

PARKS & FACILITIES PLAN

WILLISTON PARKS & RECREATION DISTRICT

2024 - 2034

Adopted September 17, 2024

Prepared By



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INTRODUCTION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This document is the result from a collaborative effort of the Williston Parks & Recreation District, Park Board members, impactful community members, and the Williston community. Without the drive and foresight of these groups, this plan would not be possible.

The next steps for the Williston Parks & Recreation District will be informed by this plan with the understanding that it was created together and for the improvement, growth, and sustainability of our community park system. This plan represents the public's vision for their park system and is a declaration of their priorities and needs.

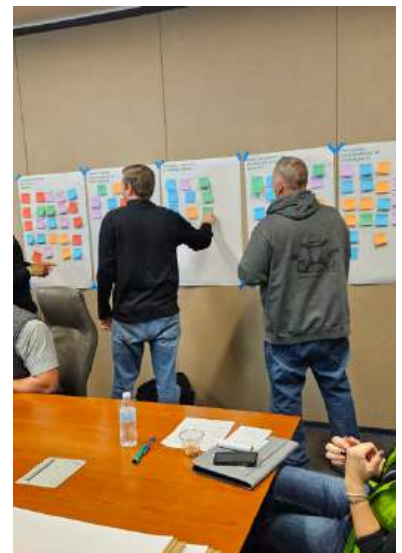


Figure 1.1
Project Advisory Committee breakout session

PLAN ADOPTION

The 2024-2034 Parks & Facilities Plan, contained herein, was adopted by resolution of the Williston Parks & Recreation District Park Board of Commissioners on September 18, 2024.

- **Motions:** Commissioner Jangula moved to adopt the plan. Commissioner Roness seconded the motion.
- **Vote:** Unanimous approval.

Figure 1.2

Project Advisory Committee



THE PEOPLE INVOLVED

Broad-Based Participation

The Parks & Facilities Plan would not have been possible without the participation from the Williston community that is passionate about their parks.

Williston Parks & Recreation District staff and a Project Advisory Committee helped guide the strategic vision of the plan over the course of several months. A special thanks to the following individuals who committed several hours towards the development of this plan:

Name	Role
Joe Barsh	Executive Director, WPRD
Amy Krueger	Williston CVB
Colby Simonsen	Williston Basin School District
Jeremy Ludlum	Williams County Parks
John Liffriq	WPRD Park Board
Kazuma Kaneko	WPRD Programs & Facilities
Kelley Heller	WPRD Park Board
Lorri Amsden	WPRD Foundation
Pat Irgens	Kimray, Inc.

Park Board of Commissioners

Kelley Heller	President
John Liffriq	Vice President
Logan Jangula	Commissioner
Shawn Roness	Commissioner
Derrick Linghor	Commissioner

WHY PLAN?

Why Update the Plan?

Williston was amid one of the country's fastest population booms when the last master plan was developed in 2011. Much has changed for the Williston community since the development of the initial master plan. The Williston population is still growing but at a much slower pace. Many of the capital improvement recommendations from the 2013 Park Planning & Design Master Plan were implemented, park infrastructure has aged, with some items nearing or surpassing their useful lifespan, and recreation trends and interests have changed. The community and the park system have matured.

Being Proactive

Driven by changes in community demographics and lifestyles, the nature of play and leisure is changing. The Williston Parks and Recreation District (WPRD) understands that it must reexamine how it defines and meets desired service levels in response. This plan is the declaration of public needs and priorities, and it will integrate the public's vision and aspirations to guide future development, improvements, management, advancements, service offerings, and programming to deliver a diverse and meaningful park experience. This master plan sets the course for the next ten years and will serve as a long-term strategic road map for creating a high-quality park experience that is relevant, inclusive, iconic, and sustainable.

Parks & Recreation Leaders

Having been nominated as finalists for the National Gold Medal Awards for Excellence in Parks and Recreation Management multiple times, the Williston Parks & Recreation District seeks to underscore its work through CAPRA (Commission for Accreditation of Park & Recreation Agencies) accreditation. This certification signifies a commitment to excellence and high standards in park management, enhances public trust and confidence in the park system, serves as a benchmark for continuous improvement, and encourages ongoing evaluation and refinement of park management practices.

Equity & Access

As the city's population grows, or shifts, it is essential to consider the needs of diverse communities, including families, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and those with different interests and abilities.

PLANNING PROCESS

The strategic vision for the Williston Parks & Recreation District is anchored in a collaborative approach throughout each phase of development. The planning process actively sought input from the Williston community through various public engagement efforts, including online comments, a community survey, focus groups, and consultations with a Project Advisory Committee (PAC).

Frequent and varied opportunities for participation ensured robust community involvement in shaping the park and recreation system's vision. By aligning strategic goals with the community's feedback and addressing their concerns, the planning process strives to tackle current needs while setting the stage for sustainable growth. This inclusive approach enhances civic engagement and equips the Williston Parks & Recreation District to adapt to future demands, ensuring it remains responsive to the needs of its residents over time.

PLAN SNAPSHOT

This plan looks forward to address existing challenges and capitalize on community aspirations. This section highlights the essential findings from our community engagement, needs assessments, and strategic planning activities. It outlines the core goals and priorities

Figure 1.3
Easter Egg Dive



that will shape the future development and management of parks and recreational facilities, aiming to enrich the quality of life for Williston residents by creating dynamic and accessible community spaces.

Community Vision

The community vision for the Williston Parks & Recreation District emphasizes the creation of a vibrant, inclusive, and accessible park system that meets the diverse needs of all residents. The community envisions a park network that not only preserves and enhances existing assets, but also introduces innovative and engaging spaces. Key elements include modernizing facilities, expanding recreational opportunities, and ensuring equitable access to amenities. The community's input has highlighted a strong desire for a park system that fosters connectivity, supports physical and mental well-being, and adapts to changing demographics and preferences. This vision seeks to build on Williston's strengths while addressing gaps in service, aiming to create a dynamic environment where every resident feels welcomed and engaged.

Community Needs & Priorities

A recurring theme in community engagement was the need for improved maintenance of existing facilities, with concerns about park and equipment upkeep. Enhanced communication and transparency were also emphasized, as residents wanted better access to information about park amenities, programs, and scheduling changes. There was a notable demand for expanded programming, particularly for teens who felt under-served.

The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) highlighted key investment areas, including the development of outdoor swimming pools, multi-use trails, and shaded play areas. There was strong support for more adult fitness classes and youth sports activities, reflecting a community interest in promoting health and wellness across all age groups. These priorities underscore a broader vision for an inclusive, accessible, and well-maintained park system that meets the diverse needs of Williston's residents.

Support for Potential Actions

Survey respondents expressed a strong preference for reinvesting in existing parks and facilities rather than acquiring new land, emphasizing the need to maintain and improve current amenities. There was notable support for continuing the 1% sales tax to fund WPRD operations beyond 2032, reflecting the community's commitment to sustaining quality services. Preferences varied regarding the extension's duration,

with some favoring a shorter term for periodic reassessment and transparency, while others supported a longer-term commitment for stable funding of long-term projects.

Strategic Vision Goals

The strategic vision is structured around four (4) overarching goals aimed at guiding the future development and management of the Williston Parks and Recreation District:

- **Stewardship (STW):** Emphasizes the careful management and maintenance of park resources and facilities to ensure their long-term sustainability and effectiveness. This approach emphasizes a context-sensitive strategy to maintain and enhance the quality of the park system.
- **Equity (EQ):** Ensures that all community members have fair and inclusive access to park facilities and programs, addressing barriers and promoting fairness for everyone. It aims to create a welcoming environment that serves the diverse needs of all residents.
- **Community Outreach & Engagement (COM):** Focuses on engaging residents through effective dialogue and transparent information sharing. This approach seeks to address community needs and build strong partnerships for enhanced park system impact.
- **Experience Enhancement (EXP):** Aims to improve user satisfaction by refining park programs, events, amenities, and management. It involves continuously upgrading offerings to ensure a positive and memorable experience for all park visitors.

Implementation Strategies

The strategic plan outlines short, mid, and long-term implementation strategies to achieve the identified goals and objectives:

- **Short-term (0-5 years):** Focus on immediate actions to address critical needs, such as enhancing maintenance, improving communication, and expanding current programming.
- **Mid-term (6-9 years):** Implement projects that require more planning and resources, such as developing new facilities or upgrading existing infrastructure.
- **Long-term (10+ years):** Pursue ambitious initiatives and large-scale improvements to shape the park system's future, ensuring sustainability and long-lasting benefits for the community.

PRIORITY ACTION ITEMS

Short-Term (5 years or Less)

- STW1:** Develop and implement a Capital and Cyclical Inventory Plan (CCIP) to assess the value, reinvestment needs, and risks of park assets, ensuring a transparent, data-driven decision-making process.
- STW2:** Develop site-specific master plans for each developed and undeveloped park property to guide future parkland improvements and investments.
- STW3/EXP1:** Conduct a feasibility study and business plan for the known Energy Center ice rink special project.
- STW4:** Identify grant (or other external) funding sources for targeted capital improvements associated with lifecycle replacement. Align CIP grants with lifecycle needs.
- STW5:** Adopt National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA) park classifications to guide park development and appropriate amenities in parks.
- EQ1:** Develop park-specific design standards for pathways and trails based on location, type of trail, and anticipated use.
- EQ2:** Add comfort amenities, such as benches, water fountains, distance markers, small shade structures, etc., along pathways to encourage walking and increase comfort for all users.
- EQ3:** Continue developing and implementing adaptive programming as part of the recreation program portfolio.
- EQ4:** Construct walkways to (and around) activity areas, such as shelters and playgrounds, to increase accessibility for mobility and vision impaired individuals.
- EQ5:** Develop a “parkland dedication worksheet” to assist and guide developers on the type(s) of land dedication the district needs, based on the level of service.
- COM1:** Develop marketing materials using relatable language and a consistent, branded “voice” or “tone.”
- COM2:** Further develop a web page dedicated to transparency and make it easy to find on the website.
- EXP2:** Continue providing and enhancing services in the identified core program areas.
- EXP3:** Annually evaluate program offerings within each core program area (and the core program areas themselves) to ensure they align with changing community needs, trends, and demographics.
- EXP4:** Develop a program assessment and evaluation tool.
- EXP5:** Develop a tool to track customer satisfaction and retention for programs.
- EXP6:** Develop and/or document required areas to submit for CAPRA accreditation.
- EXP7:** Conduct additional feasibility studies for indoor recreation and expansion of the Municipal Golf Course.

Mid-Term (6 to 9 years)

- STW6:** Invest in and implement a GIS-based asset management work order system to track assets, schedule maintenance, and guide investments.
- STW7:** Develop a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for an on-call park planning and/or landscape architecture services to assist with the implementation of master plan recommendations and future development.
- STW8:** Develop a formal partnership policy.
- STW9:** Develop a guide to partnership agreements to help partners navigate the partnership process.
- STW10:** Develop a volunteer program policy that strengthens advocacy and reduces operational expenditures.

- STW11:** Conduct a comprehensive operations and maintenance (O&M) assessment and program assessment.
- STW12:** Develop a formalized maintenance management plan for park and facility maintenance and operations.
- STW13:** Allocate an additional \$164,000 annually for improved management and maintenance of parks over the next 3 to 5 years. 67% of this funding should be allocated toward the addition of 3.91 Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs).
- EQ6:** Develop more (and smaller) path/trail loops in Neighborhood and Community Parks to provide more options, as well as decrease distances for those with mobility impairments.
- EQ7:** Prioritize accessible and inclusive play structures and playgrounds when upgrading and replacing existing amenities.
- EQ8:** Adopt and implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques when updating facilities and amenities, as well as integrate in design/planning, to decrease negative interactions.
- EQ9:** Add fitness stations along suitable trails and walking routes to encourage more use.
- EQ10:** Collaborate, partner, lead, and/or support a community-wide Active Transportation Plan to increase multi-modal access to parks.
- EQ11:** Coordinate with City Planning to require trails as part of the development process.
- EQ12:** Plan for and address current and projected level of service gaps in the park system's offerings.
- COM3:** Develop a formal marketing plan and program.
- COM4:** Develop materials for English as Second Language (ESL) and visually- and auditory-impaired individuals.
- COM5:** Develop an interactive transparency web page using GIS Online, PowerBI, or similar.
- COM6:** Schedule and plan to conduct a statistically valid Community Needs Assessment.
- EXP8:** Update the Cote Park site master plan and complete the development of the park.
- EXP9:** Plan for and conduct a comprehensive recreation program assessment.
- EXP10:** Track and evaluate other Williston area service providers to identify and avoid market competition and duplication of services.
- EXP11:** Evaluate the benefit and/or feasibility of renovating or repurposing the Raymond Center to better meet community needs.

Long-Term (10+ years)

- STW14:** Track and regularly share information and measurable outcomes of partnership program.
- STW15:** Assign a staff member to act as a partner liaison for each partner to improve communications and collaboration.
- EQ13:** Coordinate with City of Williston to enhance pedestrian and bicycle connections to parks by providing curb ramps and crosswalks (as appropriate).
- EQ14:** Identify opportunities to acquire/dedicate open space for trails through regional cooperation, grants, and private development review(s).
- EQ15:** Design and develop parks and recreation facilities for universal access and multi-generational use to encourage participation and inclusive play of residents of all ages and abilities.
- EQ16:** Strive to provide parkland within 1/2-mile (10-minute walk) of residents in neighborhoods zoned for single and multi family residential.

Conclusion

This master plan represents a critical step forward for the Williston Parks & Recreation District, capturing the community's vision and addressing both current and future needs. By building on past successes and incorporating fresh insights from public input, the plan outlines a clear path toward enhancing the park system's quality, accessibility, and inclusivity. The strategic goals, supported by targeted implementation strategies, reflect a commitment to creating dynamic spaces that foster connectivity, well-being, and engagement for all residents. With a focus on proactive improvements, sustainable growth, and ongoing community involvement, Williston Parks & Recreation District is poised to elevate its services and facilities, ensuring they meet the evolving needs of the community and continue to enrich the lives of its residents for years to come.





2

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Best of What We Have

ABOUT THE WILLISTON COMMUNITY.

A Nestled in northwest North Dakota, the Williston community blends rich history with modern growth, offering a mix of small-town charm and urban amenities. Known for its friendly atmosphere, Williston has a diverse demographic profile, balancing youthful energy with the experience of long-term residents. The local economy, rooted in agriculture and bolstered by the energy and service sectors, provides a stable socioeconomic environment. The community's growth is evident in its infrastructure, educational institutions, and recreational opportunities, all contributing to a high quality of life. This section highlights Williston's unique attributes, demographic trends, and vibrant social fabric.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Williston is a city of 29,160 people in northwestern North Dakota in Williams County; although, the population can fluctuate based on economic conditions in the region. The study areas in the Master Plan include the City of Williston corporate boundary and the Williston Micropolitan Statistical Area (Williston MSA), which encompasses all of Williams County. Using the MSA in addition to the city proper allows for analysis of park system users who may live outside of the city.

Identifying and comprehending demographic and socioeconomic trends helps provide insight into the Williston Parks & Recreation District's ability to meet public needs and project future demands. Organizations who understand their user profile can better target and meet user needs, better market to and communicate with users, and make the highest and best use of often limited resources.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Population and Households

While Williston’s population growth has steadied over the past several years, it is still experiencing overall modest growth. The 2020 U.S. Census shows the Williston Micropolitan Statistical Area’s (MSA) population at 40,950. The most recent census estimates from 2023 list the MSA population at 42,457, projected to increase to 44,668 by 2028. The City of Williston’s 2020 population was 29,160, with a 2023 estimate of 30,007, projected to increase to 31,395 by 2028.

