

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan is a first for the Teton County/Town of Jackson. It is completed within the strategic framework of the County and the Town which:

- Provides the foundation for the well-being of county and town residents through responsive and efficient services necessary to support the residential, business, environmental, and historical interests that define the community
- Enhances the quality of life for those who live here, and the experience for those who visit, through facilities and programs that contribute to public health, safety, and welfare
- Appreciates the unique environmental resource and scenic beauty
- Acknowledges responsibilities to future generations



According to the 2012 Jackson/Teton County Comprehensive Plan, the common values of community character are ecosystem stewardship, growth management, and quality of life. This Plan creates a roadmap to ensuring an appropriate balance of facilities, amenities, and programs offered to the community now and into the future. It evaluates the current system in order to appropriately develop goals, policies, and guidelines, along with achievable strategies, and will be heavily used as a resource for development and redevelopment of the Department's assets and services for the next 10 years.

About the Community and the Department

Teton County has approximately 23,000 residents, of which 10,000 are in the Town of Jackson. A significant number of the residents in Teton County are second home owners. Teton County/Jackson Parks and Recreation Department operates as a County agency under a Joint Powers Agreement between the Town and the County. Department funding is split between the County at 55 percent and the Town at 45 percent based upon the 2010 Census on residential population distribution.

The Department has 11 developed parks comprising 60 acres and four (4) undeveloped parks comprising 89 acres; a 36,000 square foot recreation center with a gymnasium, multi-purpose space, 8 lane lap pool, leisure pool, splash down pool/slide tower, and therapy pool; 50 miles of paved multimodal pathways; and management of approximately 1,000 acres of Snake River Recreation parcels owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Through a School District agreement, the Department has management and maintenance responsibilities of 11 athletic fields comprising 18 acres. Lastly, the Department has grounds maintenance responsibility for all town and county government facilities and town right-of ways

About the Process

The Department director, staff, and the Advisory Board led the project team in preparing the Plan, a document available to the public. The intent of this plan is to support the policies within the Jackson/Teton County Comprehensive Plan and it requires approval by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the County Commissioners, and the Town Council. The Plan becomes an element of the current Teton County/Jackson Comprehensive General Plan following approval of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, the County Commissioners, and the Town Council.

The year-long plan development began in April of 2017 and included community and stakeholder engagement, an inventory and level of service analysis, demographics and trends analysis, identification of findings and key issues, visioning, and development of an action plan addressing recommendations for capital assets and operations, along with potential funding strategies. Final approval was granted in April of 2018

Key Opportunities

The following key issues and opportunities were identified during the preparation of this plan. A detailed exploration exists in the main document.

EXISTING AND FUTURE FACILITIES

Indoor Facilities and Amenities

While recreational programs hosted by the Department take place in satellite/partner locations, the Teton County/Jackson Recreation Center hosts the majority of indoor programming. The community is highly satisfied with the current facility, yet the Recreation Center has experienced challenges in accommodating the needs of the community, creating user and scheduling conflicts. A feasibility study completed in 2012 has begun to be fulfilled through a SPET tax for renovations approved in 2017, but there is much more to be done.

Community/Neighborhood Parks

Community/Neighborhood parks are intended to serve the surrounding neighborhood. While well-maintained and functional, existing parks tend to suffer from a lack of individual identity. Gaps in the system, based on a ¼ mile walking distance criteria, seem to be on the east side of the community by May Park, Teton Village, and south of South Park toward the community of Hoback.

Special Event/Community Gathering Parks

The Department currently offers multiple special events throughout the system and supports numerous community events hosted by other organizations. Large maintenance impacts and traffic congestions often result. Considerations for these types of spaces include flexibility, walkability and transportation, hard surfaces, and Department resources.

Gateway Parks

Gateway parks should strengthen the sense of arrival into the community. North Park is an obvious gateway, as it sits at the northern extent of town adjacent to the Visitor Center. Though in the center of Jackson, Town Square functions as a gateway of sorts, as it is often one of the first outdoor places in town that tourists will visit. The future park in Teton Village will play the role of Gateway Park. Baux Park is a gateway in a different sense, as it is the gateway from town to the mountains and forest.

Beyond the Community and Neighborhood Parks

For the entire park system, the balance of conservation and development is paramount. Many of the BLM parcels are adjacent to the Snake River, in the floodplain, and further from populations. As such, they have habitat/conservation value and/or could be considered for land swaps to best serve the community.

