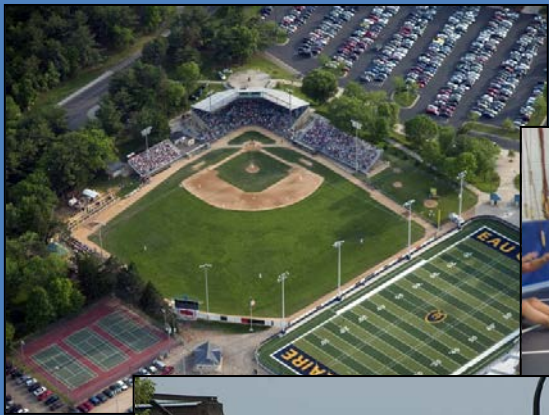


# City of Eau Claire Department of Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Strategic Plan



June, 2011





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## INTRODUCTION

The initial strategic plan for the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department was prepared in 2006. The purpose of the plan was to identify strategic issues facing the Department over a 5- to 10-year period and develop specific recommendations or actions to address these issues.

There is a distinction between strategic planning for an organization and operational or shorter time planning. Strategic planning can generally be defined as *“A process to assist in producing fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it.”*

The strategic planning process provides a shared vision of an organization’s future and then determines the best way to achieve this vision. Through strategic planning, an organization can:



- Examine the environment in which the Department operates;
- Explore the factors and trends that affect the way they do business and carry out their roles;
- Seek to meet a mission and any mandates that they may have;
- Identify strategic issues that must be addressed;
- Find ways to address these issues by re-examining the organization’s mission, product, services, facilities, costs, financing, management, and organization;
- Direct an organization and its resources toward accomplishing these goals over the upcoming months and years.

Although a strategic plan is prepared to cover a period of 10 to 15 years, it is reviewed and updated after a 5-year period. Since the plan is 5 years old, it was decided to review the document and determine whether the Department’s strategic issues had changed and whether new strategic actions should be developed.

The original plan, which identified five strategic issues, was prepared with input from the Department Director and three division heads. For the update of the plan, it was decided to involve additional staff representing the various operations and facilities managed by the Department. The group involving approximately 14 people met three times to review and update the 2006 plan.

As done in 2006, the plan update team followed a series of steps to assist in updating the plan. The first step was for the team to review and discuss community trends that may effect future Department operations, the delivery of services and recreational



needs of the community. The discussion focused on demographic trends of the community, which are included in Appendix A. The team also discussed general trends encountered within the Department that affect levels of service and programs of the Department itself, since team members were already knowledgeable in these areas.

The following sections of this report provide a summary of the discussions of each exercise completed by the strategic planning team. Each exercise builds upon the next, with the end result the identification of the strategic issues and recommendations to resolve them.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As part of the process to examine the environment in which the Department operates, team members reflected upon what they felt were key accomplishments or milestones of the Department since 2006. The following is the listing of these accomplishments as they were identified by the team members. They are not listed by priority nor grouped by order of accomplishment or by Division.

- Installation of City water connections to Carson Park Baseball Stadium
- Computerization of pass system for Fairfax Pool
- Developed system for reserving facilities on-line
- Formation of “Friends” group for the community parks
- Improvements to Department’s website and amount of information available
- Utilization of the social media sites
- Development of system for tracking leases and agreements
- Process improvements for special events applications, garbage can cleaning, and leases
- Empowering staff – allowing staff to be more self-directed
- Completion of the facility expansion and upgrades at Hobbs Ice Center
- Relocation of administrative offices to Hobbs Ice Center
- Development of the master plans for the SE and NW community parks
- Development of a pruning schedule for the trees in the parks
- Improved employee-management relationship
- Development of the Eau Claire Baseball Hall of Fame
- Construction of the Phoenix Park restroom facility
- Development of tree inventory for boulevards and parks
- Development of Forestry Master Plan and EAB Plan
- Placing trail maps on-line
- Growth of the youth football program from 4 to 25 teams
- Completion of several important trail connections eliminating major gaps
- Reduced printing costs for Prime Times activity guide
- Entered into partnerships with various organizations to expand programming efforts