Households are also projected to increase in both the City and MSA. The U.S. Census 2020 shows 11,707 households for Williston and 16,095 for the MSA, projected to increase by 2028 to 12,769 and 17,714, respectively.

Age Segmentation

The characteristics of Williston’s residents are also projected to change. Age data from 2023 ESRI Demographic estimates indicate most age groups will grow in population from 2023 to 2028, with an overall shift towards an older population. The largest shift from 2023 to 2028 is estimated to be in the 65+ age group, which will occupy a greater proportion of the City and MSA. However, during this same time period, the 25-34 and 55-64 age groups will decrease in size, both in real numbers and proportionally. Overall, the age structure of the population is balanced, with the “working age” group (25-54) remaining the largest.

Ethnicity

Williston and the surrounding region are becoming more diverse. However, the ethnicity of the Williston area remains, and is projected to remain, predominantly “white alone.” In 2020, 10.9% of the city’s population reported Hispanic or LatinX heritage. By 2028, this number is projected to increase to 11.3%. For comparison, the City of Williston recorded only 2.1% of its population as Hispanic or of LatinX heritage in 2010.

In 2023, for the population 5 years and older, 11.9% spoke a language other than English at home according to ACS estimates. The most common language spoken in the region after English is Spanish. The Diversity Index for the region also indicates greater diversity. The index measures the likelihood that two people, chosen at random from the same area, will belong to different race or ethnic groups. The index ranges from zero (no diversity) to 100 (complete diversity). The Diversity Index of the region is estimated to increase from a score of 49.5 in 2023 to 50.5 in 2028. For comparison, the diversity index for the region was 18.1 in 2010.

Figure 2.1

Population and Age Segmentation. Sources: American Community Survey 2022 Estimate, ESRI Business Analysis

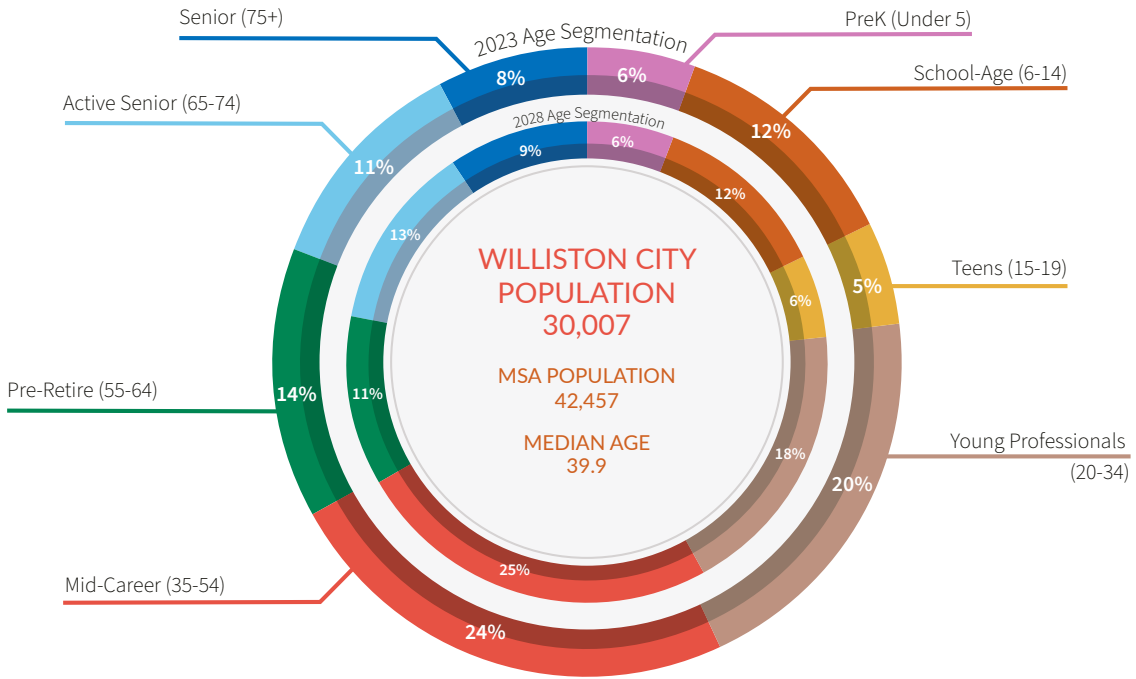
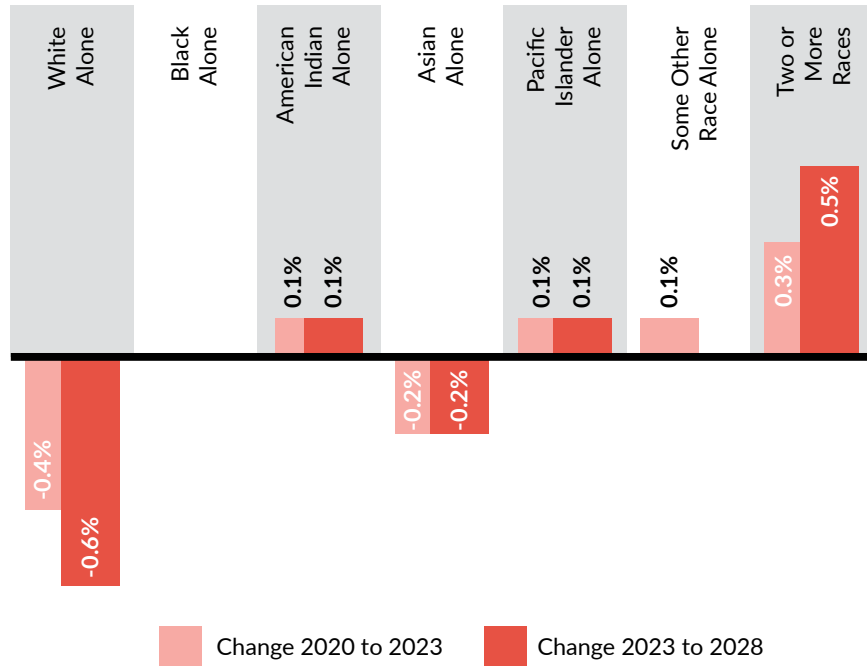


Figure 2.2

Ethnicity Change. Sources: U.S. 2020 Census, American Community Survey 2022 Estimate, ESRI Business Analysis



Income

ESRI estimates from 2023 list household median income in the MSA as \$80,126. This number is estimated to increase to \$82,896 by 2028. The per capita income of the region was estimated to be \$43,634 in 2023, and it is projected to increase to \$46,850 by 2028 (about 7% higher). Poverty levels in Williston have generally decreased over the past ten years. ACS estimates from 2022 estimate approximately 7.4% of the population living below the poverty line, down from 8.8% in 2012.

Figure 2.3

Income. Sources: American Community Survey 2022 Estimate, ESRI Business Analysis



SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE

Both the Market Potential Index (MPI) and Spending Potential Index (SPI) were reviewed because they offer great insight into resource allocations to best meet populations' needs. The MPI measures how likely individuals are to participate in a particular activity compared to the national average. Likewise, the SPI measures how likely a household spends for a product or service. Both indices compare to the national average, which is represented as 100. Those items higher than 100 indicate high potential / likelihood compared to the national average and vice versa.

Further, key socioeconomic groups were identified through Tapestry Segmentation. This analyzes age, income, and lifestyle patterns for residents and determines likely groups and cohorts within Williston who will likely share common needs and desires. This tool is a resource that helps provide a customer profile by enriching basic U.S. Census information with values, habits, and trends.

Market Potential Index (MPI) for Sports & Leisure Activities

The Sport and Leisure Market Potential Index (MPI) determines the relative popularity of a variety of sports and leisure activities. Results for the Williston region indicate that residents in the city score higher than the US average in several sports and leisure activities, especially in hunting, volleyball, frisbee, fishing, and golf. The top fifteen activities

relative to US averages can be seen in Figure 2.4. While not all these activities are practical or feasible in a park and recreation system, the MPI provides a high-level snapshot into residents' interests.

Spending Potential Index (SPI) for Recreation-Type Expenditures

Like the MPI, the SPI tracks the likelihood for households to spend money on various recreation activities. For example, the SPI for the Williston region indicated that residents have a high potential to spend on hunting and fishing equipment, recreational “toys,” bikes, and water sports equipment. The top ten highest spending activities can be seen in Figure 2.5.

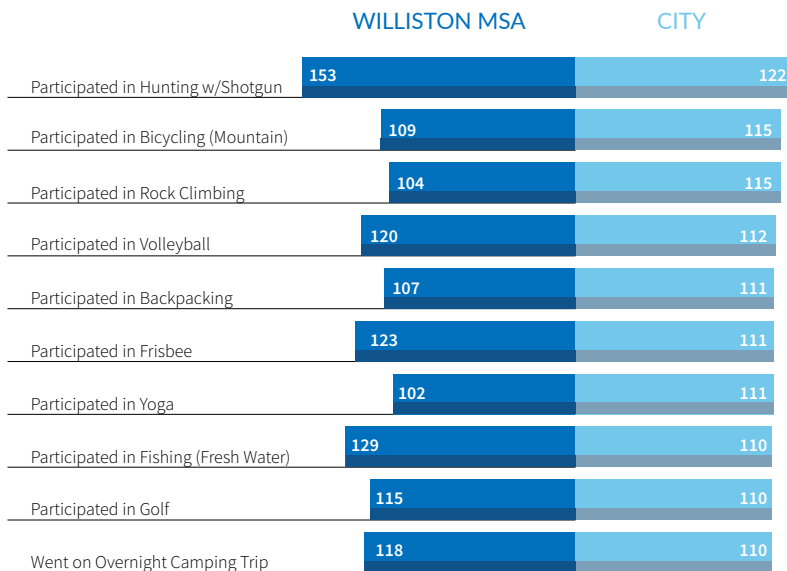


Figure 2.4
Top 10 Market Potential Index (MPI) for Sports & Leisure Activities. Sources: ESRI Business Analysis

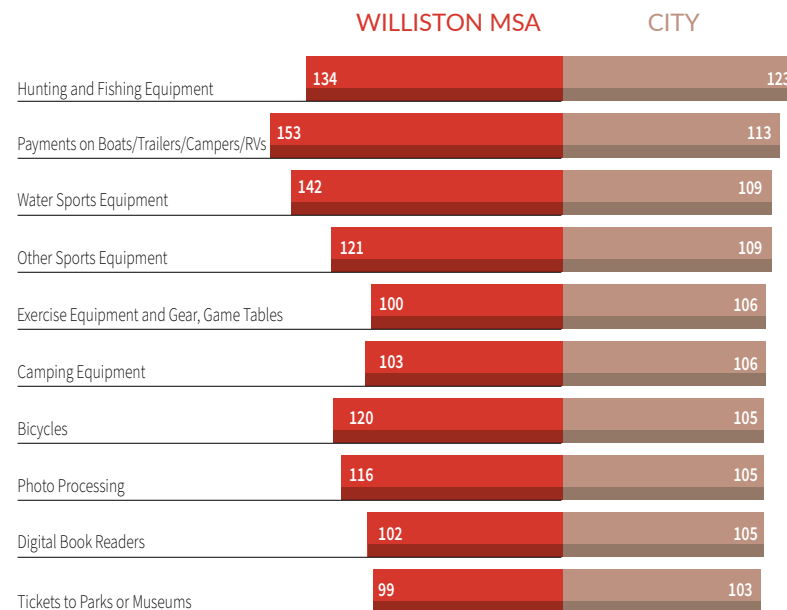


Figure 2.5
Top 10 Spending Potential Index (SPI) for Recreation-Type Expenditures. Sources: ESRI Business Analysis

Tapestry Segmentation

Williston's socioeconomic profile was assessed using ESRI Tapestry Segmentation. Tapestry segmentation provides detailed socioeconomic and demographic descriptions at the neighborhood level. The market segments identified for the area are:

- **Bright Young Professionals:** This is the largest segment in both Williston and the MSA. This segment is described as young, educated, working professionals. Many members of this segment are renters. Median income is in line with US averages and the labor force participation rate is 72%, higher than the US average. These are savvy consumers who are up to date with the latest technology. This group comprises over a third of Williston households. Nationwide, this segment enjoys sports such as backpacking, rock climbing, football, Pilates, running, and yoga.
- **In Style:** This segment consists of young, diverse, and tech-savvy individuals. They often live in urban centers and are enthusiastic about social media, entertainment, and fashion. In a parks and recreation context, they might appreciate modern, Instagram-worthy spaces, interactive installations, and spaces that can host trendy events like outdoor concerts or food festivals. This group represents nearly a quarter of Williston households.
- **Old and Newcomers:** Comprising a mix of retirees and younger individuals, this segment appreciates historical aspects, outdoor activities, and cultural events. They might gravitate towards spaces that preserve local history, walking trails that explore the area's heritage, and areas for community cultural celebrations.
- **Economic BedRock:** This segment consists of individuals often employed in the energy sector. They are generally financially stable but live modestly. These individuals are very budget-conscious, prioritize value in their purchases, and are often loyal to brands they trust. Their lifestyle is practical, with a focus on routine activities such as hunting, yard work, home improvement, and local community involvement. While they may not be affluent, they are careful with their finances and live comfortably within their means.



LifeMode Group: Middle Ground

Bright Young Professionals

Households: 2,750,200

Average Household Size: 2.41

Median Age: 33.0

Median Household Income: \$54,000



LifeMode Group: GenXurban

In Style

Households: 2,764,500

Average Household Size: 2.35

Median Age: 42.0

Median Household Income: \$73,000



LifeMode Group: Middle Ground


Old and Newcomers

Households: 2,859,200

Average Household Size: 2.12

Median Age: 39.4

Median Household Income: \$44,900



LifeMode Group: Rustic Outposts

Economic BedRock

Households: 810,000

Average Household Size: 2.54

Median Age: 41.3

Median Household Income: \$42,100

Figure 2.6
 Tapestry Segmentation. Source: ESRI
 Business Analyst

PARK & LAND ASSETS

System Overview

The Williston Parks and Recreation District operates and maintains a large and diverse inventory of assets and infrastructure. The quantity and complexity has grown considerably since the last master plan in 2011. The park system has aged, with some items nearing or surpassing their useful lifespan. Williston Parks & Recreation District now manages a system comprised of:

- Nearly 250 acres of parkland.
- 23 acres of parking surfaces (paved and unpaved).
- 5 miles of paved and gravel trails (average of 6-feet wide).
- 11 buildings/support facilities totaling over 300,000 square feet.
- Hundreds of site furnishings and amenities in each park, including aboveground and underground utilities.

Condition Assessment

Park staff reviewed and evaluated each major park asset and facility using a modified version of a tool called a Public Space Quality Index (PSQI), developed by People for Public Spaces. Rather than listing the quantities, size, and ages of the system's assets and facilities, the PSQI evaluations helps the planning team answer basic questions with regards to condition, comfort, and image. It also helps identify system-wide successes and opportunities related to asset and infrastructural improvements. The PSQI Criteria are:

- **Design & Construction:** Quality & functionality of the design and build.
- **Effectiveness:** How well the item meets its intended purpose, as well as offers a variety of options and flexibility for use.
- **Condition:** Current state of upkeep.
- **Comfort & Image:** User comfort and overall aesthetic.
- **Access:** Ease of reaching and navigating, as applicable, including availability, visibility, and connectivity.
- **Social Responsibility:** How well the item promotes health, inclusivity, and accessibility.

Park amenities and facilities were assigned a score for each question based on how well it met the criteria at the time of evaluation. Once scores were assigned, a matrix was developed to show individual asset ratings, category ratings, and trends across the park system inventory.