Athletic Fields

The main athletic fields in the system are at the High School Recreation Complex. The Department also utilizes open green space and baseball/softball fields around the system to create temporary rectangular fields when necessary, a solution often utilized for practice times. This is not ideal and creates issues with scheduling, maintenance, and mixed-uses at parks. The School District is projecting growth, and indication of impact on the demand for services provided by the Department and the rate of use of athletic fields in the system. Reinventing how the high school complex is used and development of the Stilson property both provide opportunity to address this issue.

Dog Off-leash Areas

Local community groups have been trying to identify a suitable location for a dog park for some time, and statistics show that the need is obvious. Although commonly referred to as dog parks, these places have been shown to be social gathering places for dog guardians – a park for people with dogs. Location determination and sites for consideration are explored in this plan.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Recreation Programming

The Department provides instructional, skill-based, and social programs for adults, youth, active agers, and special events that contain a wide-variety of offerings, as well as drop-in/day-use opportunities. The public is complementary about the Department's offerings and also offers useful information for improvements including more diversification of offerings such as health and wellness, nature education, and arts and culture (and a larger focus on adults and the aging population), while expressing concern about trying to offer too much with limited resources. Facility limitations are impacting the ability to offer a more robust program offering.

Adaptive Programming

The community identified people with disabilities as a user group with limited opportunities provided by the Department. Inclusion services will assist in identifying reasonable and appropriate accommodations for people with disabilities.

Outdoor Recreation Programming

Even though the Jackson/Teton County community is surrounded by outdoor recreation opportunities, there are some in the community that cannot access them, because they are within National Parks and Forest, accessible only by car, or require specialized equipment to access. To provide accessible opportunities to outdoor recreation within its system, the Department should look to provide “front country” opportunities where appropriate to bring a taste of the back country.

After-School Programming

The Department has existing partnerships with the school district and seems to be the “go to” service provider within the community for after school programs and services for children, providing expansive programming for children through grade eight as well as summer time programming. The Department needs to consider the need for after-school programming in the planning of expansion of the recreation center.



River Recreation Management and Programming

The Department has taken over river access points in recent years currently has a River Management Plan in place. Since the operation of these sites is relatively new, it is expected that there will be operational challenges. Understanding the role the BLM tracts will play in the future of the system is also important, as many of these parcels are adjacent to the Snake River.

Nordic Trail Grooming

The Department does a great job in responding to operational and maintenance issues on the large network of Nordic trails, but often receives complaints of user conflict and complaints regarding the amount and scheduling of groomed trails. This pulls the Department in multiple directions.

Collaboration and Partnerships

Many in the community expressed concern that the size of the service profile of the Department limited its ability to deliver its core services. Well designed and documented collaboration and partnerships are service delivery possibilities to be explored under the right circumstances.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Cost Recovery Philosophy and Policy, Fee Policy and Policies Regarding Access to Facilities and Services

All of these policies and procedures are related and must work together to be effective. In order to keep up with increasing expenses, experience across the country has shown that smaller periodic increases are much more tolerable than less frequent larger increases, and provisions are always made for assistance for those with economic need. With limited facilities, use policies are critical and must be adhered to for the benefit of all.

FUNDING

Department Budget

The Department experiences a funding deficit primarily in capital repair and replacement. It has been on a building and expansion boom over the past 15 years, and as a result, capital repair liability continues to grow. While it is able to maintain currently, most of the improvements are less than 20 years old, and in the next 10 years, significant funding will be required for upkeep. Over 50 miles of paved pathways have been constructed since 1998, and large capital overlay costs will begin on these facilities in the next 5-10 years.

The other funding deficit is through non-core service growth including such things as downtown restrooms, public right of ways, or other government buildings. Often the Department budget is evaluated as growing, but most is not driven by the Department or its users, but rather these other maintenance and support services.

Revenue Sources

Potential new funding sources are explored along with a look at user fees, park exaction and park impact fees, Specific Purpose Excise Tax (SPET), and Recreation District Tax. Expansion of sponsorships, partnerships and grants create additional opportunity for cost sharing, cost savings, and additional revenue.

