

**City of Kingston  
Parks and Recreation  
Assessment Report**

This page left blank intentionally

## Table of Contents

Purpose.....	5
Introduction.....	7
Methods.....	8
<b>Chapter 1 – Organization, Administration, Plan.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Organization Structure .....	9
Personnel.....	13
Mission and Goals.....	20
Budget .....	21
Recommendations.....	23
<b>Chapter 2 – Land Development, Facility, Open Space, Playgrounds .....</b>	<b>27</b>
City of Kingston Overview .....	28
Land and Facility Inventory.....	29
Kingston Community Center .....	30
Kingston Outdoor Pool .....	31
Tennis Courts at Community Center .....	32
City Park .....	33
Playground Areas at City Park.....	34
Tennis Courts at City Park.....	36
Gravel Pit Park.....	37
58 Landing .....	38
Fort South West Point Sports Complex .....	39
Fort South West Point.....	41
Betty Brown Memorial Walking Trail.....	42
Gertrude Porter Park .....	43
Playground at Gertrude Porter Park.....	44
Ladd Park .....	45
Skate Park at Ladd Park .....	46
Undeveloped Parks – Land Between Bridges.....	47
Recommendations.....	48
<b>Chapter 3 – Recreation Programming.....</b>	<b>51</b>
Recreation Programming Overview .....	52
Program Needs.....	53
Recommendations.....	60
<b>Chapter 4 – Greenways and Trails.....</b>	<b>63</b>
Greenways and Trails Overview.....	64
Recommendations.....	66
Conclusion .....	68
<b>Chapter 5 – Public Input.....</b>	<b>69</b>
Public Input.....	70
Assessment Conclusion .....	76
Appendices.....	79

This page left blank intentionally

## *PURPOSE OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARK AND RECREATION ASSESSMENT*

The purpose of this Park and Recreation Assessment is to evaluate the operations, maintenance and facilities of the City of Kingston (here after referred to as "City") Parks and Recreation Department (here after referred to as "Department") with the goal of providing recommendations for the improved delivery of parks and recreation services within the city. While the assessment included a strategic planning workshop, it is not intended as a comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan, or to be a replacement for the preparation of a Master Plan covering the city's park and recreation operations, programs and facilities.

A Recreation Assessment is one of several services offered by the Parks and Recreation Technical Advisory Service (PARTAS), Division of Recreation Educational Services (here after referred to as "RES"), Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (here after referred to as "TDEC"), located in Nashville, Tennessee. PARTAS was created by the Tennessee Legislature in 1978 for the purpose of assisting county and municipal governments in the establishment and operation of parks and recreation programs by providing technical assistance and other advice.

The assessment, as a general evaluation, examines past and current agency operations and plans with the goal of providing the City of Kingston Parks and Recreation Department with the information for decision making on how to plan for the future and improve current operations. This involves observation of agency structure, organization and administration; an inventory of facility/park conditions and needs; and current recreation programs and future needs. The following components/areas were examined:

- Organization, Administration and Planning
- Open Space, Land Development and Facilities
- Recreation Programming
- Greenways and Trails
- Public Input

A team of qualified specialists in the field of parks and recreation, planning, and greenway and trails has based the recommendations in this report on their extensive experience, professional judgment and knowledge of current park and recreation practices and trends. Observations and recommendations from the team reflect the adoption and incorporation of accepted national standards and philosophy in providing parks and recreation services in a community setting. The recommendations in the assessment are meant to:

- Enhance the operations of the Department
- Enhance the Department's short and long range planning
- Enhance the future development of recreation lands, facilities, and open space
- Enhance the quality of the Department's recreation programs
- Enhance decision making in the areas of administration, land and facility development, and programming.

The City has the right to accept and implement these recommendations, or reject them if they seem inappropriate for the future needs of the Department.

## INTRODUCTION

Park and Recreation departments, across the State of Tennessee, have been proven to be a very important component of the quality of life standards for a community. The identity and positive image of a community is strongly linked to a well developed, high quality of parks and recreation. This quality provides one of the most lasting impressions to the citizens, as well as visitors and business leaders coming to the community. In a world of rapid change, parks and recreation departments provide a sense of place and shared values to citizens through opportunities to socialize, relax, enjoy nature, and to just have FUN. Some of the most important memories families make occur at parks and recreation facilities or while participating in parks and recreation programs. These are the reasons counties and municipalities in Tennessee start and maintain park and recreation delivery systems.

The State of Tennessee recognizes, through legislation and funding programs, that recreation services are a primary responsibility for local government and represent a legitimate and essential function of government. Local government is best suited to provide park and recreation services for the following reasons:

1. The job of providing a comprehensive parks and recreation delivery system for most communities is too large and too diverse for a private or voluntary organization.
2. Local government insures permanent care and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities and this should insure for the citizens the continuity of a basic level of service for parks and recreation.
3. Recreation plays an important role in the local economy and tourism development which positively impacts sales tax revenue, hotel occupancy, and property taxes. The effective development, operation, and maintenance of recreation facilities and programs have a lasting positive effect on property values, industrial recruitment, and family relocation.
4. Local government offers custodial care of important natural resources through operating parks. This allows all citizens fair access and use which cannot be guaranteed through private or voluntary agencies.
5. People who participate in park and recreation activities have an improved level of personal health and physical fitness.

The intent of the City of Kingston Recreation Assessment is two-fold:

1. to offer an outside view of the total operations of the Department as it is currently functioning:
2. to present ideas for future opportunities in the area of parks and recreation to meet the needs of the entire populace of the City.

This report is intended to provide guidance and direction to the City Mayor, City Council and the Department through recommendations in each area of operation. It is ultimately the responsibility of the City to take the initiative in implementing these recommendations by developing a sound planning process for the City concerning the Parks and Recreation Department.

## *METHODS*

The recommendations in this assessment were based on information gathered from meetings with recreation staff, city officials, citizen input, on-site inspections of the Parks and Recreation Department's parks, facilities and programs data provided by the Department to the assessment team.

Other reports and/or references that were used include the 2020 Tennessee State Recreation Plan, the 2008 Tennessee Greenways and Trails Plan, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Recreation and Parks Open Space Standards and Guidelines, the ADA Guidelines for Parks and Recreation Facilities, and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) recommendations for Playground Safety.

A recommendations checklist, summarizing all of the recommendations made in each section, is provided at the end of each chapter. This will assist the Department with tracking and implementing the recommendations as part of an annual goals and objectives process.

Tables and Examples, where applicable, are included in the appendices to help illustrate specific recommendations.

**The assessment team was comprised of the following Recreation Educational Services (RES) staff of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC).**

**Mrs. Jeni Brinkman, RES Assistant Director**

**Mrs. April H. Johnson, CPRP, CPSI, PARTAS Manager/Consultant**

**Mr. Mackel Reagan, CPRP, CPSI, PARTAS Consultant**

Mr. Rick Ross, Parks and Recreation Department Director, was the primary RES contact and provided assistance for the strategic planning workshop and the on-site inspections of the park system. The RES staff appreciates the help of the City, the staff and citizens provided in the strategic planning workshop and the on-site portion of this assessment.

**CHAPTER 1**  
**ORGANIZATION,**  
**ADMINISTRATION,**  
**AND PLANNING**

## ORGANIZATION, ADMINISTRATION AND PLANNING

The City of Kingston Parks and Recreation Department is a full-time parks and recreation department serving the residents of the city. The population of Kingston was 5,264 according to the 2000 census and the area has grown to an estimated 5,607 in 2008. The offices of the Department are located at the Kingston Community Center at 201 Patton Ferry Road.

Mr. Rick Ross has been the Director of Parks and Recreation since 2007. He oversees all recreation services and park facilities within the city and presently has a staff of 7 full-time employees and 11 part-time employees. The challenge for Kingston is where to proceed from their current position and meet the challenges and demands of the future. ***The main issues facing the Department are aging facilities, limited budget for capital improvements and staffing.***

Mr. Ross presently works with a twelve member Citizen Advisory Board and answers directly to the City Manager. The Department and the Board realize that planning is crucial as they try to keep pace with the demands on facilities and services and responsibility to help attract industry, tourism and provide quality recreation services and programs to their citizens. Mr. Ross and his staff are anxious to move forward in creating a plan for the future provision of recreation facilities and programs to the community. The Department has no formal Master Plan that charts future recreation development or shows potential land/open space set aside and dedicated to parks, recreation and/or conservation.

## Organizational Structure

- Observations

1. Organizational configuration

The Department has an organizational chart that establishes supervisory relationships, and a chain of command. Our observations were that the chain of command should be adjusted for a better span of control and delegation of authority. Span of control refers to the number of people the Director can effectively supervise. To achieve effective direction, coordination, and control, the number of employees under the immediate control of the supervisor should not be excessive. The current chain of command has all employees reporting directly to the Director. Typically, at higher levels of authority there are fewer employees in the span of control. The addition of employees increases the difficulty of command and decreases the efficiency of both the supervisors and their employees. ***In order for the City of Kingston to grow as a department and offer more parks and recreation services, the position of Deputy Director should be created and filled to assist the Director in management of the Department.*** Delegating the authority will benefit the department in many ways:

- ✓ Increase the time the Director has to devote to other tasks and responsibilities.
- ✓ Improve the efficiency of the Department.
- ✓ Improve employee morale and self-esteem.
- ✓ Create a better team approach.

***In addition, the Assistant to the Director responsibilities reflect those more of an Office Manager position and the title should be changed.*** This will prevent confusion and establish clear job responsibilities. The current salary, \$35,360.00, is higher than the average for the position: \$28,413.

2. Department Functions

One of the very positive aspects of the Department is the team attitude of the staff in their work with each other to accomplish the goals set before them. Each staff member exhibits the willingness to pitch in and help when needed even outside the job responsibilities associated with their individual positions. There are job descriptions for each position to provide direction to the department staff; however, these should be more detailed.

The structure of an organization affects the behavior and function of individuals and groups and, thus, the effectiveness of the organization. The Department needs structure,

as a method for organizing the people and standardizing the practices, so that a shared or common purpose can be efficiently and effectively achieved. All individuals in an organization must know their places and what they are expected to do. Only when people understand their roles and responsibilities are they able to optimally focus their energies on a group goal. Essentially, structure is the way an organization identifies and groups positions and how those positions relate to each other.

***The Director and Advisory Board must conduct an evaluation of the present operations of the staff, programs, and facilities.*** The evaluation will provide vital information on the functionality of the development at the present time and identify current weaknesses that will assist in the creation of a functional plan for the department that clarifies the formal lines of internal communications and positions. This information will become very important if any expansion of facilities, programs and responsibilities is considered in the future for the Department. Kingston needs to undertake this task first. This evaluation process will benefit the Department in the future by identifying what responsibilities and functions of the Department need additional staffing to achieve future goals.

## Personnel

- **Observations:**

1. Staff Morale

The staff personified a high level of staff morale, a professional relationship with the Director and a commitment to improving the system as a whole in the future. The Department did not have a personnel and staffing plan and must develop one for the future to maintain the high level of staff morale and satisfaction that the Department currently exhibits. It would start with interviewing all employees as to their job duties and their work schedules. This is typically seen as conducting a job analysis to examine the tasks and sequences of tasks necessary to perform a job and the areas of knowledge and skills required for the job. The process would identify whether all employees are given the same consistent treatment and if not, a mechanism for correcting the problem.

2. Amount of staff

Kingston Parks and Recreation Department provides extensive programming for its citizens with an emphasis on special events. Special events are a great tool to promote the community, foster community spirit, celebrate traditions, and extend recreation opportunities in the community. It is evident by past participation in events such as the July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration, the community truly values this service. Special events require careful and extensive planning to be successful. The larger the event, the more detailed planning it takes. More information about special event planning is provided in the Recreation Programs section. ***In order to keep the current special events growing as well as sustaining current programs and facilities, the Department should expand its staffing base.*** We have identified that Kingston Parks and Recreation is understaffed and stretched beyond functioning capabilities. ***There is a need for additional seasonal summer employee and additional maintenance employees in addition to the recommended Deputy Director position.*** Coupled with the large special events, the Department now hosts several baseball tournaments and summer camp programs.

