelines based on these relationships.

ON THE GROUND

Once the stormwater management goals for a park are established, the site must be analyzed to understand how to achieve these goals. Soils and topography are the key concerns. Steep slopes accelerate runoff and erosion, while clayey, impervious soils resist infiltration. A careful study of the factors will guide decisions about locating stormwater management measures to maximize runoff retention and infiltration. Additionally, an understanding these conditions can help guide future development in a more effective way than unilateral lot coverage regulations.

Map (left)

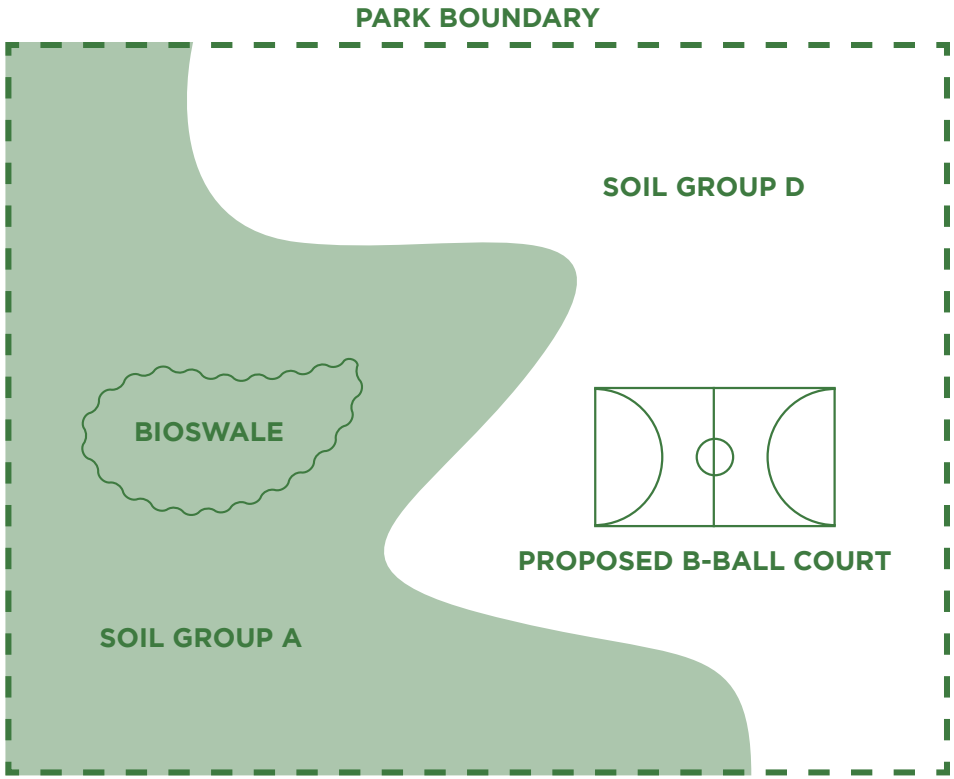
Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Map of Calahan Park. These maps can help initiate the study of park soil characteristics that is critical to effective stormwater infiltration.

WHY SOIL MATTERS

Soils should guide the placement and extent of impervious surfaces in order to maximize a park's ability to infiltrate water. Impervious surfaces, such as courts, should be located above impervious soils, as this will not increase the functionally impervious area. Conversely, rain gardens and bioswales should be located above more pervious surfaces to encourage infiltration

HYDROLOGIC SOIL GROUPS
Group A: Soils having a high infiltration rate (low runoff potential) when thoroughly wet.

Group D: Soils having a very slow infiltration rate (high runoff potential) when thoroughly wet.



Photos (Right)

A detailed understanding of hydrologic soil groups and their performance can help avoid poor amenity location which leads to deterioration. These images show damage to tennis courts caused by inundated soils below. This site is better suited as an infiltration zone.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

The following are Strategic Initiatives for Burlington Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department. The Recommendations span a 10 year period from 2014 to 2024. The Recommendations are listed as short term, midterm, or long term priorities. These time frames will provide the department with the opportunity to review the Master Plan at the end of each cycle: short, medium and long.

While the Plan should be reviewed each year in order to accommodate any changes in priorities that occur throughout each year, a more thorough review will be completed at the end of FY16-17 and FY19-20, or after every three years. The three year review will include an update to the Strategic Recommendations, noting work that has been completed and adjusting the Strategic Initiatives to reflect major changes. In addition, the three year review should include an update of demographics and revised inventory of parks and amenities. During the second review cycle following FY19-20, a Community Survey should be completed. It may also be helpful to have public input during these two review cycles to ask for resident response to the Plan's progress.

Short Term FY14-15 to FY16-17

- Add Burlington Parks and Recreation amenity information in the PRORAGIS database.
- In development of new assets, consider the perceived imbalance between the north and south end of town.
- Increase capital funding: the median of capital spending for the PRORAGIS database is $640,000. Burlington receives $350,000 in capital funding annually. This is significantly below what other agencies spend.
- Align a significant portion of Penny for Parks funding for capital priorities developed by the Department, while leaving the remainder of funding for projects suggested by the community. Create a long term Capital Improvement Plan and Replacement Plan with dedicated funding for ongoing replacement of assets. Consider increasing the Penny for Parks funding in order to double the amount of capital dollars.
- Develop a Foundation to augment capital investment into the system. The Foundation could also oversee a scholarship program for financial support for residents with financial need.
- Allocate labor dollars toward marketing support. Agencies the size of Burlington typically have at least one full-time staff member dedicated toward marketing functions. The recommendation is to add a marketing position. At first, this can possibly be a shared position with other agencies in the region to provide a regional approach to parks and recreation service delivery. This position can also include dedicated time toward corporate sponsorships. Supplement with University of Vermont marketing interns.
- Develop design standards for park amenities including elements such as water fountains, fencing, playgrounds, etc. In addition, develop park lighting standards. This is currently being developed for identifying standard fixtures for pedestrian walks, parking, trails, etc.
- Work with the Public Works Department in identifying long term maintenance of park roadways and establish percentage contribution by Public Works and Parks Departments.
- There is a need to increase park maintenance staff as the average acres/FTE is 16.7 in the PRORAGIS database, for Burlington the number is almost 40 acres/ FTE.
- Develop a financial pro forma for Memorial Auditorium building alternatives, including selling, leasing, or renovating the facility.
    - Indoor space; multi-purpose recreation center. The Miller Center only has about 17,680 of programming

space for the Department. Throughout the overall system, indoor multi-purpose space is below the average agency by 22,340. With the need for indoor activity space in the winter, a multi-purpose recreation center could be located close to the downtown area with easy access to the southern part of the City.

- Determine the success of leasing space in Memorial Auditorium and identify long term recommendations for the building, including selling or renovating the building.
- Decrease the size of existing dog parks and develop an additional dog park in the southern end of the City.

- Develop a process to implement changes and improvements based on Community Survey results.
  - Implement recommendations in the Recreation Assessment to identify ways of increasing household participation in programs as 23% of households participate. 25% of households go to neighboring communities for recreation.
  - Households were asked what areas should receive the most attention:
    - Quality of lake, beaches and areas
    - Maintenance of Burlington parks
    - Number of walking/biking trails
  - Therefore, funding priorities should be aligned with these assets.
  - Another question addressed level of support for funding, and the two highest rated features include trails and neighborhood parks.
- Perform a system wide accessibility audit.
- Implement significant Recreation Recommendations. More tactical recommendations are included in the Recreation Assessment within the body of the Plan.
  - The Department should do a cost of service analysis to determine true costs of programs, services, and events. This should also include subsidy level goals for core programs. Community events should also be analyzed for direct and indirect costs.
  - Create a virtual program guide for smart phone registration.
  - Dedicate labor resources to management of a special population's programmer.
  - This potentially could be a shared position with other neighboring agencies.
  - Increase staff programming support for the Miller Center.
  - Facilitate a series of focus groups with immigrant populations to determine their recreation needs and how to best service those needs.
  - One of the significant program priorities is outdoor winter recreation opportunities. Consider the development of an outdoor recreation park with a sled hill and toboggan run, outdoor ice rink with a warming hut.
  - Research the possibility of offering a World Events Day at Waterfront Park.
- There is a system wide shortage of storage areas. Identify areas to better accommodate Departmental storage needs, which will result in better efficiency. This includes storage for existing and additional equipment and vehicles.
- Continue to improve technology. This was identified as one of the most significant areas needing improvement in the Department.
- Brand and image: doing a better job telling the story
- Create a city-wide map of parks and their associated watersheds. Develop stormwater priorities for parks based on this map.

Mid Term FY17-18 to FY19-20

- Develop a plan for connectivity among facilities and parks and include Safe Routes to Schools plans and Local Motion bike path connection identification.
- Develop a marketing plan and business plan for major facilities
- Implement maintenance standards for parks, buildings, and facilities.
- Create a regional recreation roundtable to discuss partnership opportunities and other ways to have a more regional approach to recreation service delivery.
- As part of PRORAGIS, perform a calculation of economic benefits of Department services and events.
- Work with the Community and Economic Development office to develop a tourism plan for parks and recreation services and events.

Long Term FY20-21 to FY23-24

- Add an internal staff position to oversee the Department's use of technology as well as overseeing data analytics.
- Consideration for the installation of a spray ground in the downtown area.

Other Considerations

- Policy development for Recognition/Memorial Bench Policy
- Off-Leash Policy Recommendations
- Reference Imagine city Hall Park renovation conceptual planning effort
- Incorporate WAN/Skatepark

Parks Recommendations

Specific recommendations for parks within the system are included here:

Regional Parks

Leddy Park: This park is a beloved feature of the Burlington's New North End neighborhood. This park should be intensified as a focus of recreational activities in the City. Long term recommendations include:

- Expand the existing fields to include another regulation size Soccer/Football/Lacrosse field.
- Consider modifying one of the 60' baseball fields to be a regulation adult softball field.
- Formalize the trail system and strengthen visual connection to bike path. The latter will be addressed within the scope of the bike path redesign.

North Beach: This park recently underwent renovation to upgrade the camp facilities. Future modifications to the site's access are planned as part of the bike path redesign.

Oakledge Park (Blanchard Beach): This historic park offers a wide range of amenities for Burlington's South End residents, as well as city-wide and regional attractions. Recommendations include:

- The creation of an accessible playground in 2015.
- Relocate the existing softball field that suffers from poor siting on a wetland.
- Both projects will require an analysis of stormwater considerations. This analysis should cover the entire park to help guide future projects in the park.

Community Parks:

Battery Park: This historically significant park serves as an intimate event space and scenic overlook near downtown. Long term considerations include:

- A holistic analysis and redesign are receommended to clarify and highlight the sites historical significance while improving it's aesthetic and functional performance. Analysis should incorporate the 2013 Draft of the Archaeological Management Plan by the UVM Consulting Archaeology Program, and the site's historical relevance as part of the war of 1812 and Civil War.
- Redesign should consider future internment of remains within vault, re-organization of the existing memorials, playground renovation, the creation of a spray park, and the potential to reintroduce the historic road as a sunset lookout

Calahan Park: Calahan Park is a true community park, providing a wide range of amenities for the surrounding residents. Recent upgrades have introduced the City's only 90' baseball field.

- Opportunities should be investigated for reducing mowed areas around the park's perimeter. These areas could be converted to low-maintenance native planting.

Starr Farm Park: This park includes active recreation, community gardens and a popular dog park. Long term recommendations include:

- Expansion and formalization of athletic fields. This site could accommodate future youth softball fields.
- Upgrade the existing wooden playground.
- Formalize trail connections between east and west sides of the park.

Waterfront Park and Promenade: This park is incredibly important as the City's premiere perforamance and event space. It is also a beloved space for passive recreation. The recommendations for this site are reflected in the Parks and Recreation Department's PIAP proposal. They include:

- Upgrades to electrical, sewer and water utilities.
- Upgrades to the existing boardwalk to stabilize the slope and introduce better public access to the water.
- Incorporating vegetation improvements to serve as stormwater infrastructure.
- Improved signage, wayfinding, lighting and gateways.
- Realignment of the bike path.

Neighborhood Parks

The following list includes recommendations for neighborhood parks. Any parks not listed should be maintained under the general guidelines set forth in this document.

Appletree Park:

- Remove failing tennis courts and rehabilitate the site's natural wetland functions.

City Hall Park:

- Continue developing plans for "Imagine: City Hall Park" in collaboration with the BCA and local partners.

Northshore Natural Area/City Beach:

- Improve pedestrian access and visibilty of the site.

Roosevelt Park: Upgrades in 2014

- Perform upgrades planned for 2014, including renovation with Boys & Girls Club, court renovations, new lighting and new seating.

Schmanska Park:

- Renovation of the barn.
- Remove the exisitng tennis courts.

Smalley Park:

- Create a new entrance gateway into the park. Remove fencing and replace strategically with low, aesthetically pleasing wood fence

Mini Parks

Mini parks should be maintained under the general guidelines set forth in this document - and with minimal investment of resources as they do not provide considerable community benefits.

Implementation Guidelines

The following is a listing of suggestions for successful implementation of the Strategic Recommendations. It represents the commitment and discipline required to integrate the Master Plan implementation process into daily operations.

- The Values and Strategic Recommendations will become the guidepost for the Department. When decisions or responses to the community are needed, the Plan becomes the reference point for decision making and whether or not new issues or responses to the community are of higher importance than what's been established as existing direction.
- This information should be included as part of the new Recreation Commission member and employee orientation programs.
- Post the Executive Summary on the Website and track results on the site as well. It may also be helpful to print a short summary of the progress to distribute to interested partners and community members.
- A staff person or team should have responsibility of being the project manager or "champion" of the Plan's implementation to ensure success. This staff person is responsible for monitoring the Plan's progress and works with staff to effectively integrate the Plan with operations.
- Each Strategic Recommendation should have a leader assigned to manage the process. Each Recommendation generally requires a cross functional team of employees to work on completing the initiative. A project manager should exist for each Recommendation.
- Regular reporting of the Plan's progress should occur. Break the Plan into separate fiscal years and report one year at a time, as an ongoing annual work plan. Each Recommendation for the year should include a list of tactics that support its completion. The tactics are developed prior to each year for the upcoming list of Recommendations. It is the project leader's responsibility to report on his/her initiative, included in a monthly or quarterly report. A suggestion is to input each year's data on a spreadsheet that lists the Recommendation start and completion dates, and which staff person is responsible for the Recommendation's completion.
- At the end of the year, perform an annual written review and documentation of the Recommendation.
- In addition to an annual review, a more comprehensive three year review will occur at the end of FY16-17 and FY19-20. This will include updating demographic information, updating park and amenity inventory, revising recreation program recommendations, and completing an additional Community Survey at the end of FY19-20.
- Update major stakeholders on the Plan's implementation and results on an annual basis.
- Conduct staff meetings on a regular basis, such as semi-annually to review the Plan's progress and results and report the Plan's progress to the Recreation Commission as well.
- Complete an annual just-in-time review of the next year's Recommendations to determine if priorities have changed. This can be included at an annual retreat in which successive years' Recommendations are discussed as part of the annual budget process. The Recommendations should tie into

the budget process. The Plan's action plan includes three timeframes: FY14-FY17, FY17-FY20, and FY20 to FY24. This schedule provides the opportunity for thorough updates during those timeframes.

- Post a chart of each year's Recommendations on office walls in administrative areas with a check-off column designating completion as part of a visual management program. Staff meetings should regularly include discussion of strategy. This will help to emphasize the Plan's importance and the Department's commitment to execution.
- If there are ideas for new strategies that arise throughout the year, include them on a written "parking lot" and review them as part of the annual just-in- time review to determine if they supplant any existing initiatives.

Conclusion

Burlington Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront aspires to continue and build upon its legacy of providing excellent services to the community. The Department is poised to develop its brand and image, update its use of marketing and technology, and to further develop the park and recreation system according to the Initiatives of the Master Plan. This will ensure the Department's continued role of importance to the community. The Strategic Initiatives create a sense of direction and focus for the next 10 years. All of these efforts will result in leadership excellence in the provision of services and impactful results that will greatly benefit all of Burlington.

Burlington Planning Commission

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Bruce Baker, Vice-Chair
Andrew Saba
Lee Buffinton
Harris Roen
Andy Montroll
Jennifer Wallace-Brodeur
Vacant, Youth Member

Burlington Planning Commission Minutes

Tuesday, May 13, 2014 - 6:30 pm

PC Present: L. Buffinton, H. Roen, J. Wallace-Brodeur, Y. Bradley, B. Baker, A. Montroll
Absent: E. Lee
Staff: D. White, S. Thibault, E. Tillotson, K. Sturtevant

I. Agenda

No changes.

II. Public Forum

Y. Bradley – Opened the public forum at 6:35 pm.

J. Rippa, owner of a property on East Avenue, was invited by B. Baker to speak about a zoning issue. He currently owns a building being used as a triplex, but only approved as a duplex; he has additionally submitted a letter.

B. Baker: There are contradictory directives from the state statutes and the City ordinance.

K. Sturtevant: For the record, the current status of law, zoning violations have a 15 year limitation, but there are many exemptions. The City zoning records don't reflect the current use of three units. Generally the policy addresses fairness back to 1973.

D. White: The city could choose to define a policy as long as it doesn't conflict with state law. The confusion is about additional living space, not an additional unit.

K. Sturtevant: There have been discussions of alternative ways to solve the issue.

J. Rippa: K. Lerner, zoning administrator, didn't have any problem with the whole thing. The original contact was John Rasys who instructed him as to the building approach, incorporating John's ideas.

B. Baker: Do we have discretion to set policy? It all adds up to the fast that we need a policy to address issues like this and the Planning Commission has the discretion to set policy.

D. White: A common thread is that property may have been assessed for actual use and never permitted by zoning. Now records are shared between departments.

B. Baker: The Bianchi ruling was put in place because records weren't being kept.

Y. Bradley: What does the average citizen expect? We need to encourage ways to not blindside the average person.

B. Baker: Burlington is the only municipality that has distinguished between use and structure relative to Bianchi.

A. Montroll: At times there is a need to cure.

L. Buffinton: The recommendation seems a waste of energy and cost.

Y. Bradley: Can we have a straw poll about how much time is appropriate, 15 years?

J. Wallace-Brodeur: Would like to see a proposal.

As approved by the Burlington Planning Commission on .

Y. Bradley: Could D. White and K. Sturtevant work to find some language to propose?

D. White: A lot of situations have adjoining issues which may not be addressed.

Y. Bradley: The average person assumes that contractors will close out permits and this is often not so.

D. White: Would encourage the Planning Commission to have consistency, to reflect whatever time limitation is in statutes.

A. Montroll: If a situation has been disclosed to the city, it should not be the obligation of the owner. The City departments should share information.

J. Rippa: Nothing has changed since 1973; there have been multiple building permits and housing inspections.

Y. Bradley – Closed the public forum at 7:06 pm.

III. Report of the Chair

The Chair presented the following report:

- He has met with the Director and the Comprehensive Planner to discuss the historic buildings material and discussed the likelihood that the City Council Ordinance Committee will/will not approve the existing proposed amendments and the common opinion is that it has less than a 10% chance of passing. After looking at what was proposed, it's not perfect. He believes the Commission was tired of it and wanted to be done with it. He would rather the Commission get to the point that we wish to be at and then present the material to the City Council Ordinance Committee. It's important that the Mayor have the same position as the Planning Commission. As of now, it's not everything we want it to be. The Commission needs to get back to basics. We could consider looking at the notion of eligibility again. He would suggest that the Commission take one meeting, ask certain stakeholders to attend the meeting, and try to formulate the policy. The feedback from the Mayor's office and the State of Vermont indicates pushback and the City Councilors haven't been paying attention to the proposal. The process would be better with engagement of the City Council members. He would suggest that the ordinance proposal be referred back to the Commission.

D. White: The timeline is too short for the Council to have time to understand and do something productive with the amendment.

Y. Bradley: Politically we have spent a lot of time on policy.

J. Wallace-Brodeur: There has not been good dialogue with all of the different parties. It would be better to have advocates in a more productive role. The product is not clearly articulated, not enough information; it seems like lot of talking in circles. A work session is a good idea.

L. Buffinton: It would be good to ask the City Council members to participate in the process.

Y. Bradley: It has been too long and there is not time enough to present it now. He would like to have it referred back.

H. Roen: Agrees, but the Commission has to be prepared that there may not be consensus on the subject.

D. White: The process began with what are some problems, it is better to begin with a partnership to solve problems.

On a motion by L. Buffinton, seconded by J. Wallace-Brodeur, the Commission unanimously requested that the Council Ordinance Committee refer ZA-13-12-Historic Materials back to the Planning Commission.

DRAFT

IV. Report of the Director

The director presented the following report:

- Two weeks ago, the film The Human Scale was presented at the Main Street Landing theatre to a sellout audience which was wonderful.
- There has been a lot of work done on FBC.

S. Thibault: Noted that Burlington is the first city in the state to get the Neighborhood Development Area Designation. And she hopes all of the Commission saw the email, planBTV South End was launched last Friday!

V. Clean Hands Policy

K. Sturtevant: She wishes to clarify further what the Commission is looking to accomplish. Is the policy to be based on zoning violations, other municipal issues, or zoning applications? There needs to be a nexus to acquire answers, does the type of permit matter? Should there be a grandfathering of the statute of limitations effect on clean hands policy? Apply only to one specific property or to other properties of owner?

Y. Bradley: To use the analogy of bar owners, some are cooperative, others obstructionist, etc. The clean hands policy is a tool to have in case of code enforcements or minimum housing violations. It's an opportunity to illustrate the necessity to comply with the rules and exhibit responsibility.

B. Baker: Agrees, the policy needs to be designed to get properties into compliance.

J. Wallace-Brodeur: And not just with the primary property. A pattern of violations is more an indicator than is one violation.

K. Sturtevant: It has to be something that has to be fixed.

L. Buffinton: It might be a situation where the tenants are the problem. There could be a range of problems: property violations, code enforcement, codes, police calls, taxes, land use violations, the possibilities are too broad.

Y. Bradley: That will be our challenge to decide the parameters.

J. Wallace-Brodeur: It would seem reasonable to weigh violations vs the number of units, to establish a ratio as a tool.

D. White: Should the policy include other properties under the same ownership?

K. Sturtevant: The Planning Commission does have authority to seek remedies. The city of Milwaukee has such an ordinance. The applicant has to fill out an affidavit stating whether or not the property owner is in good standing. It can be an opportunity for a whole review process including a hearing on violations previous to permitting.

D. White: It would address known violations, but it would not be chasing unknown violations.

B. Baker: What is the trigger and what is the path to remedy?

A. Montroll leaves to attend a meeting about 7:20 and returns about 7:40.

D. White: There has been much other interest voiced on this topic. City Councilors will be weighing in on these issues.

K. Sturtevant: So I will work on drafting some possible language?

VI. Downtown Form-Based Code

This presentation will not occur tonight due to time conflicts.

As approved by the Burlington Planning Commission on .

VII. Application for Certificate of Public Good

D. White: It seems everybody is applying for a Certificate of Public Good (CPG) for alternative power. The legislature has just changed the law. In the old north end on North Winooski Avenue, the new building that Redstone has under construction is specific to the concern. The panels out near the edges of the building are a spot where typically some screening would be expected. This one has some red flags; the City should look into participating in the hearing process.

Y. Bradley: Our understanding that it is Verizon installation, driven by Verizon, and we might suggest to the developer that it is unacceptable as is and will not be approved as presented.

L. Buffinton: I would encourage participating in this hearing and requesting a projected elevation.

A. Montroll: I represent folks who are negotiating with Verizon but it is a different entity and I don't think it is a conflict of interest.

D. White: It is the opportunity for the city to participate.

A. Montroll: Cell phone coverage is poor in this area. Their request is consistent with regional plan for cell coverage. There are ways for it to be screened.

D. White: Let's encourage this in a positive way.

B. Baker: The Commission doesn't have engineering expertise; our goals are the public good.

D. White: We don't have to solve the problem; the Public Service Board will address the problem.

L. Buffinton: In this neighborhood, the reception is good all of time, screening solutions for the panels is possible. She would like better photos of this project.

On a motion by J. Wallace-Brodeur, seconded by L. Buffinton, the Commission unanimously directed staff to participate in the act 248 process for this property.