OPERATIONAL AND ECONOMIC STABILITY

Core Services

Core services satisfy values and vision, typically benefiting all community members, or are seen as essential to the lives of under-served populations. It is not necessary that an individual participate in a specific recreational or cultural activity, or even step into a park setting to receive benefit. Having a nice park and trail system with trees, open space, and recreational amenities available in the community adds to home values and a quality living environment and **provides opportunity** for partaking in activity, as well as contributes to clean air and provides relief from urban density. To achieve these and other outcomes, an agency invests its tax dollars in these **core services**.

Parks and recreation services provide value to the community as a whole in terms of economic, environmental, and social benefits. Tax dollars support these “core services.”

Beyond those benefits realized by all residents, the agency is also able to provide specific activities and services that benefit individuals. There are not adequate tax dollars to completely support this level of activity, and it is appropriate and common to charge at least minimally for these services. The Department's Cost Recovery Policy provides the framework by which all services are categorized and set up for cost recovery targets (some will be 0%). It is crucial that the Department not take on more than it can handle, and the ability to attract revenue to support activities actually makes them able to be offered.

In addition to mission-based responsibilities, the Department is charged with care of facilities outside of the park system (public facility grounds cemetery, restrooms, trees, etc.). Although these may not meet the core mission of the Department of Parks and Recreation, they may be core services of the County and/or the Town. As expenses to provide the acceptable level of service increase over time, tax support revenue has to keep pace.

Level of Service Standards

Satisfaction with the Parks and Recreation Department is very strong and exceeds national standards as measured from survey comparison with other communities. However, two operational issues float to the top of items needing more attention: the quality/condition of the Recreation Center at #1 of 21 items queried and quality/maintenance of pathways at #2. Overall, there is a sense that the Department is doing a great job with limited resources and increasing demands, but concern about the capacity to keep up with an increasing demand.

Organizational Structure

A combined County/Town Parks and Recreation Department is somewhat unique and comes with distinctive challenges, particularly related to level of service provision to both the urban and rural setting. It is otherwise organized in a traditional fashion with three functional management divisions including Recreation Programs, Recreation Center, and Parks. Full-time staff are supplemented with part-time staff. One of the biggest issues facing the Department is the impact of the housing crisis in Jackson that is also affecting other mountain resort towns.

Due to the size of the service profile of the Department, and the nature of a small community, staff are consistently pulled in many directions. All sources of input noted that while the Department meets a high standard, many were concerned that the organizational efficiency was not sustainable as the Department is asked to continue existing responsibilities, while taking on additional responsibilities.

Marketing and Communication

The Department should be commended for its marketing efforts to date. Even though many sources of input shared the sentiment that there are some gaps in communication, the Department is held with high regard in the community. Internally, marketing efforts are inconsistent and the Department should focus on consistent message, identity, and branding.

Recommendations and Action Plan

The following recommendations are drawn from the public input, inventory, level of service analysis, findings feedback, and all the information gathered during the strategic planning process with a primary focus on maintaining, sustaining, and improving parks, recreation, open space, and trails. All cost estimates are in 2017 figures where applicable. Most costs are dependent on the extent of the enhancements and improvements determined or known at this time.

Timeframe to complete is designated as:

- Short-Term/Immediate (up to 2 years)
- Mid-Term (2-5 years)
- Long-Term (5-10 years)

Capital Priorities

TIER ONE (HIGH PRIORITY) – SHORT TERM/IMMEDIATE (UP TO 2 YEARS)		
EXPAND RECREATION CENTER		
Actions	Operational Impact	Capital Impact
Continue to improve Recreation Center in a phased approach	Staff planning and development	Phase 2 estimated cost - \$13.5 million (gymnasium, classrooms, fitness)
Modernize and refresh existing facilities		
Increase overall capacity of the facility		
Provide additional gymnasium space		Phase 3 estimated cost - \$6.3 million (aquatics)
Provide health and fitness multi-use space		
Re-configure site circulation and parking- King Street Extension		

