

SECTION 7: Delivery System Analysis

7.1 EXISTING OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE & DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

The Gwinnett County Department of Community Services is responsible for providing recreation services throughout the County. Within the Department, responsibility for providing leisure services are handled by the Parks and Recreation Operations Division and the Parks and Recreation Project Administration Division.

"The mission of Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation is to provide quality parks and leisure activities to the citizens of Gwinnett County. The department will promote broad-based recreational opportunities in order to improve the quality of life for all citizens in Gwinnett County and make reasonable modifications to programs, services or activities when necessary to promote participation by persons with disabilities."

The current staffing of Parks and Recreation totals 153 full time positions, 43 part time positions and 10 seasonal workers for a total of 208 persons or positions. Tables 7-1 to 7-3 lists the positions by area of activity. *Note: Tables 7-1 to 7-3 are all current as of December 31, 2003 and do not reflect staffing changes made in early 2004 (i.e., addition of 6 full-time staff).*

The responsibilities of the divisions within the department are listed below. Parks and Recreation Operations Division of Community Services is the primary point of contact for the community and is the arm of the County that is most responsible for ensuring that the leisure needs of County residents are being met.

The Parks and Recreation Operations Division is responsible for:

1. Programming for cultural, historical, environmental, and seniors related facilities.
2. The programming of all classes, special events and camps.
3. Providing inclusion in all areas of programming for citizens with disabilities.
4. Recreational programming for aquatics and tennis.
5. Recreational programming for indoor and outdoor facilities for both youth and adults.
6. Security and police liaison;
7. The marketing and resource development for both divisions.
8. Maintenance of all park facilities.
9. Maintenance of all park grounds.
10. Rentals, collection processes, and fees to augment operational costs of park system and service delivery.

The planning, management and development of recreation services is primarily the responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Project Administration Division of the Department of Community Services, although other departments and boards also play a role.

The Parks and Recreation Project Administration Division is responsible for:

1. Community Services Development.
2. Planning and development.
3. Management of the Sales Tax implementation.
4. Construction management.
5. Special projects.

Table 7-1: Full-Time Staffing Breakdown
Department of Community Services: Project Administration, Operations and Fiscal Management

<u>Community Services Department- Director's Office</u>	
Department Director	1
Office Administrator	1
Office Assistant	1
Subtotal - Community Services Department - Director's Office	3
<u>Parks & Recreation Operations Division:</u>	
Division Director, Parks & Recreation Operations	1
Sr. Administrative Assistant	1
<u>Park Grounds Maintenance:</u>	
Community Services Manager, Park Grounds Maintenance	1
Park Maintenance Coordinator	3
Community Grounds Foreman	19
Community Parks Worker I	8
Community Parks Worker II	34
Community Parks Refuse Collector	1
<u>Support Services:</u>	
Community Services Manager, Support Services	1
Administrative Assistant	1
Park Maintenance Coordinator, Facilities Maintenance Contracts	1
Staff Assistant I	1
Field Support Services Foreman	1
Warehouse supervisor	1
Electrical Services Foreman	1
Plumbing Services Foreman	1
Facilities Operations Foreman	1
Facilities Operation Technician	7
Warehouse Technician	1
Warehouse Clerk	1
Community Parks Worker II	1
<u>Recreation Programming:</u>	
Community Services Manager, Recreation Programming	2
Program Coordinator	4
Resources & Marketing Coordinator	1
Recreation Facility Programmer - Aquatics/General	1
Recreation Facility Programmer - Tennis	1
Recreation Facility Programmer - Environmental Outdoor	1
Recreation Facility Programmer - Heritage	1
Recreation Facility Programmer - Rentals	2
Recreation Facility Programmer - Historic	1
Recreation Facility Programmer - South Area	2
Recreation Facility Programmer - North Area	2
Recreation Facility Programmer - West Area	2

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Gwinnett County 2004 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Table 7-1: Full-Time Staffing Breakdown (continued)

Department of Community Services: Project Administration, Operations and Fiscal Management

Recreation Facility Programmer – Cultural Arts	1
Recreation Facility Programmer - Senior	1
Recreation Facility Programmer – Adult Athletics	2
Publicity and Marketing Specialist	1
Aquatics Supervisor	4
Community Parks Worker II	2
Recreation Leader	7
Facilities Program Assistant	5
Subtotal - Parks & Recreation Operations Division	131
<i>Parks & Recreation Project Administration Division:</i>	
Division Director, Parks & Recreation Project Administration	1
Community Services Development Manager	1
Program Management/Sales Tax Program Manager (contract)	--
Principal Planner	1
Project Manager	1
Sr. Community Services Planner	3
Facilities Operation Foreman	1
Facilities Operation Technician	2
Subtotal - Parks & Recreation Project Administration Division	10
<i>Parks & Recreation Fiscal Management Division:</i>	
Financial Manager	1
Financial Officer I	1
Financial Officer II	3
Tech Systems Specialist I	1
Tech Systems Specialist II	1
Financial Technician II	2
Staff Assistant II	1
Subtotal - Parks & Recreation Fiscal Management Division	9
TOTAL Full-Time Positions	153

Table 7-2: Part-Time Staffing Breakdown

Department of Community Services: Project Administration, Operations and Fiscal Management