VIII. Committee Reports

Ordinance Committee – Has been working on conditional uses. There are proposed amendments about conditional uses in several sections, inclusionary PUDs require a conditional use permit. Committee likes recommendations. The next conversation will be about major impact.

B. Baker: At an earlier meeting with the Mayor, he raised the issue that this revision to the inclusionary portion of the ordinance was coming. The Mayor needs to know if this is conjunctive with Form Based Code, both are independent with predictability and a rational process and are separate conversations, but do go hand in hand.

IX. Commissioners Items

L. Buffinton: Did everyone see the article on accessory units from the NY Times sent by E. Lee? In Burlington the obstacles are parking and lot coverage. They create a missed opportunity to encourage family togetherness. It would be great if we could look at the zoning ordinance in a manner that would be friendlier to accessory units. There is a conflict between coverage and density, especially in the RM zone.

X. Minutes/Communications

On a motion by A. Montroll, seconded by H. Roen, the Commission unanimously accepted the minutes of March 25, April 8, April 22, with corrections, and placed them on file.

As approved by the Burlington Planning Commission on .

DRAFT

XI. Executive Session – Director's Evaluation

On a motion by H. Roen, seconded by A Montroll, the Commission unanimously agreed to go into executive session.

On a motion by H. Roen, seconded by A. Montroll, the Commission unanimously agreed to close the executive session at 8:30 pm.

XII. Adjourn

On a motion by B. Baker, seconded by J. Wallace-Brodeur, the Commission unanimously adjourned at 8:35 pm.

_____ _____

Y Bradley, Chair Date

_____

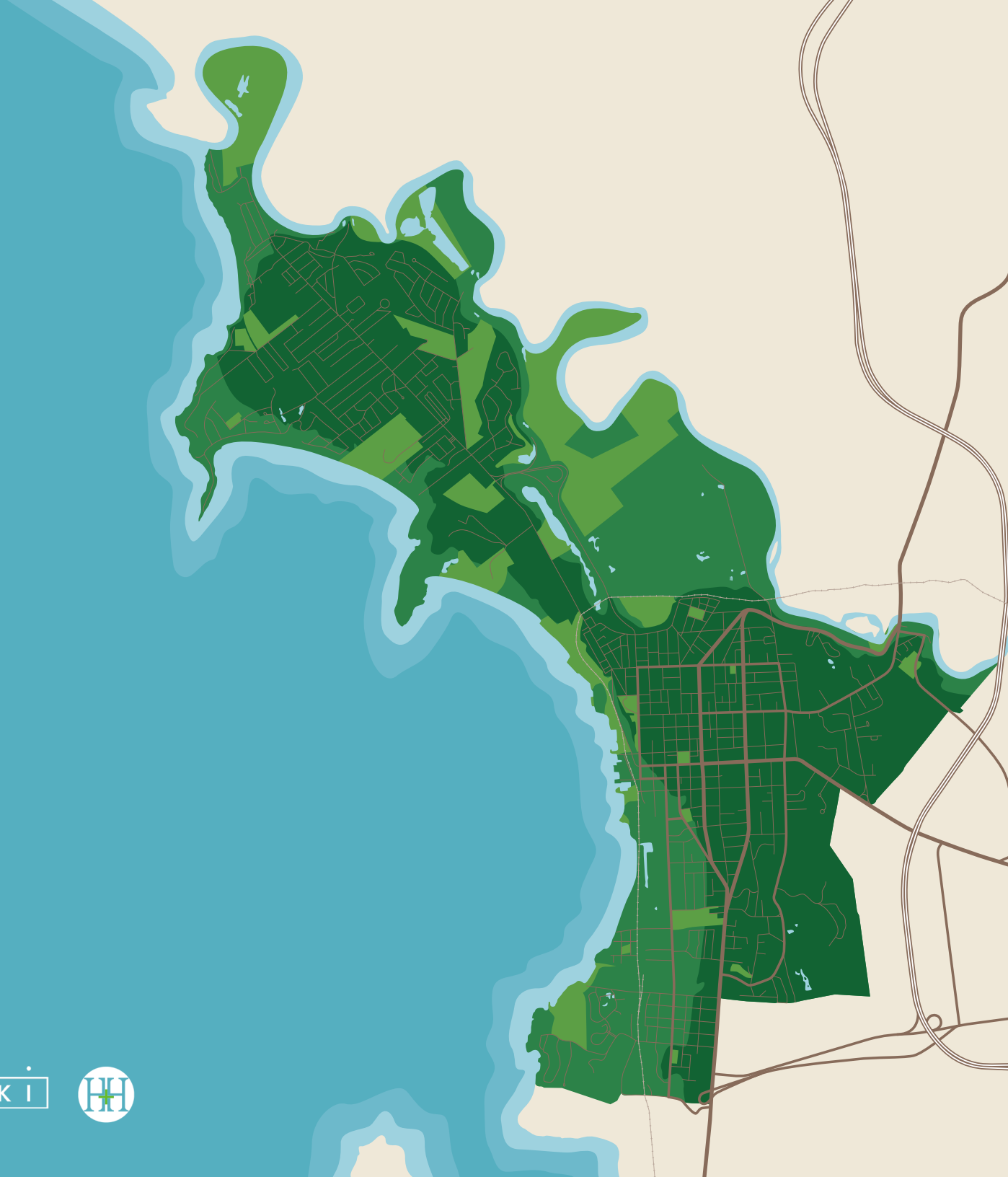
E. Tillotson, recording secretary

DRAFT

As approved by the Burlington Planning Commission on .

THE BURLINGTON VERMONT

PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN



MAY 2014

BURLINGTON
PARKS
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SASAKI

A Framework for Action

The 2014 Burlington Parks Master Plan is the initial Master Plan for the Burlington Parks and Recreation Department. The Plan provides a framework for decision making for future service delivery and resource allocation. The Plan process began in May 2013 and concluded in February of 2014. The Plan covers a 10 year period, 2014 through 2024.

The goal of the Plan, as outlined in the initial RFP was to: "Develop a community-supported plan that provides guidance for future development and redevelopment of the City's parks, recreation programming, waterfront, open space, trails and facilities. The Parks Master Plan will guide policy development, prioritize demands and opportunities, and generate a strategic action plan to be updated every three years. "The Parks Master Plan will be included as part of the current City of Burlington Comprehensive Plan.

In addition to the goal of the development of a community-supported plan that provides guidance for future development, other goals included:

- Integration of core values in the delivery of services
- Strengthening a more regional approach to parks and recreation services
- Aligning services and programs with changing demographics
- Creation of a narrative for the department to better tell its story and building brand and image
- Deploy departmental cultural change with new leadership

Future Positioning of the Department

The most significant element of the Master Plan is a call to action and future positioning of the department. The Master Plan includes several technical reports and analysis as well as community input. These elements are important in setting the stage for the most important part of the Plan: the Strategic Initiatives. Planning is important, but it's the implementation of the Plan that is most critical to ensure the department's success. The Master Plan will assist the department with ensuring resource allocation is determined according to the greatest community needs. It also positions the department to pro-actively make decisions and receive the greatest return on investment of taxpayer dollars. Finally, the Plan will become a major initiative for department employees and will provide them with a sense of direction in their daily work.

Context for the Plan

The Master Plan process included a review of several other existing or ongoing plans. This included a review of:

- Plan BTV: Downtown and Waterfront Master Plan
- 2004 Open Space Protection Plan and 2013 Update
- 2013 Chittenden County ECOS Plan
- 2012 Burlington Bike Path Feasibility Study and Bike Path Rehabilitation Project
- 2012 Imagine City Hall Park Master Plan
- FY13 and FY14 Penny for Parks Implementation Plan
- FY13 Capital Improvement Plan

Three of these plans, in particular, have relevance to the Parks Master Plan. These include Plan BTV, the 2004 Open Space Protection Plan and 2013 Update, and the 2013 Chittenden County ECOS Plan.

Plan BTV

BTV addresses comprehensive land use and development plans focused on Burlington's Downtown and Waterfront. The Plan integrated land use, transportation, land development, urban design and public infrastructure into one planning document. The Plan outlined seven themes:

- Vibrant Economy
- Transportation Choice
- Active and Healthy Living
- Access to Nature, Arts, People, Entertainment
- Environmental & Cultural Stewardship
- Sense of Place
- Creativity and Innovation

All of the themes have a relationship to parks and recreation services. In addition, several recommendations included in Plan BTV relate to the Parks and Recreation Department, such as Waterfront, Imagine City Hall Park and Battery Park Master Plans, marina support services, and implementation of recommendations from the Burlington Harbor Management Plan.

2013 Open Space Protection Plan Update

The 2013 Open Space Protection Plan (OSPP) update adapts the original vision and goals to reflect progress made on past goals and changes in the public perception of needs for open space. This plan included public input to test current public perception. Subsequently, the open space inventory was updated to reflect the current status and use of open space in the city. Then, community input and geographic information of the updated inventory were developed into a matrix that will be used to guide future open space acquisitions. Finally, policy goals were developed to guide future decisions relating to open space land uses. The list is comprised of both acquisition ideas as well as management recommendations for existing public land.

2013 Chittenden County ECOS Plan

The ECOS Plan serves as the combined Chittenden County Regional Plan, Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Goals of the Plan include:

- Natural Systems – Design and maintain a strategically planned and managed green infrastructure network composed of natural lands, working landscapes, and open spaces that conserve ecosystem values and functions, and provide associated benefits to our community.
- Social Community – Promote the skills, resources, and assurances needed for all community members to participate in the workforce and in their family, civic and cultural lives, within and among their neighborhoods, and in the larger community.
- Economic Infrastructure – Build the region's capacity for shared and sustainable improvements in the economic wellbeing of the community through support of both local and globally competitive initiatives.
- Built Environment - Make public and private investments in the built environment to minimize environmental impact, maximize financial efficiency, optimize social equity and benefits, and improve public health.

Plan Elements

The overall process of the Master Plan is represented in the image to the right. As evidenced in the process sequences, the Plan reviews the overall system with Values and Themes, supplemented by the specific areas of Department Operations, Parks and Recreation. All of this culminates into a call for action in the Planning for Action section of the Plan. The following section outlines the elements of the Plan and includes a brief description of each section of the report. The Framework for Action section was detailed in the introduction.

1 A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

2 SYSTEM VALUES & THEMES

3 THE BTV COMMUNITY

4 DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS

5 PARK RESOURCES

6 RECREATION PROGRAMS & SERVICES

7 PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Department Values

As part of the Master Plan process, Departmental values were established. These serve as the guiding principles in the way the Department will provide services. The values are:

- Accessibility: Emphasis on universal design principles and financial sensitivity for all parks and recreation programs.
- Integrity: Trust developed in doing our work in the public realm.
- Dependability: Service-oriented and responsive customer service organization.
- Health and Wellness: Focus on active and healthy lifestyles.
- Teamwork/Partnership: Confidence in our community and our department.
- Inclusive: Fostering cultures of all kinds.
- Quality: In everything we do.

System Themes

The Master Plan process resulted in the development of overall system themes, or key areas of focus and recommendations for the next 10 years. Recommendations and plan deployment will concentrate in these areas. The goal is to develop an overall systems vision for capital expenditures and the creation of funding priorities. The six system themes for Burlington Parks and Recreation include:

Meeting the Needs: Both gaps and surpluses were identified in the planning process. Gaps include specific sports facilities, indoor recreation space and participation in recreational programming. This plan identifies strategies to address current need and recommends a future process to adapt to changing demographics.

Inclusive Social Spaces: The Parks and Recreation Department has a significant role in creating opportunities for people to gather and interact, an especially important function given the city's role as a regional cultural hub. This is aligned with themes from Plan BTV and the Chittenden ECOS Plan of Sense of Place and Social Community.

Connected Parks and Neighborhoods: Burlington has adequate total park acreage, but not all types or neighborhoods are well served. The majority of the city has access to a park within a 10 minute walk, however there is limited access in wards one and six. This plan seeks to better link parks into the existing trail system and build on the existing trails.

Programming and Operations: Burlington is an active community with a robust recreation and programming component, yet participation in available programming lags behind national averages. This plan addresses both the tailoring of programming to community need as well as the need increased visibility, marketing and communications.

Stewardship and Sustainability: Urban parks offer more than simply a place to play and relax. As cities grow greener, the study and management of urban ecologies is becoming critical to understanding the way natural systems interact with the built city. This plan addresses stormwater and maintenance practices as critical to the long-term sustainability of the park system.

ASSESSING THE PARK SYSTEM

Department Operations

Financial Review

This review was an in depth analysis of the department of the Parks and Recreation's finances. It included a benchmark analysis comparing the department to national averages comparing personnel expenses, capital budgets, and organizational assets based on the population size. This tool will allow the department to evaluate resource allocation for the future.

Financial Benchmark Review

The following information reviews Burlington Parks and Recreation financial information as it relates to staffing and population comparisons (the complete spreadsheet is attached as a separate appendix). This data was derived from the National Recreation and Parks Association, PRORAGIS (Park and Recreation Operating Ratio and GIS) database. Eighty one agencies were selected as benchmark comparatives. All of the comparative agencies have a population of between 25,000 and 75,000, with a median population of approximately 48,000. The agencies are all departments within city governments. The cities are represented in approximately 20 states throughout the United States. It is important to note, very few agencies in the New England region have entered their data on the PRORAGIS site, so this region of the country is under-represented.

The number of full-time Parks and Recreation staff approaches the benchmark comparison of the upper quartile (75%) of 44 full-time staff. For the purposes of comparing park and recreation departments,

Full-Time Park and Recreation Staff	LQ*	Median	UQ*	Burlington
	19	30	44	40

* LQ=Lower Quartile
* UQ=Upper Quartile

Burlington's number of full-time staff is 40, which excludes six custodial positions servicing City buildings. Additionally, Burlington's cemetery staff is included in this number; the vast majority of park and recreation agencies do not manage cemeteries.

Total Personnel Expenditures (Dollars)	LQ*	Median	UQ*	Burlington
	1.5M	2.3M	3.4M	3.204M

* LQ=Lower Quartile
* UQ=Upper Quartile

The total Department salary budget is just under the upper quartile by $200,000. Comparing FTE's to the populations, there are 359 residents per FTE. This is closer to the lower quartile than the median.

Even with a personnel budget near the upper quartile, the total operating budget of $5,048,566 is closer to the median than the upper quartile. Sixty three percent of the operating budget is personnel related. The national average of the personnel expense compared to the total operating expense is closer to 50%. These expenses spread over the total population are at the national average at $119 per capita.

The result of the operation expenses being at or below average is that the revenue per capita and revenue per total operating expense are much higher than the national average. In fact, they are higher than the upper quartile by 19% in revenue per capita and 30% in revenue per total operating expense. The total revenue for the department is $6,111,485. Of the total revenue, 58% ($3,564,800) comes from non-tax revenue. This is also 19% higher than the upper quartile.

Burlington has a lower acres/1,000 population than the median city in the random sample, as 12.2 acres. However, acres of parkland maintained per maintenance FTE (full-time equivalent) is significantly higher than other reporting agencies, suggesting the need for more park maintenance staff. While the average city has park maintenance staff maintaining almost 17 acres per FTE, Burlington staff maintain 78% more than the upper quartile of reporting agencies, at almost 40 acres per FTE. It is worth noting, the database does not take into account the amount of mowable acres or undeveloped park acreage. Therefore, there are limitations to the data.

Along with efficiency in park maintenance, the Department also is more productive in generating revenue per capita. Whereas, the median agency produces $37/capita, Burlington produces $84.24/capita. Correspondingly, the agency greatly exceeds the percent of revenue per total operating expense of 70.6%. The median agency produces 33.33% of revenue/total operating expense.

	LQ*	Med.	Average	UQ*	BTV
Acres/1,000 population	10.3	14.4	16.7	20.2	12.2
Acres of Parkland Maintained per Maintenance FTE	6.1	12.7	16.9	22.4	39.85
Population per FTE	6.62	1,187		2,224	359
Revenue/Capita	$15	$37		$65	$84.24
Revenue/Total Operating Expense	22.81	33.33		52.77	70.6%
Total Capital Cost/Capita	$4.94	$14		$40	$8.27
Tax Cost/Capita	$16.9	$39.2		$61.5	$60.18

As the numbers indicate (diagram lower left), Burlington is under-represented in total capital cost/capita. The lowest reporting agencies have $4.94/capita of capital dollars, and median agencies have $14/capita. Burlington spends $8.27/capita. This is important as this funding assists with infrastructure improvements.

Organizational and Leadership Assessment

One of the elements included in the scope of the Master Plan was an Organizational and Leadership Review. The full report is not included within the body of the Plan as it serves as an internal document for Departmental Leadership.

The purpose of the Assessment was to review the organization staffing and structure. Organizational and leadership strengths have a significant role in the successful deployment of the Parks Master Plan. A substantial part of the information and recommendations included in the Assessment came from staff input, from three employee focus groups. These groups included Leadership Team, Parks, and Recreation staff, representing a cross section of all divisions and levels of staff within the agency.

The analysis also included a review of the organization chart and review of Departmental culture and change in

leadership.

The goals of the Assessment included:

- Analysis of the organization structure
- Review of staffing levels
- Employee perspectives of staffing structure, and future human resource requirements

Some consensus information includes:

- Most employees feel the organization structure works well
- Staff generally feel stretched with workload
- Job responsibility organization seems to be an area in need of further clarification and definition
- A lack of marketing support exists, which impacts recreation program registration, community awareness, and a lack of overall brand of the Department
- There are limitations to current technology use, but there are efforts being made to improve in this area
- Parks staff have responsibility beyond typical park maintenance duties as they are also responsible for custodial and building maintenance of City buildings
- A lack of programming support exists at the Miller Center
- Employees appreciate the change in leadership in the Department, and there is a general feeling the Department is moving in the right direction
- Employees have high regard for their ability to partner with other organizations
- Employees feel as though the Department does a good job connecting with residents

Park Resources

Park and Facility Assessment, Inventory, and Level of Service Standards

The purpose of this assessment is to provide a detailed synopsis of all parks, waterfront, open space, trails and facilities located within the City of Burlington. The assessment provides a thorough inventory, analysis of forecasted needs, existing gaps in the system, and strategic recommendations. Additionally, the inventory includes an overview of needed renovations, improvements, and system opportunities. This section also includes Level of Service Standards, or information about parkland, facility, and amenity comparisons to other similarly sized cities throughout the United States.

Mapping

This process includes park mapping by classification and major amenities by facility standards. The Consulting Team utilized GIS to create a service area analysis for specific parks, waterfront, open space, trails and facilities. The mapping process will be used in conjunction with the standards analysis and will form the basis for identifying gaps in service and potential opportunities for future facility development and capital planning.

Recreation Programs and Services

Demographics and Trend Report

This report includes data from the Burlington Parks and Recreation Department and supplemental information from census tract demographic data obtained from Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI),

the largest research and development organization dedicated to Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and specializing in population projections and market trends. For comparison purposes, data was also obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. This analysis includes information such as household income, ethnicity, gender, age, and other demographic information. Also included is a trends analysis outlining local, regional, and national recreational trends. Key trends are identified and are applied to the department for decision making and future positioning for the Department.

Recreation Assessment

This assessment includes a review of programs and service offerings of the Burlington Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department, including core program identification, a current program assessment, marketing approaches and program guide review, recreation programming standards, customer requirements, and measures. The assessment also includes a review of age segment distribution of offerings, program lifecycle analysis and a SWOT analysis for future program direction.

Visioning Section

Visioning included a discussion of the overall findings from all of the technical reports, Community survey, and community input. Discussion occurred during a staff workshop to review the findings and recommendations as well as a brainstorm exercise to prioritize System Themes. Departmental values and were also reviewed. This information then resulted in final Parks Master Plan recommendations.

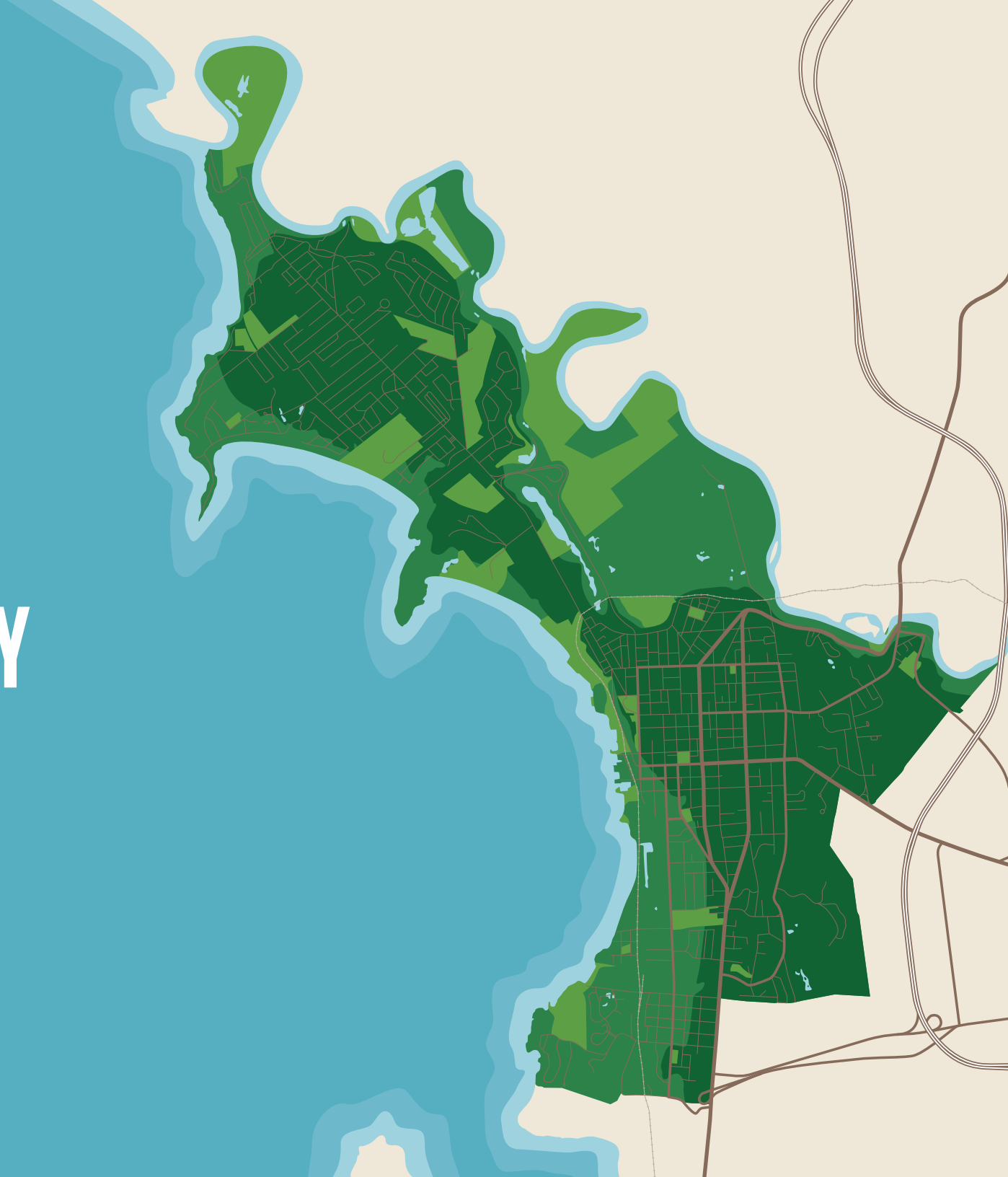
Strategic Initiatives/Action Plan

Strategic Initiatives include a listing of recommendations targeted during the next 10 years. The Initiatives are categorized according to short term, midterm and long term timeframes, which provides a review cycle of every three years

Implementation Guidelines

This section lists a series of guidelines for successful implementation including methods of monitoring progress, reporting results, and communication with City leaders, staff members, partners, and the public.

THE BTV COMMUNITY



Outreach Efforts

An important element of the Plan included a variety of input processes to ensure resident participation into the future direction of the agency. The input process included public meetings, an open house, a series of focus groups and stakeholder meetings, a statistically valid survey, and online engagement tool.

Community Survey Results

A statistically valid community survey was administered as part of the project and assessed satisfaction levels, facility use information, program and facility needs, and how well needs are being met. Over 400 households returned the survey, which greatly exceeded the minimum number of surveys required for the analysis. The survey tool is useful in identifying priorities and corresponding resource allocation.

