

APPENDIX D:

**SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION
WITH STAFF**

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION WITH COUNTY STAFF

GWINNETT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN UPDATE

The following is a summary of comments received from Gwinnett County Department of Community Services Staff through individual and group meetings, submissions and e-mails in June and July 2003. The comments are correlated to the questions posed, but are not listed in any particular order.

What do you do well/best?

1. provide and maintain an outstanding park system
2. acquiring land
3. youth athletic programs
4. variety of facilities that are fairly unique for the area
5. outdoor leisure pools
6. community centers like at Pinckneyville
7. historic preservation
8. good on ball fields but turf quality is a challenge
9. adult softball is highly successful with the park patrons who enjoy a clean well maintained facility
10. have the right equipment to do the job right
11. conceptually very good on trails but success means need to be even better
12. whatever it is we do well but we cannot rest on that because we have 100 people a day moving into the area
13. typically we do things right
14. seniors program is good and has a good network for meeting basic common skills – it is one of their best programs
15. Gwinnett Life
16. tennis is a high profile program and they try to provide a standardized building – new technology keeps changing
17. the relationship with the board of education is very good particularly for the youth program – there are 70 gyms available to the County for them to book after 5:00p.m. Youth sports is not just the County parks but takes into account the 70 gyms
18. they have about 1000 adults in programs
19. doing better on providing playgrounds
20. they now have people certified in assessing playground equipment for safety
21. we manage volunteers pretty well – there are over 11,000 volunteers in Gwinnett's sports and arts programs
22. provide the citizens of Gwinnett with a high quality facility

Problems - what don't you do as well?

1. communication
2. park managers work 7 to 3:30 – what happens in the evening (they do have radios and pagers and its getting better but need more staff in parks. They have just started Sunday trash pick up)
3. question how many parks can a manager effectively handle
4. Hard to keep up to park acquisition and keep maintaining parks at current standard. We have one staff for every 23.2 acres. May be able to adjust to more parks with contract staff. We also have a program of using inmates from the prisons who help clean up but they are now being charged for some of the cost like the guard's salary and the vehicle to transport – they do janitorial services and some do light construction
5. There is not enough maintenance staff for what we have now let alone more. Not enough staff to properly take care of everything.
6. Major equipment replacement is needed and a time frame worked out for how it's going to be done.
7. Not enough parks in the southern part of the County or enough facilities as well as just green space.
8. Need more green space.
9. do not provide for adults as much as they do for kids – they do not have adult football, soccer, or softball – and there is a need for this programming
10. Arts – one community center with arts facilities is not enough
11. Satellite system set up now is very limited – no staff, no money for supplies
12. There is a separate privately funded facility that impacts staffs ability to provide programs (question – should Gwinnett compete with private arts centers?) Need for more not in debate though – one in a peripheral location is not enough

What should the County's Priorities be?

1. maintain what we have
2. improve turf management – look at artificial turf for some fields
3. playgrounds – although staff is trained we need to increase more surfaces to be less maintenance intense
4. how we build our trails – they need to be more like roads given the traffic that they sustain
5. planning – need to start looking ahead as to how to connect the trails and connect with other facilities – have to start looking at power lines, easements
6. need more park area for free play – unprogrammed space
7. need more soccer and cricket and lacrosse – some just want a place to go play
8. community becoming more international and have to start looking at other sports like soccer, cricket etc – bocce and badminton also in demand
9. Where the density is the greatest is the most land locked area – how to meet needs when there isn't any land

What should the County's Priorities be? (...continued)