<i>Parks & Recreation Operations Division:</i>	
<i>Support Services:</i>	
Warehouse Technician	1
<i>Recreation Programming:</i>	
Tennis Center Manager	3
Tennis Attendant	7
Recreation Leader	23
Historical Site Interpreter	1
Assistant Museum Director	1
Graphic Arts Specialist	1
Subtotal - Parks & Recreation Operations Division	37
<i>Parks & Recreation Project Administration Division:</i>	
Office Assistant	2
Staff Assistant	1
Financial Technician I	2
Financial Technician II	1
Subtotal - Parks & Recreation Project Administration Division	6
TOTAL Part-Time Positions	43

Table 7-3: Seasonal Staffing Breakdown
Department of Community Services: Project Administration, Operations and Fiscal Management

<i>Parks & Recreation Operations Division:</i>	
<i>Park Grounds Maintenance:</i>	
Parks Crew Member	2
<i>Recreation Programming:</i>	
Recreation Leader	8
Subtotal - Parks & Recreation Operations Division	10
TOTAL Seasonal Positions	10

As noted in Sections 4 and 5 and outlined more fully in Appendix C, Gwinnett County has one of the lowest ratios of park staff to both population and acreage compared to the other benchmarking communities. In particular, the number of Gwinnett County project administration staff was considerably lower, indicating that this may be an area that requires further investigation, especially given the aggressive development strategy recommended by this Plan. Furthermore, the County must also address staffing levels for every facility added to the inventory and every additional acre of parkland acquired. The trends research and consultation with staff and the public indicates that additional staff will be required over the next few years in the areas of maintenance, community development, and programming for seniors and youth at-risk.

In keeping with the ever-increasing role the County plays in the provision of parks and recreation facilities and services, there will be a need to increase staffing levels or contractual services. Every facility built and every acre of land acquired has a staffing implication. As noted earlier, Gwinnett County has one of the lower ratios of staff per capita compared to other similar communities. In many cases, Gwinnett's parkland and facility inventories were also deficient compared to the benchmarking communities, however, staff ratios need to be reconciled in order to correspond to the County's existing facility and land base.

It is, therefore, recommended that the County consider increasing staffing levels or contractual services in the areas of project administration, community development, programming for seniors and youth at-risk, and maintenance (where warranted). The County must also identify staffing requirements associated with new parks and facilities and budget accordingly.

7.2 GWINNETT COUNTY'S ROLE IN RECREATION SERVICE DELIVERY

Within Gwinnett County the municipalities of Suwanee, Loganville, Buford, Sugar Hill, Duluth, Grayson, Snellville, Auburn, Berkley Lake, Norcross, and Lilburn have city-owned recreational facilities and parkland. Some of the cities have small recreation departments that oversee the operation of these facilities and Suwanee has just completed its own Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment. The County provides parks and recreation planning staff on occasion to assist these smaller departments and joint projects have been undertaken in the past.

The public has confirmed the importance of the County's role in the provision of recreational services. The County has made major strides in improving the provision of parkland, recreational facilities and the supply of recreational services to its residents since it came into being in 1971. The County has also done an excellent job in communicating with the residents to determine overall priorities and specific park development details. As the County grows and continues to change in its composition, even greater efforts may be needed to make the system accessible and responsive to the needs of all of the residents.

Gwinnett County will continue to carry the responsibility for ensuring that the leisure needs of Gwinnett residents are being addressed. For example, there are some direct delivery programs (e.g., aquatics) that will continue to be a County responsibility. The Master Plan, however, recommends that the County continue to utilize athletic associations for the delivery of sports-oriented recreational services. Over the longer-term, a greater role in service delivery may be required of community groups, the not-for-profit and voluntary sector, other public providers, and the private sector. In order to maintain this goal, a re-allocation of existing County resources may be required to help empower community-based organizations through community development and to improve customer service.

Ultimately, the responsibility for ensuring that recreational needs are being met rests with the County. The County will manage the leisure system through coordination, facilitation, support, and direct programming in areas where adequate community capacity does not exist and where the County is identified as being the most appropriate provider (e.g., aquatics, trails, ball diamonds, etc.). The County will continue to be involved in revenue generating program areas, where appropriate, as a means of offsetting non-revenue producing services.

In the strengths-based delivery system that is proposed by this Master Plan, County resources and tax dollars will be focussed on those functions that the County does best. Moving to a strengths-based delivery system does not mean that there will be a reduction in the current per capita level of public investment in the leisure system. A reallocation of County staff and resources, however, may be required to strengthen the support to the voluntary sector so that they can move to a delivery system that is more community-based. It is believed that most of the Plan's recommendations can be implemented through a realignment of existing staff responsibilities. For example, this may mean that fewer resources will be available for direct programming and facility management, while more will be allocated to facilitation and customer service.

It is recommended that the County continue to foster its working relationship with local government recreation departments, boards of education and community schools, and athletic associations to ensure non-duplication of services and the most appropriate mix of facilities to meet the needs of all socio-demographic groups in the County.

It is recommended that the County continue to foster community development and customer service initiatives in order to increase partnership opportunities, to enhance the strength-based delivery system, and to modify direct programming in response to community needs.