Online Mapping Tool and Survey

The statistically valid household survey was complemented by the launch of an online mapping tool, which invited community members to weigh in qualitatively on the park system. Community participation in the "MyBurlington" survey remained lower than the household survey, reaching 70 by the end of the project. However, the data received helped to illuminate issues within individual parks and reinforced the strength of the waterfront.

Focus Groups

Additionally, the Consulting Team met with Burlington staff members in a series of focus groups. The input and review summary will be useful in determining future programming and facility opportunities, potential partnerships, opportunities for improvement, and challenges the department will face in the next five years.

Partnerships

This section reviews the department's significant partners with specific focus on areas needing strengthening. Partnerships are critical to the department's success. While the department has an excellent reputation for collaboration and partnerships, there is always opportunities for improvement. This is particularly true for ongoing dialogue and relationships with other government providers of parks and recreation in the region.

Community Input Summary

The Master Plan process included a series of public input methods, including online comments and suggestions by the public, a statistically valid community survey, five focus groups, 12 key leader meetings, community open house, and three public meetings at the start, mid-point and end of the process. In addition, the process included participation in a community bike event as part of the Bike Path Rehabilitation Project and participation in Mornings with Miro meeting, with Mayor Miro Weinberger. The input sessions also included a series of focus groups with Burlington staff members. Furthermore, residents were asked to participate online with comments about the plan.

The following is a summary of all of the feedback generated from the meetings.

1. What are examples of organizational strengths that we need to make sure we build on for the development of the Plan?

Vision – New Departmental leadership is well suited to sustain the organization. Many sessions included consideration of what talents are required in today's environment.

Sensitivity to the diverse needs of Burlington as a community – The citizens of Burlington expressed gratitude for their opportunities (and more than a little frustration at the inability to optimize the assets for everyone's needs).

Good Will and Partnerships with people and (local and regional) organizations – Given the current mood of more demand for services and spending less, the Department benefits from positive relationship with the community. That said, there is a sense that too much planning and not enough performance is becoming SOP in Burlington.

The local population is passionate about their parks, are active participants in services, and frequent users of the system. Parks and Recreation is in charge of some of Burlington's most iconic and unique features, which are not limited to Oakledge Park, Leddy Beach, North Beach (and Campground), the Burlington Bike Path, Waterfront Park and City Hall Park, but also many other parks as well. The Department offers a diverse set of programs and services attracting all sorts of visitors.

The Department utilizes a collaborative spirit and maintains effective partnerships, which the organization needs to sustain. The reputation also speaks to the community support and behooves the organization to reach back with a robust media presence. There are a number of parks and connecting trails that will need to continue to be maintained due to the walker and cyclist's wear and tear. Funding is the final part of the plan, even though it may or may not be an organizational strength, it needs resolve.

2. What do you consider to be the most significant issues facing the Department over the next five years?

Funding – The best planning in the world will not deliver the resources needed. This topic was discussed in nearly every group.

Priorities – Though many ideas have merit, only a few can be implemented. Transparency (such as Pennies for Parks) is seen as a positive approach to planning what

actions are undertaken.

Effectiveness – Some clear take-aways from the meetings included issues that will impact most of the users of the system such as connecting the bike path north-to-south through downtown including public transportation options to get people to and from resources or resolving issues about how the docks and lake interfaces are managed (some abandoned land issues), etc.

Infrastructure-- Some of the most significant issues mentioned most frequently relate to the inventory of assets, infrastructure of trails and parks, and how to fund improvements. Amenities have been getting a lot of use, a good sign, but need protection and care. Courts and other playing surfaces are also in need of attention and need to be tended properly or updated due to usage.

Diversity--The Department needs to be agile and flexible in being able to plan for increasing diversity of the community. Engaging all aspects of the community may be difficult, but clarity of process within a concrete plan will excite to public.

Other comments include:

- Long-term emphasis on moving in the right direction
- We have orphan parcels that are not managed
- Look outside the city for a more regional approach
- There is no planning process for the urban reserve
- Having an answer for people informing them about when things will happen

3. What opportunities are there for improvement or areas of weakness the Department needs to strengthen in order to effectively implement the plan in these specific areas?

Eliminate Analysis Paralysis – Overcome a minor negative reputation of inactivity.

Act Decisively and Communicate Clearly (using means that are convenient for everyone including third-party resources) so that all constituents understand the Department's priorities.

Continued, Customized Outreach to all parts of the community – Burlington does not see itself as a place that is like other places. The ability to provide feedback that demonstrates sensitivity to this concern would earn many fans and reinforce positive impressions.

What seems to be the motivation for the weaknesses of the Department is congestion, a congestion of people and ideas. Communication then is important with the community, as is the relationship's with schools and public works.

Accessibility and space have become an issue; if you plan for more parking it takes up space. There is a lack of accessibility for canoes, kayakers, etc. The parks now become crowded which leads to a lot of responses calling for more open spaces – with of course includes the need for reliable accessibility (ADA) and the amenities of maintenance/garbage/safe-signage and ecological protection. The list of parks with the most room for improvement includes: Leddy Park, City Hall Park, bike paths, Waterfront Park, Arms Park, and boat houses. The Moran Plan is a concern. A concert venue would be nice, centrally located and can house the amenities such as restrooms and water fountains.

There must be cost conscious behavior, but ultimately the general idea is getting people to come, stay, and spend money. Possible new ideas include building a year round regional ice rink, accommodating diversity, a pool, and attending to the new Americans – resettling to an American way of life. Other general themes include:

• We try to find the perfect plan and we end up not doing anything

• Repeatedly told things will happen, but they don't

• The Department is too busy, perhaps that is the scope of the operation

• They need to learn how to say no and have a priority list that governs those decisions (responding to squeaky wheels vs. what's good for the whole)

• There are many people who are willing to pitch in. (Local Motion) Harnessing this power is an opportunity

Beyond the major themes of parks, open space, amenities, the waterfront, facilities are more specific weakness to address:

• Pennies for Parks is an indication that projects are appropriately developed based on the needs of the population

• Fuel Depot off Oak Ledge Park creates disjointed green corridor

• Wait list is 10 years for a slip

• Scholarships for up to 50% off, but it's complex and to qualify and register

• World refugee day celebration at Schmanska Park should continue

• Let the market influence what stays on the roster of programs

4. Do you have any suggestions for future programs, facilities, services that currently do not exist?

Two services that have the most suggestions relate to biking and the waterfront's marina. As trails develop, the public could bike to trails instead of driving and then biking on trails, linking all the parks. Create solutions to reduce parking, as cars take up space. Give that space to the people especially around the water's edge. Establish more bike stations, possibly even a bike valet.

For parks, establish park programming and in case of emergency have a protocol response. Safety is a concern, with suggestions of placing food/water in parks, plus easier accessibility with regards to ADA and trails. Accessibility too is important for the waterfront's marina as respondents wish to attract more boats to the dock.

Also receiving attention are the open spaces. They have both the potential to be a revenue generator (solar field, sledding hill) but could also be a home to 'sketchy' characters. Suggested as well is to create open spaces that are more public with community gardens, a warming shelter and winter village. Better signage and connect with public works for storm water management would be helpful. Think flexibly with regards to the new Americans.

Lastly, new sustainable sources of funding should be explored to ensure the ability to maintain and upgrade infrastructure and amenities in the future. Diversification of revenue streams would help bring

stable funding for year-over-year improvements to Parks and Recreation managed spaces.

- Grilling facilities need upgrading
- Pond hockey tournaments, Broomball, Curling tournament using milk carton, disc golf
- Cyclecross
- Leddy parking lot (a huge underused space in a great location)

5. Any ideas how the Department can strengthen or build new partnerships within the City or regionally?

With many ideas for strengthening and building partnerships, schools comes up on top as the one most mentioned as an opportunity be it parks as outdoor labs for scientific study, or creating a student run community or finally, teaming with the YES program. The second most common responses relates to sponsors and commercial ventures, which for some may have an unwelcome influence but some have a 20-year history with certain sponsor/volunteers. Key Bank is also a long-standing sponsor. Continue sharing common vendors.

To maintain and obtain safe, manicured trials/bike paths teaming up with UVM ensures the path's safety. Other partnerships include: InnerVale is a key connector, work alongside private clubs, friends groups, AARP and involvement with a regional health initiative. Here are possible partnerships and other thoughts:

- My relationship (Fish and Wildlife) with the City is good; we want to provide better access; the city is improving this, but we want to focus on North 40 for boat access
- Leave-no-trace sensibility and accountability, public health community
- Non-profits – Local Motion, Skate companies could give contributions
- Enable access to lake as a "trade" with other regions (you can use our parks, we can use your golf courses?)
- "Velo vert" puts the BVT paths to shame (it is a rails to trails project) Canadian Park System is highly regarded
- Association of Africans living in Vermont, Vermont refugee resettlement program
- Dog walker volunteer brigade
- Agricultural land, Campground and fires
- Licensing for food trucks at Oakledge Park on weekends or concessions at little league games
- Accessibility group looking at issues particularly around parks
- Encourage structured opportunities to ski
- Terrain park in the winter; maybe private partners
- We need more things to do in the winter time
- Sponsor interns working with the department for marketing support

6. Do you have any ideas for improvement in the Department's environmental stewardship, sustainable practices?

Create more pocket parks and an emerald necklace; create connectivity for trails, habitats and parks. Find out ways to lessen energy bills-lifecycle of design is important to consider. A great opportunity is composting as a way to deal with waste in parks, but what to do with filter storm water, runoff? Mowing practices and treatment of organic materials are

a concern. Create marketing and public relations strategy to continually put those issues in front. Lastly, as law states, recycling bins must be placed side by side with garbage cans. Other notes:

- Parts of Leddy Park looks like the woods! That is fantastic!
- Access to the rinks could be made more efficient
- One way streets have destroyed how people move around the city
- Parks needs to express better what they do. Pennies for Parks? Why not a dime? Don't they deserve it?
- Straightjacketed by "internal" rules. Paths that are dirt, erosion… paved paths would break "impervious cover" restrictions contribute to the problem
- CIP to identify projects that are cost avoidance or efficiency
- Parks needs a focus…Leddy has so many inefficiencies. We need to look at these issues and should be evaluated
- Better coordination of stewardship program. Groups adopt parks

7. How would you assess the Department's efforts in communicating with its residents? Any ideas for improvement? How would you assess the Department's brand and image?

There appears to be lots of room for improvement with regards to brand and image. Although there is pertinent information on the Website, it may not be easy to find. There needs to be an upgrade and fresher take on communication on the Website. A blog format is recommended allowing for conversation, and survey monkey publicizes progress. The marketing should be inclusive and should solve the ability to reach all parts of the community.

The image has room for improvement. The logo and look appear out of date. As one participant expressed "Graphic design really does matter," so a cohesive signage aesthetic is a specific example of improvement. Because things appear out of date, possibly partner with a marketing firm to freshen up the look of signage/brand/logo. Other notes on communication include:

- Jen Francis wants to reach out to community
- The Department is better at reaching out to the community
- An accessible facility can become obsolete just from steady (not increasing) use
- There should be an online list of amenities and parks
- If neighbors are the volunteers, they have ownership and want to limit use
- Penny for Parks Web page that looks like the bulletin board – show progress, context
- There is no consistency in look between the City and Enjoy Burlington
- People take for granted what they offer, but association isn't always there
- Front Porch Forum is effective
- The marketing (tourism) platforms should be better connected to the larger area – Lake Champlain "Byway"

8. One of the hallmarks of a great parks and recreation agencies is their ability to provide access to all. Are there underserved populations we need to make sure we address?

Remarks regarding the hallmarks of a great park: The more popular and 'must haves' of a great park are the basics such as space, safety, maintenance and

beauty. Expanding on those four hallmarks, the space must be welcoming while not overcrowded with easy accessibility to both community space and private spots. Signage, restrooms and proper infrastructure ensure those safe and welcoming places. Maintenance is important for the health of the ecosystem and botanical diversity of the park. Lastly, beauty is a sought after commodity both in terms of art and architecture and in terms of a sanctuary and mother earth. Most respondents mention walking paths and opportunities for exercise as other hallmarks of a great park system.

An example of the way to go about providing access to all includes a cost model with the two bins being parks and recreation. Also, the organization must protect assets and acquire parkland. More remarks regarding hallmarks and providing access:

- Justification and transparency is critical
- Act 250 is extreme – group is supportive but some language protects residents' interests over public good (Lake street resident resent Penguin Plunge in their front yards)
- Does the Department/population embrace the entrepreneurial plan to finance programs? Master Plan scares me- start with the customer, consider the assets. How are those two entities brought together?
- Reconsider the marina
- There should be one central park in Burlington – City Hall Park, Waterfront Park

Remarks regarding the under- served populations:

- Some parks are more accessible than others. How can we create strategies that work within the public, including the North End, which has the size of the park serving the right population? Cultural events, schools, and the United Way are all opportunities to serve and include new Americans.

Other respondents include the elderly, public transit users, physically disabled as potentially under-served populations. Also mentioned:

- It is challenging with non-English speakers. The success stories are based on neighborly behavior.
- Those who should be considered may not be in the room. Take the process to "target populations"
- United Way is a good connector
- A possible collaboration right away for plazas, slow streets, etc. (Kids can play in the street.)

9. Remarks regarding ensuring the plan's success:

This is a good time in terms of economy, management, culture shift and opportunity, so the expectations and enthusiasm are high. Due to the excitement for the plan, feedback and an active and transparent plan process are expected for the plan's success. Parks are for the people; clarity of the to-do list within the concrete plan is owed to them. Also, each park may need mini-neighbor based boards and plans presented park by park. Ultimately, community input is crucial as is the continuous feedback and coordination of funding will ensure the plan's success. Other comments:

- If the plan is neighborhood-based – do you have special assessments for particular areas?
- All-season parks are needed
- Park issues are their issues, but they are City issues too
- The city has underfunded its building assets
- The arts gets 50% of funding outside of the City
- There will be a number of capital campaigns such as the library

10. Can you think of any questions I have not covered or any additional information you would like to share?

- There doesn't seem to be a lot of reaching out to other communities
- Make urban environment cleaner, safer
- Accountability from users – make it your own!
- Run-off is a HUGE problem
- Make the survey methods clear and demonstrate the thought process is right-headed
- Conservation Board does the Open Space Plan – The Master Plan should be more of an action plan to demonstrate priorities for easements, acquisitions, of land for public purpose. (East/West connectivity for example.) Let's see what people want. We have half-cent conservation fund… the city needs to know that the fund is being used in a transparent way. Plan should empower ACTION. There always lots of talk. I want to see stuff happen.
- This Plan is critical to BTV success. I don't hear anything back in terms of keeping the public engaged
- Battery Park is an architectural park
- We are on a long term effort to be more focused on metrics through Citi stats

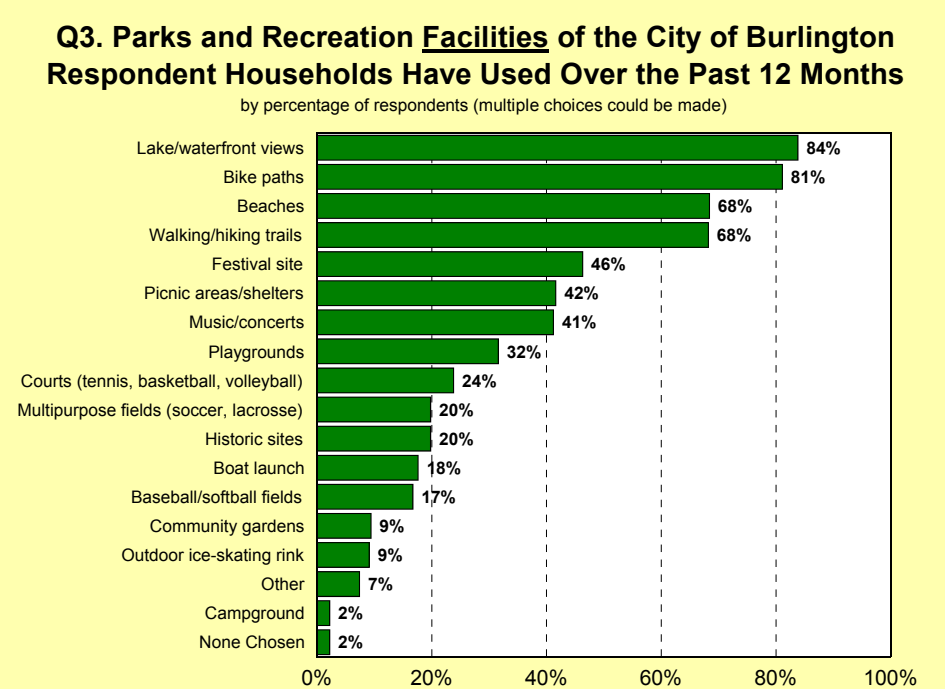
Community Survey Results

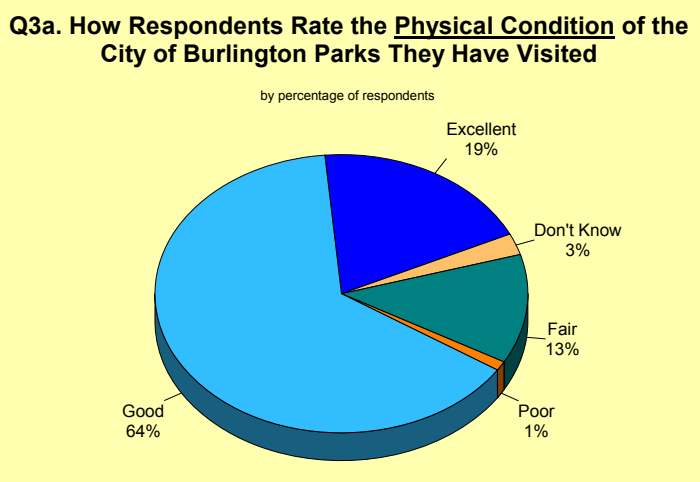
Leisure Vision conducted a Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey between August and September of 2013 to help establish usage and satisfaction for current parks and facilities and to determine priorities for the future development of parks and recreation facilities, programs and services within the City of Burlington. The survey was administered by mail and by phone. Leisure Vision worked extensively with City of Burlington staff in the development of the survey questionnaire. This work allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future system.

Surveys were mailed to a random sample of 2,000 households in the City of Burlington. The same day the surveys were mailed, each household that was to receive a survey also received an electronic voice message encouraging them to complete the survey. The goal was to obtain a total of at least 400 completed surveys. A total of 551 surveys were completed. The results of the random sample of 551 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least =/--4.2%. The return rate was 28%. The complete survey results are included in a separate document, complete with all cross tabulation information. The following information includes a brief summary of the results.

According to the survey, households identified Waterfront Park as the most used during the past 12 months at 81%. A close second was Oakledge Park at 69% in which households have used during the past 12 months. Overall, when asked, 83% of respondents rated the physical condition of City of Burlington Parks as either excellent (19%) or good (64%).

A series of questions were asked of Household Respondents regarding programs and services. Based on the sum of respondent's top two choices, the parks and recreation program services that households identified as most important include: times programs are offered (42%), quality of instructors (36%), and location of programs (32%). Of the 23% of households that indicated that they participate in recreation programs, 90% were either very satisfied (42%) or somewhat satisfied (48%) with the location of programs. Eighty-seven percent (87%) were either very





satisfied (44%) or somewhat satisfied (43%) with the safety of programs. Eighty-six percent were either very satisfied (28%) or somewhat satisfied (58%) with the times programs are offered.

When asked about the overall quality of the recreation programs in which households have participated, 32 % rated the overall quality as being excellent and 57% rated the quality as good. Households surveyed also identified parks and recreation programs that they have a need for. Sixty-one percent (61%) indicated a need for special events. Other activities included: Outdoor winter recreation (54%), adult fitness and wellness programs (41%), nature programs/environmental education (37%), boating and sailing activities (35%), and adult continuing education programs (31%).

Special events was also ranked the highest (34%) as a program that respondents participate in the most while outdoor winter recreation (26%) was second and ice-skating/figure skating, boating and sailing activities and youth sports programs were third (11%).

One key to providing quality programming is that it also matches community needs. As part of this survey, citizens were asked how well the facilities and programs meet the community's needs. Facilities play a crucial part in meeting these needs. According to the survey, 88% of households indicated a need for walking and biking trails. Other facilities where there is a significant need indicated were beach areas (75%), large community

parks (68%), and small neighborhood parks (65%). This apparent need is also directly related to the types of facilities that are felt to be the most important to the households surveyed. Of the top four choices, walking and biking trails (54%), beach areas (29%), and small neighborhood parks (26%) were the most important.

Of the programs indicated as meeting the needs, ice skating met the highest percentage of household needs at 75%. Other programs meeting the needs with a high percentage of the community are youth sports (69%), before and after school programs (57%) and youth summer camps (57%). However, unlike the facilities, the programs that are reported to be most important to the households do not correspond with those currently meeting the greatest need. These programs with the greatest "value" are special events (37%), outdoor winter recreation (34%) and adult fitness and wellness (24%).

The overall level of satisfaction of services provided in relation to outdoor facilities was very high. On average, over 78% of the households surveyed were either "very" or "somewhat" satisfied with the number of parks and walking/biking trails along with the maintenance of these parks. When asked for a level of support that respondents would give to improve existing parks and facilities, 87% responded that they would be "very" or "somewhat" supportive. This is not surprising due to the high percentage of satisfaction. There is also a correlation between the level of support to improve the facilities with those facilities that the respondents felt were most important.

Marketing plays an important role in creating awareness of services and amenities. There cannot be an assumption that there is a general knowledge of these services because they are a part of the community. Sixty-one percent (61%) of the households surveyed indicated they learned about department programs and services from the brochure. Other methods indicated were: word of mouth (52%), newspaper (47%), website (39%) and flyers at facilities (28%). However, when asked what prevents respondents from using department facilities and programs, 29% stated that they do not know what is being offered. Twenty percent (20%) indicated that their particular interest in a program or facility is not offered.

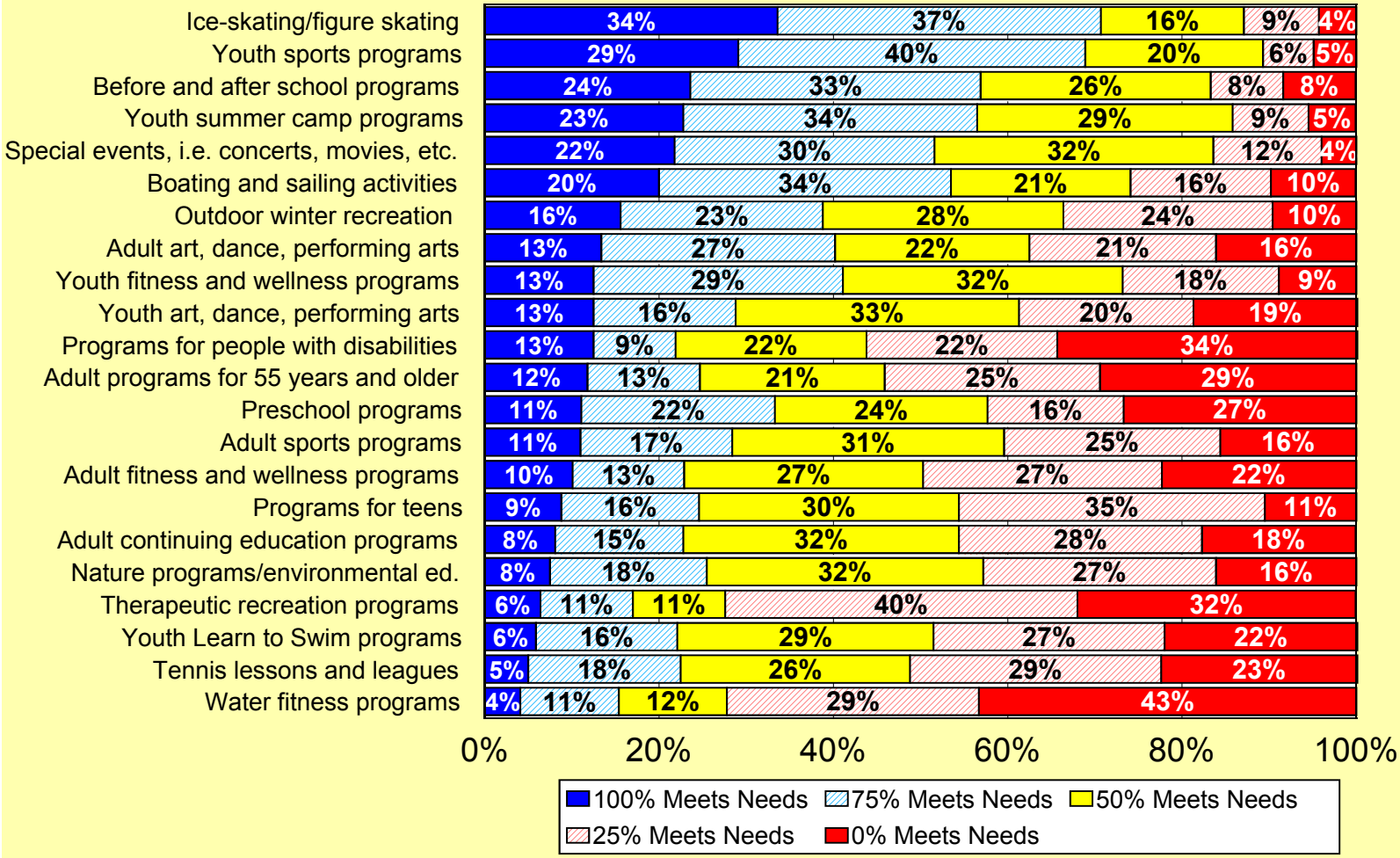
Partnership Review

One of the elements included in the Master Plan was a review of existing partnerships as well as opportunities for new areas of collaboration. Partnership review included discussion with other City departments, neighboring park and recreation agencies, and the Burlington School District. Beyond discussions of those relationships, the department also has opportunities to pursue public private partnership opportunities as a way of augmenting department resources.

