

# Introduction

---

## □ National and Local Trends and Influences

Many forces will affect the way that Parks and Recreation Departments do business in the future. Political, social, economic, and technological changes will play a major part of issues that will be addressed. A status report on Public Park and Recreation Trends stated “unrelenting financial problems, more federal and state requirements, enhanced demands for services to an aging population, program requirements catering to a greater diversity of lifestyles, a shrinking and ethnically changing work force, stiffer competition for tax dollars, increasing violent crimes in parks, a movement toward privatization of operations, computerization, shrinking public images of the profession, and lack of citizen involvement are among challenges now faced by public recreation and park agencies” (Russell, 2002).

John Robinson, a professor at the University of Maryland has conducted a series of “time estimates” dealing with American daily life schedules since 1965. In these studies, he concludes that Americans today have more free time available to them as a result of less paid work, less housework, as well as fewer married couples and fewer children. However, even though there have been increases in free time, Americans claim to be more rushed and hurried for time. Robinson claims the most critical variable in how satisfying future time use will be, revolves around people’s ability to appreciate. (Robinson, Fall 1999).

Issues that will have to be addressed include deteriorating park and recreation infrastructure, declining park and recreation budgets relative to costs, increasing competition for shrinking federal, state, and local tax resources, and massive public sector debt. Additionally, what spending priorities will be set in the face of budget cuts, how to compete successfully for funding against other community services, and how to ensure future investment in acquisition, development, and improvement in park facilities. Each one of these areas will have a major impact on how departments will do business in the future. (Whyte, 1992)

Locally, the City of Manitowoc is experiencing a number of economic changes because of the budget crisis at the State and local levels. Changes in economic base have affected hundreds of employees in the City. In recent years, shared revenues from the State of Wisconsin have significantly decreased, thus affecting every governmental agency. A demand for less tax burden by the local taxpayers has led to increasing accountability and scrutiny of public spending. All levels of government will be asked to do more with a lot less. This, along with grant-in-aid programs, will significantly change over the next few years as all entities struggle to balance their budgets.

The City is also home to Manitowoc Public Utilities (MPU), a municipally owned supplier of water and electricity. MPU’s electric generating plant is the largest municipally owned generating plant in the State of

Wisconsin. Currently under construction is a 63 megawatt circulating fluidized bed boiler and turbine generating unit (base load) that when complete will provide low cost energy that is produced with low emissions and is mercury free.

MPU also recently completed a transaction with six (6) municipalities in Brown County (a/k/a the Central Brown County Water Authority [CBCWA]) to become their exclusive provider of potable water. This "water deal" will make the Manitowoc/CBCWA system the fifth largest water system in the State, and is the perfect regional solution for the needs of the people represented by the CBCWA.

National trends in park and recreation include:

- ▶ Promote accessibility;
- ▶ Partnerships with other agencies and area businesses and schools;
- ▶ Cost recovery of operations; and
- ▶ Sustainability.

A number of sessions with the Staff, Mayor, Department Heads, and Committees have produced ways to generate additional revenues for the City of Manitowoc. By listening to suggestions, gathering citizen input, and gleaning valuable information on grants, foundations, and other means available, it is our intent to stay apprised of current funding sources for the City of Manitowoc.

All these actions complement the existing recreation programs and facilities in the City of Manitowoc. This plan includes the development of adequate National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards, and the determination of existing and short-range needs and priorities to year 2010. A short summary of projected long-term outdoor recreation needs is also provided through 2015. Additionally, several State and Federal funding recreation aids programs available to local governments are outlined.

## **□ Recreation Policies**

The following are basic recreation policies that should be considered by local governmental agencies in decision-making with respect to its recreation operation.

Local governments should give significant emphasis to the needs of their citizens for outdoor recreation by considering it in all land-use planning, opening areas with recreation potential to use, and where necessary, acquiring new areas.

Full provision for acquiring, preserving or developing shoreline lands for public access and use should be made.

Rivers and other water bodies should be allowed to remain in their free-flowing state and natural setting.

Recreation areas should be strongly defended against encroachments from non-conforming uses, both public and private. Where recreation land must be taken for another

public use, it should be replaced with other land of similar quality and comparable location.