10. can small parcels meet the needs- as land goes through transition is it possible to pick up developed land and redevelop for another use – malls, offices and schools may be sites to look at
11. 15 years ago we would have said “why do soccer” – now we cannot keep up
12. roller hockey another sport that may have to be address – Snellville has a roller hockey association and they use a private facility
13. we are behind the 8 ball in the south and west as there is no land for acquisition – some think it will be the same today as it will be in 5 years – therefore should we concentrate our efforts on acquisition where we can actually still acquire the land or go looking in this already densely populated area where land is scarce.
14. we still do not have a good handle on the needs in the south and west
15. we try to hire bi-lingual people but still behind
16. sign in package in more universal languages but they know of 27 different languages – how do they keep up
17. should have some standards but what is the right mix needs to be resolved
18. need more basketball courts but no one wants they near anything else yet they need to be near washrooms
19. as far as operations is concerned we need to look at what we already have and make sure we are maintaining it before we go and add to the system
20. need more gyms and community centers with staff at each and every park will full time employees and with a building to work out of
21. do not ease up on land acquisition – but if keep acquiring what do we do with it – put up no trespassing signs until we can develop
22. future operating cost has to be kept in mind
23. service youth well but we have no adult programs other then seniors need to serve all ages
24. Bogan – began it and need to finish it – but what and how
25. Maintain quality
26. need to integrate with other departments and need better trails and need to listen to the people
27. need policy direction and a unit (staff) to assess if we are achieving our goals – need to integrate for public good – senior department heads need to understand all programs and priorities that are out there not just their own
28. more parkland required in Buford area

What do you receive compliments on?

1. Get compliments on aquatics but not enough pools
2. like the gyms and then everyone wants one
3. everyone likes Bogan park – people from all over come and try to use
4. staff is dedicated and responsive and have good customer sense
5. when developing a park they use a citizen steering committee that influences the way the park is designed – not fixed pallet
6. trails – lots of compliments – Hispanic ladies really like the trails
7. Collins Hill Park – mainly because of the dedication of staff.
8. Day camp because it gives kids something to do.
9. Historic Courthouse as preserved its history.
10. Praised for maintenance job at parks
11. all athletic programs are successful and pavilion rentals and playgrounds are very popular
12. 90% of comments are praise only 10% are complaints
13. most compliments are on the multi-purpose trails and the playing fields
14. the swimming pools, walking trails, and gymnasiums seem to please the public the most.
15. Looking Good!
16. Bogan Park has a wide variety of activities for families.
17. Best parks in the State – we have more green space, better programs and more up to date facilities.

What needs to be Improved? What do you receive Complaints about?

1. teens – get beat up a lot for not providing and then get beat up for where they do provide – they are hard on facilities and no one wants them around
2. if going to provide for all age groups have to accept the good with the bad
3. took down basketball at Lucky Shoals and now they are putting them back up
4. next time they will not put skate park beside a hockey rink – conflicts
5. Rabbit Hill and Collins Hill good examples
6. Best Friends – they will be putting teen facilities up at the front of the park – less vandalism – this is good because we now have to pay for park police
7. In Lucky Shoals – it is more of a multi sports park – soccer, baseball and football – fewer number but different ages and working with the community
8. Collins Hill Park because its not big enough to accommodate all the activities.
9. no money to build a stand alone football field on the property purchased at Collins Hill
10. need to get more input from staff when do park master plans and do not develop any more state parks

What needs to be Improved? What do you receive Complaints about? (...continued)

11. need universal signage - signage is an issue but at least we've started to address it – its out there
12. what might be needed is a you are here symbol to help people figure out where they are in the park and where they have to go to get to a playing field
13. need at least three staff people in every park
14. offer more diverse activities and stop doing what is not popular
15. need a better pay system for those who over achieve and less money for those who are dead weight. Might be a good idea to bring back senior parks workers.
16. greatest use is the walking trails so more should be spent on them
17. need more parks in the southern zone and more green space.
18. Associations need to take better care of facilities on the weekends.
19. North is growing so fast need more parks to keep pace.
20. need to provide the citizens with more conveniences.
21. Need more parkland between Collins Hill and Bogan Park and George Pierce Park as more and more families moving into this area.
22. Need to increase the price of pool use and need to start charging the associations a more realistic price to use the facilities.
23. Need to have more multi purpose parks.

Ethnic Issues

1. We should offer the same programs regardless of ethnic or cultural background
2. There are no Spanish or Oriental sports associations
3. Universal signage would help
4. County needs to hire more ethnically diverse people

Staffing Issues

1. Adequate for now but if additional parks are added we will need more part time staff to keep up.
2. those who receive higher evaluations should get more financial rewards
3. More park workers are needed. End up only being able to do the minimum as short staffed.
4. We are working on the districts and the programs and all are determined to make it work. Some problems are finding office space in facilities to keep staff in each major park and therefore keep eyes and ears on community
5. they have decentralized with stationary staff in each park and each coordinator has 6-7 parks
6. numbers were not there so they had to combine and act as one (this is the issue of trying to create a district level park with permanent staff to that facility)