During the public input process, a focus group was held with staff from neighboring parks and recreation agencies to discuss opportunities to working together. Currently, not much collaboration exists, and there is a feeling of duplication of services among agencies. The meeting was attended by staff from the City of Winooski, South Burlington, and the Winooski Valley Park District. The park district includes seven municipalities, including Burlington. At this meeting, the attendees all expressed interest in more fully developing collaborative approaches to the provision of parks and recreation services. They thought a good start would be to simply find out what each agency

Q9a. How Well Parks and Recreation Programs Offered by the City of Burlington Meet the Needs of Respondent Households

by percentage of respondents (with a need for facilities)



is doing as well as having ongoing group meetings to share program collaboration ideas.

At this time, agencies have a difficult time fielding enough teams for athletic leagues. This was an obvious area for collaboration. Winooski has a need to find basketball courts for youth leagues. There was also discussion about the possibility of teaming together for water based events such as kayaking.

Currently, the department is involved in partnerships with Safe Routes to School, and Local Motion in relation to Go for Gold and Bike Path connections research. These relationships are working well.

The department currently works closely with other City departments, including the Department of Public Works and Burlington Economic Development. Strengthening these relationships may result in greater efficiency and effectiveness as well as improve Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department's contribution to the City's economic development.

Another significant partnership that exists currently and has potential for further development includes the Burlington School District. The City is currently collaborating on cost control measures, which will include the Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department. Indoor recreation space is a need for the community. As a result, there may be opportunities to consider recreation needs in future school renovations. In addition, there may also be opportunities with private schools, colleges, and the University of Vermont for joint approaches to program spaces.

The Burlington Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department also desires to develop more Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). These cover the gambit from "outsourcing", to traditional public-private partnerships, to privatization. In each case, this is a means to apply the resources of the private-sector in meeting the needs of the public.

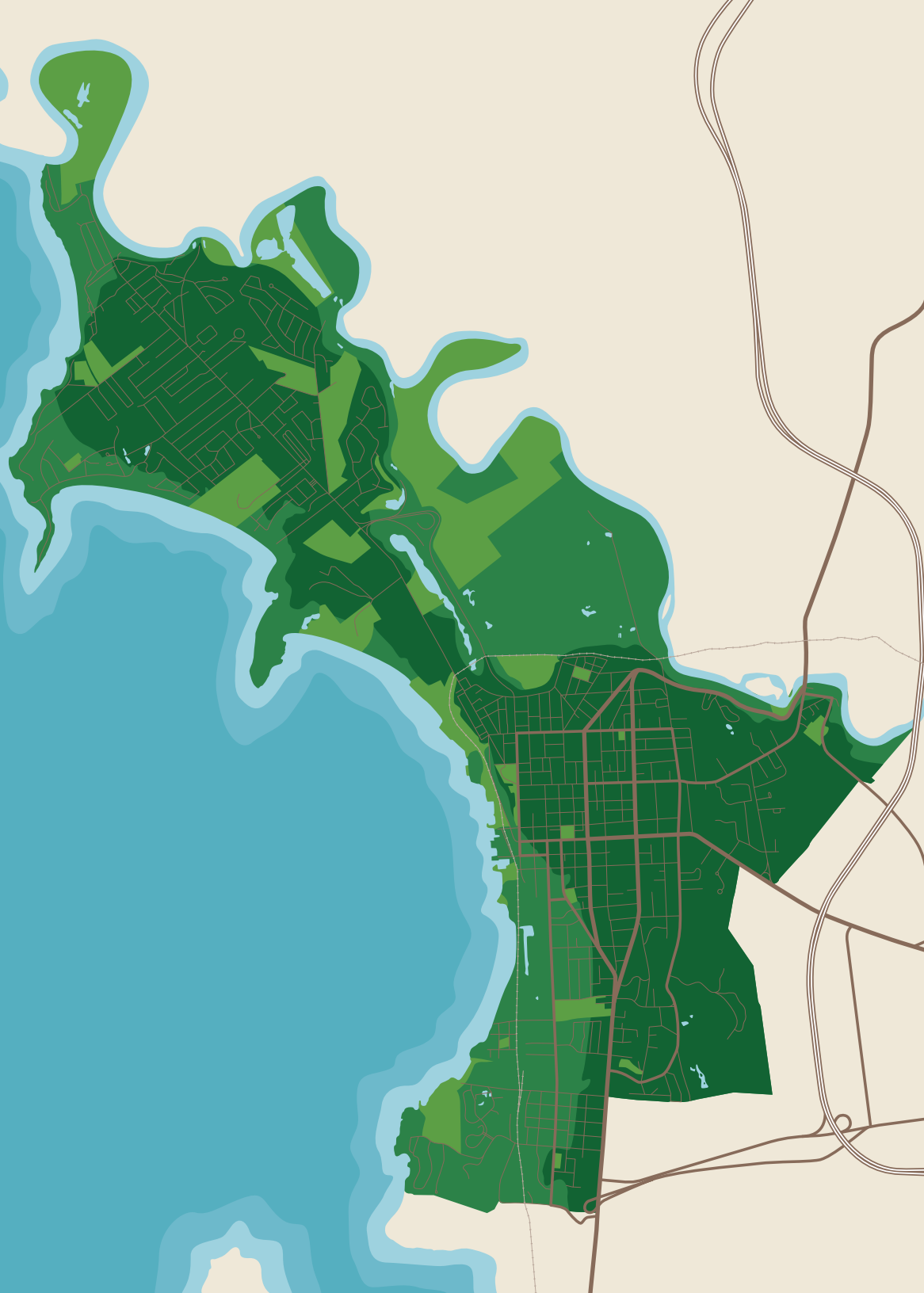
- Outsourcing is the contracting by a public agency for the completion of government functions by a private-sector organization. The government agency provides payment for services and/or facilities through government funds for the execution of a function that may have previously been done by the agency itself.
- Privatization is the sale of a government owned asset to the private-sector, for private operation of a function that might have previously been done by the public-sector.
- Public-private partnerships are a means of utilizing private-sector resources in a way that is a blend of outsourcing and privatization. PPPs can involve the design, construction, financing, operation and maintenance of public infrastructure or facilities, or the operation of services, to meet public needs. The objective of a PPP is to provide a more efficient and cost effective means of providing the same or better level of service, at a saving to the public.

There is tremendous growth in outsourcing, privatization, and PPPs around the country. Today, the average American city contracts out 23 of its 65 basic municipal services to the private-sector.

The department has identified future development that could potentially include public-private partnerships. Possible ideas include City Hall Park, City Hall Park, Blanchard Beach and Blodgett Park.

The department could also create a foundation to augment financial resources. Many agencies use foundations to assist with fund raising for special events, developing capital campaigns for new facilities, or creating scholarship programs for economically underprivileged families.

DEMOGRAPHIC & TREND REPORT



Demographics and Trends

The following report is a culmination of information derived from Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), The Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) and Physical Activity Council (PAC). This information compiles results for age, gender, race, ethnicity and household income of Burlington residents and compares the data to state and national statistics. Demographic projections from ESRI give an outlook through 2017. Recreational trends are explored at the local and national levels to direct future planning.

Methodology

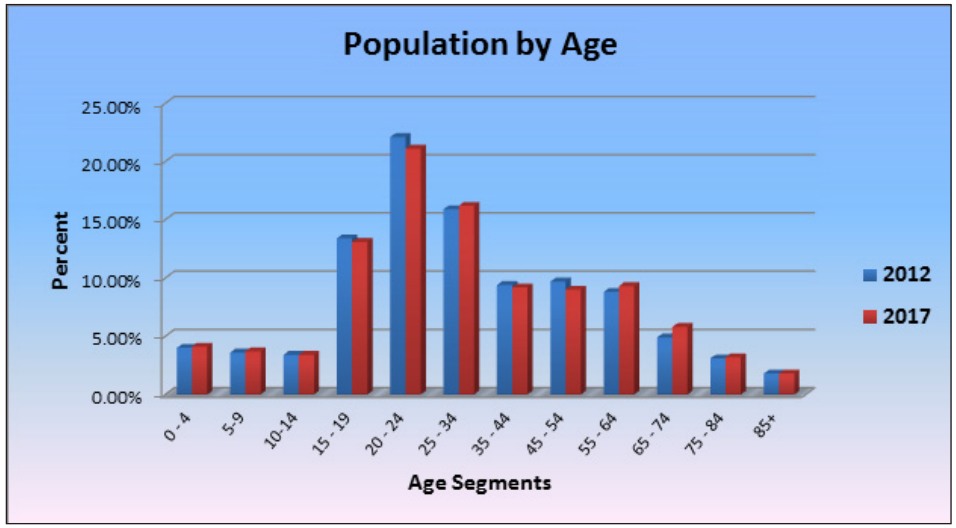
Demographic data used for the analysis was obtained from Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI), the largest research and development organization dedicated to Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and specializing in population projections and market trends. All data was acquired in October 2013, and reflects actual numbers as reported in the 2010 US Bureau of the Census and demographic projections for 2012 and 2017 as estimated by ESRI. The City of Burlington was utilized as the demographic analysis boundary.

Age Segment and Gender

Age segments appear to remain relatively constant with a slight decrease in ages 15-24 and 35-44 and the greatest decrease occurring for ages 45-54 by 2017. The greatest increases by 2017 will be ages 65-74, a testament to the aging baby boomer population. From a program and services perspective, this suggests a need to expand services for the active adult population.

Overall, males represent 48.6% of the population and females represent 51.4%. Graph below.

	Census 2010		2012		2017	
Population by Age	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0 - 4	1,730	4.1%	1,729	4.0%	1,752	4.1%
5 - 9	1,565	3.7%	1,558	3.6%	1,579	3.7%
10 - 14	1,476	3.5%	1,456	3.4%	1,490	3.4%
15 - 19	5,807	13.7%	5,729	13.4%	5,676	13.1%
20 - 24	9,250	21.8%	9,456	22.1%	9,125	21.1%
25 - 34	6,666	15.7%	6,787	15.9%	7,002	16.2%
35 - 44	4,096	9.7%	4,001	9.4%	3,992	9.2%
45 - 54	4,248	10.0%	4,133	9.7%	3,898	9.0%
55 - 64	3,593	8.5%	3,760	8.8%	3,997	9.3%
65 - 74	1,948	4.6%	2,081	4.9%	2,515	5.8%
75 - 84	1,317	3.1%	1,316	3.1%	1,386	3.2%
85+	721	1.7%	751	1.8%	782	1.8%

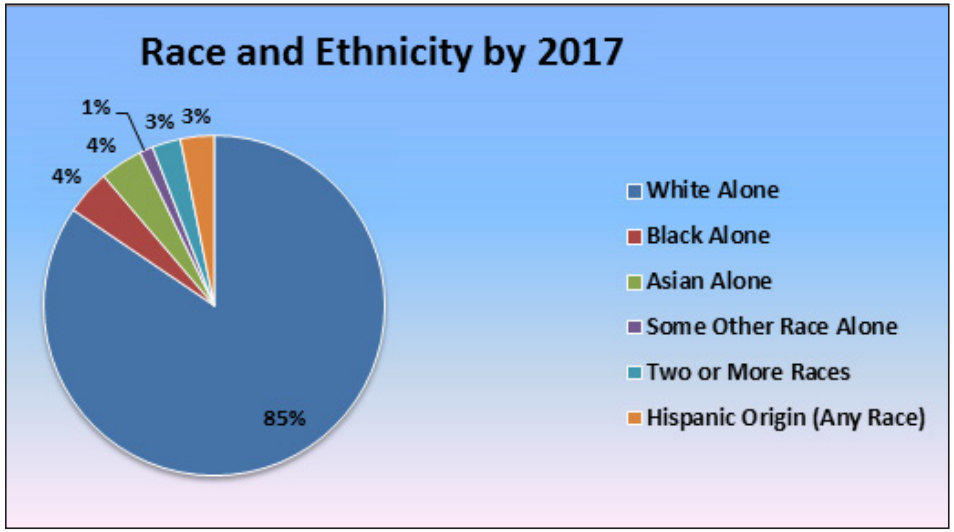


Race and Ethnicity

Race and ethnicity for Burlington according to the Census 2010 is 88.9% of the population being White, 3.9% of the population Black, 3.6% of the population Asian and the rest of residents are some other race. It is projected that Burlington will continue to maintain its current diversity, with 1.7% reduction for the white population by 2017. Additionally, the Black population is expected to increase from 3.9% to 4.4%, the Asian population from 3.6% to 4.2 % and the Hispanic population from 2.7% to 3.3% by 2017.Households and Income

Based on the Census 2010, 16,119 households are in Burlington with an average household size of 2.19 persons. The median age is 26.7 aging to 27.4 through 2017. Of these households, 6,561 were identified as families, representing 40.6% of the total households. According to the demographic and income profile, households identified as families will increase slightly by 2017. The median household income is currently estimated as $37,333 and is projected to increase to $43,828 by 2017.Area, State and National Comparison

The Burlington, Vermont area rate of population growth is projected to be slightly higher than the state average, but remains significantly lower than national average. The number of households, families and homeowners



	Census 2010		2012		2017	
Race and Ethnicity	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White Alone	37,727	88.9%	37,889	88.6%	37,675	87.2%
Black Alone	1,653	3.9%	1,694	4.0%	1,903	4.4%
American Indian Alone	131	0.3%	139	0.3%	171	0.4%
Asian Alone	1,510	3.6%	1,592	3.7%	1,816	4.2%
Pacific Islander Alone	21	0.0%	36	0.1%	62	0.1%
Some Other Race Alone	273	0.6%	288	0.7%	354	0.8%
Two or More Races	1,102	2.6%	1,119	2.6%	1,213	2.8%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	1,144	2.7%	1,196	2.8%	1,412	3.3%

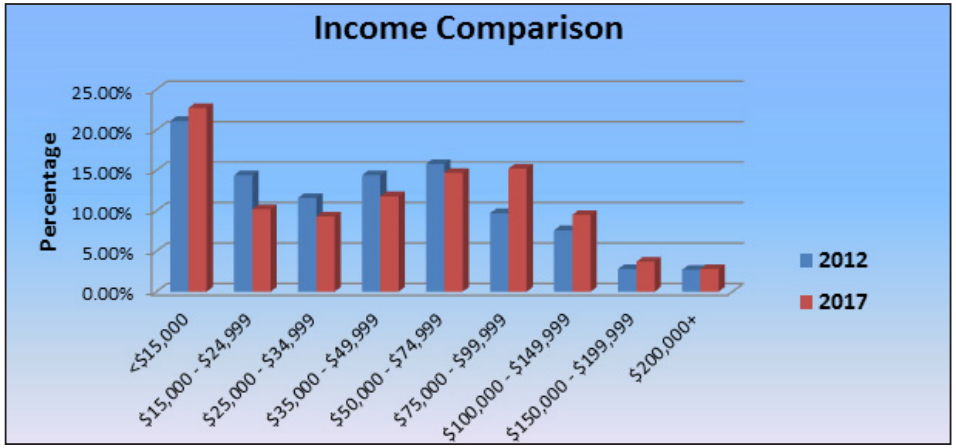
has also increased; however, is still lower than national averages. The median household income is projected to increase greatly in the $75,000 to $99,999 segment. Most other income segments will see a slight decline by 2017. Burlington's median household income remains significantly lower than the national and state median. This can be viewed in the chart below.

- Burlington median household income: $37,333
- National median household income: $53,058
- Vermont median household income: $54,804 (2011)
  Recreation Trends

Local Recreation Trends

Summary	Census 2010	2012	2017
Population	42,417	42,757	43,194
Households	16,119	16,190	16,608
Families	6,561	6,520	6,538
Average Household Size	2.19	2.20	2.18
Owner Occupied Housing Units	6,553	6,649	6,803
Renter Occupied Housing Units	9,566	9,541	9,805
Median Age	26.7	26.8	27.4

	2012		2017	
Households by Income	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<$15,000	3,417	21.1%	3,765	22.7%
$15,000 - $24,999	2,324	14.4%	1,700	10.2%
$25,000 - $34,999	1,873	11.6%	1,544	9.3%
$35,000 - $49,999	2,325	14.4%	1,965	11.8%
$50,000 - $74,999	2,559	15.8%	2,434	14.7%
$75,000 - $99,999	1,564	9.7%	2,531	15.2%
$100,000 - $149,999	1,228	7.6%	1,584	9.5%
$150,000 - $199,999	460	2.8%	613	3.7%
$200,000+	432	2.7%	464	2.8%



Recreation trends information was also derived from ESRI and is a report entitled Sports and Leisure Market Potential. These data are based upon national propensities to use various products and services, applied to the local demographic composition of the City of Burlington area. Usage data were collected by Growth for Knowledge Mediamark Research and Intelligence,LLC. (GfK MRI) in a nationally representative survey of U.S. households. MPI (Market Potential Index) measures the relative likelihood of the adults in the specified area to exhibit certain consumer behavior or purchasing patterns compared to the U.S. An MPI of 100 represents the U.S. average.

Based on projected population, the top recreational activities the Burlington residents will participate in (based on percentage of population as well as above the national average with an MPI over 100) include the activities listed in the following two charts:

National Trends

Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected Number of Adults	Percent	MPI
Participated in roller skating	722	1.9%	94
Participated in snowboarding	1,695	4.6%	236
Participated in soccer	2,472	6.7%	154
Participated in softball	1,817	4.9%	125
Participated in swimming	6,892	18.6%	96
Participated in target shooting	1,394	3.8%	98
Participated in tennis	1,937	5.2%	122
Participated in volleyball	1,569	4.2%	121
Participated in walking for exercise	9,184	24.8%	83
Participated in weight lifting	5,211	14.0%	119
Participated in yoga	2,329	6.3%	107
Spent on high end sports/recreation equipment/12 mo: <$250	2,176	5.9%	132
Spent on high end sports/recreation equipment/12 mo: $250+	1,584	4.3%	110
Attend sports event: auto racing (NASCAR)	2,911	7.8%	108
Attend sports event: auto racing (not NASCAR)	2,433	6.6%	104
Attend sports event: baseball game	5,961	16.1%	109

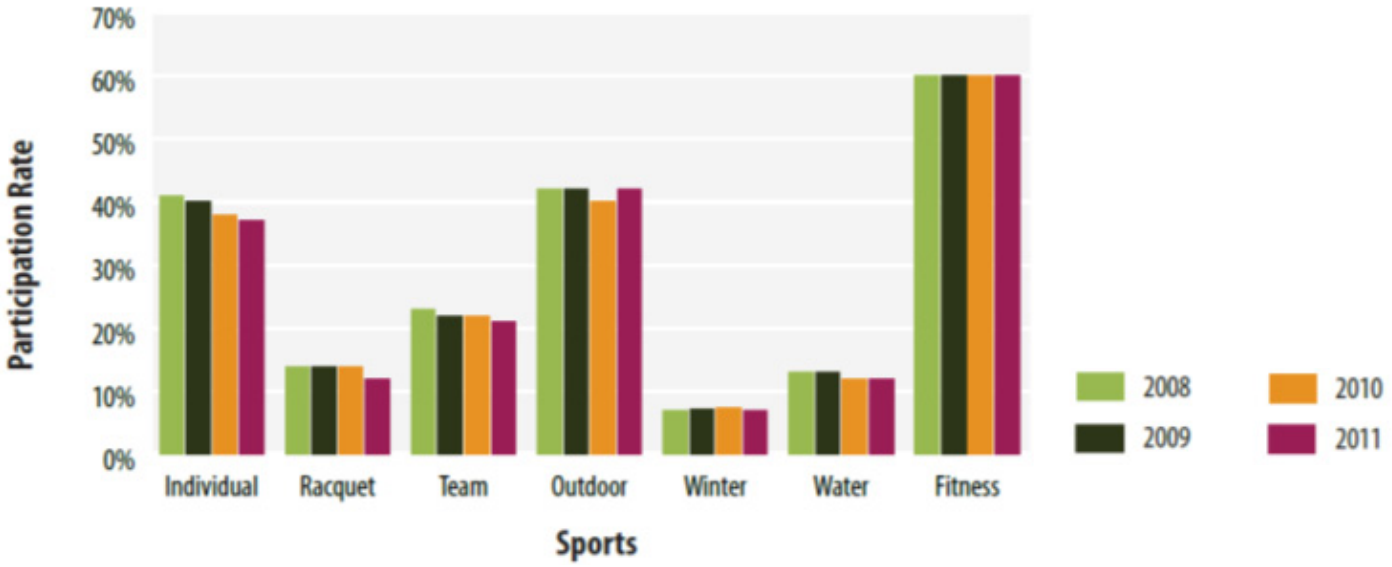
Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected Number of Adults	Percent	MPI
Participated in aerobics	4,299	11.6%	116
Participated in archery	1,496	4.0%	155
Participated in backpacking/hiking	4,430	11.9%	126
Participated in baseball	2,718	7.3%	141
Participated in basketball	5,121	13.8%	147
Participated in bicycling (mountain)	1,481	4.0%	108
Participated in bicycling (road)	4,577	12.3%	127
Participated in boating (power)	2,468	6.7%	109
Participated in bowling	5,267	14.2%	122
Participated in canoeing/kayaking	2,054	5.5%	116
Participated in downhill skiing	1,119	3.0%	103
Participated in fishing (fresh water)	4,986	13.4%	104
Participated in fishing (salt water)	1,579	4.3%	93
Participated in football	3,792	10.2%	164
Participated in Frisbee	3,049	8.2%	150
Participated in golf	3,734	10.1%	98
Play golf < once a month	1,709	4.6%	116
Play golf 1+ times a month	1,609	4.3%	81
Participated in horseback riding	1,346	3.6%	119
Participated in hunting with rifle	1,712	4.6%	97
Participated in hunting with shotgun	2,011	5.4%	130
Participated in ice skating	1,210	3.3%	112
Participated in jogging/running	4,883	13.2%	123
Participated in martial arts	1,091	2.9%	209
Participated in motorcycling	1,198	3.2%	89
Participated in Pilates	1,382	3.7%	112

Additional recreational trends were derived from the Sports, Fitness & Recreational Activities Topline Participation Report (2012) developed by The Sports & Fitness Industry Association, a top national researcher in the sports and fitness industry. The data reflecting the national trends stem from a statistically valid survey which over 38,000 online responses were compiled and analyzed. These surveys were then weighted against a total population of 283,753,000 ages 6 and up. The following variables were used: gender, age, income, household size, region, and population density.