Figure 2.7*System-wide Major Assets & Facilities
Inventory (October 2023)*

Major Asset	Quantity
Picnic Shelters	16
Tennis / Pickleball Court(s)	9
Playground / Play Structures	19
Outdoor Pool (sites)	5
Baseball Diamond, 60-ft bases (Youth)	5
Baseball Diamond, 90-ft bases (Adult/Teen)	9
Outdoor Ice Rink	1
Basketball / Multi-Use Court(s)	3
Splash Pad / Spray Park	1
Multi-Use Fields (Practice Fields)	7
Volleyball Courts	5
Skate Park	1
Dog Park / Off-Leash Area	1
Disc Golf / Frolf Course	1
Shooting & Archery	1
Batting Cages	3
Parking Lots	17
Bleachers	17
Dugouts	26
Unprogrammed Open Space	16
Public Art, Sculptures, Monuments	6
Restrooms	6
Beach	1
Fishing Pier	1
Bridge(s)	1

The PSQI criteria guided the assessment of the items being reviewed. If a criterion was not applicable, or did not exist, for a particular amenity, facility, or situation, no score was given.

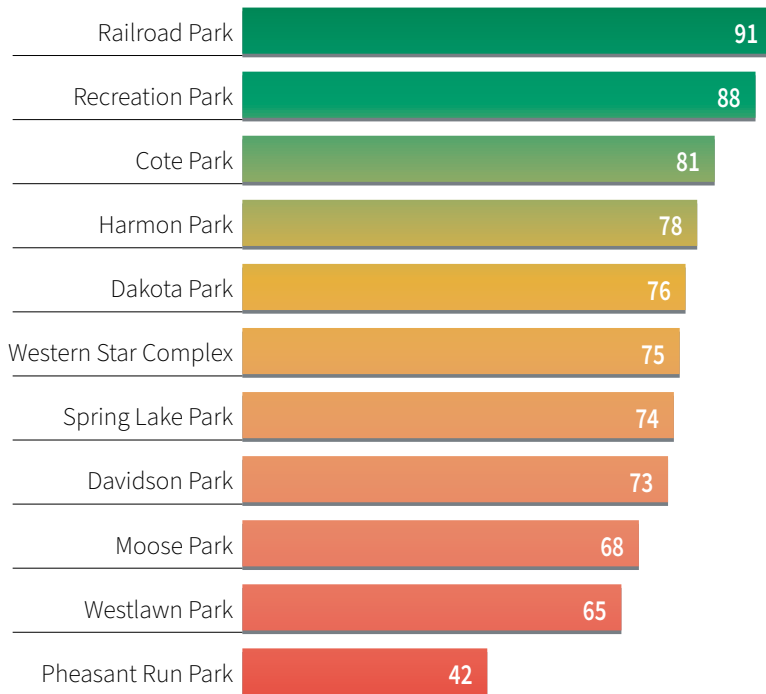
Reviewing the individual and inventory-wide rating allows the planning team to identify and assess successes, trends, and improvement opportunities.

PSQI Results

The PSQI scores for various parks show a diverse range of quality levels, with an average score of 75, indicating the general level of expectation. Railroad Park (91) and Recreation Park (88) significantly exceed expectations, while Cote Park (81), Harmon Park (78), Dakota Park (76), Western Star Complex (75), and Spring Lake Park (74) also meet or exceed expectations. Davidson Park (73) and Moose Park (68) fall slightly below the average, indicating potential areas for improvement. Pheasant Run Park (42) falls well below the average, highlighting a significant need for enhancement.

For the amenities, the average score is 68. Diamond fields with 60-ft bases for youth score highest (96), significantly exceeding expectations. Rectangle fields, sidewalks/paths, ice rinks, skate parks, volleyball courts, and disc golf courses also score high (83 each), indicating they are well-maintained and heavily utilized. On the other hand, adult/youth diamond fields, outdoor aquatics, and mechanical buildings score lower (33 each), suggesting these areas require significant

Figure 2.8
PSQI Individual Park Scores (100 represents highest score)



improvement. Playground equipment, parking areas, and public art scored mid-range (41 to 54), indicating variability in quality and maintenance. Restrooms and picnic shelters scored relatively high (81), underscoring their importance and good upkeep. Overall, the variability in these scores points to both areas of success and opportunities for targeted enhancements to ensure all amenities meet high standards.

The assessment revealed several key findings:

- **High Performance in Key Areas:** Parks such as Railroad Park and Recreation Park significantly exceed expectations, setting the bar and showcasing the standards for Williston parks. These parks score high shading, natural aesthetics, and well-maintained site furnishings that enhance the visitor experience and aesthetics.
- **Well-Maintained Amenities:** Most parks scored high for signage and parking areas. This emphasizes the ease of navigation and accessibility in the park system. Restrooms and picnic shelters are generally in good condition, underscoring the importance of these facilities for visitor satisfaction.

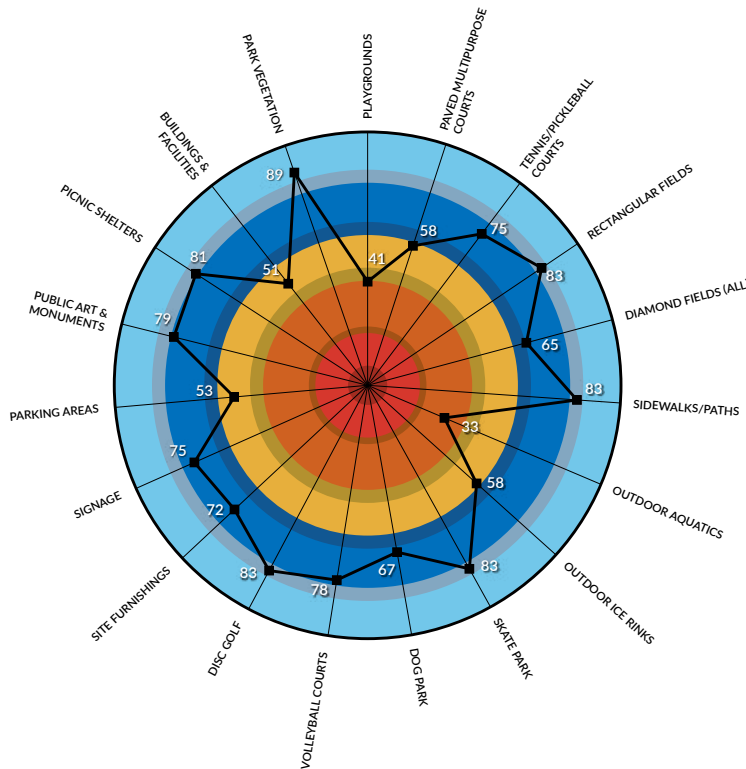


Figure 2.9
PSQI Results by Asset Category

- **Significant Areas Needing Improvement:** Scores were consistently low in general for lighting, disc golf courses, and volleyball courts. This points to specific areas requiring higher level of attention and upgrades. Low lighting scores, in particular, suggest a need for improved infrastructure to enhance visitor safety and welfare.
- **Variability in Playground Quality, Condition & Accessibility:** While playgrounds generally score decently, the variability in quality and accessibility across parks indicates a need for standardization and improvement to ensure all playgrounds provide a safe, inclusive, and enjoyable experience for all users.
- **Strategic Enhancements and Future Planning:** There is a clear need to align recreational assets and amenities with community needs, implement maintenance and lifecycle plans for aging infrastructure, and conduct continuous condition assessments. These strategies are crucial for sustaining a high-quality park system and ensuring consistent quality across all facilities.

Park Land Classification

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Classifications provide a standardized framework for categorizing parks based on their size, purpose, and the type of facilities they offer. This classification system includes categories such as mini-parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks. Each type is designed to serve different community needs and functions. These classifications help establish essential elements for parkland requirements, generally based on types of recreational uses and services to be provided.

Classifying parks within a park system is important because it helps agencies allocate resources efficiently and ensures that the diverse recreational needs of the community are met. When agencies face the challenge of finite budgets and rapidly growing community needs, aligning parkland classifications with NRPA guidelines offers numerous benefits. These benefits include promoting equal distribution of parkland and recreational facilities, maintaining a balanced system of parks, and mitigating overuse of park land. It provides a systematic approach to parkland acquisition and development, ensuring resources are allocated to their highest and best uses.

Additionally, aligning to the park classification system establishes a standardized framework that allows for consistency and comparability across different parks and recreation systems, making it easier to understand and manage park assets with metrics for success.

This structured approach enables benchmarking against national standards and best practices, identifying areas for improvement, and allowing for incremental and orderly improvements to the park and recreation system. Williston Parks & Recreation District provides parks in five of the eight typical classifications, including Mini Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, Recreation/Special Use Parks, and Sports Complex.

PARK TYPOLOGY | Mini (Pocket) Parks

Mini parks, also known as pocket parks or plazas, are small green spaces typically less than an acre in size. They address specific recreational needs within a small area, usually within an eighth to a quarter-mile radius, or as part of a distinct destination feature. Typical amenities include small event spaces, plazas, public art installations, benches, and enhanced landscaping. These parks are ideal for urban settings, providing quick access to outdoor spaces for relaxation and socializing, with a typical length of stay of less than one hour.



Railroad Park

The other park classifications are regional parks, natural resource areas, and greenways. There is no requirement for an agency to provide property in each classification, as it depends on the specific needs of each community. Additionally, other public or private providers may fulfill community needs, such as the Cimmaron Heights Park in northwest Williston. Descriptions for these other classifications are provided below in Figure 2.10:

Figure 2.10
Park Classification Descriptions



Example: Sertoma Park (Bismarck)

Regional Park

Typical Acreage: Greater than 50 acres.
Land Use: 50% Active / 50% Passive
Service Area: Greater than 3-miles.
Site Selection: Prefer location that can preserve natural resources on-site, significantly large parcel of land, and accessible from public roads capable of handling larger traffic flows.
Typical Amenities: 10 to 12 amenities to create a signature park, restrooms, concessions, restaurants, ample parking, special events sites, and sports fields/complexes are common at this park.
Revenue Facilities: Park is designed to produce revenue to offset operations.
Parking: Sufficient to support the amenities, but no more than 10% of the park.
Length of Stay: All Day.

PARK TYPOLOGY | Neighborhood Parks

A neighborhood park, typically spanning 3 to 10 acres, serves nearby residents within a 10-minute walk with safe pedestrian access. These parks feature amenities like playgrounds or sport courts, minimal parking, and are designed for short stays of about an hour. They enhance neighborhood identity and connect with other parks via trails.

Maintained at a high standard, these parks allocate about 85% of their space for active recreation and generally lack programmed activities, though a signature amenity might be included. Due to their proximity to residential areas and typical length of stay, restrooms are typically not provided.



Cote Park

PARK TYPOLOGY | Community Parks

Community parks serve multiple neighborhoods within a 3-mile radius, focusing on community needs and preserving unique landscapes and open space. These parks offer recreational opportunities for the whole family, including signature amenities like large destination playgrounds, sports fields, various sports courts, or pools. Land usage is primarily for active recreation (65%), with active programming of the signature amenities. Visits typically last between 2 and 3 hours.

Spring Lake Park

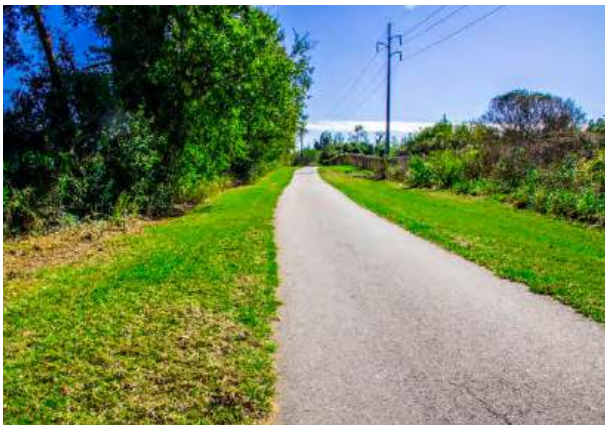
Figure 2.10 (cont'd.)
Park Classification Descriptions



Example: Atkinson Nature Park (Bismarck)

Natural Resource Area

Typical Acreage: Varies.
Land Use: 100% Passive.
Service Area: n/a.
Site Selection: Usually open space, utility easements, riparian/stream corridors, wildlife movement corridors, etc. Guided by policy for preservation & conservation.
Typical Amenities: Open and natural space managed for conservation. May include nature-based, unstructured, low-impact recreation opportunities.
Revenue Facilities: None.
Parking: Usually none. Trailheads, as applicable.
Length of Stay: Varies.



Example: Greenway in utility corridor

Greenways

Typical Acreage: 25 to 30-foot wide.
Land Use: n/a.
Service Area: Connects neighborhoods, parks, facilities & natural areas.
Site Selection: n/a.
Typical Amenities: Multi-use trails (8-ft wide min., 10-ft. wide preferred), sidewalks, and wayfinding.
Revenue Facilities: None.
Parking: On-street, at trailheads, or at parks.
Length of Stay: Varies.

Park & Amenity Level of Service Analysis

Level of Service (LOS) standards are used to determine the quantity and placement of parks, facilities, and recreational amenities needed in a community. These standards are shaped by community feedback and national trends, and they involve evaluating the current resources relative to the community's population. Typically, this is measured in terms of acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, amenities per population, or square footage per capita for specific facilities.

The goal of LOS standards is to guide decisions on investments in parks, facilities, and amenities. They provide a benchmark for development and operations, highlight any gaps or excesses in the current system, and establish the necessary quantities to meet these standards as the population grows.

LOS standards should be updated regularly to reflect changes in industry trends and community demographics. Agencies should periodically review and adjust these standards, ideally every five to ten years, to ensure they remain relevant and effective.

The following summary is based on the LOS standards analysis:

- Based on the city's current population, the total LOS is 7.73 acres of developed parks per 1,000 residents, excluding the golf course and non-park property acreage. According to the NRPA's 2024 Agency Performance Review, WPRD's LOS is towards the lower quartile compared to other jurisdictions between 20,000 and 49,999 in population. The median is 11.2 acres per 1,000.
- Based on community input and engagement, the level of service is recommended to continue as is. The service level recommendations do not suggest large modifications to the current levels of service. Rather, the levels place slightly more focus on accommodating future residential growth with neighborhood and community parks.
- To keep up with projected population growth and meet the recommended LOS standards, WPRD will need to add a total of 22 acres of developed park to the system by 2028. Additional park acreage is needed for neighborhood parks (5 acres) and community park (17 acres).
- The District currently does not meet recommended service levels for the following outdoor amenities: picnic shelters, 60-ft base diamond fields (youth fields), rectangular fields, basketball/multi-use courts (outdoor), multi-use tennis/pickleball courts, playgrounds (sites), and outdoor volleyball courts.
- The District does not meet recommended service levels for indoor ice rinks.

PARK TYPOLOGY | Recreation / Special Use Parks

Recreation/Special use parks serve a single purpose, unlike other park types that offer multiple opportunities. These spaces include cemeteries; historic, cultural, or social sites; stand-alone golf courses; indoor recreation facilities like senior centers; and stand-alone outdoor recreation facilities such as waterparks.