3. Job Descriptions

Job descriptions must include essential job responsibilities and functions and not exist as a mere listing of every possible task performed by the Department. The current individual job descriptions include the overall job tasks of each position, but these are not integrated into the overall functioning of the Department. It appears there are job descriptions for some positions such as custodian and grounds maintenance but only a brief description for the Director, Assistant to the Director and Program Coordinator. Each employee

should have a specific job description that addresses the responsibilities to that position and should not have areas of duplication and overrun into another position.

A job description is essential to an organization for good recruitment of qualified employees, educating the employee on job functions and responsibilities, performance evaluation of employees, ADA compliance and workplace safety, and setting standards (physical and mental) that an employee must meet to keep the position. The job descriptions supplied by the Department included the nature and examples of work and the desirable education and experience but did not include the physical and environmental requirements for the positions. It is important to list lifting capacity, if the job requires much standing and mobility, loud noises, cold temperatures, heat, dust, or contact with infectious diseases or blood borne pathogens. A prospective employee must know exactly what the job entails physically and mentally. Examples of job descriptions are available in **Appendix A**.

*A departmental job analysis would contribute significantly to the improvement of job descriptions for every position within the Kingston Parks and Recreation Department.* The current format is missing some standard information. A proper job description focuses on describing the job as it is currently being performed. It describes in written form job identification data (title, department, supervisor's title, pay grade), the line of authority, the scope and range of authority, the work (duties, functions, responsibilities, tasks, activities) that is to be accomplished, how the work is to be accomplished, the working conditions, and the amount and kind of supervision exercised and received. In addition, it focuses on the employee characteristics necessary to perform the job (education, certification, experience, special skills, etc). Job descriptions are especially important in providing the Department with work standards required for positions and important information for any possible requests for ADA accommodations, workman's compensation, and compensation issues.

It is also very important that the Department and the City select and hire employees based on the criteria of the job descriptions. It is critical that the Department, along with the City, provide a consistent pay scale for the positions that is competitive in the area; this allows for employees to earn a reasonable living and is fair. In 2009, PARTAS completed the Tennessee Parks and Recreation Services Study. Below is data from the study for a comparison of other community salaries in Kingston's population category. Please note the City of Kingston participated in the study and its information is reflected in the data.

**Salary & Wages Schedule: Cities 5,001 to 10,000 Population**

<b>Position Title</b>	<b># of Positions</b>	<b>Average Salary</b>	<b>Minimum Salary</b>	<b>Maximum Salary</b>	<b>Kingston Current Salary</b>
Parks Director	5	\$42,717	\$39,506	\$46,000	\$43,680
Assistant Director	1	\$32,000	N/R	N/R	
Admin Assistant Office Mgr	1	\$28,413	N/R	N/R	\$35,360 (Assistant to Director)
Seasonal Pool Manager	3	\$10.83 hr	\$6.55 hr	\$15.00 hr	\$10.00- \$11.25 hr
Park Foreman	5	\$27,848	\$20,800	\$34,895	\$20,500
Recreation Supervisor	3	\$29,833	\$27,500	\$32,000	\$31,200
Lifeguards	65	\$7.54 hr	\$6.55 hr	\$8.50 hr	\$7.25-\$8.50 hr
Skilled Laborer	10	\$27,485	\$25,420,	\$28,696	\$18,000- 21,000
Unskilled Laborer	6	\$22,230	\$20,461	\$24,000	\$15,000- 16,000
<b>Number of Cities Reporting</b>	<b>6</b>				

N/R – Not Reported

Currently, the Director salary is within the average salary in communities of comparable size and operating budget. However, the positions for maintenance (Park Foreman, Skilled & Unskilled Laborer) are below the average. *These positions should be brought to the average salary at the minimum to retain the current employees, remain competitive and ensure highly qualified persons are filled in the positions should they become vacant.*

4. Staff Recruitment

Mr. Ross respects and values the performance and professional opinions of his employees. This respect and value has lead to a low turnover rate of his staff. The most challenging issue for the Department is to hire the employees with skills needed for the positions. This goes back to clearly having each job function defined to then develop the skills needed to successfully perform the role in the department.

## 5. Volunteer Recruitment

Volunteers play a prominent role in parks and recreation. For the individual, volunteering is a leisure experience. Although volunteers do not receive financial rewards, they obtain many other personal benefits. Parks and Recreation Departments receive direct benefits from the services that volunteers provide. They can provide excellent expertise in given areas and may be able to relate better to certain clientele. The Department benefits from volunteers by reduced costs, expanded capability, improved community relations, and enhanced service quality.

Volunteer management requires a commitment from the Department and this starts with the ability to understand and address volunteer motivation (free t-shirts and food). One of the major motives for volunteering is the desire to give something worthwhile to society, and helping others. Some seek such things as achievement, affiliation or power while others may be sharpening job skills, testing new careers or building a résumé. Individuals usually become volunteers because they were asked, learned of an opportunity through an organization to which they belonged or believed that a family member or friend would benefit as a result of their involvement.

Common functions that volunteers perform that will benefit Kingston Parks and Recreation:

- *Administrative*: fund-raising, marketing, governing on boards or advising on committees.
- *Technical Assistance*: clerical support and special events management.
- *Direct Service*: leading activity programs, providing instruction, supporting special events, facilitating the involvement of participants with disabilities, and coaching youth sports.

It is recommended that the Department utilize the services of volunteers to offset the shortage of staff and develop a Volunteer Manual for both recruitment and development of volunteers. An example of a Volunteer Manual is available in **APPENDIX B**.

## 6. Staff Communication

Regularly scheduled staff meetings allow for detailed discussion and planning by the staff of the operations of the Department. Staff meetings improve communications between the Director and the staff and provide a focus to organize the work plan of the Department to efficiently achieve goals and objectives. It is recommended that a particular day and time which works best with the functioning of the Department get

chosen for staff meetings. A printed agenda is also helpful in reducing the time of the meeting and organizing the topics for discussion.

Another very important aspect of a staff meeting is that it promotes team work and allows employees to hear decisions and discussions directly, instead of being relayed by other people. The participation of the employees in regular staff meetings will produce greater understanding of Department goals, provide for work done more efficiently as each employee is “on the same page”, promote good employee relations with each other, make them feel part of a team and increase dedication to the Parks and Recreation Department.

A yearly performance evaluation is vital in staff communication and must be completed for each employee to measure the quality of work performed and areas of needed improvement. The performance evaluation process also allows time for the Director to interact one-on-one with an employee and discuss aspects of their job and provides the employee time to receive quality feedback on their performance. Performance evaluations can also document the growth and quality of an employee for future justification for pay increases and promotions. Examples of performance evaluations are included in **APPENDIX C**.

## 7. Staff Training

A result of the job analysis and job description is that specific training and education needs for each position become established by the Department. Training and education should be available to each employee and specific to their position functions and requirements, not available to only certain employees or divisions of the Department. The Director and designated employees are active in attending educational sessions and workshops sponsored by the Tennessee Recreation and Parks Association (TRPA). Improvement could take place by promoting training with the additional department staff in all areas related to parks and recreation. We recommend that additional training opportunities offered from other organizations get consideration to broaden skills of employees. Another aspect of training is completing and maintaining necessary certifications for job positions, including having one staff member certified as a Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI). The Director must obtain his Certified Parks and Recreation Professional (CPRP) designation.

## 8. Management and Administration

The four general functions of management are; planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. All four functions are immensely important and no one function is more important than another. These four functions must be coordinated to have management operate as a whole. The Director must set aside time to take care of these four functions. The basics here are to consider what resources are needed and what activities are needed.

It is the Director's job to assign responsibility of objectives to employees. A director that can successfully assign tasks to others ensures that everyone has adequate projects to complete, work is reasonably spread among employees and projects are completed in a timely manner. A director can delegate some work to others in an effort to decrease their own large work requirements. They usually delegate work that is more general and does not have to be done by someone in a management position.

The Director must make it a requirement that staff put together written proposals for budget needs, inventory of facilities, maintenance plans, and programming plans. A Policies and Procedures Manual for the Department should be developed that details policies, rules and regulations, and operational procedures relative to the Department including fiscal forms, permits, uses of areas, charges and fees procedures, rentals, system of requisition, inventories, and safety considerations. Acting as the official guiding documents of the Department, it should include the mission statement, organization chart and job descriptions. Due to size and uses of the manual, there may be a series of manuals for components such as a personnel manual, operations and procedures, risk management, etc. There should also be a written Emergency Management Plan for all park facilities. Any policy, procedure or manual must be approved by City Council.

The staff of Kingston Parks and Recreation is held in high regards by the community. There was no doubt in any of the minds of the citizens present at our public input meeting that the staff put 100% effort into their jobs. The strengths of the current staff are their hard work, dependability, commitment to the Department, and desire for improvement. The weaknesses are in insufficient amount of staffing to meet the growing demand for programs, events and facilities. The Director exhibits excellence in leadership, commitment, and knowledge of the parks and the community, he needs to find the time to sit and plan, evaluate, and organize future work which is dependent on having staff that can assist him in these areas.

Comprehensive Personnel Plan: Through the job analysis process and development of job descriptions, the Department should compose a Comprehensive Personnel Plan. This plan would allow for the review and discussion of proposed organizational structure while identifying the pros and cons of current and future staffing and putting employees into functional positions that allow best for their professional growth and abilities. Examples of Organizational Charts are available in **APPENDIX D**.

Kingston Park and Recreation, as do most departments, depends heavily on the use of sports organizations and volunteers to provide leisure services to the community. A goal of management and administration should be to provide for formal training programs for volunteers that would include a recognition program, recruitment program and volunteer manual.

The management of the Department must also develop a written Park and Facility Policy and Procedure Manual for the Department and each park that would document rules regarding facility use rules, fees and charges, reservations, maintenance and emergency action plans. A Policy and Procedure Manual must also be developed for the Parks and Recreation Citizen Advisory Board. Examples of Policy and Procedure Manuals are available in **APPENDIX E**.

## Mission and Goals

The Mission Statement of Kingston Parks and Recreation Department which was already in place and posted is:

*Kingston Parks and Recreation Department is committed to developing, managing, and maintaining the environment necessary to improve social and recreational well-being in our ever changing community.*

The mission statement of the Department must reflect the type of recreation/leisure service department that the community desires and express the vision for the Department for the future. Goals and objectives and long range planning should evolve from the mission statement which provides the direction for the Department in everything from maintenance to programming to budgets. PARTAS made some important observations and recommendations in this assessment to help the Department and the City establish a direction for the future. But, it will be up to the local government officials and staff to proceed with a more comprehensive, step-by-step planning approach in this area to ultimately establish and meet goals and objectives.

Recreation Educational Services developed a planning template for long range planning which is included in **APPENDIX F**. Kingston has taken an important step in the direction of long range planning by partnering with RES to conduct the Parks and Recreation Assessment. A crucial element still needed in initiating the long range planning process is receiving additional and up-to-date public input through a detailed needs assessment. Next, a draft of a long range plan needs to be developed that can be circulated among the employees of the Department, City and County government and the community for input and comments. Land is a critical issue in the future for the Department and it is necessary to use the local government's knowledge of future development and infrastructure to understand suitable locations for park land.

## Budget

The citizens and local government of Kingston take justifiable pride in their community and want to provide a high level of quality service to the community. This means making recommendations and a commitment to help adequately fund the needs of the Parks and Recreation Department and to prepare for the future. The first step in preparing a budget and strategy for fiscal resources is to examine use of current funds. Are all expenses based according to plan and driven by public need? Everyone interviewed during our assessments acknowledged that Kingston Parks Department does a great job utilizing the financial resources assigned to them. The universal concern was that these resources are not adequate to meet today's demand for recreation facilities, programs, and services, yet alone providing for future demand.

The Parks and Recreation Department's 2009-2010 budget is approximately \$573,804.00 which comes from the general fund of the City. The operational budget includes salaries, maintenance, landscaping, uniforms, training, special events, recreation supplies, pool expenses and office supplies. The budget does not contain any line items for advertising and marketing. There is a line item for Capital Improvements; however, there has not been a capital improvement project for parks and recreation over \$5,000 in over two years. In addition, the Department has absorbed another department (Fort South West Point) with little increase of the maintenance budget.