Overall, many activities are experiencing a slow increase and/or decline due to the recent poor economic conditions, including those that have a cyclical pattern. However, a few activities have made a foothold and are increasing in participation. In general, the survey reveals the following:

- Fitness sports remains the most popular physical activity and includes activities such as yoga, boot camp-style training, and other classes
- Increased participation among a number of key sports and activities
- An expressed desire to increase the amount of travel done for participation in favorite sports and recreational activities
- Aspirational activities show a desire and demand to participate in the coming year
- An expressed desire to participate in favorite sports and recreational activities with some areas showing an increase in spending which is encouraging
- Niche sports such as racquet sports shows a slight increase
- Significant opportunities to engage inactive populations in swimming and working out
- Smart phone apps for fitness and nutrition recording

In particular, the categories of participation include individual sports, racquet sports, team sports, outdoor sports, winter sports, water sports and fitness sports.



As the chart below reveals, individual, team, and winter sports have slightly decreased while water and fitness sports have held steady.

Other categories despite their slight decrease have remained steady and are expected to gain participation with the economy.

The survey reveals that 76% of Americans have participated in some activity in the last four years; however, the general trend is that Americans have become more inactive with the rate of inactivity increasing from 21.5 percent in 2007 to 23.9 percent in 2011. Inactivity increased among young adults aged 18 to 24 and 35 to 54. Conversely, inactivity rates fell slightly among children ages 6 to 12 from 16.6 percent in 2010 to 16 percent in 2011. This decrease may be a result of efforts towards the fight against childhood obesity. Additionally, for adolescents ages 13 to 17, inactivity fell from 16.7 percent to 16.4 percent which, although modest, is a positive step in the right direction.

Increased spending areas will likely be seen in lessons, instruction, and camps (24.5 percent); individual sports events (23.1 percent); and team sports at school (22.8 percent).

	Spend More	Spend Same	Spend Less
Team Sports at School	22.8%	64.6%	12.6%
Team Sports Outside of School	21.6%	66.3%	12.4%
Travel for Sports and Rec	22.5%	64.2%	13.3%
Lessons, Instruction and Camps	24.5%	62.9%	12.2%
Gym Membership/Fees	20.7%	67.6%	11.7%
Individual Sports Events	23.1%	65.1%	11.3%
Golf Membership/Fees	15.5%	71.4%	13.7%
Tennis Membership/Fees	9.9%	76.2%	12.9%
Winter Sports	17.6%	66.8%	15.5%
Outdoor Recreation	20.7%	70.1%	9.2%
Sports/Rec Clothing	16.5%	69.2%	14.1%
Sports/Rec Footwear	16.4%	70.4%	13.2%
Sports/Rec Equipment	16.0%	66.7%	17.3%

How to Increase Participation

The Survey revealed that one of the best ways to increase activity and participation later in life is to encourage casual play at the younger ages and in school through Physical Education. The survey points out that an adult who participated in Physical Education while in school is four times more likely to participate in a racquet sport and about three times more likely to participate in team, outdoor, winter and golf. Through the institution of more opportunities for casual play, there is strong correlation that it translates the casual play into a core activity later in life.

In particular, the survey examined the difference between Generation X and Generation Y population. "Generation Y (born 1980-1999) are twice as likely to take part in team sports then Generation X (born 1965-1979). Although much is explained by the age difference, the psychological tendency of Generation Y is more positively disposed to team sports than their Generation X predecessors who are more individual in nature. Generation Y are also more social in their interactions in terms of:

- The way they play (gravitating towards team sports)
- The way they exercise (including a tendency to participate in group exercise)
- The way they communicate (Social Networking, Facebook, Twitter)

Fitness sports remained the most popular physical activity. The participation rate has held steady at 60% over the last 4 years. There are also opportunities to engage the inactive populations. Swimming ranks as a popular "aspirational sport" for inactive participants ages 6 to 12 and 45 and older. Working out with weights and fitness machines are the top "aspirational sports" for inactive participants ages 13 to 44.

The economy has also had a slight impact on sports and recreation spending. While many active people are still not spending money on sports and recreation, more people spent the same amount or increased spending, rather than spending less.

In order to increase participation, knowing the trends and what various users groups are interested in participating is crucial. Significant changes in specific activities (both increases and decreases) over the past 2 years are summarized and listed below. This data in extracted directly from the PAC study, 2012, SGMA Participation Topline Report © 2012 SGMA Research.

Team Sports

Over the last 2 years, there has been a slight rebound in the traditional team sports area. These include decreases in negative growth in baseball (+2%), football (+12%), softball (+31%) and wrestling (+4%). Trending growth in the newer more evolving transplant sports like Lacrosse continue to grow at significant rates.

Baseball. . . . . -6.0%
Basketball. . . . . -1.4%
Football. . . . . .-4.0%
Ice Hockey. 5.6%
Lacrosse. 29.1%
Roller Hockey. . . . . -13.3%
Soccer. . . . . -2.1%
Softball (Fast Pitch). . . . . -3.1%
Softball (Slow Pitch). . . . . -14.9%
Wrestling. . . . . -37.8%

Fitness

Class based fitness and exercise programs like Zumba continue to drive positive participation performance for these types of fitness activities. Many agencies around the country have moved these classes outside and are using parks as programming space. Several systems have also advertised the availability of park space for contractual instructors to use for various class activities.

Another recent trend includes "functional fitness" as reported in the April 22, 2013 New York Times article Gyms Move from Machines to Fitness Playgrounds. Sandbags, ropes and climbing areas are taking over the floor space as part of a functional fitness movement. Companies such as Lifetime Fitness are removing weight machines and are replacing them with open areas of space for people to use as more natural strength training, rather than being locked in a machine.

"Fun" fitness is a current trend. Exercises like P90x or Insanity has proven that you don't need a lot of equipment to look and feel good. These types of classes will be growing in popularity at park districts or parks and recreation departments.

Group cycling continues its rapid growth as the younger fitness enthusiasts embrace this high performance group exercise activity as well as program variations to attract the beginner participant are developed. For most age groups, swimming for fitness or weight training are the two most2 frequently mentioned activities that people indicate they would like to participate in.

While Pilates has shown an incredible 10 year growth trend, the past 2 years have seen a decline in participation. Perhaps participation migrated to Yoga, as participation is up across all levels for the year.

Yoga is more class based while Pilates is more of an individual activity. The Gen Y fitness participants are showing a higher propensity to go with group oriented programs.

Running and Walking for Fitness continue to show strong and consistent growth. Running is up 17% year/year growth.

Aerobics (High Impact).....23.4%
Aerobics (Low Impact).....4.1%
Elliptical.....14.8%
Running/Jogging.....17.8%
Stationary Cycling (Group).....29.2%
Treadmill.....5.7%
Walking for Fitness.....1.7%
Abdominal Machine.....-4.9%
Pilates.....-3.0%
Stretching.....-4.4%
Free Weights.....11.3%
Home Gym.....1.8%
Weight/Resistance Machines.....1.2%

Outdoor Sports

Compared to previous years, outdoors sports have experienced significant increase in participation. BMX has seen the greatest growth with an increase of over 30% in the last two years.

Bicycling – BMX.....5.4%
Camping.....-10.1%
Fishing (fresh).....-4.4%
Target Shooting.....6.5%

Individual Sports

Much like the trends for individual fitness participation, sports are showing significant declines across most levels of participation.

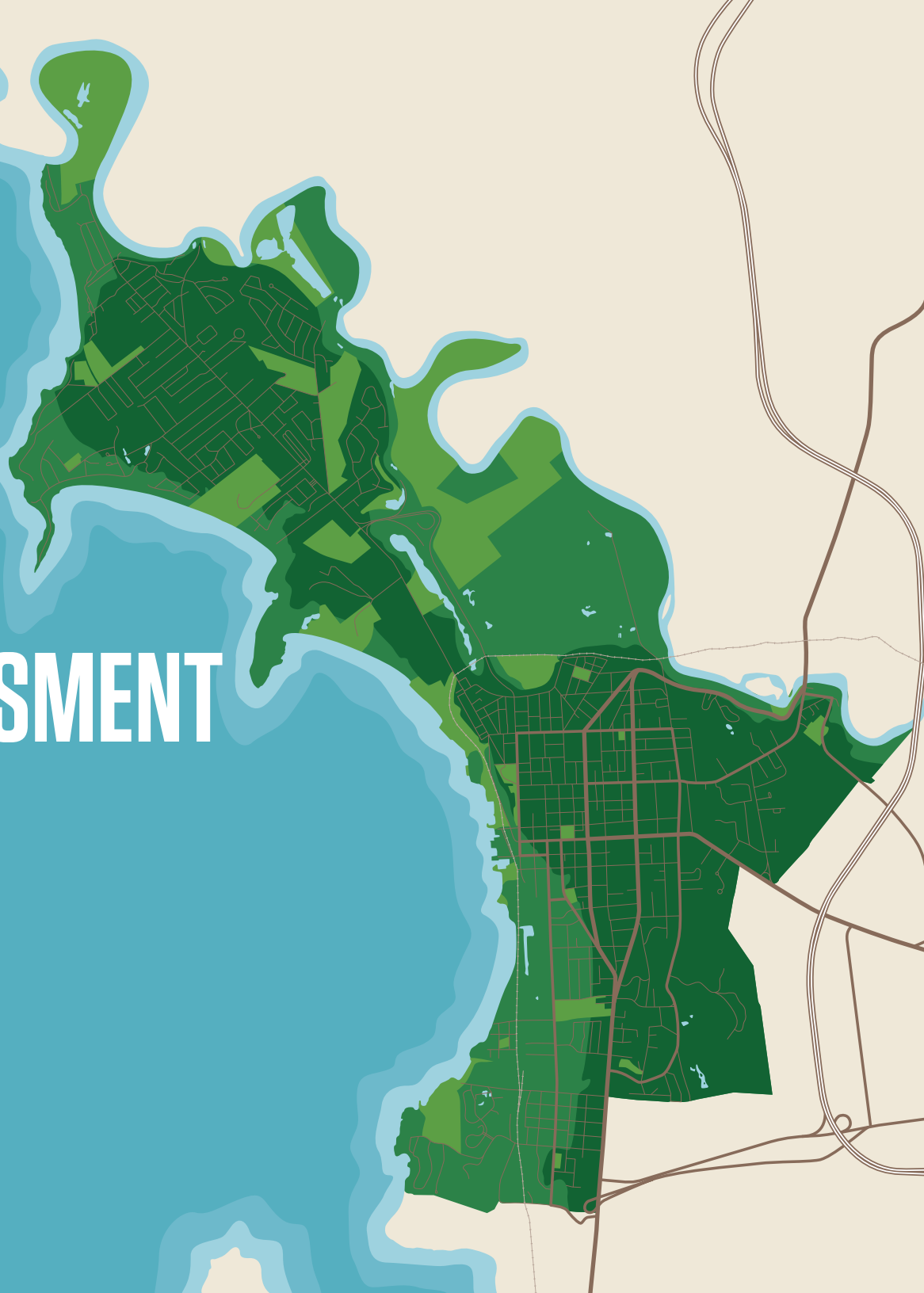
Billiards/Pool.....20.0%
Golf.....-5.2%
Martial Arts.....-24.2%
Roller Skating.....-18.6%
Scooter Riding.....-15.7%
Skateboarding.....-16.7%
Badminton.....-4.5%
Table Tennis.....1.7%
Tennis.....-4.2%

Survey Results related to Demographic and Trends

A total of 551 surveys were completed for the 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey. The following questions relate to demographics and trends for the City of Burlington. A number of the questions and respondent answers relate directly to fitness and wellness activities.

- Adult fitness and wellness programs was the number one answer (41%) for recreation programs that respondent households have a need for. This is consistent with local and national trends.
- Staying consistent with local and national trends Adult fitness and wellness programs was rated second (24%) behind Special Events (37%) for recreation programs that the most important to respondent households.
- The most important parks and recreation facility is walking and biking trails.
- Eighty-eight percent (88%) of households indicated a need for walking and biking trails.
- Thirty-four (34%) of respondents feel walking and biking trails should receive the most attention from the City of Burlington Parks and Recreation Department. This was among the top three choices, lake beaches and areas (41%) and Burlington parks (39%).
- Eighty-six percent (86%) were either “very supportive” (68%) or “somewhat supported” (18%) to develop new walking/biking trails that would connect to existing trails.
- Respondents rated the most important improvement that could be made to the Parks and Recreation System; walking and biking trails (66%).

RECREATION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT



Assessment

This assessment includes an analysis of the Burlington Department of Parks and Recreation's program and service offerings. The report offers a detailed perspective of recreation programs and events and helps to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for future program direction. It also assists in identifying core programs, program gaps within the community, and future program offerings for residents based on community input and trends.

Program findings were based on comments from the statistically valid Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey results, public input process, a review of program information, program assessment worksheets completed by staff, and interviews and meetings with the staff. In addition, marketing materials such as the Program Guide and the Website were reviewed.

The content of this section is organized as follows:

- 2013 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey results relating to programs
- Core Program Identification
- Program Mix
- Program Priority Spreadsheet
- Lifecycle Analysis
- Age Segment Analysis
- Current Program Assessment
- Recreation Best Practices
- Marketing Approaches and Program Guide Review
- Facility Assessment
- Recommendations

Survey Results for Recreation Programs

A Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey was developed and administered by Leisure Vision during the months of August and September 2013. The survey has significant relevancy to recreation program offerings and future positioning and marketing of programs. Leisure Vision has also compiled a national database of survey results. The database is referenced in several result areas for Burlington. Some of the highlights of the 2013 Survey included:

- The City of Burlington's Parks and Recreation Department was rated as the number one (68%) provider for parks and recreation programs and facilities. The national average of other communities in the Leisure Vision database is 48% of residents participate/visit programs, services, and/or facilities.
- The satisfaction with overall value offered by the Department of Parks and Recreation (those households expressing somewhat or very satisfied) is 68%. The national average for satisfaction toward value is 61%.
- Twenty-three percent (23%) of households have participated in recreation programs in the last twelve months. The national average is 35%.
- Of the 23% of households that indicated they had participated in recreation programs over the past twelve months, 89% rated the quality of programs as either "excellent" or "good." The national average is 88%.
- Programs that are most important to households are special events i.e. concerts, movies etc. (37%), outdoor winter recreation (34%), and adult fitness and wellness programs (24%).
- Programs respondent households participate in the most are special events i.e. concerts, movies etc. (34%), outdoor winter recreation (26%), ice skating/figure skating (11%) and youth sports programs (11%).

- In assessing how households find out about programs and facilities, 61% of households learn about programs and activities from the Program Guide, 52% from friends and neighbors and 47% from newspaper articles and advertisements. The national benchmark for awareness in the agency program guides is 54% from a program guide, 41% from friends and neighbors and 39% from newspapers and advertisements.
- In assessing reasons that prevent households from using programs or facilities more often, the top three reasons include: do not know what is being offered (29%), program or facility not offered (20%), and program times are not convenient (19%).

Analyzing these results will help provide suggestions for future programming and/or how to improve upon current program offerings. Realizing who is using services and the reasons why they may not, will also provide invaluable leads to marketing strategies as well as service placement. References to the survey results are noted throughout the following sections of the Recreation Assessment.

Core Program Identification

The ability to align program offerings according to community need is of vital importance to successfully delivering recreation services. At the same time, it is also important to deliver recreation programs with a consistent level of quality, which results in consistent customer experiences. Core programs are generally offered each year and form the foundation of recreation programs. In assessing the categorization of core programs, many criteria are considered. A list of the criteria includes:

- The program has been provided for a long period of time
- Offered three to four sessions per year or two to three sessions for seasonal programs
- Wide demographic appeal
- Includes 5% or more of recreation budget
- Includes tiered level of skill development
- Requires full-time staff to manage the program area
- Has the ability to help solve a community issue
- High level of customer interface exists
- High partnering capability
- Facilities are designed to support the program
- Evolved as a trend and has resulted in a “must have” program area
- Dominant position in the market place
- Great brand and image of the program, based on the Department’s experience of offering the program over a period of time

Core programs, by definition meet at least the majority of these criteria. The establishment of core programs helps to provide a focus for program offerings. This focus, in turn, creates a sense of discipline for quality control of these program areas and helps to reduce variation of service for the program participants. It must be noted that the designation of non-core programs does not suggest they are unimportant. It just means there may be less focus and fewer programs compared to core programs. A HHC Core Program Assessment is attached as a tool to use in determining future core program areas.

During discussions with staff and reviewing the core programming criteria, the following programs were identified as core program areas:

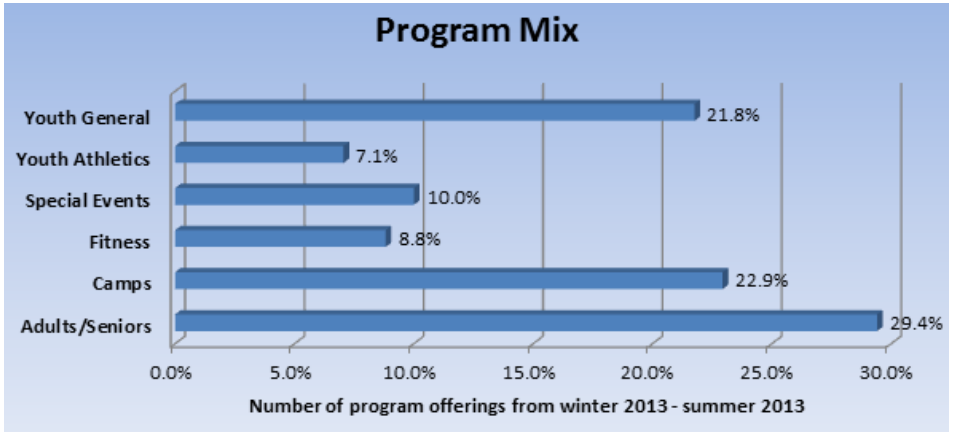
- Adults/Seniors
- Arena Programs

- Camps at Memorial Auditorium
- Day Camps, Afterschool, Adventure-based
- Events at Memorial
- Special Events
- Youth Athletics and Camps

Program Mix

The program mix or the distribution of types of programs offered should represent the programming needs of the residents. Therefore, this should be evaluated annually through an assessment process. In addition, the program offerings should include emphasis on the delivery of core programs. In reviewing program offerings listed in the 2013 winter/spring and spring/summer Program Guides, the list of core programs and number of activities offered included:

- Adult/Senior: 50
- Camp: 39 (includes athletic camps)
- Fitness: 15
- Special Events: 17
- Youth Athletics: 12 (does not include athletic camps)
- Youth General: 37 (includes early childhood programs)



Program Priority Spreadsheet

Program	Q9%	Q9 Rank	Q9a%	Q9a Rank	Q10%	Q10 Rank	Total Rank Score
Adult Fitness and wellness programs	47%	3	76%	7	24%	3	13
Adult continuing education programs	31%	6	78%	3	16%	5	14
Nature programs/environmental ed.	37%	4	75%	9	16%	5	18
Outdoor winter recreation	54%	2	62%	14	34%	2	18
Special events, i.e. concert, movies, etc.	61%	1	48%	17	37%	1	19
Water fitness programs	24%	8	84%	1	8%	13	22
Adult programs for 55 years and older	21%	11	75%	9	12%	7	27
Boating and sailing activities	35%	5	47%	18	18%	4	27
Adult sports programs	24%	8	72%	11	9%	10	29
Tennis lessons and leagues	17%	14	78%	3	7%	15	32
Adult art, dance, performing arts	25%	7	59%	15	9%	10	32
Youth Learn to swim programs	14%	17	78%	3	4%	19	39
Youth sports programs	21%	11	31%	21	12%	7	39
Youth art, dance, performing arts	17%	14	72%	11	7%	15	40
Ice-skating/figure skating	24%	8	29%	22	9%	10	40
Therapeutic recreation programs	13%	18	83%	2	3%	21	41
Youth summer camp programs	19%	13	44%	19	10%	9	41
Programs for teens	12%	19	76%	7	5%	17	43
Programs for people with disabilities	8%	22	77%	6	4%	19	47
Before and after school programs	15%	16	42%	20	8%	13	49
Preschool programs	10%	21	67%	13	5%	17	51
Youth fitness and wellness programs	12%	19	59%	15	3%	21	55

The following chart incorporates survey information into a Program Priority Spreadsheet that identifies program priorities for the Department. Three variables from the Community Survey were used in developing program priorities, as follows:

- Estimated number of households in Burlington that have a need for a recreation program
- Estimated number of households in Burlington whose needs for recreation programs are only being met 50% of less
- Recreation programs and activities that are most important to households

The programs were then ranked according to each of the three variables, and then totaled for a final ranking. The programs are grouped into three categories:

- High priority is represented in green
- Medium priority is yellow
- Low priority is blue

As a result, programming areas such as adult fitness and wellness, adult continuing education, nature and environmental programs, special events, outdoor winter recreation, water fitness programs, and programs for adults 55+ are a high priority for the community. There is significant household need for the program, there is a large percentage of household who feel that need is largely unmet, and the programs were deemed to be either the first, second, third, or fourth most important program.

Lifecycle Analysis

The program assessment included a lifecycle analysis of the core programs selected for review. This assessment helps to determine if the Burlington Department of Parks and Recreation needs to develop newer and more innovative programs, reposition programs that have been declining, or continue the current mix of lifecycle stages. This assessment was based on staff members' opinions of how their core programs were categorized according to the following areas.

- Introduction Stage (Getting a program off the ground, heavy marketing)
- Growth Stage (Moderate and interested customer base, high demand, not as intense marketing)
- Mature Stage (Steady and reliable performer, but increased competition)
- Decline Stage (Decreased registration)

The percentage distribution of programs according to lifecycle categories includes:

- Introductory programs: 12.9%
- Growth programs: 32.9%
- Mature programs: 44%
- Decline programs: 14.2%

The recommended standard for percentage distribution (according to other agency benchmarks in the Heller & Heller database) is 60% of programs should be in introduction and growth stages, and 40% in the

Program Life Cycle Stages – Adults and Seniors

Introduction	*Growth*	*Mature*	*Decline*
Getting a program off the ground, heavy marketing	Interested customer base, high demand, not as intense marketing	Steady performer, reliable success	Signs of tailing off, increased competition
Sailing	**Senior Mystery Trips** **Soccer** **Specialty Classes** **Tennis & Pickleball** **Yoga & Fitness**	**Basketball** **Table Tennis** **Volleyball** **Indoor Soccer** **American Sign Language**	**Senior Bus Trips** **Golf**

Program Life Cycle Stages – Arena Programs

Introduction	*Growth*	*Mature*	*Decline*
Getting a program off the ground, heavy marketing	Interested customer base, high demand, not as intense marketing	Steady performer, reliable success	Signs of tailing off, increased competition
All Day Specialty Camps		**Camps** **Group Lessons** **Ice Shows**	**Competitions** **Summer Figure Skating School**

Program Life Cycle Stages – Camps at Memorial Auditorium

Introduction	*Growth*	*Mature*	*Decline*
Getting a program off the ground, heavy marketing	Interested customer base, high demand, not as intense marketing	Steady performer, reliable success	Signs of tailing off, increased competition
Future Stars Camp	**April Break Camp** **Afterschool Music Program** **Circus Camp** **Summer Rock Camp**	**Dance Camp** **February/April Break Camps**	

Program Life Cycle Stages – Day Camps, Afterschool, Adventure-based			
Introduction	***Growth***	***Mature***	***Decline***
Getting a program off the ground, heavy marketing	Interested customer base, high demand, not as intense marketing	Steady performer, reliable success	Signs of tailing off, increased competition
Youth Educational Programs **Youth Fitness Programs**	**Outdoor Adventure Camps** **Specialty Summer Camps**	**Champ Camps** **Drama Camps** **Recreation Nutrition Program** **Skiing - Bolton Valley** **School Vacation Camps**	

Program Life Cycle Stages – Events at Memorial			
Introduction	***Growth***	***Mature***	***Decline***
Getting a program off the ground, heavy marketing	Interested customer base, high demand, not as intense marketing	Steady performer, reliable success	Signs of tailing off, increased competition
7 Days Tech Jam **Annex Art/Work Space** **Nightmare Vermont**	**242 Music Camps** **Afterschool Music Programs** **Circus Camps** **Dance Camps** **First Night** **Vermont Discover Jazz Fest** **Y Camps** **Zumbathon**	**242 Music Events** **Basketball Leagues** **Large Music Concerts in Main Hall**	

maturation and decline stages. For Burlington, the percentage is 45.8% introduction/growth and 54.2% maturation/decline which are not consistent with the benchmark. As can be seen from the charts above, some program areas such as Arena Programs, Special Events and Youth Athletics and Sports Camps have higher percentages of offerings in the mature and decline stages. The 60/40 split should be reviewed system-wide, but is also a good measure for individual core program areas. According to the results from the 2013 Community Survey, special events programs had a significant household need, yet there were several events designated as mature or declining program.