Williston Water World

Artist's Rendering by EAPC

Figure 2.11
Level of Service Standard

Current Inventory		Current Level of Service			Recommended Standard		2023 Current Needs		2028 Need Forecast				
Item	WPRD Inventory	Current Service Level based upon population			Recommended Service Levels		Assessment	Additional Need	Assessment	Additional Need			
DEVELOPED PARK LAND													
Mini Park	4.34	0.14	Acre(s) per	1,000	0.10	Acre(s) per	1,000	Meets Standard	0	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	0	Acre(s)
Neighborhood Park	34.56	1.15	Acre(s) per	1,000	1.25	Acre(s) per	1,000	Need Exists	3	Acre(s)	Need Exists	5	Acre(s)
Community Park	132.15	4.40	Acre(s) per	1,000	4.75	Acre(s) per	1,000	Need Exists	10	Acre(s)	Need Exists	17	Acre(s)
Recreation/Special Use	3.93	0.13	Acre(s) per	1,000	0.10	Acre(s) per	1,000	Meets Standard	0	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	0	Acre(s)
Sports Complex	57.03	1.90	Acre(s) per	1,000	1.75	Acre(s) per	1,000	Meets Standard	0	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	0	Acre(s)
Total Developed Park	232.01	7.73	Acre(s) per	1,000	7.95	Acre(s) per	1,000	Need Exists	13	Acre(s)	Need Exists	22	Acre(s)
OUTDOOR AMENITIES													
Picnic Shelters	16.00	1.00	Site(s) per	1,875	1.00	Site(s) per	1,750	Need Exists	1	Site(s)	Need Exists	2	Site(s)
Diamond Field, 60-ft Bases (Youth)	5.00	1.00	Site(s) per	6,001	1.00	Site(s) per	6,000	Need Exists	1	Site(s)	Need Exists	1	Site(s)
Diamond Field, 90-ft Bases (Adult & Youth)	9.00	1.00	Field(s) per	3,334	1.00	Field(s) per	4,000	Meets Standard	0	Field(s)	Meets Standard	0	Field(s)
Disc Golf	1.00	1.00	Site(s) per	30,007	1.00	Site(s) per	50,000	Meets Standard	0	Site(s)	Meets Standard	0	Site(s)
Rectangle Fields (all)	7.00	1.00	Field(s) per	4,287	1.00	Field(s) per	4,000	Need Exists	1	Field(s)	Need Exists	1	Field(s)
Basketball Multi-use Courts, Outdoor	3.00	1.00	Courts per	10,002	1.00	Courts per	10,000	Need Exists	1	Courts	Need Exists	1	Courts
Multi-Use Tennis/Pickleball Courts	9.00	1.00	Courts per	3,334	1.00	Courts per	2,500	Need Exists	3	Courts	Need Exists	4	Courts
Playgrounds (sites)	19.00	1.00	Site per	1,579	1.00	Site per	1,500	Need Exists	1	Site	Need Exists	2	Site
Dog Parks	1.00	1.00	Site(s) per	30,007	1.00	Site(s) per	35,000	Meets Standard	0	Site(s)	Meets Standard	0	Site(s)
Ice Rink (outdoor)	1.00	1.00	Site(s) per	30,007	1.00	Site(s) per	35,000	Meets Standard	0	Site(s)	Meets Standard	0	Site(s)
Skate parks	1.00	1.00	Site(s) per	30,007	1.00	Site(s) per	50,000	Meets Standard	0	Site(s)	Meets Standard	0	Site(s)
Volleyball	5.00	1.00	Courts per	6,001	1.00	Courts per	6,000	Need Exists	1	Courts	Need Exists	1	Courts
Outdoor Pool (site)	1.00	1.00	Site(s) per	30,007	1.00	Site(s) per	50,000	Meets Standard	0	Site(s)	Meets Standard	1	Site(s)
Splash Pad	1.00	1.00	Site(s) per	30,007	1.00	Site(s) per	50,000	Meets Standard	0	Site(s)	Meets Standard	0	Site(s)
INDOOR FACILITIES													
Indoor Aquatics	1.00	1.00	Site(s) per	30,007	1.00	Site(s) per	40,000	Meets Standard	0	Site(s)	Meets Standard	0	Site(s)
Indoor Ice Rink	65,274	2.18	SF per	person	3	SF per	person	Meets Standard	0	SF	Need Exists	28,911	SF
REC Centers (Square Feet)	48,875	1.63	SF per	person	1.5	SF per	person	Meets Standard	0	SF	Meets Standard	0	SF

2023 Estimated Population 30,007

2028 Estimated Population 31,395



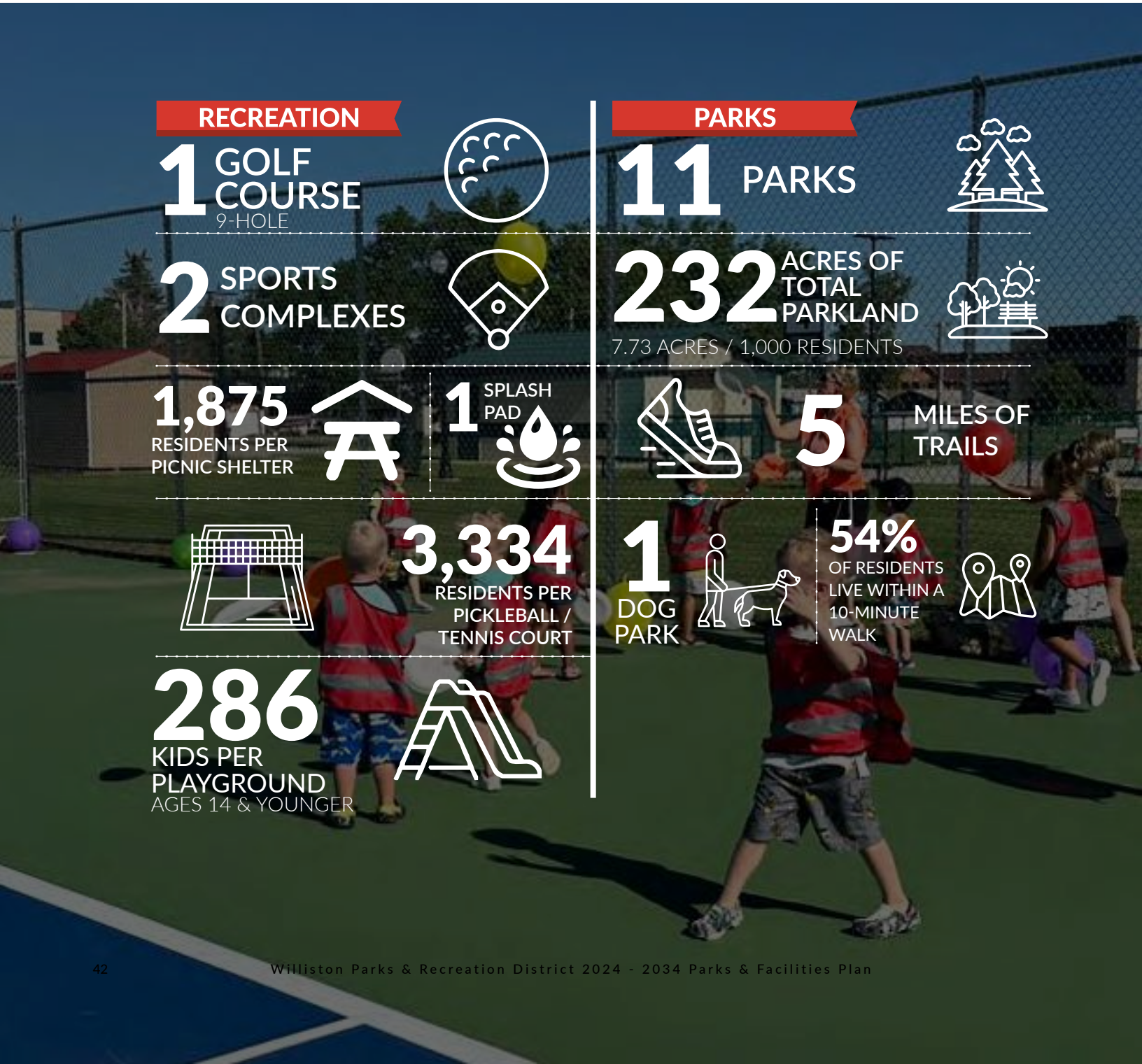
PARK TYPOLOGY | Sports Complex

Sports complexes can be found in community parks, regional parks, or as stand-alone properties and feature 4 to 16+ fields or courts in one location. They may include extreme sports facilities like BMX and skateboarding, and can be single- or multi-sport focused, with indoor or outdoor facilities for both youth and adults. Outdoor fields should be lit to maximize value and productivity. These complexes should meet residents' needs while attracting tournaments for economic benefits.

Davidson Park

Based on a thorough review of the parks and recreation system and public input, it is recommended that the District pursue further development of specific parks and recreation amenities that meet the needs listed in the High Priority Program and Facility Rankings and address the gaps per park type to increase the current level of service standard for the projected population in 2028. Figure 2.11 (page 40) and Figure 2.12 (below) shows the current levels of service.

Figure 2.12
*Level of Service Community
 Priority Statistics*



RECREATION

1 GOLF COURSE
 9-HOLE

2 SPORTS COMPLEXES

1,875 RESIDENTS PER PICNIC SHELTER

1 SPLASH PAD

3,334 RESIDENTS PER PICKLEBALL / TENNIS COURT

286 KIDS PER PLAYGROUND
 AGES 14 & YOUNGER

PARKS

11 PARKS

232 ACRES OF TOTAL PARKLAND
 7.73 ACRES / 1,000 RESIDENTS

5 MILES OF TRAILS

1 DOG PARK

54% OF RESIDENTS LIVE WITHIN A 10-MINUTE WALK

Service Area Equity Mapping Key Findings

The Williston Parks and Recreation District's system has evolved over time and distribution of sites and facilities throughout the community is reflected in the current site locations.

To further illustrate the distribution of current park types and amenities throughout the District, an equity-mapping analysis was conducted to show the service areas and the gaps in service of the current inventory of park types and amenities based on the recommended LOS standard (Appendix 1). The recommended standard established per 1,000 residents per acre of park type or number of residents per type of amenity are also indicated in the map title.

The service area is calculated by the quantity of inventory of each site extended in a uniform radius until the population served by the recommended standard is reached. Shaded areas indicate the extent of the service area based on recommended inventories; unshaded areas indicate locations that would remain outside of the standard service area for each park type or park asset. Unshaded areas are not always the most appropriate location for future parks or park assets. They only represent areas that might be more thoroughly reviewed for potential additional facilities.

Although there are occasions when the service area may extend beyond its borders, only the District's population was utilized for calculating service area standards in this analysis.

Community-wide maps of existing park types or classifications identified in this Master Plan, as well as the major park amenities, are provided in Appendix 1. The maps in Appendix 1 identify existing parks by classification as well as park amenities.

MAINTENANCE ASSESSMENT

Parks and amenities that are clean and functioning efficiently are a critical element to delivering high quality programs and services. The Williston Park and Recreation District maintains 169 acres of developed parks, 17 acres of open space parks, 21 athletic fields and nearly 110,000 square feet of indoor recreation space, including two ice rinks, an indoor pool, and recreation/community centers.

Maintenance Lines of Service

The core lines of service (functions) performed by the District are numerous and complex. The lines of service are performed in Parks & Grounds Maintenance, Golf Course Maintenance, Aquatic Maintenance, and Recreation Center Maintenance. Specific maintenance lines of service can be found in Appendix 2.

Maintenance Modes & Standards

Regular maintenance requires unit-based quantification for most major resource requirements and provides methods for projecting future resource needs. The District's maintenance efforts as detailed are expansive and address diverse aspects of maintaining high-quality parks, amenities, and infrastructure to preserve the integrity of public assets and their meaningful use. The prevailing objectives of a standards-based park maintenance program are presented below but not in order of importance:

- Maintain and improve the sites, grounds, facilities, and structures of the District's parks system to provide optimal and enjoyable use.
- Provide landscaping and general maintenance for a multitude of District amenities, including but not limited to, landscaped beds and turf, urban open spaces, urban forests, and selected park buildings and structures.
- Be responsive to maintenance needs of the District's open-space tracts. Particular attention must be paid to access points, trail repair, erosion control, and trash removal.
- Protect and preserve the value of District assets so that long-term maintenance costs are minimal due to extending the service life of those assets.

Many of the objectives assigned to the Park's maintenance teams go beyond the traditional responsibilities of park maintenance employees.

It is recommended that all park maintenance agencies adopt a system of park and ground maintenance levels wherein functions are organized into a tiered structure with three different levels of service. These levels are referred to as maintenance modes, and each has a unique standard that dictates routine maintenance tasks and their frequency. The appropriate maintenance mode is assigned to each park or site, which creates a framework for organizing and scheduling tasks and responsibilities at each location. A description of each of the maintenance modes is provided below:

- **Maintenance Mode/Level 1:** applies to parks or sites that require the greatest level of maintenance standard in the system. These parks or sites are often revenue producing facilities, such as the athletic fields, where the quality and level of maintenance has a direct impact on the park facility's ability to maximize revenue generation.
- **Maintenance Mode/Level 2:** applies to parks or sites that require a moderate level of effort and maintenance standards in the system. These include developed and undeveloped parks with amenities that are heavily used such as trails, community and pocket parks, and special-use facilities found in the District's parks system.
- **Maintenance Mode/Level 3:** applies to parks or sites that require a nominal level of effort and maintenance standards in the system. These include undeveloped parks with minimal amenities.

Overall Maintenance Key Findings

PLEASE NOTE: The analysis that follows does not include the maintenance of the golf course.

Maintenance Management Plan

Through the review of data and workshops with staff, the PROS Consulting team determined that the Parks District does try to operate within the maintenance modes identified above. Parks maintenance also generally follows a written set of routine park and grounds maintenance standards. However, a formalized, documented, detailed maintenance management plan does not exist. A formalized maintenance management plan includes not only maintenance modes and standards for each park but also tracks the performance of the work against a set of defined outcomes as well as the costs expended to achieve each outcome. A maintenance management plan is typically memorialized within an asset-based work order management system.

Asset Management Work Order System

Maintenance in the District does not currently utilize an asset management work order system to track routine/scheduled work. The Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) not only documents maintenance and asset replacement schedules but can track the time and resources required to perform work in the field.

Equipment & Storage

The District does not lack the necessary equipment or resources to perform tasks.

Staffing Levels

Parks: The Parks Maintenance District is comprised of approximately 16.72 full-time equivalents (FTEs) dedicated to maintaining the parks and recreation system.

Figure 2.13
Best Practice Parks & Recreation
Maintenance Staffing Summary

Maintenance Function	Annual Best Practice staffing Level (FTEs)	Annual Best Practice Staffing Level (labor hours)
Open Space Parks Maintenance	0.2	403.39
Developed Parks Maintenance	5.6	9,927.57
Diamond Field, 60-ft Bases (Youth)	1.3	2,200.00
Diamond Field, 90-ft Bases (Adult & Youth)	3.0	5,280.00
Rectangular Fields (U13)	1.4	2,464.00
Community Center Custodial Services	0.4	687.24
Community Center Maintenance Services	0.3	481.07
Ice Rink Custodial Services	3.1	5,470.58
Ice Rink Maintenance Services	1.6	2,872.06
Recreation Center Custodial Services	2.2	3,844.76
Recreation Center Maintenance Services	1.5	2,691.33
TOTAL	20.64	36,322.00
Current Total Annual Labor Hours	29,432.00	
Total Annual Labor Hours Needed	36,322.00	
Total Annual Labor Hour Gap	6,890.00	
Annual FTEs Needed	3.91	

Annual Park & Facility Maintenance Funding

Based on the district's current operational expenses, annual operational funding for park and facility maintenance is approximately \$165,000 under the recommended funding level (\pm \$1.7 million), as summarized in Figure 2.14 (below). This involves assigning an appropriate maintenance modes to each park and facility.