PARK SITE DEVELOPMENT		
Actions	Operational Impact	Capital Impact
<p>Athletic Fields Master Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Stilson Property to accommodate athletic fields: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidating adult and general purpose athletic fields Providing active agers park amenities Developing a gateway to transit, trails, and river recreation TCSO High School Fields Re-development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-purpose adult softball fields to consolidate youth baseball fields at this site In collaboration with TCSO, increase capacity for youth multi-purpose fields at this site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate lawn in front of High School Evaluate un-developed land east of Tennis Courts Consider land acquisition to increase youth multi-purpose athletic field capacity 	Staff planning and development	<p>Stilson Site development estimated cost - \$3-4 million (Cost estimates based on proposed master plan)</p> <p>High School site re-development Estimated cost - tbd</p> <p>Budget sheet can be found in Appendix I</p>
<p>Develop Off-leash dog park opportunities in east and west Jackson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sites to consider are Phil Baux, the Fairgrounds, Wayne May, Mike Yokel. Develop partnerships with local interest groups to co-develop sites 		<p>Site development estimated cost - \$75,000 to \$500,000 (Cost estimates based on regional comparison and dependent on amenities. Budget sheet can be found in Appendix I)</p>
<p>Develop Accessibility Master Plan to serve as ADA transition Plan addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Park amenities Facility Parking 		<p>Site and project dependent. Establish annual budget allotment</p>
<p>Tennis Court re-evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider temporary or permanent conversion to pickleball 		

TIER TWO (MEDIUM PRIORITY) – (2-5 YEARS)		
Actions	Operational Impact	Capital Impact
<p>Re-develop Phil Baux Park to become a gateway connections park:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating connections to the National Forest trail system • Developing a special event space to accommodate outdoor concerts/amphitheater • Incorporating outdoor alternative sports/opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Climbing ▪ Skateboarding ▪ Broomball ▪ Inline skating ▪ Nature play areas 	Staff planning and development	<p>Site development estimated cost - \$400,000 to \$550,000 (Cost estimates based on regional comparison and dependent on amenities. Budget sheet can be found in Appendix I)</p>
Complete Wayne May Park Development		<p>Dependent on amenities. Estimates/ amenity include: Playgorund - \$100-250k Natural Play Area - \$40 – 150k Signage - \$500/each Benches – \$1,500/each</p>
<p>Complete Karns Meadow Park Master Plan to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passive/Natural Park • Habitat and Resource Education • Public Access to Flat Creek • Interior soft Pedestrian Trails 		
<p>Develop South Park Landing (west) base, prioritizing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking • Vehicle circulation • River bank restoration 		
<p>BLM Parcel 9/10 Park Base Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine appropriate site plans for each BLM parcel. • Evaluate the potential role of BLM parcels in the Parks system and conduct land-use planning studies on parcels to be acquired. <p>It is important to note that determining an appropriate use does not imply development.</p>		Dependent on project.
Collaborate with Community Pathways to ensure continued development and connectivity of trails and pathways to parks and recreation facilities		
Balance conservation and development, focusing on developing the Town Core while		

providing gateways and passive opportunities throughout the system.		
Partner with _____ to develop public art in parks policy and procedure. Selection and approval criteria should be developed through the Advisory Board.		Dependent on project
Develop more unstructured or natural play areas – Rangeview Park and May Park hold potential for a pilot of this type of play area.		Estimates/amenity include: Natural Play Area – \$40-150k
TIER THREE (LOW PRIORITY) – LONG TERM (5-10 YEARS)		
PARK SITE DEVELOPMENT		
Actions	Operational Impact	Capital Impact
Develop Teton Village Park including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">3+ acre “community/neighborhood” type park. Site should include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">PlaygroundShelterNon-programmed play areasMulti-purpose turf athletic fields	Staff planning and development	Dependent on amenities Estimates/ amenity include: Playground – \$100-250k Natural Play Area – \$40-150k Signage – \$500/each Benches – \$1,500/each Sport Court – \$50-70k Ball diamond/Rectangular field – \$125-500,000
Pursue land acquisition for Hog Island/Hoback Neighborhood Park through the exaction process. Park area should be classified as a “community/neighborhood” type park. Site should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">PlaygroundShelterNon-programmed play areas		
Area should also be considered for joint development with the school district of multi-use athletic field.		
Determine feasibility for water play features at parks (ex. splash pad) – There are several sites in the system where this type of amenity might be appropriate. Of chief concern should be transportation and proximity to other children-related facilities and activities.		

Programming and Service Priorities

Actions	Operational Impact	Timeframe
<p>Develop Health and Wellness Programming to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitness in parks • Health education • Community and corporate wellness • Support and assist systems of care organizations and programs <p>Promote young adult, adult, and active aging programming through targeted marketing efforts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop more nature-based programming (classes, trips, and events). • Develop more fitness opportunities (indoor/outdoor classes) and through partnerships with alternative providers. • Develop more arts and culture programming (classes, trips, and events). 	Staff planning and development	On-going
<p>Develop Active Aged Programming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify additional indoor/outdoor opportunities for Pickleball through programming (tournaments), scheduling, and development. • Program “adventure” or camp type opportunities for adults. • Program integrated fitness opportunities. 		