Program areas in decline should be targeted for repositioning or deletion. Mature programs should be monitored closely in order to prevent decline in registrations. Some agencies, in order to develop accountability for an increased percentage of introductory programs, establish a performance measurement indicating new programs initiated by each staff member. Additionally, it's important to continuously monitor customer expectations and requirements as a way of determining how to reposition programs.

Age Segment Analysis

Park and recreation systems should strive for an

Program Life Cycle Stages – Special Events			
Introduction	***Growth***	***Mature***	***Decline***
Getting a program off the ground, heavy marketing	Interested customer base, high demand, not as intense marketing	Steady performer, reliable success	Signs of tailing off, increased competition
	Candy Cane Hunt	**Eggstravangaza** **Kids Day** **July 3rd Independence Day** **Pomerleaus Holiday Party** **Senior Holiday Dinner** **Senior Picnic**	**Cardboard Box Parade** **Pet Show**
Program Life Cycle Stages – Youth Athletics and Sports Camps			
Introduction	***Growth***	***Mature***	***Decline***
Getting a program off the ground, heavy marketing	Interested customer base, high demand, not as intense marketing	Steady performer, reliable success	Signs of tailing off, increased competition
Cheer	**Lacrosse** **Sailing** **Track & Field**	**Baseball** **Basketball** **Skateboard** **Soccer**	**Golf** **Indoor Soccer** **Softball** **Tennis**

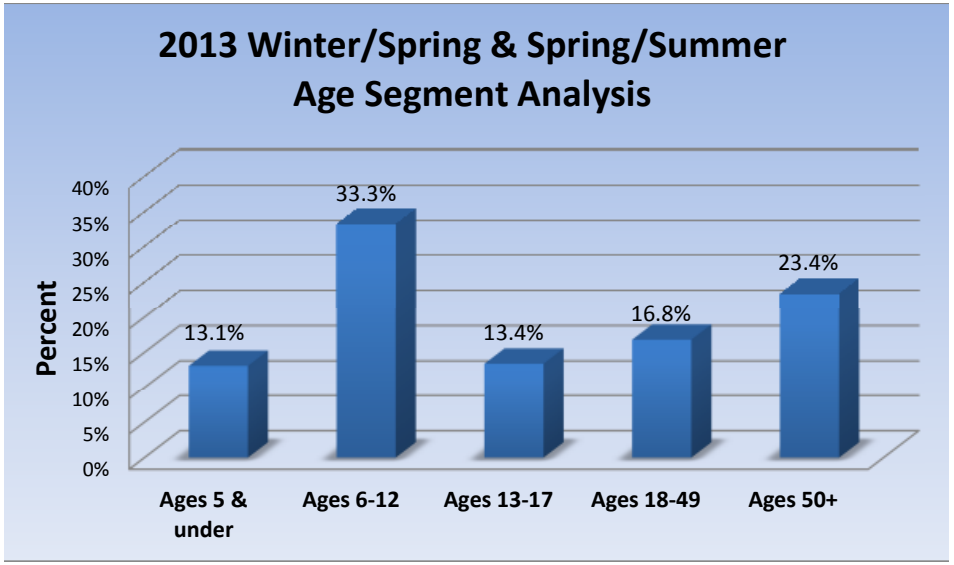
equitable balance of offerings for various age segments, including:

- Youth age 5 and under
- Youth ages 6-12
- Youth ages 13-17
- Adults 18-49
- Adults/Seniors 50 and over

The percentage of program offerings in each age category should closely match community demographics.

The following chart shows the age segment percentages of program offerings. This information was calculated by reviewing the 2013 winter/spring and spring/summer Program Guides and counting the number of programs offered for each segment. Programs and events offered for all ages, such as family special events, were not included in the list. The age distribution of programs is as follows:

- Youth age 5 and under: 38 13.1%
- Youth ages 6-12: 97 33.3%
- Youth ages 13-17: 39 13.4%
- Adults 18-49: 7 16.8%
- Adults/Seniors 50 and over: 68 23.4%This distribution reflects that programs are most geared toward individuals ages 6-12 with 33.3% of programming in this area. Adding the youth category ages 5 and under increases the total program percentage to 46.4%. Recreation assessments in the Heller and Heller database typically have an average of 70-80% of program offerings geared toward youth 12 and under. Therefore, Burlington has a much better distribution of programs among age groups and should continue to do so.



Current Program Assessment

Adults/Seniors

Current national trends show decreasing participation among senior and adult programs. In the last five years, adults are now working longer, spending is more conservative and there are additional less expensive opportunities from competitors for recreation.

A possible solution to increase participation of active adults is to create a task force, or launch group, with residents to help determine program ideas while creating a community connection. Trends and applications in lifestyle programming for active adults include several areas of interest. Findings are categorized in six dimensions of human wellness that influence optimal health, well-being and quality of life. These program areas include: 1) Physical, 2) Social,

3) Intellectual/Creative, 4) Emotional, 5) Vocational and 6) Environmental. Active adults are vitally interested in the social program area, which can include walking and biking clubs. The adult/senior program area already has mostly fitness related programs being offered.

Fitness programs continue to be a nationwide trend. Increasing offerings for fitness programs is recommended due to wellness trends and the ability to reach all age groups. In addition, adult fitness and wellness programs ranked highest in the Program Priority Spreadsheet from the Community Survey. Another growing area for active adults is sports leagues for 45+, 55+ and older. Working cooperatively with surrounding communities can help start up these types of sports leagues. This was mentioned as an opportunity for regional partnership during the input session with neighboring providers of recreation and park services.

A more recent fresh trend is a Website named "meetup.com." The concept for meetup.com is for individuals to search already formed special-interest groups that "meet up" in the area that is searched. There are currently ninety-six groups within a five-mile radius of the Burlington area. Utilizing this Website may be a tool to build adult programming or increase rental opportunities for Burlington Department of Parks and Recreation.

According to the 2013 Community Survey question that related to parks and recreation programs, specific adult programming or programming that includes adults was listed frequently in the top ten as shown in the graph on the facing page.

Fitness

Fitness and wellness tends to be the most popular type of program across the United States. The age range in fitness programming is 18+. Fitness and wellness programming continue to be a nationwide trend not only for adults, but also children. A wellness program for children is an area for potential growth. There are an increasing number of grant opportunities to assist in programming to help youth become more physically fit.

Increasing offerings in fitness and wellness is recommended due to community need and increased revenue opportunities.

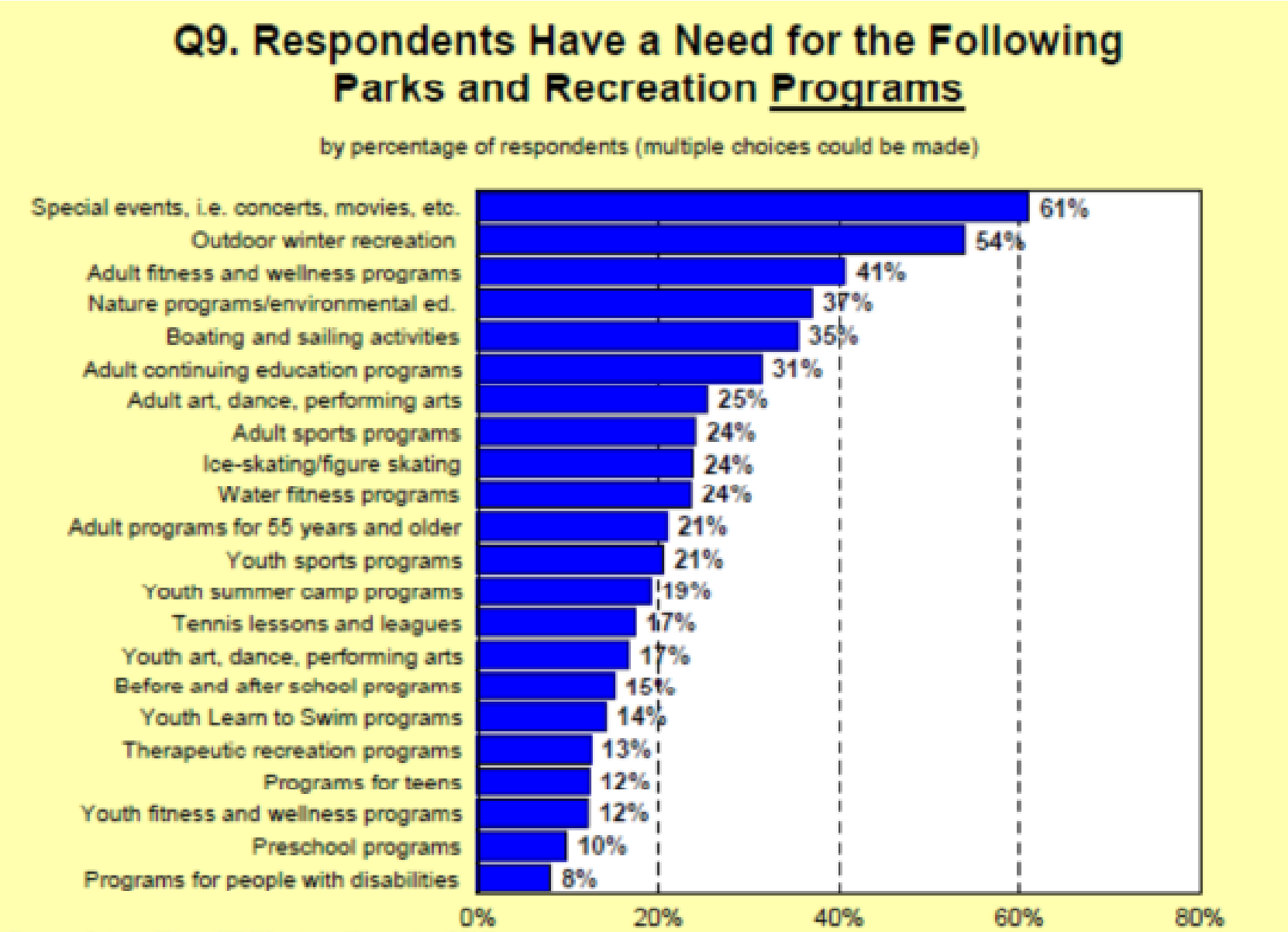
According to the 2013 Community Survey, 38% of households have a need for indoor fitness and exercise facilities. The graph above also shows the importance of fitness activities to Burlington households.

Special Events

Special events are listed as the number one need among households for parks and programs (graph above). Most of the special events in Burlington were listed as being in the mature or decline stages. Special events are an important offering for the community. Implementing changes and enhancements to events are a way show commitment to a popular service and to build trust from the community. If events are becoming routine and static, forming a task force of residents/staff for community events is a great way to create new ideas.

Youth Athletics

Youth athletic programming is listed as a medium priority in the Program Priority Spreadsheet. Reviewing


Q9. Respondents Have a Need for the Following Parks and Recreation Programs
by percentage of respondents (multiple choices could be made)
Special events, i.e. concerts, movies, etc. 61%
Outdoor winter recreation 54%
Adult fitness and wellness programs 41%
Nature programs/environmental ed. 37%
Boating and sailing activities 35%
Adult continuing education programs 31%
Adult art, dance, performing arts 25%
Adult sports programs 24%
Ice-skating/figure skating 24%
Water fitness programs 24%
Adult programs for 55 years and older 21%
Youth sports programs 21%
Youth summer camp programs 19%
Tennis lessons and leagues 17%
Youth art, dance, performing arts 17%
Before and after school programs 15%
Youth Learn to Swim programs 14%
Therapeutic recreation programs 13%
Programs for teens 12%
Youth fitness and wellness programs 12%
Preschool programs 10%
Programs for people with disabilities 8%
0%
20%
40%
60%
80%

the 2013 winter/spring and spring/summer Program Guides, roughly 7% of programs offered are youth athletics. This figure did not include athletic camps. Eight of the twelve athletic programs listed in the Life Cycle Stages are listed in the mature or decline stages. Any program area in decline should be targeted for repositioning or deletion. Mature programs should be monitored closely in order to prevent decline in registrations. Implementing changes and enhancements to improve this program area is a necessity.

Youth General

Programs in this area reference any program that is not related to athletics, special events or camps for youth. This category represents roughly 21% of programs offered in the 2013 winter/spring and spring/summer Program Guides. Although there is no specific data related to youth general programs as a whole in the 2013 Community Survey, programs listed in various categories in the Program Priority Spreadsheet list this area as a medium or low priority. Examples are before and after school programs, youth art, dance, performing arts, preschool programs and programs for teens.

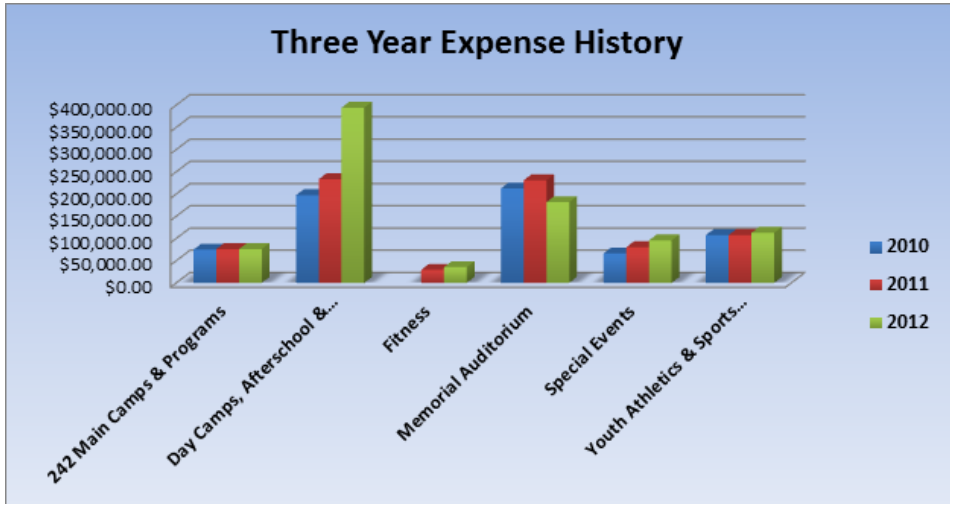
Future programs

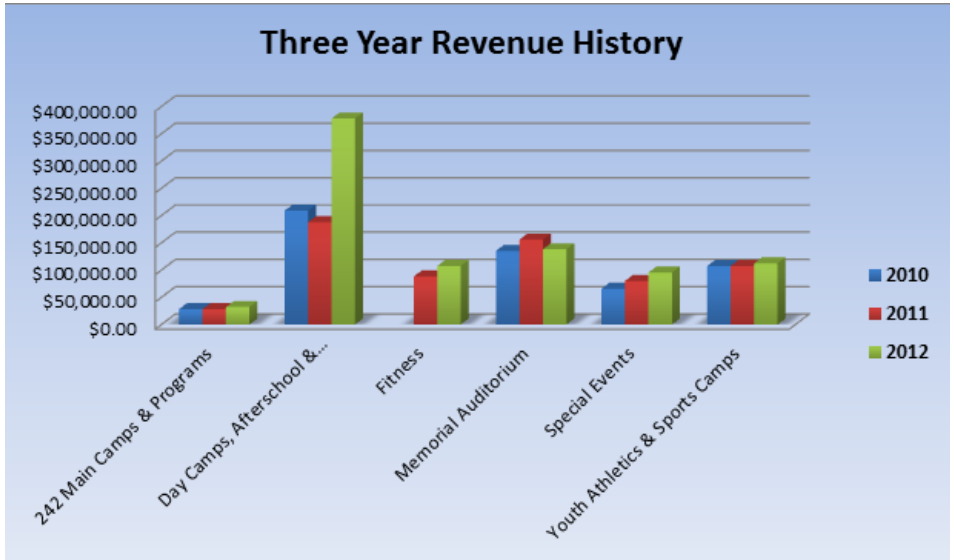
As mentioned earlier in the Program Priority Spreadsheet programming areas such as adult fitness and wellness, adult continuing education, special events, outdoor winter recreation, and nature programming are high priorities for the community. The Department should focus on developing and programming in these key areas. In addition to the importance of special events to the community, these events experienced an increase in revenue in 2011 and 2012.

Reviewing demographic information, 24.4% of residents are in the age segment 19 and under. This figure is consistent with the need for youth programming in Burlington. Implementing changes and enhancements to current programming are a way show commitment to popular services and to build trust from the community. The need for nature and environmental programs is consistent to findings from other district and department communities who have completed the Leisure Vision Community Survey process. Furthermore, Burlington residents appear to have a heightened interest in sustainable practices and may have an interest in programs that reinforce “going green.”

n reviewing the inventory of program offerings by the Department, there is a need to provide services for persons with disabilities. While this program area did not result in a high need for the program according to the Community Survey, an important need exists for a limited population. In reviewing the inventory of program offerings, there is an absence of programs geared toward individuals with disabilities or mention of inclusion services. There should be a certified individual on staff that oversees this program area. This can be a program area neighboring agencies could share the costs associated with special needs programming in offering programs on a regional basis.

Some trends seen in the region include offering classes outdoors in key park locations. Programs such as yoga are well suited for outdoor locations. Park systems around the country are also experiencing an increase in private contractors using parks for their classes. There





may be opportunities to host these programs in park locations.

Local farming, gardening, and cooking classes are gaining in popularity across the country. Given Burlington's significant interest and long term commitment to local farming, there may also be opportunity for the Department to offer programs related to these areas. Cooking classes are also gaining in popularity around the country.

Financial Information

To the left are graphs pertaining to three years of financial data given by Burlington Department of Parks and Recreation staff. It was noted that Adult/ Senior program financial information are rolled into the budgets of Recreation Coordinators 1 and 2.From the three year revenue history, Day Camps, Afterschool and Adventure-based program revenues have significantly increased from 2011 (101%). Other program areas have either seen a revenue increase or slight decline.From the three year expense history, Day Camps, Afterschool and Adventure-based program expenses have significantly increased from 2011 (69%). Other program areas have either seen an increase in spending or slight decline.

Above is Net Revenue financial informational. Figures in red represent a loss.

	2010	2011	2012
242 Main Camps & Programs	-$46,233.00	-$47,486.00	-$43,700.00
Day Camps, Afterschool & Adventure-based	$12,000.00	-$45,000.00	-$16,000.00
Fitness	n/a	$58,925.00	$72,044.00
Memorial Auditorium	-$77,124.00	-$74,914.00	-$43,427.00
Special Events	-$30,966.00	$34,550.00	$45,612.00
Youth Athletics & Sports Camps	-$37,555.00	-$40,000.00	-$42,000.00

Recreation Program Best Practices

A key to developing consistent services is the use of service and program standards. Several program standards have been put in place, however the majority of these standards deal with the certification of instructors.

Having standards provides a more consistent service environment. As program growth continues, and as staff time permits, additional standards can be put into place throughout the entire recreation program system, such as customer requirements, instructor standards, and program consistency.

In addition to standards, efforts should be made to develop a listing of key customer requirements for core program/membership areas. Key customer requirements are defined as those areas of the program purchasing process that are most important to registrants. For example, an adult softball player's key requirements may include: cost of the league, quality of athletic field maintenance, cleanliness of restrooms, quality of the umpires, game times and location of the facility. Identifying key requirements is vitally important for staff to deliver well in the items most important to the customer.

Key requirements should be identified by customers and can be included as part of an importance/performance matrix. This determines how important a requirement is to the customer and how the Burlington Department of Parks and Recreation is performing. Examples of standards include:

- The instructor to participant ratios are appropriate for the participant to feel attended to and safely directed
- Instructor must check that all class equipment/supplies are available and room setups are in place prior to start time
- Instructor completes a 30-second site survey to look for potential hazards or safety concerns
- Each instructor will be provided a tool kit or "instructor packet" that includes their class or program roster with phone numbers or email addresses, name tags for participants, customer evaluations to hand out to users, registration forms, a program guide, pertinent park information and emergency phone numbers, thank you cards for the instructor or program supervisor to give to participants at the end of the class, and an introduction sheet of what will be occurring in the program or class, how it will be conducted and what outcomes we hope to achieve. Instructor should also check with participants to make sure roster information is accurate
- Customer feedback methods are in place to seek input from participants on their expectations of the program and the results of their experience. These methods should include pre and/or post evaluations, focus groups, trailer calls, and general program surveys
- Class, program curriculum, or work plans will be prepared

by the instructor before the class or program is to begin and then signed off by the appropriate program supervisor within the recreation division

- A class or program budget will be prepared for each activity and shared with the instructor or supervisor on how class monies are spent. Final budget results will be documented at the end of the program segment and then shared with the supervisor or manager
- The general standard for class cancellation will be three business days before the class begins. This may include class combination
- Holiday hours for facilities must be posted at least eight days ahead

Program registration reports should be reviewed by core program or facility area and set up as cost centers in order to determine overall expense and revenue for the key areas. These reports should be done on a quarterly basis and condensed to a higher level of detail.

Some areas closely track financial performance, while others do not. A robust measurement system generally includes a more comprehensive set of measures, including:

- Program capacity rate (ratio of total maximum enrollments for number of spots filled)
- Number of programs per age segment
- Customer satisfaction toward the registration system
- Facility utilization rate
- Program success rate (or cancellation rate)
- Cost recovery rates by core program area
- Number of new programs offered annually
- Household percentage of program participation
- Percent of programs in introduction and growth stage
- Market penetration by age group
- Customer retention, repurchase intent, and referral

Marketing Approaches and Program Guide

The Department currently does not have a dedicated person for marketing. It would be helpful for the Department to add resources to have some level of marketing support for the agency. Departments the size of Burlington typically have a full-time dedicated marketing person. Alternatively, there may be an opportunity to utilize interns from the University of Vermont to assist with marketing functions. Ideally, the Department should have an overall marketing plan, along with business plans for major program and facility areas.

Program Guide

The 2013 winter/spring and 2013 spring/summer Program Guides were reviewed. Below are highlights and suggestions to enhance the most viewed marketing piece the Burlington Parks and Recreation Department uses to communicate services, programs and information to customers. A pdf version is also available on the parks and recreation Website. The current fall/winter Program Guide features one large picturesque photo with three smaller photos on the bottom. This is consistent with the winter/spring and spring/summer guides that were reviewed. The layout of the cover gives the reader a chance to see multiple experiences from users. The cover also includes the parks and recreation department logo and Website address.

Typically the front and back covers are printed in a higher quality paper. These four pages, front, front

inside cover, back inside cover and back, should be utilized to advertise special or community events or important upcoming programs. Currently general information and the scholarship form is featured on the inside covers.

Overall the Program Guide is simple and concise. Changing the font for both the descriptions and headers can be an easy way to add a catchy new look. A fresh look is an enhancement for marketing programs and events. Consolidating and deleting unnecessary white space, can add room for additional photos and information. Cutting down on the number of pages can also save money so the savings can be used to provide a full-color guide.

Program guides are typically the most important marketing technique used by park and recreation agencies. According to national information, 53% of residents in communities across the country find out about programs from their guides. For Burlington residents it is 61%. Creating a virtual or flipbook style guide online, other than the pdf version, would be more visually appealing and easier to read. These types are also more easily available to read on smart phones and tablets. Creating links directly on the virtual style guide where a customer can click and it takes them directly to the online site would help increase online registration.

The Director and Mayor Messages are a great communication channel to highlight upcoming events/programs and/or summarize the successes of the Parks and Recreation Department and emphasize the benefits of community parks and recreation.

The use of Facebook and Twitter logos let the community know that they can obtain parks and recreation information via smart phones. This is an important technology tool. The use of UPC code is a nice feature for smart phone users to gain immediate access also.

The strategic placement of information and photos throughout the guide is essential to the overall design. In the winter/spring Program Guide the Burlington Conservation Legacy Program would have fit nicely on the Waterfront, Parks and Facilities page. Promoting opportunities for the community rental facilities is an important revenue source.