Figure 2.14
Best Practice Operations & Maintenance Funding Calculations

Park / Facility Classification	Unit	Direct Costs	Indirect Costs	Total Costs	Inventory	Best Practice Unit Cost
Community Parks	Acres	\$396,445	\$132,148	\$528,594	132.15	\$4,000
Neighborhood Parks	Acres	\$105,150	\$35,050	\$140,200	28.04	\$5,000
Open Space Parks	Acres	\$3,867	\$1,289	\$5,156	17.19	\$300
Mini Parks	Acres	\$19,530	\$6,510	\$26,040	4.34	\$6,000
Sports Complexes	Acres	\$315,188	\$105,063	\$420,250	84.05	\$5,000
Specialty Parks	Acres	\$35,175	\$11,725	\$46,900	4.69	\$10,000
Indoor Recreation Center	Sq. Ft.	\$137,625	\$45,875	\$183,500	48,875.00	\$4.00
Indoor Ice Rink	Sq. Ft.	\$244,778	\$81,593	\$326,370	65,274.00	\$5.00
Community Center	Sq. Ft.	\$24,600	\$8,200	\$32,800	8,200.00	\$4.00
Totals		\$1,282,357	\$427,452	\$1,709,809		

Park Maintenance Key Recommendations

Formalized Maintenance Management Plan

It is recommended that the District develop a formalized maintenance management plan that details the outcomes of park and trail maintenance work and the maintenance standards (tasks and frequencies) that are necessary to achieve the outcomes.

Implement a GIS-Based Asset Management Work Order System

A work order system should be used to track lifecycle maintenance requirements that are tied to weekly and monthly work orders. This will help the staff to stay ahead of preventative maintenance and limit breakdowns. Further, utilizing the system will provide staff with the necessary "actual cost" data for work being performed. The typical components of a work order management system are as follows:

- **Schedule Work Activities:** Detailed framework for asset management by incorporating GIS into the asset repository. Allows for grouping of assets by location, type, age, or other key parameters. These groupings can then be used to create maintenance activities such as preventive work, reactive work, tests, or inspections.

- **Mapping Tools:** ArcGIS maps are an integral part of the work management process. This allows for the creation of map visualizations of database queries including open work orders, service requests, or work orders of a specific type and assignment. These tools empower both management and staff to interact with asset data.
- **Data Mobility:** A variety of tools to help maintenance staff access and update valuable information while in the field.
- **Asset Management:** Track work performed on any asset at any given time throughout its lifecycle. Users can easily search for active work orders and view them dynamically on the GIS map. Track overdue work orders and monitor work associated with a specific task, contractor, or project.
- **Track Unproductive Time:** A key component of creating an efficient parks maintenance operation is to minimize unproductive time, such as travel time between parks. Travel time on average should not exceed the maximum threshold of 2.2 hours for every 8-hour day.

Annual Maintenance Funding & Staffing

It is recommended that the Maintenance Operation be allocated an additional \$165,000 annually for improved management and maintenance of parks over the next 3-5 years. Of this funding, approximately 67% should be allocated for the addition of 3.91 FTEs or 6,800 regular part-time and seasonal staff labor hours annually.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Commission on Accreditation For Park & Recreation Agencies Analysis

The Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) accredits park and recreation agencies for excellence in operation and service. Charged with providing high quality services and experiences, park and recreation agencies across the United States turn to CAPRA Accreditation as a credible and efficient means of achieving a quality operation, while providing assurance to the public that the agency meets national standards of best practice. Agency accreditation is available to all entities administering park and recreation systems, including municipalities, townships, counties, special Districts and regional authorities, councils of government, schools, and military installations.

Benefits for the Public

- Assurance of well-administered services in accord with approved professional practices.
- Potential for external financial support and savings to the public by making an organization more competitive for funding entities that prioritize accredited agencies.
- External recognition of a quality governmental service.
- Holds an agency accountable to the public and ensures responsiveness to meet their needs.
- Improves customer service and the overall quality of services.

Benefits for the Agency

- Public and political recognition.
- Increased efficiency and evidence of accountability.
- Answer the question, “How are we doing?” through extensive self-evaluation.
- Identifies areas for improvement by comparing an agency against national standards of best practice.
- Enhances staff teamwork and pride by engaging all staff in the process.
- Creates an environment for regular review of operations, policies, and procedures, and promotes continual improvement.
- Forces written documentation of policies and procedures.

There are currently 155 agencies nationwide (1 in North Dakota) that are accredited. The Williston Parks and Recreation District can be accredited within the next five years with a commitment to the development of the necessary documentation. Accreditation is based on an agency's compliance with the 154 standards for national accreditation. To achieve accreditation, an agency must comply with all 36 Fundamental Standards and 106 (90%) of the 118 Non-Fundamental Standards upon initial accreditation and 112 (95%) of the 118 Non-Fundamental Standards upon reaccreditation.

In conducting an analysis of the administrative policies and procedures that govern the Williston Parks and Recreation District, a self-assessment utilizing the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) standards was conducted.

PLEASE NOTE: Not all CAPRA standards are applicable to the Park and Recreation District. The intent of the analysis is to identify operational strengths and gaps against a set of best practice standards.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

This section provides a high-level evaluation of the district's overall programmatic portfolio, focusing on core program areas, public opinion, and the program life cycle. While not intended to replace a comprehensive recreation program assessment, it offers a foundational overview, identifying key strengths and areas for growth within the district's offerings. This initial assessment serves as a critical starting point for deeper analysis and future planning efforts.

Core Program Areas






The Williston Parks and Recreation District provides a diverse array of year-round recreation programs, special events, and facility operations, managed by a professional staff dedicated to meeting the community's evolving needs. These offerings include youth and adult recreation, fitness, aquatics, kids camps, adaptive programs, and senior activities, all of which are bolstered by partnerships with various organizations to enhance program delivery and access to facilities.

To achieve its vision of being a premier parks and recreation system, identifying the Core Program Areas that focus on the activities and outcomes most important to the community is critical to meeting community need and making the best use of (oftentimes) limited resources. These areas are defined by criteria such as long-term provision, budget allocation, wide demographic appeal, and the presence of dedicated facilities and staff. Figure 2.15 provides a list of the identified Core Program Areas for the district.



Figure 2.15

Core Program Areas

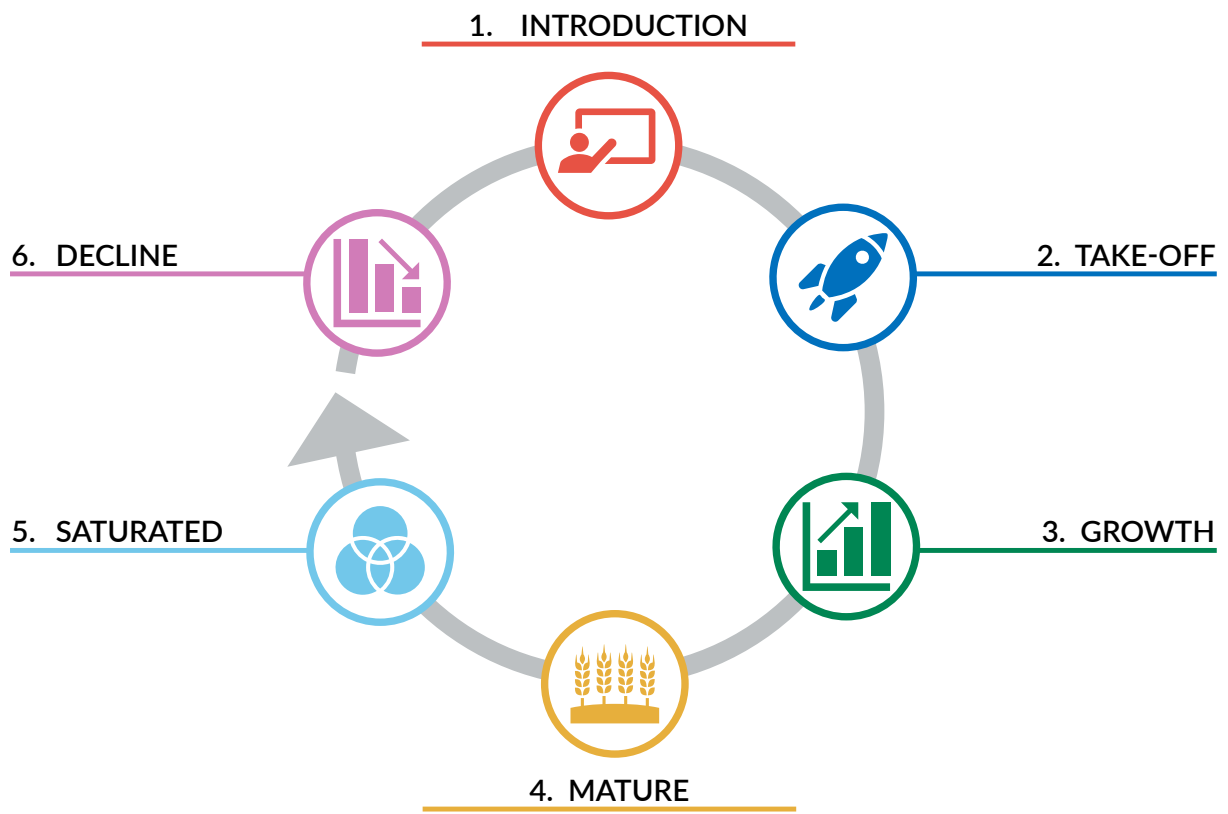
<p>Sports / Athletics</p>		<p>Description: Programs to improve athletic skills and offer organized sports leagues, tournaments and recreational play for youth and adults.</p>	<p>Sample of Offerings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Adult volleyball » Youth baseball » Youth soccer » Adult softball
<p>Adaptive</p>		<p>Description: Programs designed for individuals with special needs of all ages to interact socially, try new experiences, and be physically active.</p>	<p>Sample of Offerings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Adaptive swim » Outdoor T-ball » Indoor Soccer » Noah's ARC
<p>Aquatics</p>		<p>Description: Programs utilizing aquatics facilities to include group and private swim lessons, water exercise classes and recreational swimming/ water play.</p>	<p>Sample of Offerings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Aquasice » SwimFit » Tyke Swim
<p>Seniors</p>		<p>Description: Programs tailored to promote active aging, community engagement, and quality of life.</p>	<p>Sample of Offerings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Lunch & Learn » Senior Room » Silver Sneakers » Quilting
<p>Special Events</p>		<p>Description: Events planned and executed by WPRD that bring community members together.</p>	<p>Sample of Offerings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Kids Night Out » Giving Hearts Day » Nerf Wars » Holiday Lights Drive
<p>Health & Fitness</p>		<p>Description: Programs designed to improve physical fitness and personal wellness through fitness classes, personal training, and group exercise/ education classes.</p>	<p>Sample of Offerings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Group/personal fitness » Fitness App

Regular evaluation is crucial to ensure that these Core Program Areas remain aligned with changing leisure trends, demographics, and community needs. Guided by the National Recreation and Park Association’s (NRPA) six determinants for programs and services (CAPRA 6.1.1), the District strives to balance innovation with stability, continually assessing its offerings to maintain relevance and effectiveness. This ongoing process ensures that Williston’s parks and recreation services contribute meaningfully to the quality of life for all residents.

Program Lifecycle

All organizations and their offerings naturally evolve over time, driven by the need to adapt to changing environments—this adaptability is essential for long-term sustainability. The program lifecycle concept (Figure 2.16) serves as a strategic tool for the district, enabling the anticipation of these changes and allowing for deliberate planning. By understanding the progression of a program through its lifecycle, the district can predict potential shifts and take proactive actions to either modify its course or ensure optimal adaptation. Each phase of the lifecycle requires specific strategies, methods, and levels of management to maintain high standards of performance and effectiveness.

Figure 2.16
Program Lifecycle (adapted from Crompton & Hensarling, 1978)



In this context, introducing new and innovative programs and services is crucial to meet the evolving needs and preferences of the community. However, it is equally important to maintain a stable core of established offerings in the “mature stage,” ensuring they continue to provide value without overwhelming the overall recreation portfolio. These mature programs should be consistently monitored for signs of saturation or decline, enabling timely adjustments that keep them relevant and beneficial to the community.

Conversely, when programs or services never progress to the later stages of their lifecycle, it often signals “over-tweaking” by staff, which can inhibit their full potential. This continuous adjustment, especially in the face of limited resources, can divert attention from more impactful programs. Focusing too much on sustaining underperforming offerings may lead to inefficiencies and reduce the overall effectiveness of the district’s services. The greater consequence is that valuable resources are drawn away from programs that could yield higher returns and better meet the community’s needs.

Community Need

The community survey and focus group findings demonstrate strong support for the Williston Parks and Recreation District’s (WPRD) programs and events. With 81% of respondents participating in activities over the past year and 84% rating the overall quality as good or excellent, it is evident that these offerings are highly valued by residents. The diverse range of engagement, with nearly half of the respondents participating in multiple programs or events, underscores the community’s active involvement in WPRD’s activities.

However, the survey also identified barriers that limit broader participation, including inconvenient scheduling, high fees, and limited class availability. These factors suggest that while the programs are well-received, there are opportunities to increase access and inclusivity by improving scheduling, reducing fees, and expanding class availability. Addressing these challenges could help mitigate barriers and increase participation rates, ensuring that more residents can benefit from the district’s offerings.

Additionally, the assessment highlighted specific areas where the community perceives gaps or unmet needs. Programs like free drop-in classes, STEM programs, cooking classes, and outdoor environmental camps were identified as having the highest unmet demand. The community also places significant emphasis on adult fitness and wellness programs, youth sports, and community special events, reflecting a strong desire for opportunities that promote health, engagement, and social connections. Aligning program offerings with these identified needs and priorities will be crucial in enhancing overall satisfaction and participation within the community.





3

NEEDS & PRIORITIES

Discovering Strategic Opportunities & Imagining Aspirations for the Ideal Future

WILLISTON COMMUNITY NEEDS

This master plan is the declaration of how the public envisions the future of their park and recreation system. The community's needs, preferences, priorities, and expectations underpin every action recommended in this master plan. Engagement provided a variety of online and in-person methods to collect input. These included a project advisory committee, focus groups, and a community-wide survey.

PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A project advisory committee (PAC) was convened for the purpose of providing strategic guidance and direction for the master planning process through the members' specific areas of expertise and understanding. The committee membership was comprised of park staff, park board members, and District partners. The primary areas of expertise represented on the advisory committee were partnerships, programs, tourism, organized sports, and park management.