- Providing on-line registration for the public
- Improved front office customer relations
- Increased staff visibility to the public with uniforms
- Creation of user group committee for Hobbs Ice Center
- Stadiums at Carson Park becoming self-supporting
- Implementation of the NR 151 regulations
- Improved asset tracking and reporting
- Creation of playground safety specialist position
- Development of Fairfax Pool master plan
- Providing concessions on POS
- Improved tracking of accounts receivable
- Development of a centralized filing system for the Department
- Ability to provide more services with reduced staffing numbers
- Installation of fiber optic connections to facilities
- Improved cemetery recordkeeping
- Greater environmental consciousness – reduced fertilizer applications
- Increased efficiency of the stores clerk
- Creation of the volunteer coordinator position
- Reduced inventory of Recreation Division supplies and equipment as part of relocation from First Avenue site
- Construction of centralized maintenance operation facility at Carson Park
- Implementation of green team initiatives and process improvements
- Increase in revenues from sponsorships
- Improvements completed at Carson Park Baseball Stadium





## TRENDS

As part of the process to examine the environment in which the Department operates, team members also discussed the demographic trends of the community which may affect the delivery of services by the Department. A summary of these general demographic trends are included in Appendix A.

On an overall basis, population forecasts continue to show that Eau Claire's population will continue to grow with the rate of increase to be slightly less than the 1% increase that the City has experienced over the past few decades. The size of the City in area will also continue to increase, but at lower rates of growth as shown historically. Growth to the northeast will no longer continue with the incorporation of the Village of Lake Hallie; while growth to the west, northwest, and southeast will continue.

Housing construction has slowed in recent years, with the trend for more condominium and multiple-family developments. It is anticipated that housing construction will continue at similar levels as in recent years, with no return of the housing construction levels of the late 1990s.

The planning team also discussed additional trends or observations that they had recently encountered that could relate to providing park, recreation, and forestry services in the community. These included:

- The City will see the continued need to combine facilities and programs as funding is reduced. (Examples are the reduction in the number of skating rinks, summer playground programs, etc.).
- Community expectations for services provided by public agencies continues to increase as tax dollars shrink:
  - people expect higher and better facilities and programming
  - they want it immediately
  - they want information 24/7
  - we will see continued job reductions as public expectations rise.
- There is an increasing need to provide services with the help of volunteer labor, and also many organizations are willing to provide that volunteer assistance.
- Fees have reached or will soon reach levels where they could impose hardships for households and organizations.
- Fewer programs and activities can be provided with no fee.
- We are seeing more cooperation between agencies as funding becomes scarcer, including private sector companies and the medical community.
- There will be increased demand for public transportation and various means of non-motorized means of travel, such as with bicycling.
- The use of social media will continue to increase.
- The decline in the interest in organized adult activities will continue.

## INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

A major consideration in decision-making within an organization is the internal and external influences on an organization. This information is useful when recognizing strengths and weaknesses of the organization as team members begin identifying strategic issues. In 2006, the Department went through a series of exercises to identify these influences. As part of the update process for the plan, staff members reviewed the listings from the original plan and updated it as needed. In addition, there can be interplay between these influences, which is illustrated in Appendix B.