For the purposes of comparison with other parks and recreation departments in the state, we are using the population of Kingston, 5,607, as the criteria even though it serves the market area outside the city limits. PARTAS has gathered the following city population and park budget for the 2007-2008 or 2008-2009 fiscal years to be used as example communities with populations within 2,500 of Kingston.

Harrogate	Population-4,425	Park budget-\$778,734
Savannah	Population- 6,600	Park budget- \$647,500
Ripley	Population- 7,300	Park budget- \$559,475
Fayetteville	Population- 7,500	Park budget- \$540,000
Portland	Population- 7,900	Park budget- \$1,073,000

The per capita average for these communities is **\$111.71** and Kingston 2009-10 budget per capita average is **\$102.34**. Kingston Parks and Recreation Department has received increases in budgets for the last three years reported and this indicates a dedication to providing recreation to the citizens and that the City is moving forward in creating new recreation opportunities. The challenge for the future is meeting the needs and expectations the community has for recreation,

while meeting the demand for up-to-date facilities and the increasing maintenance cost on the majority of the current aging facilities. Long range planning is again essential to prepare for these additional costs and examining needed capital improvements.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations and initiatives represent what RES considers Kingston should fund and implement to achieve the strategic objectives and performance measures put forth by the citizens. The advantage is that by going through each layer step by step, the recommendations have a better chance of succeeding because they are so directly linked to the agency mission and strategic goals. The recommendations and initiatives provide new ways to meet the challenges identified in the very beginning through the strategic planning process. The end result is that they are prioritized to reflect resource identification and every task, initiative, and recommendation can get linked back up to strategic objectives that cover the varied responsibilities of any organization.

### **SHORT TERM**

(Should be accomplished and implemented within 6 months to 1 year)

- Creation and distribution of E-Newsletter
- Correction and updating of the Parks & Recreation web page
- Development of an Emergency Management Plan for the Department including an action plan for each park
- Job analysis and job descriptions for all positions
- Change Assistant to Director title to Administrative Assistant
- Development of a detailed up-to-date facility inventory, can be posted on web after completion
- Director become a Certified Park Recreation Professional (CPRP)
- Maintenance Supervisor and/or Director become a Certified Playground Safety Inspector
- Research the legality in removal of the “Lakefront Fund” tax

### **MID TERM**

(Should be accomplished and implemented within 1 to 3 years)

- Expand staffing levels to include a Deputy Director, 2 additional maintenance staff and 1 additional seasonal program staff
- Creation of comprehensive action plan for Department
- Develop a policy to recruit volunteers and an Volunteer Manual
- Develop 5-Year Capital Improvements Plan

### **LONG TERM**

(Should be accomplished and implemented within 3 to 5 years)

- Develop a Long Range Plan

## **RECOMMENDATION DETAILS**

**Comprehensive Action Plan-** The Department needs to have a Comprehensive Action Plan in place that will guide future decision making in park development, program development and benefit both the City of Kingston and its citizens.

**Assistant to Director Position should be changed to Administrative Assistant-** Presently the position's job responsibilities reflect those associated with an Administrative Assistant. This will prevent confusion as the Assistant to the Director is often confused with Assistant Director.

**Expand staffing levels to include a Deputy Director -** In order for the City of Kingston to grow as a department and offer more parks and recreation services, the position of Deputy Director should be created and filled to assist the Director in management of the Department.

**Emergency Management Plan-** The development of an Emergency Management Plan is essential to provide detailed information on what action is to be taken, and by whom, in the event of a major disaster or emergency within the City or specific to the Department. An action plan is also included for each facility and should have information on actions to be taken in the event of an emergency at the facility. Including but not limited to: an evacuation plan, location for EMS pick-up, copy of "In case of emergency contact..." signage location at park and map of each facility. The local Emergency Management Agency and City Fire and Police Chiefs must be actively involved in the development of this plan.

**Volunteer recruitment and manual-** Volunteers are a valuable asset to a Parks and Recreation Department. In order to achieve the maximum benefits provided by volunteers, a plan for use of volunteers must be formulated and implemented. There are many issues to be addressed when dealing with volunteers. That list includes recruitment, selection, orientation, in-service education, supervision, evaluation, and recognition. Liability is an issue that must be addressed as well.

**Facility Inventory-** A document detailing the facilities in the Kingston Parks and Recreation Department Inventory, amenities at each location, age of amenities, picture and reoccurring facility issues must be created. A version of the document omitting the age and issues could then be posted on the City's website.

**Development of an E-Newsletter-** The Department must take advantage of the advancement of technology to distribute information on their facilities, programs, schedule and rentals. Obtaining e-mail addresses from program participants is the first step in creating a distribution database. Combining the participant e-mail addresses and publicizing the request for additional e-mail addresses will create a database for the distribution of a quarterly e-newsletter to increase the

awareness of the Department's offerings. The newsletter should have some informative articles and pictures along with current program information.

**Accurate and Up-to-date Webpage-** Currently if you visit [www.kingstonparks.com](http://www.kingstonparks.com) you get a very nice and organized home page. On the Facilities page, photos should be added of the facilities along with hours of operation. The Swimming Pool page is the same as the Facility Use page. Change and update with photos, update the swim lesson schedule for 2011 and add hours of operation and fees. The Country Fair page should be updated with photos from the 2010 event with dates for 2011. The Camp Get Out page should be updated with fun photos from 2010 and include 2011 dates, brochure and application form links. Parents begin scheduling kid summer activities in early spring and the lack of information on the current website will result in low participation numbers.

**Additional maintenance staff-** Presently the Department is managing the routine maintenance of its facilities. As stated earlier, the Department has absorbed another department (Fort South West Point) with little increase of the maintenance budget. In time, the condition of the new facilities will require additional attention due to age and the present staff will be unable to keep the facilities in their current condition due to the increase in workload. Preventative maintenance is presently being overlooked due to the limited number of staff. These additional maintenance positions will allow preventative maintenance to be a primary focus, thus decreasing the unscheduled emergency maintenance of facilities and equipment. Like the saying goes "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Nowhere is this truer than in maintaining facilities and equipment.

**5-Year Capital Improvements Plan** – Capital projects involve investment in land, facilities, and equipment with a useful life of more than five years. Kingston Parks and Recreation should develop a plan, processes and criteria to ensure the strategic and cost-effective acquisition, replacement, and retirement of capital resources.

**Long Range Planning-** The purpose of this Parks and Recreation Assessment is to provide direction for the Department in establishing goals and objectives for future work. Challenges found for the Department are many different projects competing for limited resources, age of community center and outdoor swimming pool, future expansion of greenway, age of baseball/softball facilities, maintenance and up-keep of facilities and future land acquisition. A long range planning process is vital to developing a prioritization system that identifies goals and objectives and places them within a planning process acknowledging resources and time line for completion. The Advisory Board should take the lead with the director in initiating the long range planning of the Department. A committed Advisory Board should give the Department support and provide effective communication to the public. This would include helping schedule public hearings on any long range plans, supplying budget input to the Director and priorities for projects. It is important for the Advisory Park Board to play a role in the development of system-

wide policies concerning conduct rules, facility reservations policies, fees and charges, emergency management, land management plans, greenway development, and future land acquisition and development. A long range plan for the Department should address the following areas:

- Administration/Organization
- Budget and Finance
- Planning, Open Space and Land Acquisition
- Recreation Programming
- Parks, Facilities and Maintenance
- Community Services/Public Relations

## **Conclusion**

The City has reached a turning point. Citizens and City officials think that it is time to develop a comprehensive Parks and Recreation Department Plan that meets the needs of all the citizens of Kingston. To meet today's standards the City should look at providing staff with training in all park aspects from safety and liability to providing citizens with programming that meet their needs and interests. If this is not done then the citizens will find other cities for their recreation needs. Business and prospective residents will look for other place to locate. The citizens and city officials have a genuine interest in improving the total recreation system in Kingston. Our desire is for Kingston to review the recommendations, discuss, prioritize and implement an action plan for achieving them.

**CHAPTER 2**

**LAND DEVELOPMENT,  
FACILITIES, OPEN SPACE  
AND PLAYGROUNDS**

## The City of Kingston Overview

The City of Kingston has a population of just over 5,000. The City is situated at the confluence of the Clinch River and the Tennessee River and is part of Watts Bar Lake, a reservoir created by the impoundment of the Tennessee River by Watts Bar Dam several miles to the southwest. The City is adjacent to I-40 and has limited large bodies of land available for purchase within the city limits. The changes in population and land use the city experienced over the past fifty years have been continuous. US census reports show a moderate population growth in comparison to other cities with the same size; the County is currently experiencing average to moderate growth in population.

Although the existing recreational facilities are very well manicured and maintained, some of the older parks and facilities are in need in immediate upgrade or renovations. The City of Kingston's parks are made up of active and passive recreation which makes use of the surrounding natural beauty. The city's trails, lakes and rivers, fort, playgrounds, and pavilions were all highly spoken of during the strategic planning.

As the Recreation Department plans for the future, having a comprehensive planning process in place is the key to progress. Three main areas that should drive a planning thought process are:

- 1) How to best utilize existing facilities and space to meet the needs of the entire community.
- 2) What to do with facilities that are older and have major safety issues, and facilities that do not meet ADA requirements.
- 3) How do we assess the needs and interests of citizens to plan for future facilities and programs?
- 4) What is the legal liability of the City when looking at their Parks and Recreation Department facilities?

## Land and Facility Inventory

There was a map locating and describing the City of Kingston's Parks and Recreation Department areas and facilities and a park and facility inventory for each park. The PARTAS staff used the map as a locator and guide to assist in the inspection of each of the City's parks. During the inspection it was noted that the current inventory is in need of updating. An up to date inventory would aid Kingston Parks and recreation in the maintenance, upkeep location and planning of all Kingston's parks, facility and equipment. Each facility is addressed below with a list of positive qualities and existing problems for each.

### **Kingston Community Center**

Located just off Highway 70 at Patton Ferry Rd, the Kingston Community Center sits across from scenic Watts Bar Lake and the Gravel Pitts. The building offers a large central meeting room, a kitchen, and a variety of meeting/activity rooms. The Community Center is the City's only permanent indoor recreation building which is over 35 years old and in need of repairs and upgrades. This Community Center is used for limited exercise activities like aerobics but mostly used for meetings, senior activities, and Parks and Recreation administration offices.

### ***EXISTING PROBLEMS***

- ❖ Exposed plumbing from missing water fountain
- ❖ Electrical outlet next to water fountain does not appear to be ground fault protected.
- ❖ No emergency contact information signage
- ❖ Facility is approaching 40 years of age
- ❖ Facility is too small to meet cities current indoor recreational needs
- ❖ ***Facility does not meet ADA standards for restrooms, but it has accessibility in certain parts of the facility. Items that are not in compliance with ADA***
  - Signage not properly located
  - Doors with inappropriate width
  - Restroom amenities cannot be operated with a closed hand
  - Commode improper distanced from wall failing to meet current ADA guidelines
- ❖ Water pipes in restrooms are not properly secured and covered
- ❖ Access to swimming pool does not meet ADA requirements
- ❖ Water fountain does not meet ADA standards

### **POSITIVE QUALITIES**

- ❖ Facility is centrally located in downtown
- ❖ Building is ADA accessible from the outside with ramps.
- ❖ Community expressed a bond with the facility during the strategic planning.
  - Seniors felt the facility was a vital part of their quality of life and daily active.
- ❖ Multiuse facility serving the public

### **Recommendation for Kingston Community Center**

- ❖ Repair exposed plumbing from missing water fountain and make electrical outlet next to water fountain a ground fault protected outlet.
- ❖ Add emergency contact information signage
- ❖ Facility is too small to meet city's current indoor recreational needs and long term planning on a larger indoor recreation facility should begin.
- ❖ Bring facility into current ADA standards for restrooms and accessibility to all parts of the facility.
- ❖ Properly secure hot water pipes in restrooms.

### **City of Kingston Outdoor Pool**

The City owned and operated pool is one of the city's oldest facilities. The pool was constructed in the early 1970s at the time the Community Center was constructed and had upgrades of the liner, decking, and filtration system approximately 9 years ago.