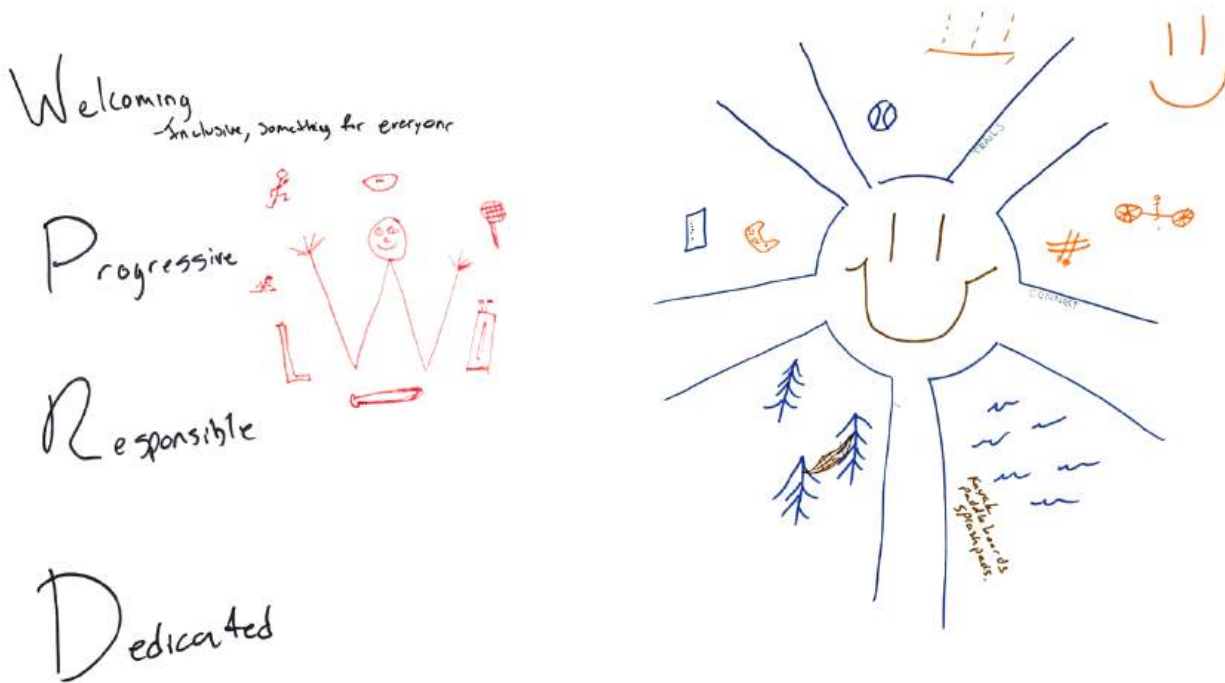
Through facilitated meetings, the committee convened to help develop the planning vision, identify park and recreation issues and trends, and formulate goals and actions that consider existing conditions, citizen input, industry best practices and standards, resource availability, and needs. The committee participated in five (5) meetings during the planning process. Each meeting focused on a specific topic that included an introduction to the topic, group activities, and discussions that helped drive the outcomes for this master plan.

The planning process employed an approach known as “appreciative planning,” which centers on recognizing and leveraging existing strengths rather than focusing on shortcomings. This forward-thinking strategy encourages a perspective of “what can be” rather than “what is missing,” promoting a positive and collaborative atmosphere. The PAC utilized the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) Analysis to steer their discussions, highlighting current successes as the basis for future progress. This method was instrumental in shaping the long-term vision for the planning process and the Williston Parks & Recreation District. The PAC’s efforts resulted in a cohesive vision:

Williston Parks & Recreation District envisions an inclusive, unique, and affordable park system, fostering a welcoming and connected community. Through dedication, adaptability, and transparency, we aim to be a progressive hub for diverse recreational experiences.

Figure 3.1

Mobile clinic on the Fort Peck Reservation



Developed through a mix of drawing exercises and reflective discussions, this vision is designed to steer decisions and recommendations within the master plan, ensuring that the system progresses in harmony with its historical roots and future goals. The vision and collaborative approach highlight the significance of robust partnerships and a forward-thinking perspective in successful master planning.

VOICES & INSIGHTS

Focus Group Sessions

Focus groups are commonly used in planning and marketing and were used to help develop the Williston Parks & Facilities Plan. This plan conducted three focus group sessions. These sessions explored the perceptions of the park system and needs of users from the perspective of the focus group participants.

The focus groups included individuals representing various park user groups, constituencies, partnering organizations, general park users, Williston citizens, and local teenagers. The information gathered from participants was used to supplement, enrich, amplify, flesh out, or more fully understand quantitative data collected as part of the plan.

It should be noted that the focus group methodology is qualitative and exploratory in nature and is not intended to provide data generalizable to a larger population.

Key themes from the focus groups are outlined below:

Maintenance

Maintenance was among the most discussed topics by focus group participants. “Maintenance” was used by some participants as a catch-all term to describe perceived health and safety issues as well as outdated equipment. However, well-maintained, clean, and safe amenities and facilities are core expectations to participants’ park experience.

Many participants felt that WPRD is falling behind on regular maintenance of its existing facilities. While participants expressed desire for more facilities and amenities to meet their needs, their concern for maintenance surpassed their interest in new facility construction or program expansion.

Communications & Transparency

Focus group participants expressed frustration with the current level of communication from WPRD. According to participants, program offerings, sports scheduling, and facility availability are not reliably



Figure 3.2
*Project Advisory Committee Small
Breakout Session*

accessible. Participants noted that finding information often required active research, and that communication regarding changes to scheduled events could use improvement. Participants also noted that communication was lacking for the middle and high school age groups.

Some participants expressed a desire for better signage or wayfinding materials within the parks themselves.

Participants found that transparency from WPRD was critically lacking. They felt that decision making for parks in the community was often without understanding from the public. As a steward of public funds and assets, participants are eager to ensure that their dollars are going to the “highest and best use.”

Programs

WPRD programs were an oft-discussed topic of focus groups. Participants expressed how programs are generally well attended. They have a mostly positive perception of the current offerings and are somewhat mixed on the variety being offered.

Participants noted that programming has several options for young children and adults, but that programming for teens was missing. Some participants also expressed a desire for less sports-centered activities. The teen group stated that they would like more opportunities for sports that require less overall commitment as several existing programs cater to travel team sports, which are sometimes perceived as expensive and exclusive.

Some participants felt that WPRD could improve communication on daily program offerings, while others expressed their need for an improved registration system. Participants also felt that there is not enough space to expand programs.

Staffing

Focus group participants repeatedly brought up the persistence staffing shortages in the WRPD system. Teen group participants also noted a desire for more employment opportunities. Participants also emphasized a need for volunteers, notably for programs. However, they acknowledged that volunteers would not be reliable enough for day-to-day operations.

Amenities and Facilities

Participants were generally satisfied with the “mix” of offerings within the system; however, several spoke about how offerings leaned towards athletics/organized sports. The teen group found that facilities and

amenities are generally geared for little kids or adults and that they would like spaces that would allow them to be more independent.

Residents use available trails around Williston, especially at Spring Lake Park. Some participants are interested in more trails, both for biking and for winter use.

The ARC was one of the most popular topics of discussion in the focus groups. Participants stated they frequently take advantage of the programs and amenities and cited the facility as a strength of WPRD. However, the teen group held different opinions of the ARC, saying they found it boring and its entry cost prohibitively high. Participants also noted a need for a dedicated website for the ARC.

Equity and Inclusion

Equity and inclusion were discussed during the focus group sessions. Participants recognized the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and noted that while there are gaps in this area, WPRD is making progress.

Funding

Focus group participants were asked about their thoughts on WPRD funding mechanisms. The 1% sales tax which supports continued operations of the ARC sunsets in 2032 or when the bond is paid off, whichever occurs first. Participants overwhelmingly supported the continuation of the 1% sales tax to finance WPRD operations, with the added benefit that the cost of sales tax is also borne by people who do not reside in Williston but may use the parks.

Figure 3.3
Adaptive Swim Lesson Program Graduates

Figure 3.4
Davidson Park Splash Pad



FACTS & FIGURES

About the Community-Wide Survey

As part of the Parks & Facilities Plan, WPRD sought input from the public. Various channels, including the WPRD website, social media, and traditional print media, were used to advertise an online survey available from November 20 to December 22, 2023. The survey gathered data about respondents and their households and asked them to respond to several aspects of Williston parks. There were 736 responses to the survey, indicating a significant level of community engagement and interest in shaping the future of parks and recreational spaces.

The results from the Community-Wide Survey are exploratory in nature and are not able to provide data generalizable to the broader community. The non-random method of selection and group sampling do not allow for this kind of generalization. The results, however, do provide further depth and insight to what is important to Williston's citizens.

Participant Engagement

Respondents were asked about their level of engagement with WPRD and their sources of information. Nearly half of respondents (43%) reported not participating in any WPRD-specific engagement or outreach activities over the past year.

Respondents indicated that social media is the most popular channel for learning about offerings from the WPRD, followed by word of mouth and the district website.

Visitation

Respondents were asked several questions about WPRD parks and facilities including how often they visited, and their perceptions of parks and facilities. Respondents reported how often they visit a WPRD park or facility and their relative importance/satisfaction. Respondents' importance scores for each facility were compared to a weighted average.

- 51% of respondents reported visiting a WPRD park or facility at least once per week.
- 78% of respondents visit once per month.
- The most frequented and most important parks/facilities were The ARC, Spring Lake Park, Davidson Park, Raymond Center, Harmon Park, and trails/paths.

Respondents also identified various barriers that were preventing them from visiting more often. Costs, outdoor pests, and several other issues were highlighted by the survey.

Park Importance & Satisfaction

The survey results provide valuable insights into how the WPRD parks are used and the levels of satisfaction among users. The Importance/Satisfaction Rating is a tool that helps public officials understand the most critical aspects of the services they provide. This rating is based on the idea that agencies can maximize overall customer satisfaction by focusing on improvements in areas where satisfaction is relatively low, but the perceived importance is relatively high.

Parks and facilities classified as “High Priority” should receive increased attention, while “Medium Priority” items should maintain their current focus. The highest priority should be given to the Municipal Golf Course, trails/paths, Western Star Complex, Raymond Center, Spring Lake Park, and the Williston Area Recreation Center (ARC). This information is crucial for prioritizing recommendations related to capital, operations and maintenance, and replacement investments.

FOCUS: Equity & affordability are high importance to residents who noted concerns about high fees.

Figure 3.5
Park & Facilities Importance-Satisfaction Rankings



Priority Legend	
Score	Priority
67+	Very High
34 - 66	High
<33	Medium

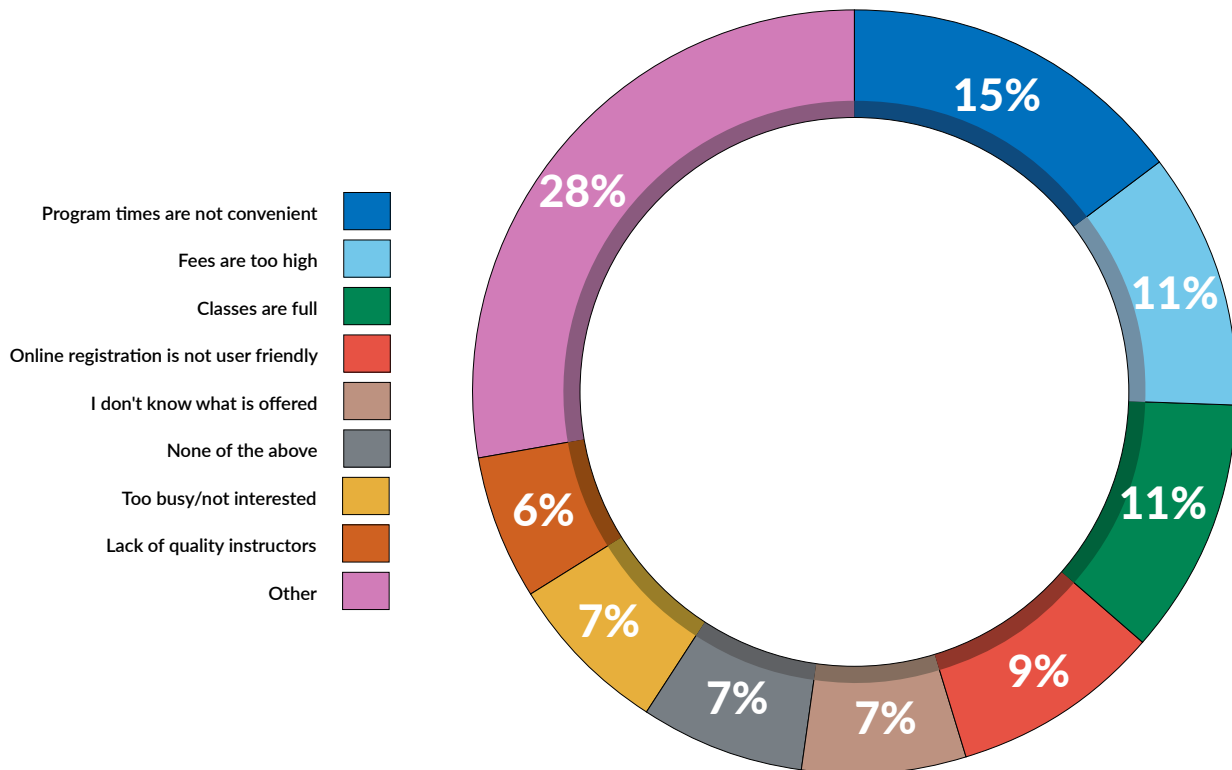
Program Participation & Perception

Most respondents believe that WPRD offers high-quality programs and events, reflecting strong community support. Participation rates are robust over the past year. 81% of respondents reported engaging in programs and events, with 49% participating in 2-3 events and 38% participating in 4 or more. Additionally, 84% rated the overall quality of programs and events as good or excellent.

Respondents indicated barriers to participation included inconvenient timing, high fees, and limited class availability. Improvements in these areas could help mitigate these barriers and further increase participation rates.

Survey respondents generally held favorable attitudes toward the benefits of WPRD’s parks, facilities, and recreation programs or events. They agreed or strongly agreed that these offerings contribute to improved physical health and fitness, enhanced mental well-being and stress reduction, increased desirability of living in Williston, and the preservation of open space and environmental protection. However, there was less agreement regarding the impact of parks on reducing neighborhood crime and keeping children out of trouble, as well as the contribution of parks to increasing property values.

Figure 3.6
Barriers to Program / Event Participation



The community's vision emphasizes accessibility, safety, and innovative features. Priorities include improving maintenance, adding amenities like splash pads, shaded playgrounds, rock climbing walls, and virtual reality arcades. Creating an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere with adequate parking and better accessibility is also crucial. This vision aims to foster a sense of pride and involvement, ensuring that the park system remains a cherished and evolving space for all residents.

Community Needs & Priorities

This section explores the diverse needs and preferences of the community concerning parks and recreation facilities, amenities, programs, and events. Understanding these needs is crucial for aligning WPRD's strategies to better serve the varied interests and desires of residents. The goal is to develop and enhance parks and recreation services to meet the evolving needs of our vibrant community in a context-sensitive manner.

Community needs are assessed and ranked using a tool called the Priority Investment Rating (PIR). The PIR provides decision-makers with an objective measure for evaluating the priority of various parks and recreation investments. The ratings reflect the importance residents place on certain items and the level of unmet needs (partially or not met needs). Since future investment decisions should consider both the level of unmet need and the importance of facilities and programs, the PIR equally weighs each of these components.

The PIR is categorized into three investment priorities:

- **High Priority Areas:** Items with a PIR of at least 100 indicate a relatively high level of unmet need and importance to residents. Improvements in these areas are likely to have the most positive impact on the greatest number of households/residents.
- **Medium Priority Areas:** Items with a PIR between 50 and 99 suggest a medium-to-high level of unmet need or significant importance to residents.
- **Low Priority Areas:** Items with a PIR lower than 50 indicate relatively low levels of unmet need and importance. Improvements may still be warranted if targeting the needs of specialized populations.

Facilities & Amenities

Based on the PIR, the following facilities and amenities were rated as high priorities for investment, listed in order of the survey PIR:

- Outdoor Swimming Pool
- Multi-use Walking & Hiking Trails
- Shaded Play Areas
- Paved Trails
- Restrooms

Several medium priority items could be considered “low-hanging fruit,” or relatively low risk/low-cost investments that could be implemented quicker than other items. It is important to recognize that the implementation of these priorities, including any medium and low priority items, must be done within the context of available District resources. This includes capital improvement funds, long-term operations and maintenance, and staffing. As conditions, needs, and trends rapidly change, priorities must continue to be evaluated.