Out of the extensive consultation process that has been a building block of this Master Plan has come the identification of the following areas where new responses and initiatives may be needed from Gwinnett County:

- In order to continue to move to a system whereby the community has a stronger role to play in the delivery of services, the County may need to exert more efforts with regard to community development in more densely populated areas and areas with higher concentrations of ethnic mix.
- There may be a need for greater strategic linkages between other County departments, agencies (State and Federal), cities, utility companies, and community providers to increase the effectiveness of every dollar spent.
- The responsibility for sport tourism initiatives within the County should be clarified. The primary responsibility of the Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation Division is to provide facilities and services for recreational sports. Gwinnett County Convention and Visitors Bureau, through its Sports Commission, should undertake a marketing analysis (with the assistance of the County) regarding the benefits of sports tourism to the area.
- There continues to be a need to identify core services as a basis to guide the County's future investment in recreation and leisure services.
- The principle of cost recovery is a desirable goal for the County, however, certain recreation facilities and activities can not be treated as cost recovery items. For example, neighborhood parks and trails and programs for children, teenagers, and at-risk individuals should continue to be subsidized. There is also a need to identify the services that require higher levels of financial support, such as youth and at-risk groups. User fees should continue to be an integral component in the financing of recreational services for those capable of paying.

7.3 STRENGTHS-BASED DELIVERY SYSTEM: THE COUNTY'S ROLE

Gwinnett County and its partners in recreation will deliver recreational services in the County. Who does what will be based on the abilities of each partner, including the County, to deliver the service in an effective, efficient, and affordable manner.

While enhanced roles are seen for community partners, Gwinnett County will have three main roles in this strengths-based delivery system:

- Manager and coordinator, overseeing the entire leisure system.
- Delivering the services it does best (e.g., planning, developing, and managing parks and open spaces; recreation programming such as aquatics providing an adequate complement of community recreation facilities, etc.).
- Filling in the gaps (e.g., the County will assume responsibility for delivering services if no suitable community partner exists to deliver the service).

7.4 DEFINING GWINNETT COUNTY'S CORE SERVICES

In defining its role in a strength-based delivery system, the County shall be responsible for providing the following core services:

- **the provision of services and programs where the County is the agency that is the best positioned to deliver them; priority shall generally be assigned to those programs and services serving the greatest number of residents;**
- **the supply and maintenance of appropriate buildings and structures capable of serving County residents;**
- **the supply and maintenance of appropriate areas of open space/parkland for passive and active pursuits; and**
- **the provision of staff to co-ordinate and program core services, including planning, research, facility allocation, customer service, community development functions, etc.**

In addition, the County may become involved:

- **when, for reasons of legislation or public safety, the services are best provided by the County;**
- **when the program is seen as a priority by the public and operation by an alternative provider will not be acceptable to the public; or**
- **when revenue-generating opportunities are significant to the overall operation of the Department.**

Gwinnett County will continue to have a fundamental role to play in the provision of recreational services, however, within the broad scope of recreation, it is clear that the County cannot play a pivotal role in all areas and maintain the overall goal of fiscal responsibility, which is a caveat of all civic actions.

7.5 AGREEMENTS WITH OTHER ENTITIES

The Parks and Recreation Division has numerous agreements with other providers and users involving the operation and usage of recreation facilities within the County. These agreements allow the Department to meet many of the community's needs that they would not otherwise be able to meet on their own.

The County is involved in a number of land and facility leases, both as the lessee and the lessor. For example, the County currently leases Lillian Webb Field and Cemetery Field from the City of Norcross, part of Rhodes Jordan Park from the City of Lawrenceville. The County has an agreement with a private company for the operation of Vines Botanical Garden and with an appointed public authority for the operation of Collins Hill Golf Course. The County also leases out remnant parcels that are not suitable or required for parkland, such as the Vulcan Site.

Most importantly, the County has an agreement with the Board of Education for the use of community schools and the provision of continuing education programming. Under this agreement, the Parks and Recreation Division utilizes most elementary and middle school gyms and fields for its Gwinnett L.I.F.E. programming. Furthermore, as part of the existing agreement, the County funds approximately 60% of directors' salaries for 13 community schools. While the arrangement appears to be working, a longer term agreement is required in order to ensure continued community access to school facilities after hours.

The Gwinnett Parks Foundation is a charitable organization established to support Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation. The following is their mission statement:

The Gwinnett Parks Foundation is a 501c(3) organization whose mission is to assist the needs, whether volunteer labor or monetary, of the Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation. The foundation was organized in 2001 to improve the quality of life for all its citizens by working in cooperation with Gwinnett County parks and Recreation, private citizens, businesses, foundations and the Gwinnett County government.

Specifically, the Foundation enhances the County's park system through the acceptance of tax deductible donations and the organization of fundraising events, corporate challenge, commemorative programs, and the "Adopt-a-Park" program that allows community organizations to beautify their favorite park.

Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation has informal links with a number of greenspace conservation agencies, including the Trust for Public Land, Gwinnett Open Land Trust, and the Chattowah Open Land Trust. In order to increase the amount of protected open space in the County, it is essential that the County continue to expand its connections with these groups through information-sharing and, in certain cases, land acquisition.