#### ***EXISTING PROBLEMS***

- ❖ Pool is constructed in a low lying area that is at or below lake level.
- ❖ Pool is not ADA accessible due to slope of path.
- ❖ Restrooms are not ADA accessible and restroom amenities cannot be operated with a closed hand.
- ❖ Filtration system is outside and exposed to the natural elements.
- ❖ Life guard stand shows sign of rusting on hardware.
- ❖ ADA signage is not in proper location.
- ❖ Internal plumbing is approaching its maximum life span.

#### **POSITIVE QUALITIES**

- ❖ Facility is very well maintained.
- ❖ Facility has a new filtration and chlorination system.
- ❖ Pool has drains that meet Virginia Gram Baker law.

#### **Recommendation for Kingston Swimming Pool**

- ❖ Perform study with local input on long term plan for swimming facility for the City of Kingston. Pool replacement or upgrades to current facility should be evaluated along with indoor swimming options.
- ❖ Bring pool to current ADA standards.
- ❖ Cover filtration system.
- ❖ Replace rusted hardware on Lifeguard stands.
- ❖ Internal plumbing is approaching its maximum life span and needs to be replaced.

## **Tennis Courts at Community Center**

### ***EXISTING PROBLEMS***

- ❖ Facility does not meet ADA standards for accessibility.
- ❖ Facility in need of resurfacing.
- ❖ Fencing is showing sign of aging and rusting.
- ❖ Lighting is older and not energy efficient.
- ❖ Facility appears to have minimal use.
- ❖ Bench is rotten, decaying and poses a safety hazard.
- ❖ Electrical outlet not properly mounted and lying on the ground.
- ❖ Overhead wiring present.

### **POSITIVE QUALITIES**

- ❖ Facility is centrally located for easy access.
- ❖ Facility is lighted with timed lights.

### **Recommendation for Kingston tennis courts by community center**

- ❖ Due to age and condition of the facility the City of Kingston needs to do a study to evaluate the need of these tennis courts. Community input and data on community use should be utilized in the decision process. If facility is not removed then the below should be followed:
  - ❖ Bring Facility into current ADA standards
  - ❖ Resurface facility
  - ❖ Replace fencing
  - ❖ Replace lighting with newer energy efficient lighting
  - ❖ Replace bench and sitting area
  - ❖ Repair electrical outlets
  - ❖ Remove overhead wiring

## **City Park**

City Park is located on Watts Bar Lake and Highway 70. The park has two children's playgrounds, tennis courts, sand volleyball, a basketball court, picnic tables, grills, pavilion, rest rooms, boat ramps, and docks.

### ***EXISTING PROBLEMS***

- ❖ Facility does not meet ADA standards for parking, restrooms, pavilion, benches, picnic tables, playgrounds, basketball court, sand volleyball court, stage, and the docks due to non accessible pathway.
- ❖ Current non-compliant ADA issues at restroom and access to restrooms did not meet current ADA guidelines, but at time of inspection the new pavilion was under construction and should meet ADA when completed.
  - Some restroom amenities cannot be operated with a closed hand
  - Not all stalls meet current ADA guidelines
- ❖ No irrigation system on any playing fields
- ❖ No emergency contact information
- ❖ Fence is bent up from the ground leading to an entrapment hazard.
- ❖ Overhead wiring throughout facility
- ❖ Exposed electrical boxes
- ❖ No border around sand volley ball court to prevent loss of sand.
- ❖ Concrete bleachers at Byrd Park do not meet current safety standards.
- ❖ Tennis courts in need of repair to surfacing and net support post

### **POSITIVE QUALITIES**

- ❖ Facility is centrally located in downtown
- ❖ Community expressed a bond with the facility during the strategic planning
- ❖ Multiuse park that offers a high number of activities
- ❖ Construction in progress of very large ADA accessible pavilion that will offer ADA accessible restrooms and meeting areas that will be aesthetically pleasing with lake view

### **Recommendation for City Park**

- ❖ Bring all parts of Facility into ADA standards including but not limited to parking, restrooms, pavilion, benches, picnic tables, playgrounds, basketball court, sand volleyball court, stage, and the docks due to non accessible pathway.
- ❖ Add irrigation system to baseball playing fields.
- ❖ Add emergency contact information.
- ❖ Repair all fencing to include but not limited to tennis courts and ball fields.
- ❖ Remove concrete bleachers at Byrd Park and replace the 3 row moveable bleachers.
- ❖ Remove overhead wiring throughout facility.
- ❖ Add cover or boundary to exposed electrical boxes.
- ❖ Add border around sand volley ball court to prevent loss of sand.

## **Playground Areas at City Park**

### **Playground Area #1 at City Park, 5-12 year old Playground**

#### ***EXISTING PROBLEMS***

- ❖ Safety surfacing worn and it lacks sufficient depth to meet current standards. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Playground Safety Handbook is available in **APPENDIX G**.
- ❖ High use area has been worn down to the dirt and has not been raked to maintain required depth.
- ❖ Not ADA accessible.
- ❖ Rusted and broken support beam

### **Recommendation for City Park Playground Area #1**

- ❖ Use tested safety fall surfacing that meets the height and distance requirements and makes playground ADA accessible within playground boundaries.
- ❖ Bring playground into current ADA requirements for accessibility to other areas of park.
- ❖ Perform and document weekly inspections and repairs on all playground equipment.

### **Playground Area #2 at City Park, Toddler Playground**

#### ***EXISTING PROBLEMS***

- ❖ Safety surfacing worn and has insufficient depth to meet current safety standards.
- ❖ High use area has been worn down to the dirt and has not been raked to maintain required depth.
- ❖ Not ADA accessible for surfacing and no accessible path to playground
- ❖ Climber is rusted; the bent support beam and bolts are extending too far.

### **Recommendation for City Park Playground Area #2**

- ❖ Remove and properly dispose of climbing play structures.
- ❖ Follow manufacturer's recommendations when making all future repairs to play structures.
- ❖ Replace removed equipment with modern and up to date properly installed equipment.
- ❖ Use tested safety fall surfacing that meets the height and distance requirements and makes playground ADA accessible within playground boundaries.
- ❖ Bring playground into current ADA requirements for accessibility to other areas of park with the addition of ADA accessible pathway.
- ❖ Perform and document weekly inspections and repairs on all playground equipment.

**Playground Area #3 at City Park, Playground adjacent to Tennis Courts**

***EXISTING PROBLEMS***

- ❖ Safety surfacing does not meet current safety standards; it is also worn and lacks sufficient depth to meet current safety standards. High use area has been worn down to the dirt and has not been raked to maintain required depth.
- ❖ Playground has no ADA accessible pathway.

**Recommendation for City Park Playground Area #3**

- ❖ Use tested safety fall surfacing that meets the height and distance requirements and makes playground ADA accessible within playground boundaries.
- ❖ Bring playground into current ADA requirements for accessibility to other areas of park.
- ❖ Perform and document weekly inspections and repairs on all playground equipment.

## **Tennis Courts at City Park**

### **EXISTING PROBLEMS**

- ❖ Facility does not meet ADA standards for accessibility. During time of inspection constructions of pavilion limited access.
- ❖ Facility is in need of resurfacing.
- ❖ Fencing is showing sign of aging and rusting.
- ❖ Lighting is older and not energy efficient.
- ❖ Facility appears to have minimal use.
- ❖ Broken net post.
- ❖ Overhead wiring.

### **POSITIVE QUALITIES**

- ❖ Facility is centrally located in City
- ❖ Facility is lighted

### **Recommendation for tennis courts at City Park**

- ❖ Bring Facility into current ADA standards.
- ❖ Resurface facility.
- ❖ Replace lighting with newer energy efficient lighting
- ❖ Evaluate the need of tennis courts at this facility.
- ❖ Repair broken net post.
- ❖ Remove overhead wiring.

## **Gravel Pit Park**

Located on Highway 70 across from the Community Center, it offers a pavilion, picnic area, benches, ADA fishing pier, boat ramp, and dock.

### ***EXISTING PROBLEMS***

- ❖ No emergency contact information on signage.
- ❖ ADA parking is not correctly marked.
- ❖ No ADA accessible picnic table.
- ❖ No protective railing around dock.

### **POSITIVE QUALITIES**

- ❖ Facility is very well maintained and groomed.
- ❖ Connected by city's greenway.

### **Recommendation for Gravel pit park**

- ❖ Add emergency contact information on signage.
- ❖ Add ADA parking.
- ❖ Add ADA accessible picnic table.
- ❖ Add protective railing around dock.

## **58 Landing**

Located on Highway 58, it offers picnic areas, boat ramp, dock and gazebos

### ***EXISTING PROBLEMS***

- ❖ Facility does not meet ADA standards for accessibility.
- ❖ Gazebos are not ADA accessible and show signs of weathering.
- ❖ Electrical boxes are not protected by fencing.
- ❖ Benches are not ADA accessible.
- ❖ Overhead wiring in park.

### **Recommendation for 58 Landing**

- ❖ Bring Facility into current ADA standards.
- ❖ Bring gazebos into to current ADA standards and repair/remove as needed.
- ❖ Add protective fencing around electrical boxes.
- ❖ Make benches ADA accessible.
- ❖ Remove overhead wiring in park.

### **POSITIVE QUALITIES**

- ❖ Facility is very well maintained and groomed
- ❖ ADA parking
- ❖ Two parking lots offering closer proximity throughout park
- ❖ Park offers access to water activities
- ❖ Park connected by city's greenway

## **Fort South West Point Sports Complex**

The sports complex offers a lighted 400 meter-8 lane track, baseball, softball and soccer field with concession stands, press box, restrooms, bleachers, and a picnic pavilion.

### ***EXISTING PROBLEMS***

- ❖ Facility does not meet ADA standards for restrooms, concession stand, batting cages, pavilion, and accessibility.
- ❖ Current non-compliant ADA issues at restroom:
  - Signage not properly located
  - Doors with inappropriate width
  - Restroom amenities cannot be operated with a closed hand.
  - Commode improperly distanced from wall failing to meet current ADA guidelines.
- ❖ Water pipes in restrooms are not properly secured and covered.
- ❖ Water fountain does not meet ADA standards and is not working.
- ❖ Not all electrical outlets next to water fountain appear to be ground fault protected.
- ❖ No emergency contact information on signage.
- ❖ Bleachers do not meet current safety standards. A guide for retrofitting bleachers is available in **APPENDIX H**.
- ❖ Portable outfield fencing improperly stored.
- ❖ Ball field lighting is old and not energy efficient.
- ❖ Gravel flooring in batting cages.
- ❖ Roof of dugouts rotting and showing weather damage.
- ❖ Overhead wiring.
- ❖ Electrical boxes not covered with fencing or protective barrier.
- ❖ Drain in restrooms does not have cover.
- ❖ A bolt on picnic table extends too far and does not meet current safety standards.
- ❖ Cross ties used as a barrier for batting cages. Cross ties are a carcinogen and can lead to long term health problems.

### **POSITIVE QUALITIES**

- ❖ Multi-use park that offers a high number of activities.
- ❖ Area has historical value.
- ❖ Connected by City's Greenway.
- ❖ Area is very visually appealing with view over parks activities and water way.

### **Recommendation for Fort South West Point Sports Complex**

- ❖ Bring facility into current ADA standards for restrooms, concession stand, batting cages, pavilion, water fountain, parking and accessibility.
- ❖ Properly secure and cover water pipes in restrooms.
- ❖ Bring all electrical outlets that require ground fault protection into current safety standards.
- ❖ Locate emergency contact information on signage.

- ❖ Bring all bleachers into current safety standards.
- ❖ Properly store portable outfield fencing.
- ❖ Replace ball field lighting with energy efficient lighting.
- ❖ Replace batting cages flooring with solid non-moveable flooring.
- ❖ Remove overhead wiring.
- ❖ Cover all electrical boxes with fencing or protective barrier.
- ❖ Add cover to drain in restrooms.
- ❖ Replace bolts and other protrusions that extend too far and replace to meet current safety standards.
- ❖ Replace cross ties with other permanent border around batting cage.

## **Fort South West Point**

Fort Southwest Point is the only fort in Tennessee being reconstructed on its original foundation. The completed sections of the fort include barracks, a blockhouse, and 250 feet of palisade walls. The fort is owned, operated, and maintained by the City of Kingston Recreation Department.