Programs & Activities

Based on the PIR, the following programs and activities were rated as high priorities for investment, listed in order of the survey PIR:

- Adult Fitness & Wellness Programs
- Free, Drop-In Programs/Classes
- Community Special Events
- Youth Swim Lessons
- Youth Sports & Camps

Similar to the facilities and amenities, it is important to recognize that the implementation of these priorities must be done within the context of available resources. Program and activities, however, must also consider the associated capital investments. The adage that “form follows function,” coined by architect Louis Sullivan, is especially important when considering these programmatic priorities. In many instances, WPRD may already have existing facilities and amenities to support the programmatic needs; however, there are several that may require significant capital investment in new facilities and/or equipment.



Figure 3.9
Puzzle Palooza Winners

Figure 3.10

*Facility & Amenity Priority Importance
Rating (highest possible score is 200)*

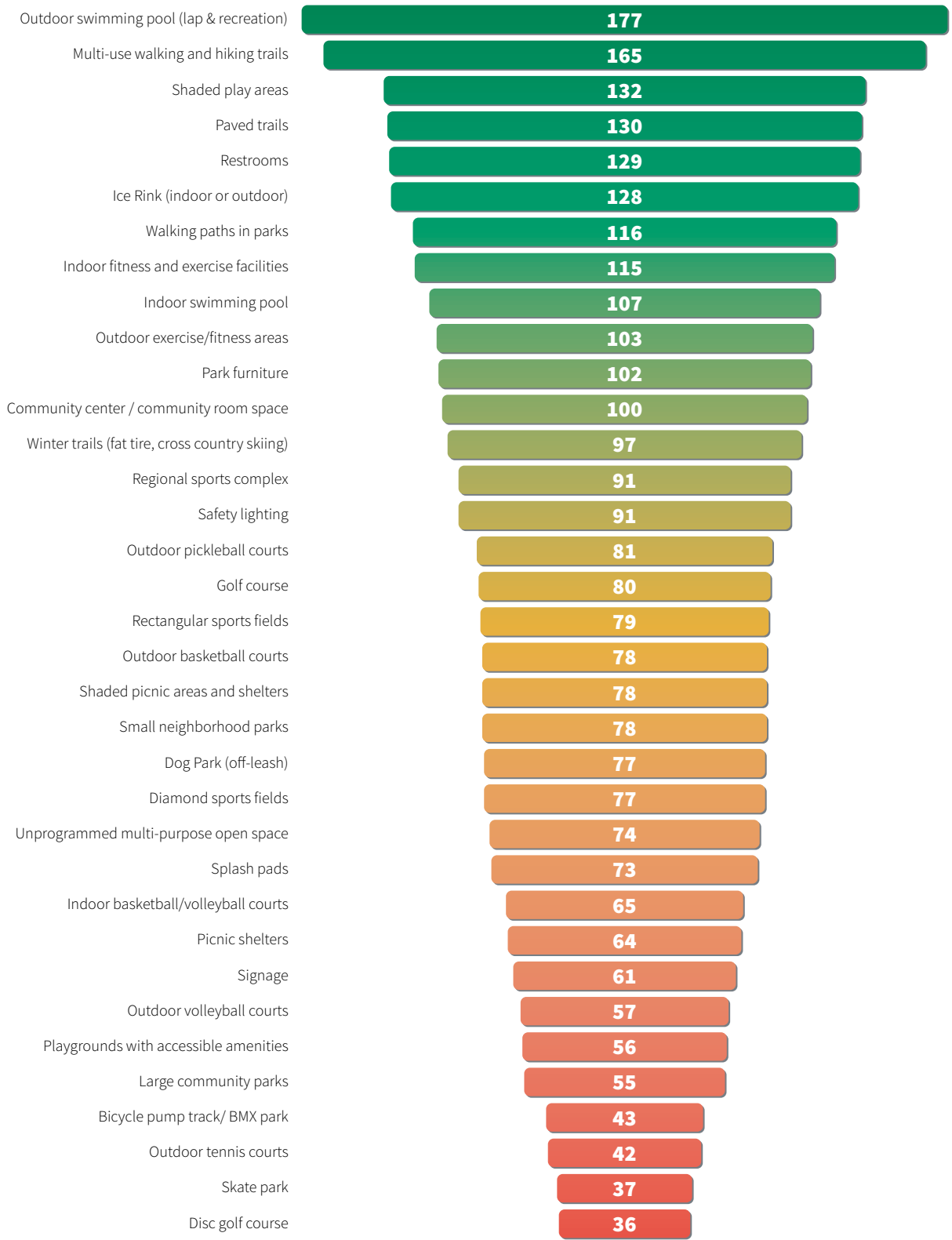


Figure 3.11

Program & Activity Priority Importance Rating (highest possible score is 200)

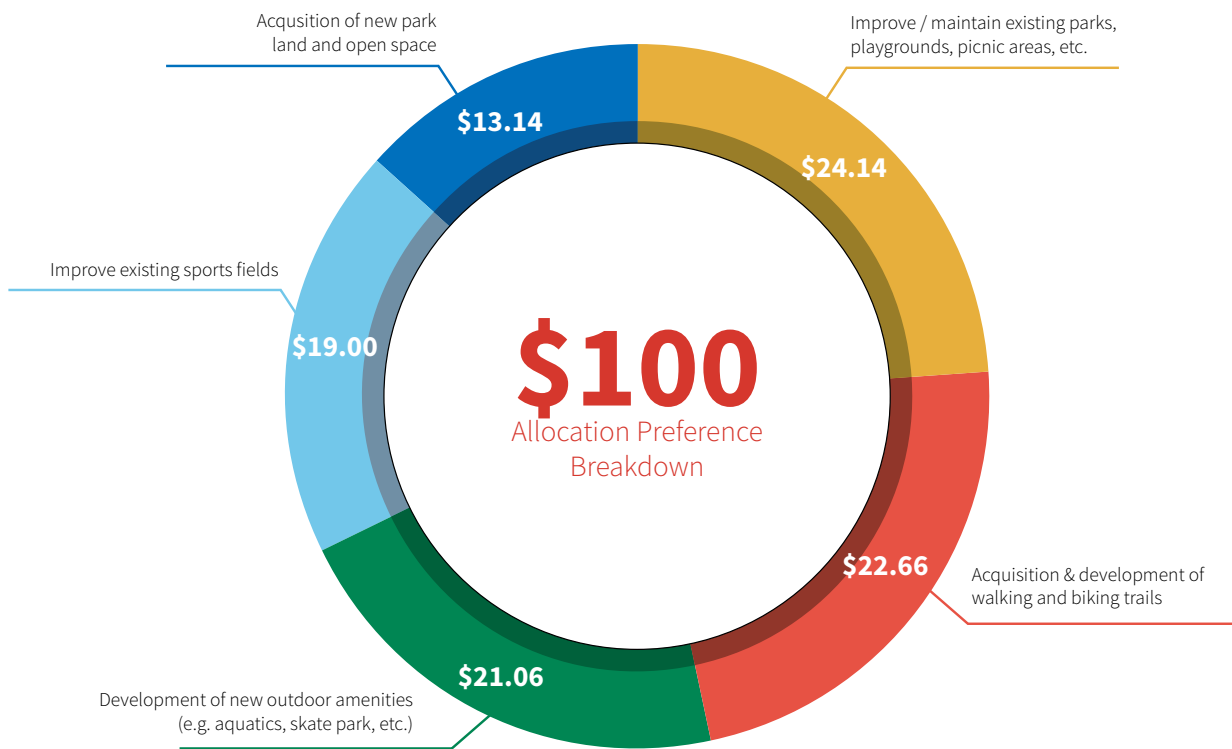


Support for Potential Actions

In the community survey, participants were asked how they would allocate a hypothetical \$100 budget, aiming to identify which areas were deemed most crucial for investment and improvement within the community’s recreation portfolio. Respondents showed a strong preference for enhancing existing parks, playgrounds, and picnic areas, placing less emphasis on acquiring new park land and open space. This suggests a general inclination to reinvest in the current park system rather than developing new assets, indicating satisfaction with the existing mix of facilities and amenities.

With the current 1% sales tax that funds the WPRD set to expire in 2032, participants were also asked about their preferred method of funding the district. The survey revealed strong support for continuing the 1% sales tax, with 88% of respondents favoring its continuance as the primary funding mechanism. When discussing the preferred duration for extending the tax, 47% of respondents supported a 10-year term, 27% favored a 20-year term, and 18% preferred durations of 30 years or more. These responses reflect a desire for shorter terms to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of funds.

Figure 3.12
Allocation preference toward certain actions







4

STRATEGIC VISION & ACTION PLAN

Creating “What Will Be”

STRATEGIC VISION

Several overarching goals provide the guidance for the future of the Williston parks and recreation system. These goals are aligned with the community's need and strategic vision set as part of this planning process.

OVERARCHING GOALS:

1. Stewardship

Responsibly manage, maintain, and operate resources, including facilities, infrastructure, and organization, with a sound, context-sensitive approach.

2. Equity

Promote inclusive, universal access to park facilities, programs, and services, ensuring equity and fairness for all community members.

3. Community Outreach & Communication

Engage the community through meaningful dialogue and effective communication strategies to address shared challenges and opportunities.

4. Experience Enhancement

Aim to improve user experiences in parks, including programs, events, amenities, overall satisfaction, and excellence in management.



Figure 4.1
New Pickleball Court Players

GOAL 1: STEWARDSHIP

1. Keep park facilities and infrastructure in safe and usable condition to provide excellent park experiences for the community.

- **Short-Term:** Develop and implement a Capital & Cyclical Inventory Plan (CCIP) schedule to understand the magnitude and value of the current park system, understand the timing of reinvestment needs, understand the level of risk associated with each asset, identify level of deferred maintenance, and have a consistent and transparent data-driven decision making process.
 - » GPS-locate all existing park assets and conduct condition assessments of each asset.
 - » Bi-annually update the CCIP schedule to ensure data accuracy is current.
- **Short/Mid-Term:** Identify grant (or other external) funding sources for targeted capital improvements associated with lifecycle replacement. Align CIP grants with lifecycle needs.
- **Mid-Term:** Invest in and implement a GIS-based asset management work order system to track assets, schedule maintenance, and guide investment with data-driven information.
 - » This can be completed by the District or with assistance from local or national consultants (or providers). There are several companies that provide “out-of-the-box” solutions for asset/work management systems. ArcGIS Online is an alternative that can be developed by the District or GIS consultants.

2. Develop site master plans for “shovel ready” projects to assist in fundraising efforts and guiding future park development.

- **Short-Term:** Develop site-specific master plans for each developed and undeveloped park property to guide future parkland improvements and investments.
 - » Begin with Cote Park, Western Star Complex, Davidson Park/Raymond Center, and Spring Lake Park rank high on the Importance-Satisfaction Rating.

- » Conduct ongoing community outreach for each master plan to ensure the community remains central in decision making. This could include surveys, listening sessions, design charrettes, etc.
- **Short/Mid-Term:** Adopt NRPA Park Classifications to guide park development and appropriate amenities.
 - » Develop District facility planning and design guidelines/standards for use internally and by consultants to maintain a consistent design pattern language that visually brands Williston Parks & Recreation District.

3. Utilize park professionals to help facilitate and implement master plan recommendations effectively.

- **Mid-Term:** Develop a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for an on-call park planning and/or landscape architecture services to assist with the implementation of master plan recommendations.
 - » Assistance may include CCIP schedule development, GIS database development/management, ongoing operations, maintenance, and programmatic assessments, site-specific master planning, etc.

4. Develop & implement tool/strategies to sustainably manage the District's limited resources.

- **Short-Term:** Develop a “Go/No-Go” process for acceptable parkland (dedicated, donated, etc.) and community-initiated special interest projects.
 - » Require up-to-date feasibility studies, business plans, and/or pro formas for such projects from non-District entities prior to accepting them.
 - » Prior to accepting any “special projects,” require an endowment for long-term operations and maintenance.
- **Short-Term:** Conduct a feasibility study and business plan for the known Energy Center ice rink special project. The study should help identify the optimal size, amenities, location, programming, fees, revenue and operating model, concessions, rentals, operating hours, and staffing requirements.
 - » Mid/Long-Term: implement the action(s) based on results of the feasibility studies. These may be implemented within existing park properties or in the future as standalone facilities.



Figure 4.2
Enjoying the Williston ARC's FlowRider

5. Refine and seek new partnerships to broaden the range of recreation opportunities and service offerings and enrich the overall park and recreation experience.

- **Mid-Term:** Develop a formal partnership policy that ensures fair and equitable relationships. Successful partnerships are borne of clear responsibilities and mutual benefits.
- **Mid-Term:** Develop a guide to partnership agreements to help partners navigate the partnership process.
- **Mid-Term:** Develop a volunteer program that strengthens advocacy and reduces operational expenditures.
- **Long-Term:** Track and regularly share information and measurable outcomes of partnership agreements.
- **Long-Term:** Assign a staff member to act as a liaison for each partner to improve communications and collaboration.

6. Formalize maintenance activities to minimize reactive maintenance and provide formalized data for decision making.

- **Mid-Term:** Conduct a comprehensive operations and maintenance assessment, as well as a comprehensive program assessment.
- **Mid-Term:** Develop a formalized maintenance management that details the outcomes of park and trail maintenance work and the maintenance standards (tasks and frequencies) that are necessary to achieve the outcomes.
- **Mid-Term:** Implement a GIS-based asset management work order system to track assets, schedule maintenance, and guide investment with data-driven information.

Figure 4.3

Girl Scout Service Project

Figure 4.4

Davidson Park



- » This can be completed by the District or with assistance from local or national consultants (or providers). There are several companies that can provide “out-of-the-box” solutions for asset/work management systems. ArcGIS Online is an alternative that can be developed by the District or GIS consultants.
- » The work order system should be used to track maintenance requirements that are tied to weekly and monthly work orders.
- » This will help WPRD understand the “actual cost” for work being performed.

7. Increase annual park maintenance funding and staffing for improved management and maintenance of the park system.

- **Mid-Term:** Allocate an additional \$165,000 annually for improved management and maintenance of parks over the next 3 to 5 years. Of this funding, ±67% (\$109,880) should be allocated for the addition of 3.91 FTEs, or 6,890 regular part-time and seasonal staff labor additional hours required annually.

GOAL 2: EQUITY

1. Support and expand walkability within the park system.

- **Short-Term:** Develop park-specific design standards for pathways and trails based on location and type of trail (e.g. standard paved multiuse path, gravel trail section, etc.).
 - » Ensure the typical cross-section provides adequate space for people to walk side-by-side comfortably.

Figure 4.5
Kids snacking in the park



- **Short-Term:** Add comfort amenities, such as benches, water fountains, distance markers, small shade structures, etc. along pathways to encourage walking and increase comfort for all users.
- **Mid-Term:** Develop more (and smaller) pathways/trail loops in the Neighborhood and Community Parks to provide more options, as well as decrease distances for those with mobility impairments.
- **Mid/Long-Term:** Add fitness stations along suitable trails and walking routes in parks to encourage more use.
- **Long-Term:** Develop an updated and consistent wayfinding system.

2. Support and expand community active transportation to increase access to parks and recreation.

- **Mid/Long-Term:** The survey results highlight a vital need for safe connectivity throughout the community (and to the parks themselves), and the District plays a key role in achieving this. However, addressing this need effectively requires collaboration efforts from various other organizations, each bringing unique and essential contributions to the table. The district should collaborate, partner, lead, and/or support a city-wide Active Transportation Plan that addresses city-wide system gaps, sidewalks, on-street facilities, and trails that connect parks to neighborhoods, schools, transit, and other facilities.
 - » Partners could include Williams County Parks, City of Williston (City Planning), City Engineering, and advocacy/interest group(s).
- **Mid/Long-Term:** Continue coordination with City Planning to require trails as part of the development process.
- **Long-Term:** Coordinate with the City of Williston to enhance pedestrian and bicycle connects to parks by providing curb ramps and crosswalks (as appropriate).
- **Long-Term:** Identify opportunities to acquire/dedicate open space for trails through regional cooperation, grants, and private development review(s).
 - » Investigate the use of utility easements as possible connection areas.