Gwinnett County Parks & Recreation and the Gwinnett County Park Police have organized a joint venture called "Neighborhood Park Watch". The program brings volunteers, Parks & Recreation staff and park police together in an effort to improve safety within specific parks. Volunteers are trained to recognize and report potential concerns in the parks and their observations help the County keep the parks clean and safe for the community. Currently, five parks are participating in the Neighborhood Park Watch program, including Lucky Shoals Park, Yellow River Park, Jones Bridge Park, George Pierce Park and Tribble Mill Park.

Last but not least, it bears noting that the Parks and Recreation Division is overseen by the County's Recreation Authority. The Recreation Authority is a nine-member advisory board comprised of volunteers appointed by the Board of Commissioners. With staff, the Recreation Authority helps ensure that the Parks & Recreation mission is being fulfilled.

7.6 HOW SERVICES ARE DELIVERED IN THE FUTURE

The Parks and Recreation Division of the Department of Community Services should continue to analyze recreation needs on a "planning area" system basis in order to manage population to service levels; this Master Plan utilizes five recreation planning areas in order to analyze area-specific and County-wide needs.

In an effort to enhance customer service and capitalize on existing synergies, the Department of Community Services shall play a lead role in enhancing communication and coordination among the civic partners involved in the delivery of recreation.

The Department of Community Services shall promote and advocate the importance and values of recreation to residents and its partners in recreation and will assume a leadership role for the support and coordination of recreation services in Gwinnett County. The Department of Community Services will coordinate opportunities and be the point of contact with its identified service partners.

The Department of Community Services shall identify its partners in recreation and bring them together on a regular basis (e.g., annually) to share direction, lend support through community development initiatives, promotion, grant assistance, service partnerships, funding, etc.

The County shall act as an "information broker" and shall share its knowledge and expertise with the community to aid in capacity building and the identification of necessary and redundant services. In order to accomplish this, the County shall ensure that its information resources are accurate, relevant, and accessible. Information shall also be provided to the County's partners in recreation, as required, and technology shall be used to provide broader access to this information. The information about County parks and facilities as well as City and private facilities could be

consolidated on the County's web site and a review undertaken periodically to ensure the appropriate links exist to relevant related sites.

Some retooling of the way that the Department of Community Services delivers its recreational services is required in order to better serve this rapidly growing County. The current three-district approach should be revised to better reflect community boundaries and to provide for greater community involvement and accountability. It is recommended that five (5) areas be created solely for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating the delivery and provision of services and not for the purpose of maintenance crews.

7.7 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Department of Community Services should clearly define its responsibilities towards volunteers, including the definition of roles and responsibilities and parameters for their involvement in the delivery of County services. As a general principle, the County will support volunteers by offering training in organizational development.

The emphasis in this Master Plan is on an asset-based approach to community development. **“Community development” in simple terms means helping or enabling communities to help themselves. In the context of this Master Plan, it is a process whereby neighborhood, youth, seniors and volunteers in general will become more involved in deciding what should be provided and will play a more significant and direct role in service provision.** This means identifying and mobilizing community assets in each of the five Recreation Planning Areas so that the County's partners in recreation can play a more hands-on role in providing locally-based leisure activities that meet the unique needs of that community.

Gwinnett County, primarily through the efforts of the recreational service division of the Community Services Department, currently supports community development in the following ways:

- Providing staff resources to community development initiatives;
- Bringing partners together to develop solutions to community problems and issues (e.g., youth vandalism);
- Providing access to the County administration for local community associations to address local concerns;
- Volunteer training (e.g., coaching certification); and
- Promotion of special events.

Another area that falls under the realm of community development is volunteer services. Volunteers are the backbone of the recreation delivery system. For example, volunteers deliver all the minor sports programs in Gwinnett. As the number of volunteers declines, as has been the general trend in recent years, more resources will be needed for volunteer training and recruitment. One of the emerging issues is the need for liability insurance for volunteers acting in the public interest.

There is widespread support for making demographic analysis the fundamental basis for determining program and facility needs. This generally means that greater support will be provided to those activities that serve the largest population. However, there is also recognition that emerging sports and activities may not have the volunteer base or organizational capacity to build their organizations such that their participation numbers will grow to the level where they may be eligible for more support from the County. Activities such as cross country running and extreme sports may fall within this category. For low-capacity organizations in particular, more assistance is required in areas such as filling out grant applications, community outreach, problem solving, networking and mentoring.

7.8 CUSTOMER SERVICE

It is recommended that the County continue to monitor, survey and seek public opinion regarding the delivery of recreational services to the residents of Gwinnett. The County should also seek greater cooperation with other departments to increase the recreational opportunities to its residents through coordinated efforts of the County expenditures.

The County will need to continue to conduct surveys on a periodic basis of the opinions regarding parks and recreation and the delivery of services by the County. The County should also monitor the number of persons by age involved in various recreational pursuits in order to more accurately reflect trends and changing demands on the department's resources.

The County should also continue to produce its leisure guide Gwinnett L.I.F.E. in cooperation with the Boards of Education and continue to distribute it to households throughout the county. Consideration could be given to including advertisement from related recreational groups and private operators. Consideration could also be given to putting the information on line.

The County also needs to improve communication across department lines (e.g., with the Departments of Public Utilities, Planning and Development, Transportation, etc.) in order to provide a single window access to services. This is a goal not just for recreation services, but for the entire civic administration. The teams will have representation from each department and may be an appropriate mechanism to deal with some issues facing recreation services.