Listing the Burlington Festival & Event Schedule is a nice way for the community to plan for upcoming events. An idea would be to include a dashed line around the box and suggest cutting out and placing on a calendar or refrigerator.

The Parks and Facilities Guide is unique. However, the lack of street names may confuse park users and customers.

The spring/summer Program Guide added a modernized font for title headers. Fonts are also an attention-grabber for readers. Changing the font for both the descriptions and headers can be an easy way to add a catchy new look to draw interest. Also in the spring/summer Program Guide, staff relocated code numbers to underneath program titles. The location in the winter/spring guide may have been confusing to customers.

The addition of “new” programs is important for the community and keeps things fresh. Coming up with a catchy logo for “new” programs will help capture the attention of the reader.

The Burlington Bike Path Repair Update is a nice feature. Penny for Parks at Work information is also

great information for residents.

There seems to be plenty of Ice Skating programs to include on its own page. The addition of photos would complement the page.

There is a wide age range for Friday Night Game Nights. This may deter parents from registering. Perhaps split up into separate-aged programs or communicate if ages are broken up.

Below are some additional suggestions to help communicate a consistent message to readers.

- There is no staff directory. Listing staff members provides a sense of open communication and also communicates the appropriate staff members to reach for questions.
- Some resident fees were missing with youth classes. It may be confusing if just one fee is listed.
- Label program locations with headers that read "Offsite Program Locations."
- Using the age segment 18+to communicate the program age and not 18-99. There were some inconsistencies.
- Include fitness and wellness programs together since they are an active trend locally and nationally.
- Certain classes do not fit the health and wellness category, i.e. Puppy Class, ASL at Miller Center. Make sure classes are placed on appropriate pages.
- Adult and family programs are an odd mixture of programs to be placed together, unless specifically listed in the table of contents.
- Public Skating Sessions and Stick Sessions can be moved to skating page, since they are similar programming.
- In addition to your Photography permission, a suggestion is to also list social media.
- Fees have been added to Robert Miller Page in the spring/summer guide. This provides information so customers are not confused if programs are free.
- In the spring/summer guide on page 18, there is a picture of adults playing tennis on youth page. Age appropriate pictures may help assist in selling a program. A great example is the picture on page 25 of the spring/summer guide for "On Stage Performance." The two patrons look as though they are enjoying the program.
- Create Camp Page (header on page) for all the various camps, not on youth programs, call them cultural arts, athletic, etc.
- Usage of the same photos in each guide should be prevented. An example is the fitness photo on page 22 in the winter/spring guide and page 29 in the spring/summer guide.
- Include the link address with the Facebook icon at least once in the guide.

Website

Websites are becoming increasingly more important as a marketing tool and identification of brand and image. The 2013 Community Survey reported 39% of households learn about services from the parks and recreation department from the Website. The Program Guide, learning from friends and neighbors and newspaper articles are the three most popular methods of creating awareness.

Opening the Website, the design is simple; however it is crowded with information. The colors used portray an earthy feeling with blues, green and orange. The featured photo with "learn more" is a nice feature. Including scrolling photos would be a great option to promote more parks, facilities and programs.

Along the top are tabs with major categories with

information pertaining to the category when selected. Although the tabs are orange in color, they are on the smaller size to the reader.

A suggestion is to include core program options so the reader does not have to open the pdf Program Guide to view this information. An enhancement for parks and facilities would be to include a "take a tour" video and links to Google maps. Although there currently is a Parks Finder option, users may be more familiar with Google maps.

On the left side in lighter blue are more options for visitors to click on to obtain more information. The current font with white type face is not easily readable. When each individual tab is selected, it takes the reader to a new page with a photo gallery in the middle. This is a great option to give the reader more information through photos. The tabs on the left side remain the same and there are new informational tabs on the right side of the page for readers to select. Navigating through different tabs still keeps the main webpage information available, which offers too much information to the reader.

On the right of the Website is the Calendar. At the time of review the Tracy Lawrence concerts were the only listed events. Utilizing the calendar to its fullest to provide more information will help communication with the community. Listing important program dates, special events, registration dates, etc. are other options.

The mission of the department was on the About Us tab; however, located lower on the page reinforcing the mission is important for the community. Moving the mission up on the page will help.

Although the basic information is presented and the site user friendly, there are opportunities for improvement. Once the Program Guide has been mailed, the Website another great option as a marketing tool. Technology has given us endless opportunities to promote agencies. A process should be put into place to constantly assess the Website, at least on an annual basis, as this may be the first introduction of Burlington's Parks and Recreation to new residents and potential users. An assessment should include a review of the following items:

- Accessibility
- Content
- Customer Usage
- Internal Support
- Maintainability

The assessment should also include external customer feedback, commonly through focus groups. In addition to full-time and part-time staff, contractual instructors should review the site and provide feedback and suggestions for areas of improvements.

Over the next few years, the projected number of users using smart phones and tablets to access Websites will increase greatly. In order to maximize outreach to its target market, the development of a WAP (wireless application protocol) enabled Website can be easily viewed by potential users on smart phones or tablets and allow them to make online reservations. The Department has also adapted to the increasing amount of social media sites that are available to all users. All of these allow the community to be more informed and connected to the City. These available opportunities can be a great way to promote and market Burlington Parks and Recreation.

The introduction of all of the social media techniques listed above results in additional staff time required toward marketing

Facility Assessment

As part of the Recreation Assessment, a Facility Assessment was performed, which includes a listing of indoor programming space. This space includes the Robert Miller Community Center, Memorial Auditorium, the Community Boathouse, and Leddy Ice Arena.

The Robert Miller Community and Recreation Center is a multi-purpose facility that includes:

- Full size gymnasium
- Community room with kitchen
- Conference room
- Kids room
- Art room
- This is the one multi-purpose facility of the Department.

The Center is 22,000 square feet. Of that amount, the Department uses 17,680 square feet as some of the space is leased to other providers of service, including the Sara Holbrook Teen Center.

Previously, the facility included a fitness center, but the school district owned the equipment, which was recently removed from the Center. The fitness room will be converted to a wellness room, which will house programs such as yoga, dance, and other group exercise activities. Additional popular programs and activities of the Center include pickle ball, youth camps, youth gymnastics, youth and adult athletics, and room rentals.

Memorial Auditorium has 22,000 square feet and includes a main floor and stage, a leased basement annex, a loft, and 242 Main. The auditorium has approximately 19,000 square feet of space for the Department as the basement is currently being leased. The Auditorium has been operating since 1928 and offers concerts, dances, exhibitions, banquets, civic engagement meetings, and conventions. 242 Main offers music oriented programs for young adults and teens. This includes programs such as the After School Music Program, Rock Music Camp, and Rock and Roll Vacation. The building is in serious need of improvements. As for future direction of Memorial Auditorium, the Department will need to research the best option for the Auditorium, either leasing, renovating, or selling the building. A partnership opportunity may exist if the decision is made to renovate the building.

The Community Boathouse and Marina operation includes a boathouse facility with a downstairs café and an upstairs primarily used for private rentals such as receptions, meetings, and parties. This is a seasonal facility, operating from mid-May through mid-October. The marina includes boat slips and moorings. Charter boats operate out of the marina.

The Paquette Arena at Leddy Park offers both an Olympic sized and studio sized rinks as well as an upstairs meeting/party room and is 47,000 square feet. The facility offers public skating, skating lessons, private rentals, and hockey. The rink is home to Burlington's Youth hockey organization, Burlington and Colchester boys and girls high school hockey programs, Full stride adult hockey programs and the Champlain Valley Skating Club.

According to the NRPA PRORAGIS database, the average amount of square footage of indoor recreation space is 61,340 square feet for cities of a population of 25,000-75,000 nationwide. This includes multi-purpose space, and not special facilities such as indoor ice. Burlington has about 63% of that amount of indoor multi-purpose space (approximately 39,000 square feet), or a shortage of 22,340 square feet according to the national average. These square footage comparisons do not account for school use by community park and recreation agencies.

Heller and Heller Consulting uses a standard of 2.0 square feet of multi-purpose indoor space for colder climate agencies. According to this standard, Burlington should have 84,694 square feet of space, or an additional 46,000 square feet of indoor space. An additional center could become a regional draw, attracting residents from surrounding towns.

Recommendations

- Review the Program Priority Spreadsheet and prioritize future program offerings accordingly, such as adult fitness and wellness, nature and winter time outdoor programs. Continue to offer programs that may not fit into the high priority category as long as they are continuously successful.
- Develop a Department Marketing Plan, which provides an overview of strategic marketing efforts. This should be supplemented with business plans for individual program and facility areas.
- Review program offerings with neighboring communities on an annual basis to create opportunities for partnerships in program offerings.
- Strengthen marketing by dedicating labor resources to this function. There may be an opportunity to share a marketing person among the various providers of recreation services, as a way of reducing the costs associated with staffing. An alternative is the use of interns.
- A possible solution to increase participation of active adults is to create a task force, or launch group, with residents to help determine program ideas while creating a community connection. Adult programming was listed frequently in the Community Survey (The question: Respondents Have and Need for the Following Parks and Recreation Programs).
- Allocate labor dollars toward special recreation programming, possibly in partnership with other neighboring communities.
- Increasing offerings for fitness programs is recommended due to wellness trends and the ability to reach all age groups. This is also an area that earns revenue for the Department. Another growing area for active adults is sports leagues for 45+, 55+ and older. Working cooperatively with surrounding communities can help start up these types of sports leagues.
- A wellness program for children is an area for potential growth. There are an increasing number of grant opportunities to assist in programming to help youth become more physically fit.
- Special events are an important offering for the community. Implementing changes and enhancements to events are a way show commitment to a popular service and to build trust from the community. If events are becoming routine and static, forming a task force of residents/staff for community events is a great way to create new ideas.
- The front, front inside cover, back inside cover and back page of the Program Guide, should be utilized to advertise special or community events or important upcoming programs since these pages are usually printed in a higher quality paper. Advertisements are more appealing when printed on higher quality paper.
- Creating a virtual or flipbook style program guide online, other than the pdf version, would be more visually appealing and easier to read.
- Creating links directly on the virtual style guide where a

customer can click and it takes them directly to the online site would help increase online registration.

- Including photos for The Howard Chapel, Oakledge Park and North Beach in the Program Guide will help make a first good impression to the potential user. Pictures help sell an experience. Labeling photos as to where it is from can assist in the promotion.
- There is a wide age range for Friday Night Game Nights. This may deter parents from registering. Perhaps split up into separate-aged programs or communicate if ages are broken up.
- Review the Website. Although the basic information is presented and the site user friendly, there are opportunities for improvement. Once the Program Guide has been mailed, the Website another great option as a marketing tool. Technology provides endless opportunities to promote agencies. A process should be put into place to constantly assess the Website, at least on an annual basis, as this may be the first introduction of Burlington's Parks and Recreation to new residents and potential users.
- In order to maximize outreach to its target market, the development of a WAP (wireless application protocol) enabled Website can be easily viewed by potential users on smart phones or tablets and allow them to make online reservations.

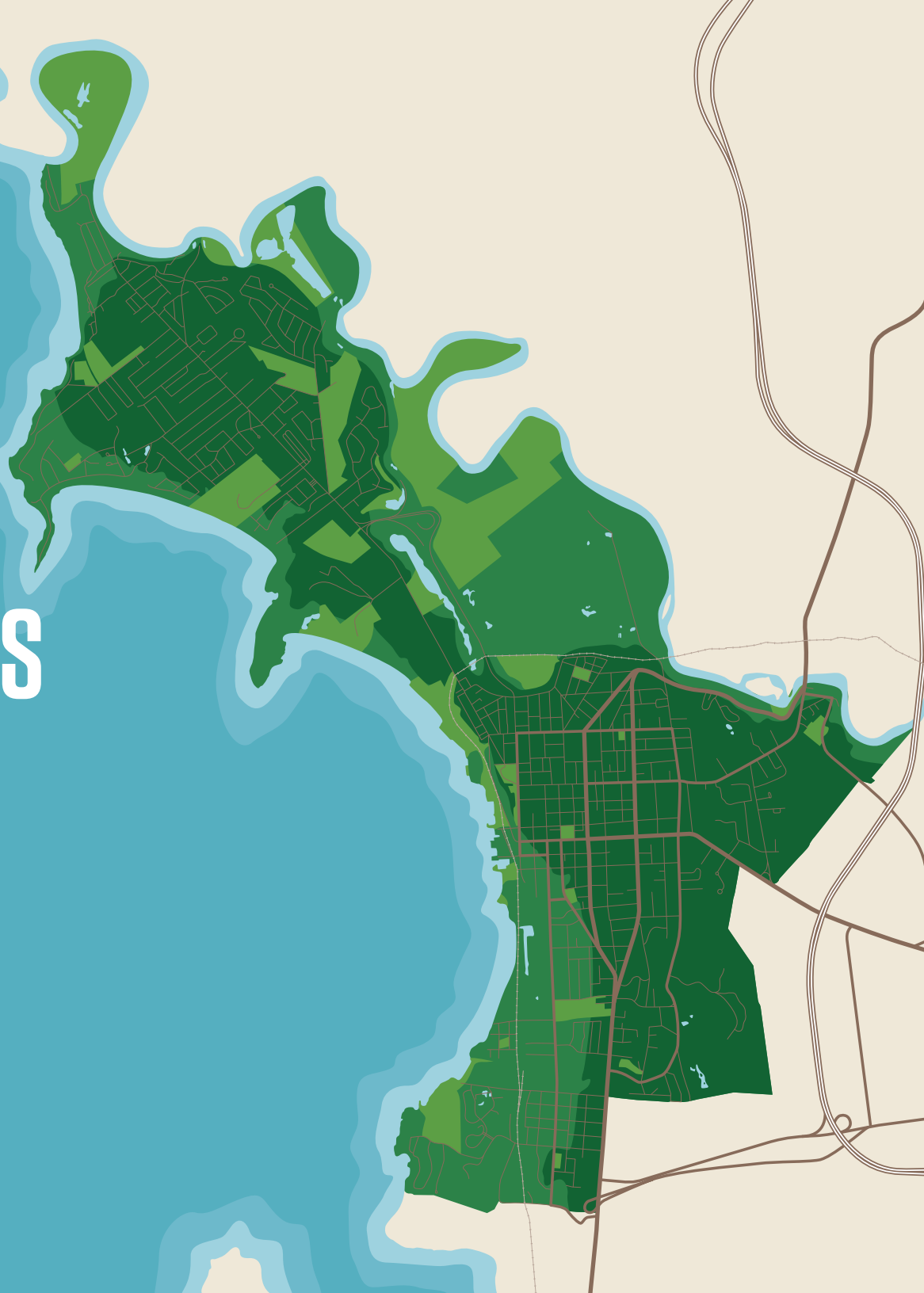
"To connect public spaces and programs which grow, inspire and create inclusive social interaction through land, water and people."

-Department Mission Statement

"A supportive and constructive (work) environment that embraces equity through mindful decision making and daily actions."

-Diversity and Equity Growth Vision

VISIONING THEMES



Master Plan Vision

In December, 2013, the Consulting Team and Burlington Parks and Recreation Department staff met for a day of visioning to discuss overall Master Plan findings and preliminary discussion of strategic recommendations. The session included:

Review of criteria for great park systems, according to the Trust for Public Land:

- A Clear Expression of Purpose
- Ongoing Planning and Community Involvement
- Sufficient Assets in Land, Staffing, and Equipment to meet the System's Goals
- Equitable Access
- User Satisfaction
- Safety from Physical Hazards and Crime
- Benefits for the City beyond the Boundaries of the Parks

Based on the discussion, strengths of the Burlington system include:

- Quality and size of assets
- Users are satisfied with the system – survey results
- Many visitors and tourists visit the City and Parks and Recreation facilities
- How to measure impact on the region?
- Community involvement
- Staff involvement and commitment to vision

Burlington weaknesses or suggestions for improvement:

- Measure of economic benefit
- Clear exposure of purpose
- Level of service
- Consistency about how things get done, are programmed, are maintained
- Social issues/transient population

The group then discussed major system themes. There was a brainstorm session that resulted in several themes. The themes serve as the over-arching framework for the future vision of the system. These will serve as the major focus areas and positioning of the Department. After discussion and priority ranking, the system themes follow:

- Meeting the Needs
- Inclusive Social Spaces
- Connected Parks and Neighborhoods
- Programming and Operations
- Stewardship and Sustainability

Meeting the Needs

Burlington is home to approximately 520 acres of City owned and operated parks. This translates to 12.2 acres per thousand residents, which is just above the national standard (12 acres per thousand residents). Most of the City's parkland (55%) is within large regional parks like Oakledge and Leddy. The remaining acreage is in community parks (32%), neighborhood parks (13%) and mini parks (<1%). Ideally, neighborhood parks would represent a larger percentage of the overall parkland (29%), but regional parks like Ethan Allen Park serve double-duty as neighborhood parks by offering amenities like playgrounds. Overall, Burlington has a robust and diverse park system.

Park amenities are the built elements within a park that support various forms of recreation (both active and passive). For many users these are the primary reason they visit parks. It is critical that the parks supply the right number and types of amenities to meet the needs of their users. Additionally, as the demographics of a city change over time (race, age, population, etc) park amenities need to be assessed for their relevance to the changing user groups. Level of Service (LOS) standards provide metrics for this assessment.

The primary gaps in service are in field sports, specifically adult baseball, adult softball and regulation size soccer/football/lacrosse, and indoor recreation such as a fitness center and indoor swimming. Providing additional amenities will require careful planning and design - and should be proactive about anticipating future demographic changes.

There is a deficit of neighborhood park land and a surplus of regional park land. The Open Space Protection Plan suggested the identification of potential pocket parks which provide small shared community spaces that enhance social interaction and create green refuges especially in the Urban Core. There is also a deficit of community parkland.

Inclusive Social Spaces

The urban park is often seen as a place for residents to step away from city life and reconnect with nature. In Burlington, however, residents have access to a wide range of natural resources surrounding the city. As a result Burlingtonians have a unique relationship to their city parks. Rather than strictly respite from urban life, the parks are also a place to participate in urban life and culture. Among Burlington residents surveyed for this master plan, 64% of respondents requested additional events like concerts, farmers markets, and festivals. In fact, special events lead the list of park needs among respondents. The City's parks perform a critical role as a social forum for residents. This function should be expanded through careful planning and design to insure that the parks are inclusive to all users.

In order to support additional programming and activity the current and future uses of each park must be understood and vetted with the community. The recent planning for City Hall Park is an excellent example of how a park can be re-envisioned through collaboration and public outreach. A partnership between Burlington City Arts and the Department of Parks and Recreation and Wagner Hodgson Landscape Architecture has generated a vision for the park that foregrounds public art and flexible gathering space. Similar collaborative efforts could help breathe new life into many of the City's underutilized parks.

Among all of Burlington's parks the waterfront parks stand out as the primary social spaces. The waterfront supports large seasonal events, daily tourism, and a great deal of recreational opportunities for both residents and visitors. Among survey respondents, six of the most visited parks were along the lake. Additionally, 41% of respondents felt the beaches and lake areas should receive the most attention.

Connected Parks and Neighborhoods

As the park needs assessment demonstrated, Burlington has adequate total park acreage, but not all types or neighborhoods are well served. The majority of the city has access to a park within a 10 minute walk, however there is limited access in wards one and six. Moreover, the city's long, linear shape restricts connectivity between the north and south

areas of the city. Both the congestion of downtown and areas of steep topography make connections through downtown difficult. The parks and recreation master plan seeks to better link parks into the existing trail system and build on the existing trails.

The waterfront bike path provides excellent north-south connectivity, connecting into 48 total miles of trails (34 public). During this process, the city was working with VHB Associates on a concurrent study to redesign segments of the waterfront bike trail to improve difficult trail links and amenities. The parks master plan coordinated with this effort, collaborating on a public bike trail ride, "Path to Parks," in October 2013 and studying ways to improve waterfront parks to better link to the bike trail.

Programming and Operations

Burlington is an active community with a robust recreation and programming component. The city's diversity and changing demographic trends, both locally and nationally should be considered as changes are made to programming and services in coming years.

The household survey demonstrated the importance and success of Burlington's recreation offerings. The City was rated as the number one provider for parks and recreation programs and facilities, with 68% ranking it first (well above the national average of 48%). Additionally, satisfaction is high with 68% of households expressing satisfaction with the offerings and 89% calling them high quality. Given the high use and satisfaction, it is interesting to note, however, that overall participation, at 23%, lags behind the national average. This may demonstrate a possibility to capture greater participation in city recreation programs.

To increase participation and continue satisfaction, the right programs must be tailored to community requests, prioritizing future program offerings accordingly, such as adult fitness and wellness, nature and winter time outdoor programs. Areas such as adult fitness and wellness, adult continuing education, special events, outdoor winter recreation, and nature programming are high priorities for the community. Special events are not only community priorities, but they also experienced an increase in revenue in 2011 and 2012; renovations to the Waterfront Park will increase the efficiency and opportunities to stage large, community events. Detailed recommendations for recreation and programming improvements and priorities are found in the technical report.

Finally, the success of Burlington's recreation or special events program relies on a marketing strategy that ensures people know how to use and attend programs. A new brand has been created for the Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department through this process. It should be translated to program guides, and to a better online experience (content, design and mobile devices). Additionally, it is recommended that the department create a marketing plan and dedicate staff resources to this effort.

Stewardship and Sustainability

Burlington is a city defined by its relationship to water. To the West, Lake Champlain has long been a driver of industry and tourism. To the East, the Winooski River and its floodplain is a rich and productive agricultural and ecological corridor. The city occupies a high ridge line between these two hydrological systems - directing runoff toward both. There are a number of ways a park can help improve the water quality in surrounding

landscapes, including infiltration, retention and purification. Additionally, if there is capacity, parks can intake stormwater from surrounding landscapes. This concept is proposed for as a strategy for downtown Burlington in Plan BTV as the "Green Machine."

City-wide stormwater strategy

Stormwater management focuses on two metrics: 1) controlling pollutants entering water bodies and groundwater (quality), and 2) controlling the risk of flooding and erosion caused by rapid flow of stormwater through the watershed (quantity). The management priorities for each park will depend on which water body is downstream of the park. The Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department, in collaboration with the City's Stormwater Administrator, should develop a map that codes each park based on whether the park is draining to Lake Champlain, the Winooski River, or to a storm sewer.

Priorities

Stormwater management in Parks draining to Lake Champlain should prioritize water quality. The department should work with the City's Stormwater Administrator to set standards for water quality. Potential water quality measures may include bioswales, erosion control planting, sediment forebays, regrading and in extreme cases some mechanical filters.

Stormwater management in parks draining to the Winooski River or the City's storm sewer should control for quantity in addition to quality. The department should work with the City's Stormwater Administrator to set the threshold for allowable stormwater quantity. As an example, Massachusetts regulation requires that quantity is controlled to pre-development levels for 2, 10, 25 and 100-year design storms. Potential water quantity measures may include reshaping the land to reduce slopes and create retention areas, modifying surface materials to slow overland flow and increase infiltration, reducing catchment area by storing stormwater from building roofs in cisterns or rain barrels, and directing runoff from parking areas toward retention areas.

Rethinking lot coverage

Lot coverage refers the portion of a zoning lot which, when viewed from above, is covered by a building or other impervious surface. Historically, City zoning ordinances have regulated the allowable lot coverage to control the density of development and by default stormwater runoff. In Burlington, parks belong to a zoning district called Recreation/Conservation – Recreation/Greenspace (RCO-RG). Until recently, the maximum lot coverage for this district was 5%, with the intention that parks should not discharge stormwater.

In reality, to provide the basic amenities required of an urban park system, almost all of Burlington's parks exceed 5% coverage. In January 2014, as proposed by the Department of Parks and Recreation, the City Council Ordinance Committee amended the zoning ordinance for the RCO-RG district effectively increasing the allowable lot coverage for several parks (See table on next page). The parks department is currently conducting a detailed assessment of impervious surface in the City's parks to help guide future development.