Figure 4.6

Playground without accessible route to access

- » Consider using trail easements on private as a possible approach for connectivity.

3. Provide safe and inviting public spaces that support positive experiences for all users.

- **Short-Term:** Continue developing and implementing adaptive programming as part of the park program offerings.
- **Short-Term:** Construct walkways to (and around) activity areas, such as shelters and playgrounds to increase accessibility for mobility impaired individuals.
 - » While many of WPRD's playgrounds feature accessible and inclusive experience, nearly all of them have no accessible route to the playground itself.
- **Mid-Term:** Prioritize accessible and inclusive play structures and playground areas when upgrading and replacing existing amenities.
 - » Consider play features beyond mobility impairments to include sensory-specific play with variety and different levels of challenge.

Figure 4.7
Multi-modal transportation provides safe access to parks and open spaces



- **Mid-Term:** Adopt and implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques when updating facilities and amenities, as well as incorporating them into park design/master planning, to help address negative interactions within the parks and increase safety.
- **Long-Term:** Design and develop parks and recreation facilities for universal access and multi-generational use to encourage participation and inclusive play of residents of all ages and abilities.

4. Balance the park system offerings to ensure equitable access to recreational amenities and facilities.

- **Short-Term:** Develop a “parkland dedication worksheet” to assist and guide developers on the type(s) of land dedication the district needs, based on the level of service assessment.
- **Mid/Long-Term:** Plan for and address current and projected level of service gaps in the system’s offerings.
 - » Park Land: Specifically target a Community-type park property in southwest Williston and Neighborhood-type park properties in north Williston.
 - » Outdoor amenities needs include youth diamond fields, picnic shelters, rectangular fields, multi-use tennis/pickleball courts, playgrounds, dog parks, and volleyball courts.
 - » Indoor amenity needs include an ice rink.
- **Long-Term:** Strive to provide parkland within 1/2-mile (10 minute walk) of residents in neighborhoods zoned for single- and multi-family residential.
 - » Focus efforts and identify properties for acquisition (fee, dedication, donation, etc.) in the north and southwest areas of Williston.

Figure 4.8

Indoor ice rink is a high need for the community



GOAL 3: COMMUNITY OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS

- 1. Continuing improving ongoing engagement, marketing, and communication practices using a comprehensive approach and multiple channels to reach more community members in Williston.**
 - **Mid-Term:** Develop a formal marketing plan and program that aligns with how residents prefer to receive information from the District, and identify/create targeted strategies for each market segment.

- 2. Ensure marketing and communication materials are inclusive and accessible to your audiences.**
 - **Short-Term:** Use relatable language in all material using a consistent, branded “voice” or “tone.”
 - **Mid-Term:** Develop materials for English as Second Language (ESL), visually-impaired, and auditory impaired individuals.

- 3. Leverage communications to improve transparency and build public trust and support.**
 - **Short-Term:** Further develop the existing transparency web page to communicate information about park improvements, new initiatives, budgeting, and decision marking. Make this web page easier to find on the website.
 - **Mid-Term:** Develop an interactive web page using GIS Online, PowerBI, or similar. Examples include:
 - » [Minneapolis Parks & Recreation Board Capital Improvement Dashboard](#)
 - » [City of Bloomington \(MN\) Parks & Recreation Capital Improvement Projects](#)
 - » [Bend \(OR\) Parks & Recreation District](#)
 - » [Arkansas State Parks Project Information Management System \(PIMS\)](#)

- 4. Conduct a formal, statistically valid community needs assessment in 5 years.**
 - **Mid-Term:** Schedule and plan to conduct a statistically valid Community Needs Assessment to continue guiding and understanding the rapidly changing needs, trends, and priorities of the community.

- » Statistically valid surveys give a more accurate and reliable picture of a population because they use careful sampling methods to represent all groups fairly. This reduces bias and ensures the results are trustworthy and useful for making important decisions.
- » Consider making this a permanent action on a 5-year cycle.

GOAL 4: EXPERIENCE ENHANCEMENT

1. Satisfy community need through investment in signature park amenities and facilities.

- **Short-Term:** Conduct a feasibility study for the proposed Energy Center ice rink project to ensure WPRD fully understands the requirements and implications associated with adding the facility to the park system.
 - » Identify opportunities for multi-use facilities that can consolidate park operations while meeting community needs.
- **Short/Mid-Term:** Conduct additional feasibility studies for 1) an indoor recreation facility that specifically provides an indoor playground and indoor turf and 2) the expansion of the Municipal Golf Course to an 18-hole course with a pro shop, club house, and driving range.
 - » The studies should help identify the optimal size(s), amenities, services, location(s), fees, revenues and operating model, concession(s), rental(s), operating hours, staffing requirements, and impact to the larger park system.
 - » Long-Term: Implement action(s) based on the results of the feasibility studies.
- **Mid-Term:** Update the Cote Park site master plan and complete the development of the park.
- **Mid/Long-Term:** Evaluate the benefit and/or feasibility of renovating or repurposing the Raymond Center to better meet community needs.

2. Prioritize core program service areas to more effectively manage and execute programs, events, and activities.

- **Short-Term:** Continue providing and enhancing services in the identified core program areas.

- **Short-Term:** Annually evaluate program offerings within each core program area (and the core program areas themselves) to ensure they align with changing community trends, demographics, and needs.
- **Mid-Term:** Conduct a comprehensive Recreation Program Assessment to better understand how to align recreation programming with community needs and interests, as well as focus limited resources towards those areas that are most important to the community. A comprehensive assessment should include:
 - » An Age Segment Analysis to understand how well the program offerings meet current and future demographics.
 - » Program Lifecycle Analysis to monitor and track all programs and align management strategies based on their lifecycle stage.
 - » Review and set pricing strategies and cost recovery goals to sustainably operate the programs within the confines of available resources.

3. Implement assessment and evaluation tools to maximize customer satisfaction and provide high-quality recreational experiences.

- **Short-Term:** Develop a program assessment and evaluation tool.
- **Short-Term:** Develop a tool to track customer satisfaction and retention.
- **Mid-Term:** Track and evaluate the Williston area service providers to identify and avoid market competition and duplication of services, evaluate whether a program or service should be offered by the district, and assess regional pricing.

4. Achieve CAPRA accreditation to demonstrate the District's commitment to excellence, enhance public trust, and validate the quality of its services by adhering to national park and recreation standards.

- **Short-Term:** Development and document information for the following fundamental standards required for accreditation:
 - » Agency Authority, Role & Responsibility: Agency Goals & Objectives and documentation for the Agency Relationship Standard.
 - » Planning: Update and/or creation of various planning documents, including the strategic plan, ADA transition plan, historical/cultural resource management plans, site master plans, and feasibility studies
 - » Organization & Administration: Internal communication processes and public information policy, specifically, a community relations plan and formal marketing plan.
 - » Human Resources: Job analyses for job descriptions and volunteer management.
 - » Financial Management: Primary focus should be on the finalization of the supporting documentation for most of the Financial Management Standards.
 - » Programs & Services Management: Primary focus should be on the development and addition of evidentiary support for most of the standards.
 - » Facility & Land Use Management: Documentation for this standard needs to be fully developed.
 - » Public Safety, Law Enforcement, and Security: Full development of documentation for this standard.
 - » Risk Management: Full development of documentation for this standard.
 - » Evaluation, Assessment & Research: Finalize and put into practice the processes and procedures for continuous evaluation and improvement.





5

FUNDING STRATEGIES

Building Blocks for Funding

PATHS FOR PARK SYSTEMS

Park and recreation agencies across the United States today have learned to manage revenue options to support parks and recreation, especially with the limited availability of tax dollars. Local park and recreation systems can no longer rely on taxes as their sole revenue option and have developed new revenue sources/options to help support capital and operational needs.

A growing number of localities have developed policies on pricing of services, cost recovery rates, and partnership agreements for programs and facilities provided to the community. They also have developed strong partnerships that are fair and equitable in the delivery of services based on who receives the service, for what purpose, for what benefit, and for what costs. In addition, agencies have learned to use parks and recreation facilities, amenities, programs, and events, to generate revenue and support economic development. Localities have also learned to recognize that people will drive to their community for quality recreation facilities such as sports complexes, pools, and tournaments, if the facilities/events are professionally managed and properly marketed.

To continue to build and maintain the Williston Park and Recreation District system, funding should be pursued for capital investments, such as those presented in this plan. The following section provides fundings strategies for the district to consider for improving its parks and recreation system.

A detailed listing of available grants and funding sources through specific foundations and corporations can be found in the Appendix 3.

HIGHLY IMPLEMENTABLE FUNDING STRATEGIES

The following funding strategies are currently utilized by the District and should be continued as part of implementing the master plan.

Sales Tax

Dedicated tax on goods and services is the primary funding source for the district.

Grants

Grant funds are used by many agencies to enhance parks and the availability of grants continues to grow annually. The district should continue to pursue grant opportunities. Matching dollars are required for most federal grants and many state grants.

General Obligation Bond

A general obligation bond is a municipal bond secured by a taxing authority such as the District to improve public assets that benefits the municipal agency involved that oversees the Parks and Recreation facilities. General Obligation Bonds should be considered for park and recreation facility projects, such as updates to a community or regional park, trails, recreation centers, aquatic centers, or a sports complex. Improvements to parks should also be covered by these funding sources because there are little operational revenues associated with these parks to draw from, and some of the district parks need upgrades and renovations. These parks help frame the district image and benefit a wide age segment of users and updating these parks will benefit the community as a whole and stabilize neighborhoods and other areas of the district. According to Trust for Public Land research, over the last 10 years across the United States over 90% of park and recreation bond issues have passed in cities when offered to the community to vote to support the community needs for Parks and Recreation.

Capital Fees

Fees added to the cost of revenue producing facilities such as golf courses, pools, recreation centers, hospitality centers, campgrounds, and sports complexes and are lifted off after the improvement is paid off.

Developer Cash-in-Lieu of meeting the Open Space Requirement

Ordinances requiring the dedication of open space within developments to meet the park and recreation needs of the new residents often have provisions allowing cash contribution to substitute for the land requirement.

User Fees

User fees are fees paid by a user of recreational facilities or programs to offset the costs of services provided by the District in operating a park, a recreation facility or in delivering programs and services. A perception of “value” must be instilled in the community by the Parks and Recreation staff for what benefits the district is providing to the user. As the Department continues to develop new programs, all future fees can be charged based on cost recovery goals developed in a future Pricing Policy. The fees for the parks and/or core recreation services are based on the level of exclusivity the user receives compared to the general taxpayer. It is recommended that user fees for programs be charged at market rate for services to create value and operational revenue for the Department. For services where the District feels that they cannot move forward on adequate user fees to obtain the required cost recovery, consideration of contracting with a not-for-profit and/or private company to help offset service costs can be pursued. This would save the district dollars in their operational budgets while still ensuring the community receives the service to keep the quality of life at a high standard.

Permit Fees

This fee is incorporated for exclusive reservations for picnic shelters, sports fields, special events that are provided by the district, and competition tournaments held in the district by other organizations who make a profit off District owned facilities. Permit fees include a base fee for all direct and indirect costs for the district to provide the space on an exclusive basis plus a percentage of the gross for major special events and tournaments held on District owned permitted facilities. Alcohol permits can be explored and if determined worthwhile, added to these permits would generate more dollars for the district for these special use areas. These dollars are applied to the Recreation and Park Revolving Fund if developed to help support park improvements and operations.

Business/Resident Donations

Individual donations from corporations and private donations are accepted to support specific improvements and amenities.

Concessions

Concessions are leased out to a private operator for a percentage of gross profits, typically, 15%-18%.

Field Permits

The District issues recreational use permits for activities, practice, or games. Permits can cover the operational cost of each field and management costs. If a private operator desires to rent the site for a sporting tournament for private gain, the district can provide a permit fee plus a percentage of gross from the event for the exclusive use of the fields.

Williston Parks and Recreation Foundation

The utilization of the Parks Foundation is a joint-development funding source with the district. The foundation operates as a non-profit organization, working on behalf of the public agency to raise needed dollars to support its vision and operational needs.

- The dollars that are raised by the foundation are tax-exempt. Foundations promote specific causes, activities, or issues that the District needs to address. They offer a variety of means to fund capital projects, including capital campaigns, gifts catalogs, fundraisers, endowments, sales of park-related memorabilia, etc.
- Private donations are received in the form of cash, securities, land, facilities, recreation equipment, art, or in-kind services.

Private Foundation Funds

Nonprofit community foundations are strong sources of support for the district and are pursued for specific park and recreation amenities.

Food and Equipment Sponsors

Official drink and food sponsors are utilized for the district. Official drink and food sponsors pay the district a set percentage of gross. Typically, this is 15%-20% of costs for being the official product and receiving exclusive pouring and food rights to the complex. Likewise, official equipment sponsors work well for trucks, mowers, and tractors.

Advertising Revenue

Advertising revenue comes from the sale of ads on banners in the parks. The advertising can include amenities such as trashcans, trail markers, tee boxes, dasher boards, scorecards, and restrooms.

FUNDING STRATEGY OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSIDERATION

- **Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grants:** The Federal Lands Access Program (Access Program) was established in 23 U.S.C. 204 to improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within Federal lands. The Access Program supplements State and local resources for public roads, transit systems, and other transportation facilities, with an emphasis on high-use recreation sites and economic generators.
- **Federal Housing Grants:** These can help support parks near federal housing areas and should be pursued if appropriate. Several communities have used HUD funds to develop greenways, including the Boscobel Heights’ “Safe Walk” Greenway in Nashville, Tennessee.
- **Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention (Small Watersheds) Grants:** The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) provides funding to state and local agencies or nonprofit organizations authorized to conduct, maintain, and operate watershed improvements involving less than 250,000 acres. The NRCS provides financial and technical assistance to eligible projects to improve watershed protection, flood prevention, sedimentation control, public water-based fish and wildlife enhancements, and recreation planning. The NRCS requires a 50-percent local match for public recreation, and fish and wildlife projects.
- **Tax Abatement:** The governing body of a political subdivision may grant a current or prospective abatement, by contract or otherwise, of the taxes imposed by the political subdivision on a parcel of property, which may include personal property and machinery, or defer the payments of the taxes and abate the interest and penalty that otherwise would apply, if:
 - It expects the benefits to the political subdivision of the proposed abatement agreement to at least equal the costs to the political subdivision of the proposed agreement or intends the abatement to phase in a property tax increase, and

- It finds that doing so is in the public interest because it will:
 - » Increase or preserve tax base.
 - » Provide employment opportunities in the political subdivision.
 - » Provide or help acquire or construct public facilities.
 - » Help redevelop or renew blighted areas.
 - » Help provide access to services for residents of the political subdivision.
 - » Finance or provide public infrastructure.
 - » Phase in a property tax increase on the parcel resulting from an increase of 50 percent or more in one year on the estimated market value of the parcel, other than increase attributable to improvement of the parcel; or
 - » Stabilize the tax base through equalization of property tax revenues for a specified period with respect to a taxpayer whose real and personal property is subject to valuation.
- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF Funds):** The concept behind the tax increment financing is that taxes in a designated area are frozen and the redevelopment that occurs in the blighted, conservation, or economic development area will increase the assessed valuation of the property and generate new property tax revenues. The increase can be used on an annual basis to retire revenue bonds issued to finance redevelopment costs. A great deal of development is required to generate sufficient revenues for a TIF to be a viable option.



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