7.9 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

It is recommended that the County maintain databases for use in performance measurement (e.g., customer profiles, participant registrants, exit surveys, demographic profiles and cost of service). Where applicable to parks and recreation, the County shall also apply nationally accepted benchmarking standards, performance measures, and best practices.

“Performance measurement” refers to the tools that the County will use to measure outcomes resulting from its investment in recreational services. Generally, these tools are measures of efficiency, effectiveness and customer satisfaction.

Sometimes recreation professionals have difficulty in visualizing the logical progression between spending resources (inputs such as budget and human resources) to achieve outcomes such as a healthier community. A document prepared for a parks and recreation performance measurement think-tank offers a useful example.

Like many communities, Gwinnett is committed to developing and maintaining an integrated trail system. But how does this system lead to outcomes that offer community benefits and contribute to the County’s vision for the future? The progression of sequential thinking outlined in the following table helps to illustrate the series of events leading from planned actions to desired outcomes, using trails as an example (see Table 7-4).

Table 7-4: Performance Measurement - Inputs to Ultimate Outcomes

Inputs Investments)	Tactics (Initiatives)	Outputs (Tangible Results)	Short-term Outcomes	Mid-term Outcomes	Ultimate Outcomes
Budget Staff	Trail-System Planning	Plans	Safe Hiking Route	People Bike More Often	Better Air Quality
	Construction	Meetings	Convenient Biking Routes	More People Use Trail System	Healthier Citizens
		Bike Paths	Safe Walking Paths	People Use Car less Often	Reduced Health Care Costs
	Maintenance	Signs	Public More Aware of Trail System	Reduced Auto Emissions	More Dollars Available to Support Other Community Services
		Grass Cut		Increased Exercise by Citizens	Better Quality of Life
		Weeds Controlled			
	Public Information Material				

Source: “Harnessing the Power of Performance Measurement”, Heather Daynard, PME Inc. 2002.

As illustrated in Table 7-4, basic yet tangible results (outputs) can be expected shortly following the implementation of tactics and activities. A quality assurance and maintenance program will immediately cause grass to be cut, signs to be posted, etc. Outputs can be easily counted and

attributed to staff members with the immediate control of the quality and frequency of the activities. Straightforward performance measures can be established, tracking mechanisms set and reporting schedules developed.

A little further along the measurement timeline, short-term outcomes such as safer biking routes and a higher level of public awareness are likely to occur. These outcomes can be directly attributed to the implementation of the activity and are therefore helpful in establishing future priorities. While somewhat less tangible than outputs, creative measurement systems and tracking protocols can help to quantify short-term outcomes.

Advancing along the continuum, mid-term outcomes are possible. It is noteworthy, that due to the time lapse between activity and results, these outcomes may be less obviously connected to the tactic or action and are usually more difficult to measure. Measurement systems can either be developed locally or the municipality may wish to borrow for pre-established systems from other organizations.

The final outcome can be best described as the ultimate community benefit(s) derived by the department's initiative. The complexity and nature of these benefits are not normally associated with a single activity, but rather a number of complementary initiatives targeting a common vision. For this reason, it is advisable that the performance management system spans most/all departments as community benefits are often the result of a combination of strategies arising throughout the organization.

As the time between actions and results becomes greater, the need for more sophisticated performance measurement grows. To illustrate this point - and continuing with the trails example drawn from the Harnessing the Power of Performance Management document - Table 7-5 provides potential performance measurements connected to output and outcome results of different types.

Table 7-5: Potential Performance Measurements for Trails

Outputs	Measures
Plans, Meetings, Bike Paths, Signs, Grass Cut, Weeds Controlled, Public Information	Total Miles Bike Paths per Capita Total Miles Bike Paths per Square Acre of Area Average Maintenance Cost per mile of New Bike Paths
Outcomes	Measures
Safer Bike Routes	Number of Bike Accidents per Capita Number of Bike Accidents per Square Acre of Area
More Convenient Bike Routes	% of Population Using Bike Paths for Leisure
People Bike More, Use Car less	% of Commuters Biking to Work
Reduced Auto Emissions	% of Main Commuter Corridors Served by Bike Paths
Increased Exercise by Citizens	Parts per Million of Air Pollutants from Auto Exhaust
Better Air Quality	Number of Citizens Considered Active/inactive
Reduced Health Care Costs	Incidence of Asthma in Citizens Annual Number of Doctor Visits per Capita for Respiratory Ailments
More Dollars Available to Support Community Services	Annual Number of Hospital Days per Capita for Respiratory Ailments
Better Quality of Life	Average Number of Citizens Active Enough to Realize Optimum Health Benefits Average Levels of Obesity

Source: "Harnessing the Power of Performance Measurement", Heather Daynard, PME Inc. 2002.

Adopting an "outcomes focussed" performance management system would help to link service delivery, program development and other department functions with the municipal vision and desired community benefits. Understandably, as the department moves towards this system, there will undoubtedly be certain existing services and programs that are not obvious contributors to the desired outcomes. For example, to achieve optimum community health benefits, a program should be accessible, maintain the long-term interests of participants, attract a broad number of citizens and contain sufficient physical activity levels (intensity and frequency) to provide health benefits. How then, would an existing program that captures a narrow target audience and that is somewhat restrictive - either by price or policy - fit into the outcomes approach? Several communities have grappled with this question when setting priorities for the construction of new arenas versus more versatile and multi-purpose facility such as gymnasiums.