### **EXISTING PROBLEMS**

- ❖ Current non-compliant ADA issues at restroom:
  - Handicap signage not properly located.
  - Doors with inappropriate width.
  - Some restroom amenities cannot be operated with a closed hand.

### **POSITIVE QUALITIES**

- ❖ Fort South West Point is a multiuse park that offers a high number of activities.
- ❖ Area has historical value.
- ❖ It is connected by City's Greenway.
- ❖ Area is very visually appealing with view over parks activities and water way.

### **Recommendation for Fort South West Point**

- ❖ Bring facility into current ADA standards for restrooms, concession stand, batting cages, pavilion, water fountain, parking and accessibility.
- ❖ Addition of a playground for ages 5-12

### **Betty Brown Memorial Walking Trail**

Over 3 miles of walking and jogging trail are located along the lakefront. The trail offers drinking fountains, benches, and picnic tables.

#### EXISTING PROBLEMS

- ❖ Not all of Greenway is lighted.
- ❖ Not enough access point for timely emergency response.
- ❖ Most park benches are not ADA accessible.
- ❖ No distance markers and signage on trail.

#### POSITIVE QUALITIES

- ❖ Majority of greenway is ADA accessible.
- ❖ High number of benches, resting and viewing areas placed along trail.
- ❖ Greenway is connected to areas rich in historical value, other parks, public schools, and blue ways.
- ❖ Majority of City's parks are connected by greenway.

### **Recommendation for Betty Brown Memorial Walking Trail**

- ❖ Light entire Greenway system and add access points
- ❖ Add distance markers, more ADA accessible benches, and signage on trail

## **Gertrude Porter Park**

Located two blocks from Kentucky Street, this area has a fenced softball field, children's playground, and basketball court.

### ***EXISTING PROBLEMS***

- ❖ No emergency contact information.
- ❖ Park is not ADA accessible.
- ❖ Gates to baseball field are overgrown in vegetation and will not open and close.
- ❖ No restroom facility at park.
- ❖ Park has water damage that has created fall hazards from the washed out areas.
- ❖ Ball field is not lighted.
- ❖ No irrigation system on the ball field.
- ❖ Basketball courts are showing cracks and are in need of resealing.
- ❖ No marked ADA parking.
- ❖ Broken poles on outfield fencing.
- ❖ Metal pole jammed throughout field fencing.
- ❖ Steal wiring from outfield fencing is stretched out and exposed for 10 feet leading to a trip hazard.
- ❖ No nets on basketball goals.
- ❖ Rock trashcan and bleachers in basketball court playing area.
- ❖ Bleachers do not meet current safety standards.

### **POSITIVE QUALITIES**

- ❖ Two parking locations.
- ❖ New pavilion with restroom is currently being constructed.

### **Recommendation for Gertrude Porter Park**

- ❖ Add emergency contact information to park signage.
- ❖ Bring park into ADA standards.
- ❖ Repair/ replace gates and fencing.
- ❖ Control water runoff and repair washed out areas.
- ❖ Use public input to evaluate the need for lighting and an irrigation system for park.
- ❖ Resurface basketball courts and repair cracks.
- ❖ Move rock trash can out of playing area and replace bleachers with ones that meet current safety standards through park.

## **Playground at Gertrude Porter Park**

### **EXISTING PROBLEMS**

- ❖ Playground does not have an ADA accessible path to and the surfacing does not meet current standards for accessibility.
- ❖ Safety surfacing does not meet current safety standards.
- ❖ Lay out of playground leads to large areas for safety surfacing that are not under equipment.
- ❖ “S” hooks are not completely closed, they are worn and some overlap not meeting current safety standards.
- ❖ Bolts extend too far and don’t meet current safety standards.
- ❖ Rusted swing set is missing swing and has paint peeling.
- ❖ Swings have no safety surfacing, bent support beams and have outlived their utility.

### **Recommendation playground at Gertrude Porter Park**

- ❖ Properly dispose of any removed equipment and hardware; replace with modern and up to date equipment and hardware that meets U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commissions guidelines.
- ❖ Age appropriate and user information signage should be installed to manufacturer’s recommendations.
- ❖ Perform and document regular inspections and repairs on all playground equipment.
- ❖ Move playground to location by new pavilion and bring it into current ADA standards.
- ❖ Replace “S”-hooks.
- ❖ Safety surfacing needs to be added and raked to properly cover fall height. Reconfigure safety surfacing borders to better utilize safety surfacing and meet current safety standards.

## **Ladd Park**

Located on the Clinch River and mouth of the Emory River, this park has a large parking lot, pavilion, picnic area, grills, fish weigh-in-station, boat ramp and dock. This park also has a skateboard park; helmet laws do apply.

### EXISTING PROBLEMS

- ❖ No emergency contact information on signage.
- ❖ Facility does not meet ADA standards for accessibility, restrooms, pavilion, and picnic area.
- ❖ Current non-compliant ADA issues at restroom:
  - Access to restrooms does not meet current ADA guidelines.
  - Some restroom amenities cannot be operated with a closed hand.
  - Not all stalls meet current ADA guidelines.
- ❖ Overhead wiring in park
- ❖ Electrical boxes exposed without protective fencing.
- ❖ Four unused metal poles in the middle of park
- ❖ No ADA picnic table.
- ❖ ADA signage at restrooms not proper height
- ❖ Bent pipe in restrooms leading to trip hazard
- ❖ Broken support cover around support beam at pavilion leaving anchor bolts exposed.

### POSITIVE QUALITIES

- ❖ Large capacity of trailer parking to accommodate fishing tournaments.
- ❖ Facility is easily accessible.
- ❖ Parking lot has recently been resurfaced.
- ❖ Grant signage posted.

### Recommendation playground at Gertrude Porter Park

- ❖ Add emergency contact information to park signage.
- ❖ Bring park into ADA standards.
- ❖ Remove overhead wiring in park and add protective covering to electrical boxes.
- ❖ Remove the four unused metal poles in the middle of park.
- ❖ Repair bent pipe in restrooms leading to trip hazard.
- ❖ Repair broken support cover around support beam at pavilion.

### **Skateboard Park at Ladd**

- ❖ Skate Park has erosion problems leading to dirt washing on to Skateboard Park surfacing.
- ❖ Gate broken at entrance of Skateboard Park
- ❖ No bar around top of Skateboard Park fencing.
- ❖ Skateboard Park is not lighted.

### **POSITIVE QUALITIES**

- ❖ Facility is easily accessible.
- ❖ Parking lot has recently been resurfaced with large number of parking spaces.
- ❖ Grant signage posted.

### **Recommendation for Skateboard Park at Ladd**

- ❖ Build erosion wall to prevent erosion problems leading to dirt washing onto skate park surfacing.
- ❖ Repair gate and fencing around Skateboard Park.
- ❖ Add lighting with push timer at Skateboard Park.

**Undeveloped Parks**  
**Land between the Bridges**

***EXISTING PROBLEMS***

- ❖ Land is undeveloped with roads and utilities.
- ❖ Area has graffiti on Bridge.
- ❖ Land is out of sight of traffic.

**POSITIVE QUALITIES**

- ❖ Land is flat and would require very little construction to make area accessible.
- ❖ Park would offer access to water activities.
- ❖ Area is currently used by fisherman and sportsman.

**Recommendation for Undeveloped Park**

- ❖ Follow community input and add park development into Master Plan.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations and initiatives represent what RES considers the City of Kingston should fund and implement to achieve the strategic objectives and performance measures put forth by the citizens. The advantage is that by going through each layer step by step, the recommendations have a better chance of succeeding because they are so directly linked to the agency mission and strategic goals. The recommendations and initiatives provide new ways to meet the challenges identified in the very beginning through the strategic planning process. The end result is that they are prioritized to reflect resource identification and every task, initiative, and recommendation can get linked back up to strategic objectives that cover the varied responsibilities of any organization. Below is a list of recommendations that were suggested by the citizens who provided public input during the strategic planning.

### **SHORT TERM**

(Should be accomplished and implemented within 6 months to 1 year)

- Develop ADA plan for bringing all facilities into compliance.
- Complete an up-to-date inventory on Parks, facilities and equipment.
- Update reservation forms to include all facilities. Examples of reservation forms are available in **APPENDIX I**.
- Prioritize maintenance items.
- Prioritize improvements.
- Bring all equipment including bleachers into current safety standards.

### **MID TERM**

(Should be accomplished and implemented with 1 to 3 years)

- Renovate restrooms and pavilions to meet current ADA standards for accessibility.
- Complete items on ADA plan.
- Extend Greenway to connect points of interest and allow non-motorized commutes.
- Establishing an ordinance for developers to include green space in their developments.

### **LONG TERM**

(Should be accomplished and implemented within 3 to 5 years)

- Complete feasibility study on Indoor Recreation Complex.
- Develop additional land.

## **RECOMMENDATION DETAILS**

**Safety-**Any item that has the potential of causing or leading to harm, injury, or liability must be repaired immediately. Items listed or mentioned on the walk through, listed in this report, or noted in the weekly inspections must be documented and repaired immediately. Examples of items included in this area that do not meet safety standards are: bleachers and playground equipment, electrical hazards, improperly stored equipment, unmaintained fencing, and other items. Repairs of this type need immediate priority over other projects due to the potential of danger and liability to the City. One case of litigation has the potential to cost the City more in damages than repairing all facility concerns as well as leaving the City with a loss of funds and no facility improvements to show for it. By making safety repairs to the facilities, citizens will have safe places to recreate and receive a strong feeling of pride about the services received.

**ADA Compliance Plan of Action-**Upgrade all facilities to meet current ADA laws. By not meeting current ADA laws, Kingston City is at risk of litigation from these violations of laws. The federal government has enforced compliance of ADA laws through litigation with cities who have not upgraded facilities. This action has occurred in at least two cities in Tennessee in the last five years. In both cases the cities were forced to work out a plan of action to bring all facilities and ground up to current ADA laws. To reduce possible litigation the Department should develop a 5-Year Master Plan to bring all facilities up to meet all ADA laws. Also part of the 5-Year Plan the City should also pass an ordinance that all new facilities will meet current ADA laws. Also, a complete and specific evaluation of every facility to provide a prioritized list of needed renovations to comply with ADA laws should be completed. Primary areas discussed during the walkthrough were accessibility to parks and recreation facility, restrooms, parking and equipment and hard ware. This Master Plan can serve as a guide and a plan of action to assure the completion and compliance and to promote efficient use of funding to increase accessibility to all citizens of Kingston.

**Future Development-**The Recreation Department Community Center and Swimming Pool are at the age where major repairs or expansion would not be cost effective. With the age of this facility it would be more cost effective for The City of Kingston to replace them with and modern and updated facility that would meet the indoor recreational needs of Kingston's citizens for many years to come. It is very important for the City to build projects not only for today's citizens to have the fore-sight to build facilities that will benefit the citizens for many years to come. Currently the Recreation Department offers very little physical indoor recreation. Many of the citizens present during the strategic planning stated they would support an indoor facilities/Community Center with an indoor swimming pool.

## **Conclusion**

The City of Kingston needs to address its problem areas in facilities with detailed, well thought plans to assure they meet the public needs, safety standards and ADA laws. A well thought and prepared 5 year plan will assure the citizens of the City of Kingston convenient, safe, and quality facilities that will serve their needs for many years to come. Public input is the best way to assure meeting the needs and interests of the citizens of Kingston and is vital for developing a comprehensive 5 year plan. Addressing the safety standards and ADA laws first will reduce liability and assure facilities meet current standards allowing for future development and expansion without having to play catch up.

**CHAPTER 3**  
**RECREATION**  
**PROGRAMMING**

## ***RECREATION PROGRAMS OVERVIEW***

Recreation programming is a direct link between the Parks and Recreation Department and the Community as it establishes a relationship of involvement beyond the level of casual visitors. Programming serves as a connector between the community, administration, recreation department and its citizens. Programming can serve as a delivery system for the Department's mission statement; it enhances the recreational experiences of participants while creating a grassroots base of support for the Department as a whole. Programming can be the most cost effective way for a Department to improve the quality of life of its user population. A Parks and Recreation Department can invest large amounts of funding for facilities, but this is a waste if they are underused because of lack of programs, lack of marketing and promotion, and lack of involvement by the community. Quality programming is an effective way to develop community support and assist a community in support for future park investments.