PARK	LOT COVERAGE
Baird Battery Park and Extension Calahan Champlain Street Leddy North Beach and Campground Oakledge Schmanska Smalley Staff Farm	15%
Appletree Lakeside	20%
Waterfront Park	25%
Pomeroy Roosevelt	30%
City Hall Park	35%
Perkins Pier	70%

Benchmarking lot coverage

The amended ordinance was based on a benchmarking study of similar parks. The study divided parks by park type:

- Mini parks: These parks serve their immediate neighbors. Each park usually offers a few small amenities such as seating, play equipment and ornamental planting. Lot coverage for similar parks in peer cities range from 25%-75%. Benchmarks include:
  - Pritchard Park 61% 0.4 acres (Asheville, NC)
  - Ira Keller Fountain Park 31% 1 acre (Portland, OR)
- City plazas and squares: These spaces serve a wide constituency. These parks are symbolic centers for the community. They provide seating, flexible gathering spaces, public art, memorials, lighting and infrastructure for performances. Lot coverage for similar parks in peer cities range from 50%-100%. Benchmarks for this park type include:
  - City Hall Plaza 98% 8 acres (Boston, MA)
  - Santa Fe Plaza 51% 1 acre (Santa Fe, NM)
- Neighborhood parks: These parks provide walkable park amenities for their surrounding neighborhood. These parks typically include lawns, paths, playgrounds, ornamental planting, shade trees, some court sports and occasionally small structures. Lot coverage for similar parks in peer cities range from 10%-50%. Benchmarks included:
  - West Austin Park 10% 4 acres (Austin, TX)
  - Aston Park 40% 8 acres (Asheville, NC)
- Community parks: These parks provide amenities for multiple neighborhoods. Visitors walk and drive to these parks. Community parks offer parking, lawns, paths, field sports, court sports, special sports facilities, community gardens, performance spaces, a range of natural and ornamental vegetation, pavilions, vending, restrooms and other structures. Lot coverage for similar parks in peer cities range from 15%-30%. Benchmarks included:
  - New Haven Green 22% 15 acres (New Haven, CT)
  - McKinley Park 16% 28 acres (Sacramento, CA)
- Regional parks: These parks provide amenities for the entire city, surrounding communities and visiting tourists. Parking is available for the many visitors that drive to these parks, but there are often walkable amenities for immediate neighbors. By virtue of their size regional parks provide unique opportunities such as woodlands, trails, natural resource areas, water bodies, major sports complexes, historic sites, beaches and camping. Lot coverage for similar parks in peer cities range from 5%-25%. Benchmarks include:

- Look Park 18% 132 acres (Northampton, MA)
- Deering Oaks Park 27% 54 acres (Portland, ME)
- Stewart Park 23% 41 acres (Ithaca, NY)

- Special use parks: These spaces provide a single amenity that requires specific infrastructure and design. Uses may include: harbors and marinas, golf courses, performance venues, ropes courses, pool facilities, skate parks, historic sites and sports complexes. Lot coverage varies widely (5%-100%) due to varying requirements for parking, buildings and gathering space. Benchmarks included:
  - Northeast Harbor Marina 80% 4 acres (Northeast Harbor, ME)
  - Prescott Park (Waterfront) 40% 10 acres (Portsmouth, NH)

But what about stormwater?

While lot coverage regulation can serve to guide development density, it is actually a blunt instrument for mitigating stormwater runoff. This is because impervious surfaces such as buildings and pavement are only part of a site's 'effective imperviousness.' The subsurface soil conditions must be considered as well. For example, if a park is situated on dense clayey soils the addition of a parking lot will do little to increase the amount of run-off leaving the site. It will, however, increase the speed of runoff. But if designed to retain stormwater, this development will result in a net zero increase in runoff leaving the site.

Site topography is an equally important factor. Consider a bowl shaped park that pools with water during rain storms. No site modification, other than introducing a storm sewer, will direct more water toward the river or lake. That said, if the site's soils allow for infiltration adding impervious surfaces will slow the infiltration rate, which impacts groundwater recharge. As a result, any site development in parks must begin with analysis of the soils and topography to truly assess the stormwater implications of the design.

Improving infiltration

As described above, the stormwater management priorities for each park should be guided by a city-wide strategy. In addition to these goals, encouraging stormwater to infiltrate back into the water table should be a priority in all parks. This requires the following considerations:

Planning: Designing for infiltration begins with analysis of site topography, soils and existing use.

- Topography: The shape of the land greatly influences the rate of runoff. Water flows quickly across steep slopes, especially when the surface creates minimal friction such as exposed soil. This results in less infiltration because water does not have time to percolate through the soil. Conversely, shallow slopes and depressions minimizes the rate of overland flow. This allows water longer to seep into soil.
- Soils: In the United States soils are divided into four hydrologic soil groups. Hydrologic soil groups are based on estimates of runoff potential. Soils are assigned to one of four groups according to the rate of water infiltration when the soils are not protected by vegetation, are thoroughly wet, and receive precipitation.
- Existing use: The current configuration of amenities and materials on site can greatly impact infiltration – both negatively and positively. Design should respond to these conditions.

Design: With a thorough site analysis in place, design proposals should site amenities where they will make the minimum impact on run-off. Similarly, retention

and infiltration features should be sited where they will be most effective. Some additional recommendations include:

- Design gradual slopes and coarse surface materials to slow the rate of surface flow. This will promote percolation where soils permit.
- Locate impervious surfaces in areas with least pervious soil groups to minimize impact to overall effective infiltration rate.
- Locate infiltration features such as bioswales above soils that will promote stormwater recharge. When infiltration is unlikely, focus on retaining water for reuse or aesthetic impact.
- Minimize costs by infiltrating water close to where it hits the ground.
- Pervious surface materials such as porous asphalt, porous pavers, rubber play surfaces and various 'soft' surfaces such as woodchips and gravel can help provide useable space while mitigating the impact on the site's perviousness. However, these materials require maintenance to insure performance. The cost of maintenance should be considered when selecting materials.
- Porous surface materials only reduce imperviousness when used in areas with permeable soils.
- The selection of a porous surface material should be guided by intended use. Given maintenance implications, materials like porous asphalt should only be used when paving must be applied over porous soils.
- Inundated soils can compromise foundations and other construction. As a result, infiltration should account for existing or proposed development.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations

The following are Strategic Initiatives for Burlington Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department. The Recommendations span a 10 year period from 2014 to 2024. The Recommendations are listed as short term, midterm, or long term priorities. These time frames will provide the department with the opportunity to review the Master Plan at the end of each cycle: short, medium and long.

While the Plan should be reviewed each year in order to accommodate any changes in priorities that occur throughout each year, a more thorough review will be completed at the end of FY16-17 and FY19-20, or after every three years. The three year review will include an update to the Strategic Recommendations, noting work that has been completed and adjusting the Strategic Initiatives to reflect major changes. In addition, the three year review should include an update of demographics and revised inventory of parks and amenities. During the second review cycle following FY19-20, a Community Survey should be completed. It may also be helpful to have public input during these two review cycles to ask for resident response to the Plan's progress.

Short Term FY14-15 to FY16-17

- Add Burlington Parks and Recreation amenity information in the PRORAGIS database.
- In development of new assets, consider the perceived imbalance between the north and south end of town.
- Increase capital funding: the median of capital spending for the PRORAGIS database is $640,000. Burlington receives $350,000 in capital funding annually. This is significantly below what other agencies spend.
- Align a significant portion of Penny for Parks funding for capital priorities developed by the Department, while leaving the remainder of funding for projects suggested by the community. Create a long term Capital Improvement Plan and Replacement Plan with dedicated funding for ongoing replacement of assets. Consider increasing the Penny for Parks funding in order to double the amount of capital dollars.
- Develop a Foundation to augment capital investment into the system. The Foundation could also oversee a scholarship program for financial support for residents with financial need.
- Allocate labor dollars toward marketing support. Agencies the size of Burlington typically have at least one full-time staff member dedicated toward marketing functions. The recommendation is to add a marketing position. At first, this can possibly be a shared position with other agencies in the region to provide a regional approach to parks and recreation service delivery. This position can also include dedicated time toward corporate sponsorships. Supplement with University of Vermont marketing interns.
- Develop design standards for park amenities including elements such as water fountains, fencing, playgrounds, etc. In addition, develop park lighting standards. This is currently being developed for identifying standard fixtures for pedestrian walks, parking, trails, etc.
- Work with the Public Works Department in identifying long term maintenance of park roadways and establish percentage contribution by Public Works and Parks Departments.
- There is a need to increase park maintenance staff as the average acres/FTE is 16.7 in the PRORAGIS database, for Burlington the number is almost 40 acres/ FTE.
- Develop a financial pro forma for Memorial Auditorium building alternatives, including selling, leasing, or renovating the facility.
    - Indoor space; multi-purpose recreation center. The Miller Center only has about 17,680 of programming

space for the Department. Throughout the overall system, indoor multi-purpose space is below the average agency by 22,340. With the need for indoor activity space in the winter, a multi-purpose recreation center could be located close to the downtown area with easy access to the southern part of the City.

- Determine the success of leasing space in Memorial Auditorium and identify long term recommendations for the building, including selling or renovating the building.
- Decrease the size of existing dog parks and develop an additional dog park in the southern end of the City.

- Develop a process to implement changes and improvements based on Community Survey results.
  - Implement recommendations in the Recreation Assessment to identify ways of increasing household participation in programs as 23% of households participate. 25% of households go to neighboring communities for recreation.
  - Households were asked what areas should receive the most attention:
    - Quality of lake, beaches and areas
    - Maintenance of Burlington parks
    - Number of walking/biking trails
  - Therefore, funding priorities should be aligned with these assets.
  - Another question addressed level of support for funding, and the two highest rated features include trails and neighborhood parks.
- Perform a system wide accessibility audit.
- Implement significant Recreation Recommendations. More tactical recommendations are included in the Recreation Assessment within the body of the Plan.
  - The Department should do a cost of service analysis to determine true costs of programs, services, and events. This should also include subsidy level goals for core programs. Community events should also be analyzed for direct and indirect costs.
  - Create a virtual program guide for smart phone registration.
  - Dedicate labor resources to management of a special population's programmer.
  - This potentially could be a shared position with other neighboring agencies.
  - Increase staff programming support for the Miller Center.
  - Facilitate a series of focus groups with immigrant populations to determine their recreation needs and how to best service those needs.
  - One of the significant program priorities is outdoor winter recreation opportunities. Consider the development of an outdoor recreation park with a sled hill and toboggan run, outdoor ice rink with a warming hut.
  - Research the possibility of offering a World Events Day at Waterfront Park.
- There is a system wide shortage of storage areas. Identify areas to better accommodate Departmental storage needs, which will result in better efficiency. This includes storage for existing and additional equipment and vehicles.
- Continue to improve technology. This was identified as one of the most significant areas needing improvement in the Department.
- Brand and image: doing a better job telling the story
- Create a city-wide map of parks and their associated watersheds. Develop stormwater priorities for parks based on this map.

Mid Term FY17-18 to FY19-20

- Develop a plan for connectivity among facilities and parks and include Safe Routes to Schools plans and Local Motion bike path connection identification.
- Develop a marketing plan and business plan for major facilities
- Implement maintenance standards for parks, buildings, and facilities.
- Create a regional recreation roundtable to discuss partnership opportunities and other ways to have a more regional approach to recreation service delivery.
- As part of PRORAGIS, perform a calculation of economic benefits of Department services and events.
- Work with the Community and Economic Development office to develop a tourism plan for parks and recreation services and events.

Long Term FY20-21 to FY23-24

- Add an internal staff position to oversee the Department's use of technology as well as overseeing data analytics.
- Consideration for the installation of a spray ground in the downtown area.

Other Considerations

- Policy development for Recognition/Memorial Bench Policy
- Off-Leash Policy Recommendations
- Reference Imagine city Hall Park renovation conceptual planning effort
- Incorporate WAN/Skatepark

Parks Recommendations

Specific recommendations for parks within the system are included here:

Regional Parks

Leddy Park: This park is a beloved feature of the Burlington's New North End neighborhood. This park should be intensified as a focus of recreational activities in the City. Long term recommendations include:

- Expand the existing fields to include another regulation size Soccer/Football/Lacrosse field.
- Consider modifying one of the 60' baseball fields to be a regulation adult softball field.
- Formalize the trail system and strengthen visual connection to bike path. The latter will be addressed within the scope of the bike path redesign.

North Beach: This park recently underwent renovation to upgrade the camp facilities. Future modifications to the site's access are planned as part of the bike path redesign.

Oakledge Park (Blanchard Beach): This historic park offers a wide range of amenities for Burlington's South End residents, as well as city-wide and regional attractions. Recommendations include:

- The creation of an accessible playground in 2015.
- Relocate the existing softball field that suffers from poor siting on a wetland.
- Both projects will require an analysis of stormwater considerations. This analysis should cover the entire park to help guide future projects in the park.

Community Parks:

Battery Park: This historically significant park serves as an intimate event space and scenic overlook near downtown. Long term considerations include:

- A holistic analysis and redesign are receommended to clarify and highlight the sites historical significance while improving it's aesthetic and functional performance. Analysis should incorporate the 2013 Draft of the Archaeological Management Plan by the UVM Consulting Archaeology Program, and the site's historical relevance as part of the war of 1812 and Civil War.
- Redesign should consider future internment of remains within vault, re-organization of the existing memorials, playground renovation, the creation of a spray park, and the potential to reintroduce the historic road as a sunset lookout

Calahan Park: Calahan Park is a true community park, providing a wide range of amenities for the surrounding residents. Recent upgrades have introduced the City's only 90' baseball field.

- Opportunities should be investigated for reducing mowed areas around the park's perimeter. These areas could be converted to low-maintenance native planting.

Starr Farm Park: This park includes active recreation, community gardens and a popular dog park. Long term recommendations include:

- Expansion and formalization of athletic fields. This site could accommodate future youth softball fields.
- Upgrade the existing wooden playground.
- Formalize trail connections between east and west sides of the park.

Waterfront Park and Promenade: This park is incredibly important as the City's premiere perforamance and event space. It is also a beloved space for passive recreation. The recommendations for this site are reflected in the Parks and Recreation Department's PIAP proposal. They include:

- Upgrades to electrical, sewer and water utilities.
- Upgrades to the existing boardwalk to stabilize the slope and introduce better public access to the water.
- Incorporating vegetation improvements to serve as stormwater infrastructure.
- Improved signage, wayfinding, lighting and gateways.
- Realignment of the bike path.

Neighborhood Parks

The following list includes recommendations for neighborhood parks. Any parks not listed should be maintained under the general guidelines set forth in this document.

Appletree Park:

- Remove failing tennis courts and rehabilitate the site's natural wetland functions.

City Hall Park:

- Continue developing plans for "Imagine: City Hall Park" in collaboration with the BCA and local partners.

Northshore Natural Area/City Beach:

- Improve pedestrian access and visibilty of the site.

Roosevelt Park: Upgrades in 2014

- Perform upgrades planned for 2014, including renovation with Boys & Girls Club, court renovations, new lighting and new seating.

Schmanska Park:

- Renovation of the barn.
- Remove the exisitng tennis courts.

Smalley Park:

- Create a new entrance gateway into the park. Remove fencing and replace strategically with low, aesthetically pleasing wood fence

Mini Parks

Mini parks should be maintained under the general guidelines set forth in this document - and with minimal investment of resources as they do not provide considerable community benefits.

Implementation Guidelines

The following is a listing of suggestions for successful implementation of the Strategic Recommendations. It represents the commitment and discipline required to integrate the Master Plan implementation process into daily operations.

- The Values and Strategic Recommendations will become the guidepost for the Department. When decisions or responses to the community are needed, the Plan becomes the reference point for decision making and whether or not new issues or responses to the community are of higher importance than what's been established as existing direction.
- This information should be included as part of the new Recreation Commission member and employee orientation programs.
- Post the Executive Summary on the Website and track results on the site as well. It may also be helpful to print a short summary of the progress to distribute to interested partners and community members.
- A staff person or team should have responsibility of being the project manager or "champion" of the Plan's implementation to ensure success. This staff person is responsible for monitoring the Plan's progress and works with staff to effectively integrate the Plan with operations.
- Each Strategic Recommendation should have a leader assigned to manage the process. Each Recommendation generally requires a cross functional team of employees to work on completing the initiative. A project manager should exist for each Recommendation.
- Regular reporting of the Plan's progress should occur. Break the Plan into separate fiscal years and report one year at a time, as an ongoing annual work plan. Each Recommendation for the year should include a list of tactics that support its completion. The tactics are developed prior to each year for the upcoming list of Recommendations. It is the project leader's responsibility to report on his/her initiative, included in a monthly or quarterly report. A suggestion is to input each year's data on a spreadsheet that lists the Recommendation start and completion dates, and which staff person is responsible for the Recommendation's completion.
- At the end of the year, perform an annual written review and documentation of the Recommendation.
- In addition to an annual review, a more comprehensive three year review will occur at the end of FY16-17 and FY19-20. This will include updating demographic information, updating park and amenity inventory, revising recreation program recommendations, and completing an additional Community Survey at the end of FY19-20.
- Update major stakeholders on the Plan's implementation and results on an annual basis.
- Conduct staff meetings on a regular basis, such as semi-annually to review the Plan's progress and results and report the Plan's progress to the Recreation Commission as well.
- Complete an annual just-in-time review of the next year's Recommendations to determine if priorities have changed. This can be included at an annual retreat in which successive years' Recommendations are discussed as part of the annual budget process. The Recommendations should tie into

the budget process. The Plan's action plan includes three timeframes: FY14-FY17, FY17-FY20, and FY20 to FY24. This schedule provides the opportunity for thorough updates during those timeframes.

- Post a chart of each year's Recommendations on office walls in administrative areas with a check-off column designating completion as part of a visual management program. Staff meetings should regularly include discussion of strategy. This will help to emphasize the Plan's importance and the Department's commitment to execution.
- If there are ideas for new strategies that arise throughout the year, include them on a written "parking lot" and review them as part of the annual just-in- time review to determine if they supplant any existing initiatives.

Conclusion

Burlington Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront aspires to continue and build upon its legacy of providing excellent services to the community. The Department is poised to develop its brand and image, update its use of marketing and technology, and to further develop the park and recreation system according to the Initiatives of the Master Plan. This will ensure the Department's continued role of importance to the community. The Strategic Initiatives create a sense of direction and focus for the next 10 years. All of these efforts will result in leadership excellence in the provision of services and impactful results that will greatly benefit all of Burlington.

Burlington Planning Commission

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Lee Buffinton
Harris Roen
Andy Montroll
Jennifer Wallace-Brodeur
Vacant, Youth Member

Burlington Planning Commission Meeting Notes

Tuesday, June 10, 2014 - 6:30 pm

PC Present: H. Roen, A. Montroll, E. Lee (No quorum present)
Absent: B. Baker, L. Buffinton, J. Wallace-Brodeur, Y. Bradley
Staff: D. White, S. Thibault, E. Tillotson

Due to absence of a quorum, only the Parks Master Plan was presented. No other action was taken

I. Agenda

No changes.

II. Public Forum

None

III. Report of the Vice Chair

None

IV. Report of the Director

None

V. Parks Master Plan Presentation

Jesse Bridges, Director of Parks and Recreation presented the draft Parks Master Plan.

The Master Plan is in its review phase. It is the first ever comprehensive Parks Master Plan for Burlington and it addresses urban forestry, urban wilds, recreational and conservation lands.

It is an overarching plan for all the City's parks and open spaces encompassing a survey and plan for equipment similarities, identities, lighting and signage in an effort to create an identity for the City Parks areas. The Department is still doing internal staff review. August 5th will be the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting where the focus will be on the Master plan looking for adoption of the plan in September.

A. Montroll: Perhaps it is better not to break the parks down by wards, but by neighborhoods? By wards might be isolating.

E. Lee: Connectivity is defined by bike and walking trails?

J. Bridges: Walking is the definition, based on a ½ mile walking distance.

D. White: How far is the park from residences, does the public have adequate facilities to get to parks?

J. Bridges: *Schmans*ka Park is very diverse but is not handicapped accessible. Biking and walking to parks is always free, we want to enhance that accessibility.

Programming and operations - Lake Champlain is one of our biggest parks. There are big deficiencies in marketing exposure, camps are led by professionals which are city employees, and are relatively inexpensive for families at about $150 per week.

As approved by the Planning Commission on August 12, 2014.

Sustainability and stewardship - For twenty years the department has received arbor awards. There is planning for increasing canopy cover. The plans for the urban wilds are being updated. The Department is working with the state to establish stewardship programs for rare and endangered species. Champ camp is continuing. The Department generates more than 60% of its own revenues. There is a struggle between public revenue focus vs recreation focuses.

Field rental rates are low and the Department is looking at increases of some fees. The focus is to have the fields not constantly reserved so that they can be used on a more random basis by park users.

J. Bridges: Looking more regionally, it would be nice if there was a regional park pass.

H. Roen: It could be reciprocal.

P. Wagner, city resident: Programs for kids and especially kids 18 to 25 are needed. The sailing center is not part of the parks Department but private money is being raised for a new sailing center.

J. Bridges: Parks does partner with the sailing center. Burlington City Arts, the Fletcher Free Library do offer programs. 18 to 25 is an underserved population. The Parks Department plays host to adult leagues. This area is one of the biggest deficiencies.

P. Wagner: Another group which is underserved is homeless people. Do Parks provide quasi shelters?

J. Bridges: It is a balancing act; the City is not able to provide shelter. On Thursday, the Department is doing training with an Americorp representative on this subject. The City has to find a way to connect people with appropriate services. Some of the City spaces function as defacto shelters.

D. White: Something equivalent to the street outreach program like the market place has through the Howard Center? It seems there is the potential for a parallel to this.

J. Wallace-Brodeur: It is her hope that staff will be educated about possibilities for connectivity. A system wide solution with all service groups is needed.

J. Bridges: The Burlington golf course allows wonderful winter accessibility plus running trails. There are some calls to remove some tennis court facilities. There are a plethora of community gardens but more are needed. There are 500 gardeners in the City. There is a need for a dog park in the south end. Vermont State has highest rate of pet ownership in the country. Is Oakledge Park a possibility? Dog licensing could be improved.

D. White: There is a plan to drill down to examine surpluses and deficiencies.

A. Montroll: National averages/allocations might be not appropriate for Burlington.

J. Bridges: There are drop in programs all summer, free lunches all summer, plus four hours of recreation free. This program serves multi ethnic families, with the emphasis on developing an expanded menu reflecting ethnicities.

Parks are designated by size, based on national standards.

A. Montroll: Waterfront Park feels like a regional park, not community. Perhaps it needs a different characterization.

D. White: Considering how a park is used and applying the Form Based Code approach is completely different.

A. Montroll: The report is based on consultant language, perhaps Jesse could provide a description more appropriate to Burlington.

P. Wagner: Doesn't the connectivity make all part of a system? Establishing nodes of connectivity between parks as linkage could help.

J. Bridges: This is good feedback from the Commission and the public, the language can be fine tuned for Burlington. Six of the seven most visited parks are on a waterfront. Lake trails and beaches need the most attention.

D. White: And this is an urbanized park, not rustic. Not all civic spaces are green as relates to FBC.

As approved by the Planning Commission on August 12, 2014.

H. Roen: The opposite point is that the park does provide peace and quiet sometimes.

A. Montroll: Parks can be special and unique with multi functions, which is great.

J. Bridges: The Waterfront PIAP proposals, connectivity, wayfinding for the park system, bike path upgrade all are connected. There are partnership opportunities, almost all with non profits. A new logo has been designed for the department. Stormwater is addressed in sustainability; there is a new compilation of inventory, a new approach which comes back to lot coverage.

D. White: Really likes the thinking about parks and stormwater. The map shows the street tree corridor, greenbelts also serve stormwater functions as well as urban wilds, and as special habitats. The tree canopy cover is impressive.

E. Lee: Rain gardens, parks should be part of a public and neighborhood conversation system.

J. Bridges: The City has a lot of approaches to stormwater and water conservation. The key is increasing sidewalk funding, improvement of stormwater and planning.

A. Montroll: Long term specifics are very specific. He would recommend that they be made more broad.

J. Bridges: There have already been changes to plan. More graphics, assigning divisions of responsibility would be helpful. The system themes need to be right. They are pretty good right now, but fine tuning is on going.

VI. Committee Reports

None

VII. Commissioner Items

None

VIII. Minutes/Communications

None

IX. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm

As approved by the Planning Commission on August 12, 2014.