There is no single answer to this quandary, however, a locally specific, well-crafted and creatively orchestrated performance management system focussing on outcomes will provide sufficient data and ongoing feedback to help decision makers place the highest priority on results oriented activities.

7.10 ACCESS AND EQUITY

It is recommended that the Department of Community Services work with its partners in recreation to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the recreational system.

It is recommended that all organizations receiving funding from the County or using county facilities to deliver recreational services be committed to the County's policies on accessibility.

In planning new facilities, it is recommended that geographic accessibility be a basic requirement (e.g., physically locating facilities so that the largest number of persons can reach the facility and ensuring that public transit is available).

It is recommended that the Gwinnett County Department of Transportation consider developing bus routes to major parks and recreation facilities in order to serve the more densely populated areas of the County on weekends (e.g., Recreation Planning Areas A, B, and C).

The Master Plan reaffirms these policies but in addition to the above, adds to the equation the guiding principle of distribution – that is striving for an accessible and equitable distribution of recreational services throughout the County.

Income is a significant barrier to recreational participation. As a basic premise of this Plan, no resident will be denied access to the recreational system due to a lack of financial resources. The County will, therefore, continue to offer subsidies.

While the County has long had a commitment to inclusive programming for persons with disabilities, due to a significant aging of the communities demographic composition, an increase in the numbers of persons who will face challenges in accessing the recreational system is anticipated.

7.11 SPECIAL EVENTS, SPORT TOURISM AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST

When pursuing major sporting, cultural or special events, it is recommended that the County continue to consider the needs of local residents and the facility requirements identified in this Plan as the County's primary responsibility. Although it is recognized that special events and tournaments often provide economic benefits to local recreation organizations and the County as a whole, any new facilities that may be required should meet the recreational activity needs of local residents first and foremost.

Local residents should not be displaced by non-local events, be they professional sporting events or amateur events. When a major event will impact directly on a user group or on an adjacent community, every effort should be made to balance the local interest with the broader corporate goal of bringing revenue to the County. The Gwinnett County Convention

and Visitors Bureau's Sports Commission is often one of the lead agencies involved in bringing such events into the County. The Parks and Recreation Division, prior to designing and/or building major facilities, should consult with the Sports Commission on matters relating to sport tourism.

7.12 PARTNERS IN RECREATION

It is recommended that the County's Parks and Recreation Division recognize the following organizations as its major partners in recreation, including (but not limited to) athletic associations, sports council, Boards of Education, County Library system, Health and Human Services Department, Gwinnett County Convention and Visitors Bureau, local governments, YMCA, Salvation Army, Boys and Girls Club, Cultural Centers, and key community-based leisure organizations. These agencies and groups shall be actively engaged in the planning and development of new and redeveloped facilities.

Overall, there is a strong sentiment that the County should be involved in the recreation delivery system. According to the household survey, the most frequented places for recreation and leisure activities in Gwinnett are managed by the County, reinforcing the importance of the County's involvement as a facility provider. The identified "major partners" are public and quasi-public organizations which the County recognizes as partners who offer potential partnership opportunities either in the provision of land for development, joint use of new facilities or the use of existing facilities.

7.13 SERVICE & FACILITY PARTNERSHIPS

It is recommended that, where appropriate, the County consider entering into partnerships with public, not-for-profit, and/or private organizations in developing, financing, operating, and/or maintaining recreation facilities or services in an effort to better serve the residents through improving cost efficiency, customer service, and accessibility.

Over the past decade, recreation departments have experienced unprecedented change in the delivery of services and the management of leisure facilities. Pressures caused by the influences of technology, shifts in participation trends, and calls for increased operating efficiencies have caused many departments to search for new and creative ways of doing business. Moreover, the need to adopt more financially prudent methods of leisure service delivery has caused many communities to examine new forms of alliances, agreements, and partnerships.

Recreation and parks services have traditionally been provided using a variety of alternative delivery approaches. Joint ventures and partnerships between governments and community groups have a long history and the contracting out of certain maintenance functions is relatively commonplace. Furthermore, joint use agreements with boards of education have been instituted with varying degrees of success for many years. The

difference now seems to be an increased focus on financial benefits and the emergence of new potential service providers from the private sector.

As governments face the challenge of providing quality leisure programs and services at the right cost, new types of alternative service delivery methods and arrangements with outside interests have become increasingly attractive. These arrangements are usually designed to share the costs, risks, and benefits of particular initiatives while remaining sensitive to the program requirements of the selected target audience. As mentioned earlier, many of these collaborative arrangements already exist. However, there appears to be mounting enthusiasm at both staff and political levels to examine non-traditional and new collaborative possibilities.

Partnerships, collaboration, and alternate service delivery models will continue as significant considerations. Given the significant evolution of partnership concepts and the emergence of new types of arrangements between governments and customary, as well as non-traditional partners, it may be useful to re-examine elements of the Gwinnett's service delivery options review framework to ensure that it is applicable to a wide range of alternatives and circumstances that might be presented to the County for consideration.