## **Program Needs**

Currently, Kingston Parks and Recreation offers a wide variety of programming in the areas of youth sports, seasonal aquatics, special events and programs for all ages. In order to move forward, the Department should gather citizen input on both current and future program needs and develop a Program Plan that is updated annually. The process for developing a Program Plan includes:

***Step 1: Gain citizen input and identify target issues and target goals.***

- Needs Assessment
- Identify target issues
- Select potential partnering organizations and volunteer leaders

***Step 2: Design a program to specifically address goals***

- Program Identification & Selection
- Adhere to programming principles
- Define objectives and goals

***Step 3: Measure outcomes***

- Assess effect on target issues and goals

***Step 4: Realize impacts and communicate successes***

## **Step 1: Gain citizen input and identify target issues and target goals.**

Gathering the input of citizens is vital to developing a well-rounded parks and recreation department. Kingston Parks and Recreation must obtain input from the citizens by beginning a series of public input meetings and developing a Comprehensive Needs Assessment for distribution. The data obtained from the meetings and the Needs Assessment provides the essential information to create a roadmap for the future programs conducted by the Department.

### **Needs Assessments and Surveys**

An up-to-date Needs Assessment is the best way to gather citizen input. The four key ingredients from citizen input to develop a program plan are:

1. Citizen's opinions of the services delivered
2. Types of programs and facilities they desire/don't desire
3. Support for new ideas
4. Support for fees and charges, operating hours, etc

Programming needs of citizens, based on demographics of a community, continually change from year to year. Due to man hours and costs associated with a Comprehensive Needs Assessment, we recommend conducting one every three to five years. The use and development of annual mini-surveys or program evaluations can assist the Department in evaluating programs and needs between the assessments.

A Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment would center on specific questions as they relate to diverse programming. The purpose of the questions is to gather information on how often a particular program is used, age groupings of the users, where they live, what programs they would attend and other basic information common to all programs that the Department would like to document. The purpose of the questions must also address shortfalls in the Department's programming to determine which citizens' needs are not being met.

Assessment questions should address the following questions:

- What do you want to measure or find out?
- What information is needed to determine your community's recreation needs, problems and goals?
- How will the information be used?
- What is the value of the information that is gathered?
- Who will decide what information is important to future planning?

The Needs Assessment gathers information that is vital to a Department's future development. It offers a benchmark on where the Department stands in relation to services offered. It is necessary to get an understanding on the citizen's wants and needs in programming. The best run program

will fail without participation. The best preprogram predictor of participation is through public input through a well prepared needs assessment. Examples of needs assessments are available in **APPENDIX J**.

The Needs Assessment questions represent fundamental techniques for receiving and documenting citizen input within a community. A survey is a questionnaire designed to measure the responses of a group of people about a predetermined topic. A needs assessment is a broader tool that gauges response over a number of topics and usually requires the participant to rank or prioritize several provided options.

The Needs Assessment and survey can be distributed widely and reflect through written documentation the opinions of all segments of the community, and should include demographic information so the evaluation of responses reflects a consideration of factors such as age, economic resources, neighborhoods, ethnicity, and social conditions. Failure to obtain participation from a particular group will be seen as exclusion and lead to negative feeling about the department. The City of Kingston should not develop the Needs Assessment only to get needed information from a specific group, but develop a strategy of distribution that will allow all segments of the community to respond.

After the collection and review of the data from a community wide Needs Assessment, the City can implement surveys specifically targeted at users of specific services of the Department. Some distribution plans from other communities include mailing assessments out by use of a City Water Department customer list, assessments distributed to homes by public works, newspaper publishing assessments, on-line assessments, distribution to senior centers, high schools, and other specific groups.

### **Public Meetings and Public Forums**

Presently Kingston Parks and Recreation does not hold public input meetings specifically to obtain information. The Kingston Parks and Recreation board holds open meetings with publicized agendas. A citizen can address recreational concerns/acknowledgements at this meeting, but it is not designed for obtaining public input. Expansion of these meetings is vital to obtain information and gather input on programs and facilities the public would like to see the department offer in the future. Conduct a public meeting and forums every 6 months to a year for the sole purpose to obtain the most relevant information and changes if necessary. Attending other public forums and/or meetings for feedback in order to address issues and get groups opinions is also a valid means of obtaining public input, i.e. the Director of Parks and Recreation and Parks and Recreation Board members should attend a scheduled meeting of the Rotary Club and other organizations to obtain their input.

## **Step 2: Design a program to specifically address goals**

Program selection and scheduling is taken directly from the public input meeting and needs assessment. Thoughtful consideration of each of these areas is necessary for future programming success. Program selection, scheduling and registration are the tools used to transform programming ideas into reality. It is the practical implementation that allows patrons to participate in the programs and enjoy the benefits of the program.

### **Program Selection**

#### ***Sound principles to follow for program selection:***

- Provide program opportunities for all ages, genders and interests.
- Provide for varying levels of skill and ability, basic skills emphasized.
- Emphasize programs with involve activities that the participant can continue, such as lifetime sports, arts, etc.
- Provide programs that challenge the participants.
- Provide opportunities for noncompetitive as well as competitive, for passive as well as active programs.
- Balance program offerings on an annual basis and between indoor and outdoor activities.
- Offer individual opportunities as well as mass activities, such as special events.
- Encourage community participation in program planning and develop and utilize volunteer leaders.
- Encourage community awareness of program offerings.
- Develop an awareness of all recreation opportunities within Kingston in order to complement rather than duplicate programs of other organizations.
- Offer programs with a low cost and high return of participation and goal accomplishment.

### **Program Registration**

The development of an overall registration procedure must be established, especially when a Department offers programs that utilize partnerships. Registration should come directly through the Department to cut down on confusion, inconsistency, delayed or lost forms and fees. The Registration procedures should be in writing and a part of the Policies and Procedures Manual. Software programs are available that serve many different kinds of registration needs and registration options from shelter and program reservations to online program registration. Program registration is the best time for the collection and sharing of information between the Recreation Department and the patrons who participate in the program. The department can provide program overview and insight and collect patron's expectations, health/physical limitations, and other concerns.

### **Program Promotion and Publicity**

A Marketing Policy must be developed for the Parks and Recreation Department. The Plan must be comprehensive and cover all areas and responsibilities of the handling of promotion and publicity of programs. Quarterly Internet brochures and an e-newsletter must be developed that list contact information, facilities hours of operation, and upcoming programming. A partnership with the local newspapers to promote the Internet brochure and e-newsletter, along with local businesses where citizens may pick up brochures while shopping and completing other daily activities, will provide the needed contact information for citizens to obtain additional information. The website should be updated weekly to reflect current dates and times for all programs and special events as well as pictures from the recent events for visual impact. Partnerships would also be utilized with local radio stations for weekly and special announcements and with the school system to distribute flyers. All partnerships must have a written contract and should be approved by the Park Director, City Administrator, Mayor and City Council.

### **Special Events and Events Management**

Kingston Parks and Recreation has established a great reputation for delivering quality special events that draws the community together to enjoy a recreational experience that is meaningful, significant, and relevant to their well-being. Some of these events include July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration, Smoking the Waters, Candy Cane Hunt, Spook-tacular, Country Fair, and Family Dance Night. Special events require careful and extensive planning to be successful. The larger and more sophisticated the event, the more detailed planning and staffing it takes. *It is recommended as part of the Program Plan, an action plan for special events be created utilizing the staffing roles mentioned below. PARTAS has identified Kingston Parks and Recreation is lacking in adequate staffing and must utilize efficient event management and identify potential partnership and volunteer opportunities in order to allow the special events to keep growing.*

### **Staffing**

For a special event there are three aspects related to personnel: (1) the overall manager of the event, (2) the planning and management team, and (3) the committees.

- **The overall event manager.** One person should be designated in charge of the event. Depending on the size of the event, this may be the Director or Program Coordinator. This person should have no routine assigned duties, but rather focus of the recruiting and supervision of the staff, paid or volunteer, and the delegation and supervision of all functions. The role becomes one of coordinating the functions and the various committees, monitoring and overseeing the process, and helping the different parts work together as a team. A planning chart should be prepared to keep tasks moving along on an appropriate timeline.
- **The planning and management team.** The planning committee may consist of both staff and volunteers. This committee does the initial work of establishing the time and location of the event and in setting up additional committees to perform the various tasks.

It also should take responsibility for the event evaluation. It may handle or set up a special committee to work on sponsorships. The management team is responsible for the actual operations and is composed of the event manager and the people in charge of the key responsibilities. It should not be too large and does not need to include all committee chairs. This team establishes the internal communication system and maintains control of the budget.

- **Committees.** Under the direction of the management team, the volunteer committees can perform tasks such as:
  - Finance – develops and monitors the budget and sponsorships.
  - Marketing, promotion & media relations – prepares a marketing plan and handles public and community relations.
  - Crowd control – concerned with the behavior of the people attending the event; may have subcommittees on security, traffic/parking, signage, transportation, and amenities. Partnership with local law enforcement is highly recommended.
  - Production – the conduct of the event itself; may have many subcommittees for decorations, entertainment, maintenance, food and beverages or concessions, volunteers, children’s activities, prizes and awards, officials and judges, or a VIP’s liaison.

Most special events need many volunteers to serve on the committees, as well as perform specific tasks. Special events present an excellent opportunity to involve the citizens directly with Kingston Parks and Recreation’s programs. Not only does the Department save money by using volunteers and expand its staffing capabilities, it is also an opportunity to better learn the community’s needs and create program awareness. The primary reason people do not volunteer is that they were not asked, so Kingston should make a serious effort to recruit and involve community volunteers.

### **Step 3: Measure outcomes**

Programs offered by Kingston Parks and Recreation should have their own individual stated objectives that are consistent with agency goals. Measurable objectives will allow the Department to compile an evaluation for each program. Program evaluations allow direct feedback for the portions of the public that utilize the program and are a great form of direct public input. Program evaluations provide feedback on the instructor, the facility, the Department's representative, and their specific opinions about the activity. Program evaluations are the best measurement of public opinion concerning program or activity offered. This gives the facilitator direct feedback on the quality of services offered, and recommendations for program improvements needed. Incentives can assist in better participation in the evaluation process such as free swim passes, coupon for upcoming programs, etc. Examples of program evaluations are available in **APPENDIX K**.

The evaluations should be conducted based on the frequency of program delivery:

- **Daily & Weekly Programs:** on a monthly occurrence
- **Monthly Programs:** quarterly
- **Session Programs** (swim lessons, etc.): at conclusion
- **One-time special events & programs:** at conclusion

### **Step 4: Realize impacts and communicate successes**

Communicating the success of parks and recreation programs is extremely important to the total process and creates awareness in the community. Kingston Parks and Recreation celebrates its successes in an Annual Report each year in the local newspaper but should also utilize:

- **Press Releases** – expressing the extent of the success can increase future participation. It can also be used a marketing tool for the next program. For example, the swim lesson program had a record number of participants with a result of all children passing a certain level. Following up with information regarding when the next round of lessons will be offered is sound marketing practice.
- **Letters to the editor of the local newspaper** – can also attribute to the communication of program success. A satisfied parent who raves about a program is a wonderful testimonial that can be used for future marketing.
- **Newsletter to members or parents**
- **Presentations to civic organizations**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations and initiatives represent what RES considers Kingston should fund and implement to achieve the strategic objectives and performance measures put forth by the citizens. The advantage is that by going through each layer step by step, the recommendations have a better chance of succeeding because they are so directly linked to the agency mission and strategic goals. The recommendations and initiatives provide new ways to meet the challenges identified in the very beginning through the strategic planning process. The end result is that they are prioritized to reflect resource identification and every task, initiative, and recommendation can get linked back up to strategic objectives that cover the varied responsibilities of any organization.