Floodplain zoning should be used wherever possible as a method to preserve attractive rivers and streams for public recreation in addition to the other benefits from such zoning.

Local government must provide continuing and adequate funds for outdoor recreation.

Cooperation between the City, County, Public and Private School Districts, and other regional, state, and governmental entities is vital to the growth of the Manitowoc community.

Smart Growth requirements shall be incorporated into each plan devised through all governmental systems.

## ❑ Outdoor Recreation Needs

All specific standards and recommendations are subject to variations, conditions, and peculiarities of the area surrounding the recreational facility. Recreation needs for a given area are affected by the cultural background, age, and sociological-economic status of the population being used by the recreational planner.

Three (3) types of gross land area standards recognized by the NRPA are:

**Population Ratio Method** – this is the best-known method and most commonly applied park and recreation standard. This standard is sensitive to population density and is used in concert with service radii, minimum size, and a description or classification of parks for which it applies.

**Recreation and Open Space Based on Area Percentage** – this methodology is based, in part, upon a commonly applied standard that ten (10) percent of the total area of a city should be devoted to recreation and open space available to the general public. Incorporate holistic planning into open space preservation, inclusive of storm water management, natural resources, and habitat protection and buffers. The NRPA points to several shortcomings of this method for realistic planning purposes for existing urban areas.

**Needs Determined by User Characteristics or Demand Projections** – Space requirements for park and open space activities is projected by this method based upon need or the participation rate aspect. The NRPA states that this approach is the most relevant to people and their needs. However this method has not been used as much by planners to date.

Past local analyses of park and recreation land needs have utilized the first standard, the Population Ratio Method. This standard will be utilized in this report. The NRPA recommends exclusion of the following in computing existing and/or future recreational land needs for: public school property; public or daily fee golf courses; special areas such as parkways, plazas,

cemeteries, public water supply reservoirs; private or voluntary agency lands; land that is vacant and undeveloped and not under the ownership or control of a public agency; and public acreage outside the jurisdictional limits of the community.

In the inventory of existing outdoor recreational land use section, all of the above listed exclusions have been made, with the exception of elementary school playgrounds, which provide an extremely balanced grouping of active recreation facilities.

## **□ 2015 Parkland and Facilities Needs**

Based upon the ratio of ten (10) acres of parkland for each 1,000 residents in a community, Manitowoc should have approximately 345 acres of parkland to serve its estimated 34,561 residents. The following table indicates a total of 612.65 acres of land within the park system at present. However, approximately 146.22 acres or nearly 24 percent are currently not developed for park use. Some of the lands are in their natural state, some are in the process of being prepared for development of the park. While it appears that the City has parklands that meet the ideal ratio mentioned above, the northeast and southwest portions of the City are lacking in the neighborhood park category. Existing park types and projected future land needs in each park type are summarized in Table 1. Each park may have deficiencies related to user amenities, code compliance, accessibility, cost recovery, or operations and maintenance that should be addressed on a park-by-park basis.

Table 1

2005 – 2015 PARKLAND NEEDS				
YEAR	TYPE OF PARK	EXISTING LANDS AVAILABLE (ACRES)	RECOM-MENDED LANDS AVAILABLE (ACRES)	ADDITIONAL LAND NEEDS (ACRES)
2005	a. Mini	11.0	-	-
	b. Playground**	84.68	175	90.32
	c. Neighborhood Parks	67.49	52	-
	d. Community Playfields	88.41	66	-
	e. Community Parks	361.07	52	-
<b>TOTALS</b>		612.65	345	90.32
2010	a. Mini	11.0	-	-
	b. Playground**	84.68	180	95.32
	c. Neighborhood Parks	67.49	55	-
	d. Community Playfields	88.41	69	-
	e. Community Parks	361.07	55	-
<b>TOTALS</b>		612.65	359	95.32
2015	a. Mini	11.0		
	b. Playground**	84.68	180	95.32
	c. Neighborhood Parks	67.49	56	
	d. Community Playfields	88.41	70	
	e. Community Parks	361.07	56	
<b>TOTALS *</b>		612.65	362	95.32

\* Excludes Special Use Facilities

\*\* Includes 66.63 acres at Stangel, Franklin, Monroe, Jackson, Jefferson, Riverview, and Madison Elementary Schools.