In the broadest sense, a **public-private partnership** is any significant relationship between a public sector entity and private sector enterprises, for which providing a product or service is the primary objective.

A **public-public partnership** involves any collaboration between public-sector organizations or between the public sector and not-for-profit organizations. These arrangements may involve the development of facilities, products or the delivery, implementation and monitoring of services. In the sphere of recreation and leisure services, public-public partnerships may include various joint-use agreements pertaining to the use of recreation facilities. Development projects that have involved joint financing by different levels of government can also be classified as partnerships. Similarly, the development and delivery of certain public services to the community by not-for-profit groups (including recreation services and programs) is also an emerging form of partnership with the public sector.

Historically, various partnerships between the public and voluntary sectors have been more prevalent than contractual collaboration between the public and private sectors. The growth of public-private partnerships can be viewed as a distinct alternative to the historical role of the public and institutional sectors in building, owning and operating community facilities.

7.13.1 Reasons for Partnering

The rationale for engaging in public/public or public/private partnerships is, in theory, most clearly rooted in the need to achieve resource efficiency. If properly executed, they allow for public services and facilities to be provided in a more efficient and cost effective manner, using the qualities

and strengths of each partner. The role of the County in such partnerships must, however, reflect the need for transparency of operations and accountability to the community. Such precepts may require specific business and contractual arrangements to be put in place which enable the review of performance of the partnership and which allow for penalty or reward for failing to meet, or exceeding, revenue targets or service standards.

Table 7-6 contains a sampling of reasons for considering a public/private approach to infrastructure problem solving.

Table 7-6: Reasons for Considering a Public-Private Partnership

REASON	DESCRIPTION
Construction Cost Savings	Combining design and construction components under one private partner can result in significant cost savings through a "phased in" construction schedule, faster procurement, and a reduction in the risk of cost and time overrun.
Operational Savings	In some cases, private sector service providers are able to reduce operating costs through the operation of multiple facilities, the sharing of specialized labor, bulk supplies purchasing, the use of centralized administrative staff, and more flexible compensation arrangements. These savings are often enhanced when the private partner is involved at the infrastructure design stage.
Faster Implementation	By dealing with fewer service providers, combining the design and construction, reducing procurement time, and accelerating capital financing, required infrastructure may be introduced faster and less expensively.
Risk Sharing	Under traditional procurement practices, governments assume all risk associated with serviced delivery. Privatization allows the transfer of some risk such as that associated with cost overruns market fluctuations, ongoing maintenance, environmental regulatory compensation, etc.
Increased Financing Options	The wide range of financing options (both debt and equity markets) and the flexibility available to the private sector (i.e. the ability to periodically refinance debt of use financial innovation) may, in some instances, reduce the cost of project capital.
Enhanced Public Management	In allowing a greater role for the private sector in the provision of municipal infrastructure, local government managers are able to spend more time planning and monitoring results as opposed to managing the resources required to provide public services.
Increased Public Sector Revenues	Privatization may provide municipalities with new sources of revenue in the form of property taxes, lease or franchise payments, or profit sharing agreements.
Realizing the Value of Under-utilized Assets	Creative development projects combined with intensified marketing initiatives by private sector providers may succeed in increasing the use of a particular asset to reflect potential value.
Enhanced Facility Maintenance	Local Governments are often reluctant or unable to dedicate appropriate funds for ongoing maintenance of facilities despite the long-term savings it may generate. Depending upon the structure of the partnership, private partners are motivated to protect the value of their assets and invest in equipment and machinery that leads to increased efficiency.
True Costing and True Value	The price of services, in the form of user charges or the general tax rate, seldom reflects the full cost of the service (i.e. depreciation, risk capture, overhead, etc.) Among its other benefits, the PPP process forces municipalities to determine the real cost of service delivery.
Arms Length Independence	Privatization often facilitates the efficient and needs based delivery of services by removing political influences from day to day operations.

Source: Canada/Nova Scotia Corporation Agreement to Promote Private Sector Participation in Municipal Infrastructure

7.14 PRICING STRATEGY

It is recommended that the County maintain its user fee policy of protecting the interests of specific groups for whom subsidized services are essential. The County should continue to ensure access for people with disabilities and for other groups with financial difficulties.

It is recommended that the County develop a reporting process whereby operating costs and revenues can be tracked by type of activity to enable ongoing monitoring of the relationship between costs and revenues on an annual basis.

It is recommended that the increase in total operating costs for the provision of new recreation programs, services and facilities be minimized through an increase in user fees to the extent that such an increase in fees is reasonable and appropriate. Notwithstanding, the County shall recognize the legitimate need to maintain an operating subsidy for certain activities, types of facilities, and specified communities in need within the County.

Just as stormwater management, libraries and streetlights are essential services and not user fee controlled, certain recreation activities and facilities are not capable of being treated as cost recovery items. For example, full cost recovery is not possible or recommended for items such as neighborhood parks, trails, play equipment, spray pads, aquatic programs, use of environmental areas, etc. Furthermore, full cost recovery should not be expected for programs for children, teenagers, and at-risk individuals. Often, the true cost of an essential service would make a cost recovery approach prohibitive.

7.15 PROGRAMMING INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation currently offers a wide range of activities for residents. The various program topics (by age group) that are available to Gwinnett residents through the County's park system and programming division are listed in Table 7-7.