### **SHORT TERM**

(Should be accomplished and implemented within 6 months to 1 year)

- Develop and conduct a needs assessment for citizen input on programming and facilities
- Implement a schedule of public meetings and forum on a semi-annual or annual basis
- Develop partnerships to assist in implementation of suggested programs
- Conduct a survey of what programs are offered by churches, civic organizations, and other community groups
- Identify potential partnerships and volunteers in the community

### **MID TERM**

(Should be accomplished and implemented with 1 to 3 years)

- Expand staffing levels to include 1 additional seasonal program staff
- Develop a long range Program Plan to guide the City of Kingston for a minimum of 5 years to be updated each year by a public input meeting
- Develop a policy to recruit volunteers and develop a volunteer manual
- Implement needed programs based on data from citizen input

## **RECOMMENDATION DETAILS**

**Comprehensive Needs Assessment-**The development and distribution of a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment in order to determine the path of the department's future programs is essential in determining the programs that the citizens will support and attend. Examples are provided in **Appendix J**.

**Partnerships-** The challenge to offering programs is finding qualified instructors. Instructors are usually hired on a contractual basis to teach a determined number of classes for a fixed fee, or percentage of revenue generated from the class. Partnerships allow the Recreation department to offer programs at no or reduced expense to the general public. They allow businesses, community groups or persons with facilities, certifications, skills, or areas of interest the ability to offer activities without having to run a fulltime business. It is a win-win situation for the instructor and the department with the biggest winner being the public who participates in the program. It is recommended that Kingston recreation department seek partnerships that will enhance the current programs offered by the City. Martial arts, aerobics, art and music are examples where partnerships can be utilized. Most failed partnerships are due to undefined written responsibilities. All partnerships must have written contract that addresses who is responsible for collection of fees, insurance, premises liability, etc. The written contract should be addressed in the Comprehensive Policies and Procedures manual

**Other community offerings-**The City of Kingston needs to conduct a survey of what programs are offered by churches, civic organizations, and other private organizations. A survey will determine what areas of need are not being met. Once specific needs are determined, an agreement with qualified facilities and instructors will be required in order to offer the best programming.

**Long Range Programming Plan-** Once programs have been selected and are operational the parks and recreation department, parks board, and instructors combined with public input should develop a long range program plan. A long range program plan is a 5-10 year plan that is a master plan of programming for the City of Kingston Recreation Department. It should be a guide of where the City wants its programming to be, based on citizen input, and the path it plans to take to get there. The plan should be updated each year.

**Volunteers-**The City of Kingston currently uses volunteers for its Parks and Recreation Citizen's Advisory Board and for programming. These volunteers are essential to the City having successful, cost effective programs and increase the overall manpower at events. Currently the City does not have a Volunteer Manual and one must be developed to provide rules, regulations and guidance to current and future volunteers. An example of a volunteer manual is provided in **Appendix L**.

## **Conclusion**

The City of Kingston currently offers an adequate amount of recreational programming for a City its size with a very limited budget. While some programs are offered through local churches and other organizations the overall programming of the city is lacking in nontraditional programming. By following the above recommendations the city will develop and implement a comprehensive programming component to its recreation department. By offering a comprehensive programming component the quality of services available to the citizens of Kingston will be improved and bring about a greater and more fulfilling quality of life.

# **CHAPTER 4**

## **GREENWAYS AND TRAILS**

## ***GREENWAYS & TRAILS OVERVIEW***

The 2008 Tennessee Greenways and Trails Plan provides information on the enormous benefits to the citizens and visitors to the State of Tennessee and its local communities provided by greenways and trails. Among these benefits are positive economic impacts, improved personal health, increased bicycle and pedestrian transportation opportunities, providing stream buffers and improving water quality and preservation/conservation of our diminishing open green spaces and recreation opportunities.

Most adults remember riding a bicycle or walking home from school, dropping off their school books, grabbing a snack and heading for the woods to play or helping with the chores on the farm. Modern school children do not have those opportunities due to the disappearing open spaces of the fields, farms and forests that turn into the ever expanding residential and commercial developments. The projected increase in population in Tennessee, now over 6 million people, and the subsequent increasing demand for land to develop is placing a premium upon the ability of a community to plan for the future to preservation their existing open green spaces.

Through RES conducting this Parks and Recreation Assessment, the City of Kingston is acknowledging the need for planning and evaluating opportunities. The Assessment provides the City the chance to reflect on where they are at this point in time and guide the development that is occurring in the City and how the City should look in the future.

### **Current Resources and Trail inventory**

The results of the PARTAS staff interviews, Strategic Planning Workshop and on-site inspections of Kingston's city parks indicated opportunities that are present that the Community should capitalize upon. The City currently has the 3 mile Betty Brown Walking Trail that begins at Southwest Point and terminates at the City Park on the northern edge of the City; a copy of the Kingston Greenway Map is available in **APPENDIX L**. The trail is adjacent to the lake, except for a small spur, and creates a connection to all the city parks except Ladd Landing. The existing trail is an excellent base to extend the greenway trails system out to make additional connections to schools, residential and the commercial parts of the City.

A greenway trail system would also provide citizens of all ages the opportunity to walk from their homes to nearby schools, parks and retail businesses. In addition it would provide personal health benefits as well as the creation of a bicycle and pedestrian transportation network.

## **Funding Opportunities**

The City of Kingston can help reduce the cost of developing these greenway trails by accessing the different grant programs through the TDEC-RES and the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT). These grant programs include:

- Recreational Trails Program (RTP) – TDEC 80% grant/20% match
- Local Parks and Recreation Fund (LPRF) – TDEC 50% grant/50% match
- Transportation Enhancements (TE) – TDOT 80% grant/20% match
- Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) – TDOT 100% grant

The competition for these grants is high and if the City is willing to commit to developing a comprehensive plan and providing the matching funds, the opportunities for receiving grants increases.

## **Development Standards**

TDEC-RES has accepted the current TDOT standards for both pedestrian and bicycle paths and the development of greenway trails across the State has shown that these are the minimum widths for paths. Greenway trail standards are 6 feet wide for pedestrian only trails and 10 feet wide for both bicycle and pedestrian use trails. These hard surfaced trails need to be constructed to have a 10-15 year life span thus reducing the annual maintenance cost of the trails. Another consideration is the depreciation of the trail over time, establishing reserve account in order to have funds available when major maintenance such as repaving is required is a necessity.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations and initiatives represent what RES considers Kingston should fund and implement to achieve the strategic objectives and performance measures put forth by the citizens. The advantage is that by going through each layer step by step, the recommendations have a better chance of succeeding because they are so directly linked to the agency mission and strategic goals. The recommendations and initiatives provide new ways to meet the challenges identified in the very beginning through the strategic planning process. The end result is that they are prioritized to reflect resource identification and every task, initiative, and recommendation can get linked back up to strategic objectives that cover the varied responsibilities of any organization.

### **SHORT TERM**

(Should be accomplished and implemented within 6 months to 1 year)

- The City should pass an ordinance creating a dedicated funding source for Greenways and Trail projects

### **MID TERM**

(Should be accomplished and implemented within 1-3 years)

- Develop and implement a Comprehensive Greenway and Trail System Plan
- Investigate opportunities for developing greenway trail linkages through existing parks, schools, businesses and other government agency property
- Creation of a City ordinance to require new construction or developments to provide green space, greenways and/or greenway connections based on a developed plan

### **LONG TERM**

(Should be accomplished and implemented within 3-5 years)

- Develop 2 additional miles of greenway trails linking the Betty Brown Memorial Walking Trail to schools, parks and retail areas with pedestrian and bicycle trails

## **Recommendation Details**

**Dedicated Funding-**This could be an additional one percent to the hotel motel tax, a quarter of one percent sales tax increase or a three cent property tax increase. Having a dedicated funding for greenways and trails is like a saving account, so money will be available when opportunities to construction trails appear. This dedicated funding source also will provide for future maintenance needs to repair or repave the trails.

**Comprehensive Greenways and Trails Plan-**Creation and implementation of a Comprehensive Greenways and Trails Plan will lead the development of greenways and trails in the City of Kingston in the future. The plan will identify possible routes of development to connect the residential areas of the City to schools, City facilities, commercial development and other areas deemed valuable by the citizens. The Plan must also address City requirements on developers to provide interior walking options within their developments and this action will create connections to the City's Greenway and Trails System.

**Opportunities-**A Parks and Recreation Master Plan with a Greenways and Trails component is needed to design a Comprehensive City Wide Trail System that would be established by City ordinance. Future development would be guided by this ordinance and the developers would be responsible for funding the development of the trails, not the City of Kingston. PARTAS strongly encourages the City of Kingston to go visit the Town of Farragut to see this greenway trail system and to use the local ordinances passed by that Town as a model. A long term easement agreement with the Tennessee Valley Authority for public use access to additional land could be the start to build additional greenway trails.

## **Conclusion**

As the 2008 Tennessee Greenways and Trails Plan states, there are numerous benefits to local communities having a greenway and trail system. These include:

- positive economic impacts
- improved personal health
- increased bicycle and pedestrian transportation opportunities
- providing stream buffers and improving water quality
- preservation/conservation of our diminishing open green spaces
- recreation opportunities

As the Tennessee population ages, more people are looking to downsize their residential requirements, moving back home to be closer to family and friends, and looking for less expensive places to live, these benefits become increasingly important. The sense of community that develops when people use the trails becomes a strong sales point in attracting new residents to Tennessee cities and towns. The City of Kingston should work hard to increase their greenway and trails capacity as another selling point for why people would want to live here.

This page left blank intentionally

# **CHAPTER 5**

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

## *PUBLIC INPUT*

The Parks and Recreation Technical Advisory Service (PARTAS) of the Recreation Educational Services Division (RES) conducted a Public Input Workshop as part of a Park and Recreation Assessment for the City of Kingston on April 12, 2010, from 5:30-8:00 pm. The purpose of the meeting was to identify and prioritize parks and recreation issues and needs for the future of Kingston.

Mayor Troy Beets requested assistance from PARTAS to conduct a citizen input process to examine future recreation planning. Jeni Brinkman, RES Assistant Director, April H. Johnson, East Tennessee PARTAS Consultant and Mackel Reagan, Middle Tennessee PARTAS Consultant conducted the Public Input Workshop. Kingston invited interested citizens concerned with the future of the park system to participate. A variety of individuals representing groups that currently use the park system or would like to be involved in the planning and expansion of the park system attended the workshop.

The facilitators utilized the nominal group process to initiate discussion and determine park needs and issues. RES implemented the Balanced Score Card Performance Management System to promote more specific planning goals and objectives. The advantages of the Balanced Score Card are that it links the mission of an agency with the customer/community's requirements with achievable goals and objectives. The workshop began with the review of Kingston's Parks and Recreation Department's current mission statement. Participants provided their opinions and thoughts on how the current statement expresses the important impacts the Department contribute to communities and if it reflects the mission of the Department for the future.

The workshop began with a review of the current mission statement for the Department. After group discussion, it was decided that the current mission statement was a solid reflection of the Department. The next step involved the facilitators working with the group to complete an assessment of the parks organization. The group was asked to provide what they envisioned as the current strengths and weaknesses of the park system and discuss the present condition of the Department. The citizens were then given individual Post-it notes to list individual objectives for the City's park system. One challenge in this phase of planning is identifying duplications that are often the same objective. Prioritization needs to take place to consider what the most important goals are, and what are short term tasks and long term tasks.

The facilitators presented the group with a PICK Chart and asked them to put their individual items on a graph measuring impact against cost. The facilitators then divided the graph into four quadrants based upon the participants' impact vs. value view of each item. These items were later classified by the facilitators as Postpone, Implement, Consider, and Kill. Items in the implement area were of high impact with relatively little cost. Postpone items were of minor impact and minor cost, while Consider items had very good impact, but the cost was significant. Kill items had a high cost but low impact and should not proceed at this time.

The following information represents the data gathered at the public input meeting and was used in determining the recommendations set forth in the Assessment.