Actions	Operational Impact	Timeframe
Continue Program Diversification and Community Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop multi-cultural opportunities for engagement and inclusion of the Latino population and others. Evaluate scheduling of programs to accommodate parents/children/multi-generations. Continue to partner with alternate providers to strengthen the offerings within the community. Continue to identify underserved populations and the barriers of entry that exist within the system; with a particular attention to low and moderate-income populations. Evaluate the fit of programs through a services assessment. 	Staff planning and development	Ongoing
Adaptive/Accessible Programming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and communicate opportunities for inclusive services within current programming. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicate staff liaison to coordinate efforts with programmers. Address program access through marketing materials and registrations system. Provide programming opportunities for seniors, special needs, and through Special Olympics activities. 		
Continue to Build Partnerships and Collaborative Programming with Alternative Providers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> St. John's Hospital Teton County Health Department Teton County Library Teton County Senior Center Teton County School District Public/Private Partnerships Snake River Fund Friends of Pathways Jackson Hole Public Art 		Ongoing

Policy and Procedure

Actions	Operational Impact	Timeframe
Review and Update Cost Recovery Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilizing Parks and Recreation Advisory Board input for sorting during the next review of policy. Analyze definitions for direct and indirect costs, and ensure that consistency, accurate tracking, and measurements are in place. Consider adjustments to the ranges in each tier, if necessary. In conjunction with services assessment, determine the viability and effectiveness of programs. 	Staff planning and development	2019
Recreation Center Access/Use Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximize use of the Aquatics Scheduling Policy. Develop an operations philosophy to balance the facility use at the Recreation Center, shifting group use away from prime time. 		On-going
Field Scheduling Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use aquatics scheduling policy as a model to create field/facility scheduling policy. 		Immediate
River Access Maintenance Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop communication strategy regarding current maintenance and management policies. Re-evaluate Management Plan prior to expiration. 		Immediate

Funding

Actions	Operational Impact	Timeframe
Recreation Center User Fees (Update) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop user fee strategy that reflects update to cost recovery goals and objectives. Incrementally increase per hour pricing for swim lanes, the gymnasium, etc. Effort should take several years. 	Staff planning and development	With Cost Recovery update cycle/ Immediate
Park Facility Fees (Update) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop user fee strategy that reflects update to cost recovery goals and objectives. Incrementally increase per hour pricing for athletic fields, shelter rentals, etc. Effort should take several years. 		
Sponsorship/Partnership Policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop more comprehensive sponsorship and partnership policies to encourage these strategies and allow for an easier communication and implementation process. Specifically address gift giving/donations within the policy to encourage, provide clarity, establish process, articulate selection criteria and approval mechanism. 		Immediate
Park Exaction Land Development Regulation Update and Text Amendment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add land acceptance criteria to existing language Assure adherence to valuation of fees-in-lieu calculation Explore park impact fee to generate park development funding 		Immediate

Operations

Actions	Operational Impact	Timeframe
River Access Maintenance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a community education strategy for the river access points operated by the Department. Evaluate the effectiveness of the current Management Plan on a yearly basis. 		Immediate
Town of Jackson Downtown Public Restrooms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track the true cost of service and ensure proper funding to keep up with increasing expenses. 		On-going
Town/County Non-Park Grounds Maintenance Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a services assessment to determine potential of contracting/partnership services, based on ability to continue current levels of service. Develop communication strategy to show impact of service. Continue to develop partnerships. Evaluate contracting some services where financial savings is possible. 	Staff planning and development	Ongoing/ Immediate
Develop a new Marketing and Communications Strategy that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate marketing efforts to dedicated staff member to ensure consistency. Develop a strategic marketing plan that shifts efforts toward story-telling, relationship building, and connection, and away from program/logistic focused marketing. Provide more communication about partners and programs. Continue to establish platforms for outreach/feedback. 		With update of the Communication and Marketing Plan.

Actions	Operational Impact	Timeframe
<p>Continue to evaluate the action plan provided in this Strategic Plan and how opportunities fit into the long term priorities on an annual basis. Criteria for decision making should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit with multiple planning documents • Community needs/demand • Funding and opportunity • Urgency • Operational efficiency 		On-going