Table 7-7: Leisure Activities for Various Age Groups

Pre-School (0-4)	Children (5-9)	Teens (10-19)	Adults (20-54)
waterplay swimming climbing (play equipment) arts, crafts & music developmental programs	swimming walking cycling waterplay in-line skating organized sports: (soccer, baseball, basketball, football, cheerleading) skateboarding day camps music & dance gymnastics	swimming walking cycling skateboarding in-line skating organized sports: (soccer, baseball, basketball, badminton, volleyball, roller hockey, football, cheerleading, lacrosse) day camps drop-in programs leadership training/social recreation music & dance adventure (extreme sports; e.g., rock-climbing)	walking & jogging aerobics & fitness golf gardening organized sports: (softball, football) continuing education/self improvement cultural programs nature appreciation
Seniors (55+)	Families	People with Disabilities	Special Populations
walking swimming golf softball wellness activities gardening nature appreciation cultural programs arts, crafts, games, classes, clubs tours & trips continuing education basketball	swimming special events walking, hiking, cycling cultural activities	varies by age & disability swimming inclusive programs specialized programs	varies by type & level of need but may include low-cost programs, social services, ethnic services, organized sports, etc.

In terms of geographic distribution, scale and scope, the County's extensive offerings are complemented very well by the recreational opportunities provided by local athletic associations, community schools, community groups, not-for-profit agencies, and private enterprise. Based on the 2002 Needs Assessment Survey, the benchmarking exercise, and national trends, it would appear that Gwinnett County has an excellent understanding of the programmatic needs of its citizenry and is currently offering an acceptable level of service in this regard. Within the more ethnically diverse neighborhoods, however, community development efforts may need to be enhanced in order to identify and address local preferences and program needs.

**7.16 MONITORING
& UPDATING
THE MASTER
PLAN**

This Master Plan is intended to guide decision-making related to parks and recreation services in the County for the next 5 to 10 years. With any document that utilizes a long-term planning horizon, the further into the future that projections are made, the more difficult it becomes to ensure accuracy. This is particularly true given Gwinnett's rapid pace of growth and increasing ethnic diversity. As a result, there is a need for the recommendations contained in this Master Plan to be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure that the Plan remains reflective of current realities and responsive to the changing needs of the community.

It is recommended that the County implement a system for the regular monitoring of the Master Plan.

Trends change and often unforeseen factors emerge which create unanticipated increases or decreases in participation and which, in turn, may impact substantially upon facility provision. Continued monitoring of the participation levels (as well as overall population figures) in Gwinnett's major recreational activities is necessary to identify significant changes and to relate the change to the corresponding impact on the facility and park provision recommendations. As a result, the direction of the Plan may need refocusing from time to time.

The following steps may be used to conduct an annual review of the Master Plan early on in the budgeting process.

1. Review of the past year (Master Plan recommendations implemented, capital projects undertaken, success/failure of new and existing recreation initiatives, changes in participation levels, issues arising from the public and community groups, etc.).
2. Issues impacting the coming year (anticipated financial and operational constraints, political pressures, etc.).
3. Review of Master Plan for direction regarding recommendation.
4. Staff identification of Master Plan recommendations to be implemented over the next year. Due to implications identified during steps #1 and #2, the output of this task may result in the identification of projects or timing that do not correspond with the recommendations of the Master Plan.
5. Prioritization of short-term projects and determination of which projects should be implemented in the coming year based upon criteria established by staff (e.g., financial limitations, community input, partnership/funding potential, etc.).
6. Preparation of report by Project Administration staff on items 1 through 5 above. If staff recommendations and priorities differ significantly from those recommended in the Master Plan, the report should detail the reasons for the new direction. If staff recommendations support those established in the Master Plan, the

report should explain how their recommendations conform to the direction of the Plan.

7. Communication to staff, the Recreation Authority, and Board of Commissioners regarding the status of projects, criteria used to prioritize projects, and projects to be implemented in the coming year.
8. Budget revisions as necessary.

Unanticipated circumstances may dictate the need to reassess the priorities and recommendations of the Master Plan. Through the monitoring of participation levels and qualitative considerations, adjustment of resource allocations, and implementation of shifts in political pressures and direction, it is possible that certain components of the Master Plan will require updating.

It is important to remember that one of the primary objectives of this Plan was to propose a refined capital program for the period following the current SPLOST program. In the event that the SPLOST program is extended past March 31, 2005, then it is anticipated that a large number of the capital recommendations of this Plan could be implemented, depending on the size of the parks and recreation allocation. Extension of the SPLOST could provide significant capital resources for parks and recreation through the year 2009. It would, therefore, be prudent to begin re-examining the leisure needs of Gwinnett residents for the period following the 2005 SPLOST. Updating the Master Plan requires a commitment from all staff involved in the delivery of leisure services, including staff, the Recreation Authority, the Board of Commissioners, and the public.

In 2008, the County shall initiate a process to reconfirm the direction, priorities and accomplishments of the Master Plan. This review is not intended to be a comprehensive update, but rather a scoped evaluation of the issues of the day and should be sufficient to provide adequate direction for the period of 2009 to 2013.

In 2012, the County shall undertake a complete review and update of the Master Plan.