### **Current Strengths and Positive Aspects**

#### **Top four ranked in order**

1. Staff/Customer Service
2. Special Events
3. Maintenance of Facilities
4. Partnerships

#### **Other Strengths Mentioned**

- Maintenance of pool and its operation
- Improving participant morale and physical well-being
- Good park maintenance with limited resources
- Walking trail
- Waterfront
- Support of youth organizations
- Senior activities
- Historical significance and programming at Fort Southwest Point
- Friendly community
- Volunteer organizations and support/partnerships
- 4<sup>th</sup> of July event
- Swim lesson scholarships
- Swim team
- Certified staff/award-winning lifeguard staff
- Number of people served
- Flexibility to meet needs
- Variety of activities
- Bringing people to city
- Events for all ages
- Physical Setting
- Dedication of staff
- Boat Ramps and docks/water access
- City parks
- Setting & venue of Southwest Point Park
- Kingston country fair
- Support groups and services
- Community support
- Kids Camp
- Community commitment

## **Current Weaknesses, Concerns, and Issues**

### **Top four ranked in order**

1. Funding
2. Inadequate number of facilities- Indoor and Outdoor/Lack of land
3. Need more non-traditional, non-athletic adult and senior programming
4. Security

### **Other Weaknesses, Concerns, and Issues**

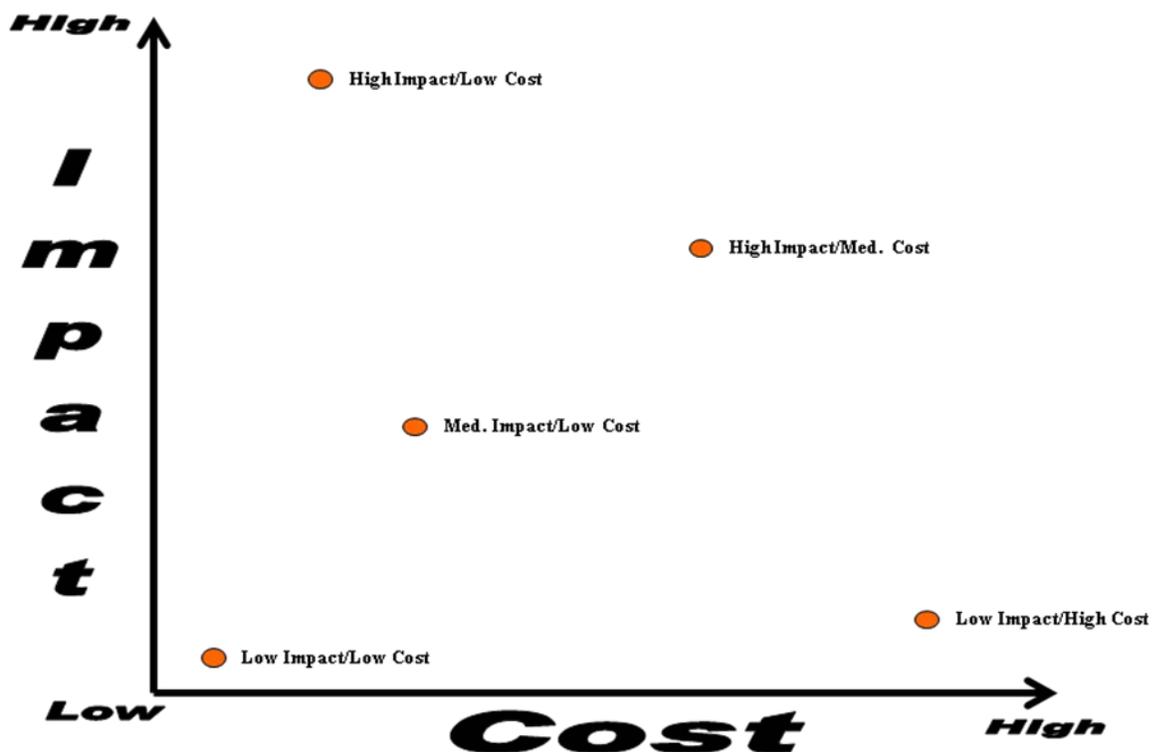
- Lack of staffing / budget issues
- Boat ramps conditions / in disrepair – underwater areas
- Lack of indoor pool – access year-round
- Inadequate number of ball fields
- Limited parking
- Safety and security in parks/ball fields
- Vandalism
- Lack of evening staff
- Need centrally located facility – ball fields/center, etc in one place
- Inadequate lighting on some athletic fields– Porter park needs lighting
- Staff and funding is stretched to cover residents and non-residents
- Facilities are over-utilized
- Removal of Lakefront Tax – .25% of Sales Tax
- Lack of programming for adults – sports
- Lack of programming for youth – non-sports
- Lack of programming for preschool, teens, non-athletic children, arts
- Lack of youth football fields
- Redevelopment of Porter Park to be multi-purpose
- Limited facilities impacting programming – practices, equipment – had to go to Lenoir City
- Sports fighting for space– no room for adult softball
- Lack of indoor, active recreation– gymnasium
- Land/growth issues
- Age of facilities– constant remodeling
- ADA accessibility issues at most facilities
- Lakefront development– need more boat access & activities
- No indoor facility for basketball
- Lack of tennis complex
- Lack of 5-10 yr comprehensive plan– communicate to public – action to be taken
- Political tension
- Lack of non-traditional recreation– Frisbee, climbing walls, etc.

## PICK Chart

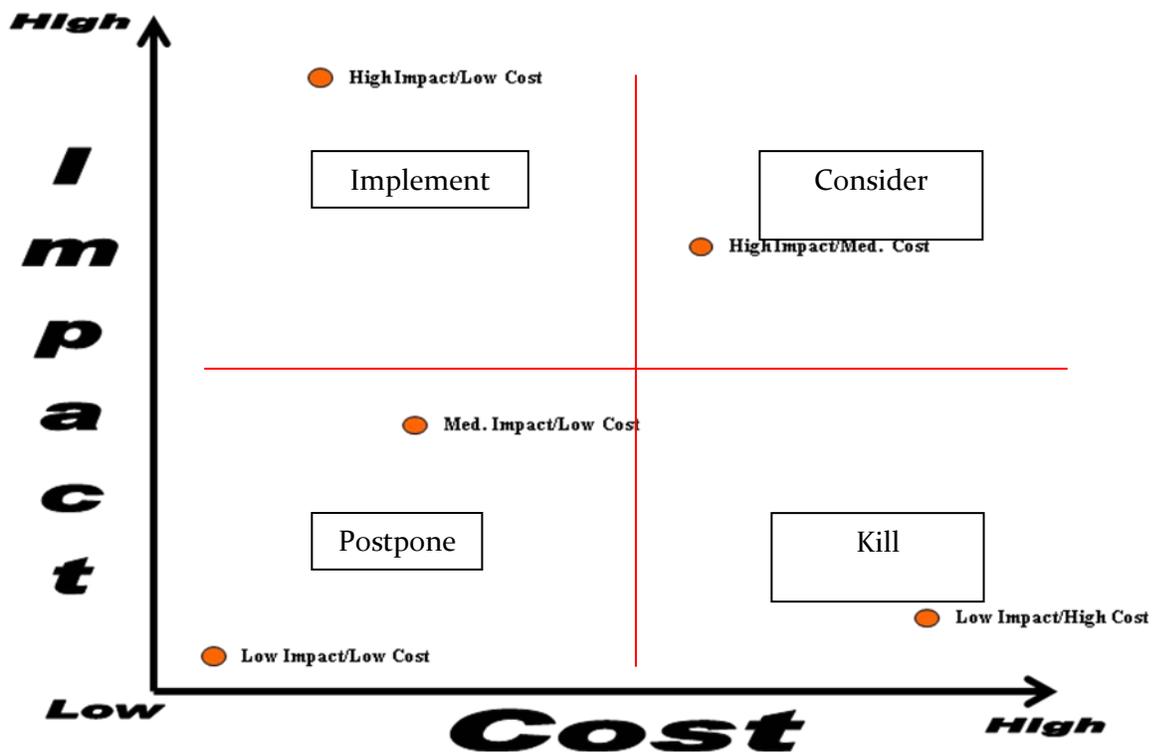
The PICK Chart is a method of visually prioritizing actions by the agency. The goal is to put high impact, low cost into an immediate implementation plan, high impact/high cost into a consider long range goal, low impact/low cost in a postpone, and a low impact/high cost as non-starters.

The initials of PICK chart stand for Postpone, Implement, Consider, and Kill and are a method for participants to determine where each of their performance measures fall within the chart.

The chart graphs impact versus cost and the participants were asked to take each of their wants for the department and physically place it on the chart graph provided on the wall. The goal was to determine where it would fall when compared to the two indices of value and cost. Below is an example of the chart.



After the participants locate each performance measure on the chart, the facilitators explained the reasoning behind the quadrant location of the measures. This method allowed the participants to see where their objective fell in terms of cost and impact and relate this to those that in the short run could get implemented, those of little cost and impact that could get postponed, others that should get consideration in the long term because they offer great impact but have significant costs, and then those measures that should get eliminated (killed) because the impact is much less than the cost to the agency. Below is an example of the quadrants drawn on the PICK Chart:



The citizen objectives were prioritized by the PICK Chart in the following manner:

**Implement higher impact and lower cost**

- More park benches
- Evening staff for programming (2)
- Martial Arts programming
- Speed bumps at Byrd Field
- Evening park staff
- Parking

**Consider, mid to high impact and mid to low cost**

- Disk golf course (2)
- Computer classes
- Maintenance staff (2)
- Cooking classes
- More recreational sports programs
- Improve boat docks
- Add more boat docks
- Develop Porter Park (3)
- Upgrade/modernize current facilities (2)

**Postpone, mid to high value and mid to high cost**

- Land (7)
- Sports complex (6)
- Larger Community Center (2)
- Indoor pool (5)
- Gymnasium (2)
- Multi-use facility with indoor and outdoor areas that is centrally (7)
- Marina
- Cover pool

**Kill, low value, and high cost**

- More trash cans
- Shuffle board
- Horseshoe pits

## Assessment Conclusion

What is “quality of life”?

Why is the quality of life of its citizens important to a community?

Who should pay for items that effect/influence the quality of life in a community?

Quality of life is based on each individual’s work, recreation and family influences. A community is responsible for the recreation portion of the quality of life for its citizens and as such must provide for it as it does any other service of the City. Recreation is defined differently from one individual to another. One person may consider their recreation as playing a sport, while another views recreation as more passive, like reading a book in a park overlooking the lake. Both of these, and many other past-times and activities are classified as recreation. For a community to provide a good quality of life for its citizens, a full service recreation system is essential and cannot be over looked.

We know at the present time local governments are struggling to balance their budget. The key issue is “quality.” What makes a quality community? We believe it is more that low taxes. People live in cities because they can receive services and benefits that are not obtained in sparsely settled rural communities and that are reasonably priced for quality service. This includes high quality utilities, garbage pickup, smooth roads, quality medical facilities, quality education system, and *quality public recreation facilities and programs*. Through taxes, everyone pays for these advantages.

Once these basic services are secured, people want more than a smooth ride home from work. They look for entertainment, cultural, opportunities for themselves and their children to participate in sports or instructional classes, a beautiful environment and ways to relax with family and friends. All of these items are recreation and a part of a recreation system. The more of these things a community offers, the more desirable a place to live and work becomes. Both large and small cities benefit from a commitment to enhancing quality of life for their residents by providing quality recreation services, programs and facilities. Cities must provide these services and be willing to budget for them to compete for population growth and economic development. Many businesses rank quality of life high on the list of things they are looking for in a community when they are looking to relocate or develop facilities. A prime and relevant example of this is Hamilton County. The recreational opportunities and quality of life of the future employees was one of the main criteria that Volkswagen’s looked at when deciding to locate in Enterprise South Industrial Park.

Local government expenditures should be viewed as investments in quality of life, investments that will generate a positive return. Government can’t do everything, but it should be a facilitator. It can prime the economic pump by creating venues and services to attract private investments, thus creating community growth. Government must not lose sight of this reality and help provide a good quality of life for its citizens.

The City of Kingston has expressed a commitment to recreation and the quality of life of its citizens by requesting RES to complete this assessment and the strategic planning meeting. The City must now determine the path for the future of the quality of life of its citizens by making the commitment to follow the recommendations outlined in this report. The path will not be an easy or short one, but based upon the current recreation system and the dedication of employees and citizens, it is a path that can be developed.

This page left blank intentionally

# **APPENDICES**

(files are located on cd)

A- Job Descriptions

B- Volunteer Manual

C- Performance Evaluation

D- Organizational Chart

E- Policy and Procedures Manual

F- Planning Template

G- Playground Safety Manual

H- Retro-fitting Bleacher Guide

I- Facility Reservation Forms

J- Needs Assessments

K- Program Evaluation

L- Volunteer Manual

M-Kingston Greenway Map