NOTE: Acreage figures based upon ratio of parkland to City residents in Manitowoc.

### ❑ 2015 Recreation Plan

This section is intended to briefly outline gross outdoor recreational parkland needs by the year 2015 (Table 2). Based on the population projections of 36,324 persons in 2015, the approximate 1,800 additional persons living within the City of Manitowoc will generate an additional land demand in certain growth areas. Additional land is needed, based upon the Population Ratio Method.

**Table 2**

<b>PROPOSED 2015 PARK SITE DISTRIBUTION</b>			
	2005 Acreage	2010 Acreage	2015 Acreage
Community Parks	51	54	63
Community Playfields	68	72	84
Neighborhoods Parks	51	54	63
Community Playgrounds	<u>170</u>	<u>180</u>	<u>210</u>
TOTALS:	340	360	420

## **□ Mission**

The Mission of the City of Manitowoc:

Through innovative and dynamic leadership, the City of Manitowoc will effectively manage public resources to enhance the quality of life for the benefit of the entire community by:

- ▶ Fostering opportunities for economic growth;
- ▶ Protecting the safety and well-being of the community;
- ▶ Serving the needs of the community with respect and dedication;
- ▶ Embracing the arts, humanities, and cultural diversity; and
- ▶ Providing a welcome atmosphere for our citizens and visitors.

The City's Parks and Recreation Department consists of three (3) distinct Divisions: Parks, Recreation, and Senior Center. The department's manpower is comprised of 23.5 full-time equivalent employees, and numerous part-time and seasonal employees. The main governing body for this department is the Parks and Recreation Committee. The department also receives advisory council from the Recreation Board, Zoological Board, Municipal Tree Commission and Committee on Aging.

The Parks Division maintains within the City over 700 acres of parklands, boulevards, waysides, trails, and open spaces. It also operates the Lincoln Park Zoo, which houses a wide variety of local, regional, national, and international type animals. The Park Division serves as the City's Forestry Division responsible for over 18,000 street trees within the City limits. Park facilities include ball diamonds, basketball facilities, football fields, cabins/field houses, concession stands, tennis courts, volleyball courts, horseshoe pits, soccer fields, playgrounds, nature trails, cross country ski trails, multi-use facilities, beach areas, restroom/shelter facilities, disc golf, and dog runs.

The Recreation Division organizes, plans, develops, and supervises a diversified program of recreation, sports, and special events for all ages and abilities. Additionally, the Division maintains the Red Arrow beach area during the summer months. It also maintains the outdoor ice rink at Silver Creek Park during the winter season. All scheduling and

reservations, as well as equipment rentals, are handled through this Division.

The Senior Center Division administers and coordinates all activities of the Manitowoc Senior Center. Activities at the Center include day trips, seminars, physical fitness activities, life-long learning activities, special events, and recognition programs. The various boards and committees work hard to cooperate with, and assist, community organizations by providing space for a myriad of activities for older adults.

The Parks and Recreation Department cooperates and partners with various community organizations, school districts, businesses, and agencies throughout the region. The arrangement reduces overhead, enhances the departments' revenues, and provides the ultimate in resources for the community.

Ensuring that local citizens are satisfied with programs and facilities, City staff work effectively with commerce and industry in Manitowoc, to enhance the vitality and progress of this community. The development and maintenance of natural open areas available to all is also vital to the future success of the City.

Parkland acquisition, development, and maintenance is carried on through both long-range planning, such as this document, as well as through the City's subdivision review, street re-assessment, and other business related activities and programs.

This planning effort attempts to coordinate with the other planning efforts, such as the State's Smart Growth laws, the City of Manitowoc "Comprehensive Plan", Manitowoc County's Park and Open Space Plan, the City of Manitowoc Bicycle Facilities Plan, and other plans relative to recreation and open spaces.

These plans address the component of park, recreation, and open space lands in the context of relationships to neighborhoods, growth patterns, and improving quality of life in the City. The Bicycle-Pedestrian Facilities Plan addresses the linkages of parks, open space, neighborhoods, area attractions to promote non-motorized transportation and safe travel within the City for bicyclists and pedestrians.