The following are the influences identified that could be factors (directly or indirectly) in decision-making within the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department:

### **Internal Strengths (These are resources or capabilities of the Department that help the organization accomplish its mission.)**

- Education and training of Forestry crew
- Good financial support from City Council
- Professional staff – strong educational training – good diversity in background and expertise
- Good equipment available to do work with
- Good working relationship with Public Works Department
- Good policies and procedures in place
- Good understanding of government (ability to work with other governmental agencies)
- Well organized/efficient office assistant for Parks/Forestry
- Good working relationships with outside groups (facility users, community groups, neighborhoods, etc.)
- Good training of part-time staff
- Good, energetic part-time staff
- Stability of staff (good longevity)
- Good blend of experienced employees & new/younger ones with fresh ideas
- Flexibility of staff and being adaptive to change
- Well maintained facilities
- Good cross section of facilities provided and available
- Diverse types of recreation programs provided, such as aquatics, special ed., adult programs
- Good computer systems (communicating, software, support)
- Strong supervisors in each division
- Good leadership of the Department
- Online access to information (website, Active Net software)

- Structure of internship program
- Front office design and accessibility to public
- Quality maintenance and operation of facilities
- Learn-to-swim program (over 3,000 participants)
- Working relationships with other City Departments
- Revenue tracking system and staff follow-up
- Current with industry trends
- Exceptional Fairfax training and in-service program
- Strong, talented, and knowledgeable front office team
- Diverse programming for individuals with special needs
- Visibility of Department employees at special events
- Unified Parks, Recreation, Forestry/Cemeteries Department staff
- Increased partnerships with ECASD, YMCA, EC Youth Hockey, and other local Parks & Recreation Departments
- Staff are experts in the community in various capacities (facility scheduling and use, hockey, and manufactured ice)
- Communication and relations with the public
- Playground safety inspector on staff
- Playground inspection program
- Public access to cemetery records
- Asset management program for park inventory
- City water hookup for Carson Park
- Department Director splitting office hours between administration and maintenance
- Full-time volunteer coordinator position
- Completed costing of operations ( ball fields ice rinks)
- Template created for work requested that is not high priority ( i.e. Luther Hospital-HML agreement)
- Shifted mower maintenance to CESA
- Old water system abandoned at cemeteries
- Stores Clerk position evolution
- Green initiatives considered in all aspects of operations
- Climate may be changing for volunteer partnerships
- Completion of Jeffers Road brush disposal site
- EAB readiness plan complete
- Completion of 10-year Urban Forestry Management Plan
- Hobbs Mgt flexibility
- Bio fuel contracts

**Internal Weaknesses (These are deficiencies in resources and capabilities of the Department that may hinder an organization's ability to accomplish its mission.)**

- Uncertainty of budget from year to year – cuts seem to focus on P & R Department
- Accessibility of certain park areas relating to the ADA requirements
- Poor coordination/organizational structure of Finance Department
- Union/management issues
- Hours of operation (8 to 4 vs. 7 day, 24 hour operation)
- Lack of training and training funds
- Lack of programming for lifetime activities, nutrition, health, etc.
- Lack of clarity and dissemination of mission or purpose to employees
- Need to grow public awareness
- Lack of marketing of the Department, its programs, facilities, services
- Lack of boulevard tree planting requirements for new subdivisions
- Lack of parkland dedication ordinance
- Understanding the potential uses of our Active Net software
- Soliciting feedback from our participants using online evaluations
- Understanding changing City processes with Human Resources and Finance
- Upcoming retirements of upper level management staff (such as Parks & Recreation, Public Works, & Fire)
- Learning curve and acceptance of staff to rely more on social media
- Inability of more staff to have access to computers
- Cemetery offices are quite old/need for consolidation
- Bleacher/seating at Carson Park ( aging and non-portability)
- Owen Park wells pumping to Half Moon Lake

**External Opportunities (These are outside factors or situations that can affect the Department in a positive or favorable way.)**

- Networking more with other agencies in the areas of wellness and fitness
- Working more with the DNR and their resources
- Encourage groups to assist in facility maintenance, plantings, upkeep through sponsorships
- Capitalize on the community's support for quality of life programs
- Capitalize on GIS technology
- Expand opportunities to work with the Sports Commission
- Improve marketing of the Department, facilities, programs and services
- Find more sources of revenue through sponsorships, grants, donations, etc.
- Encourage special interest groups to step forward in being a partner to assist in providing facilities, funding, etc.
- Capitalize on existing staff contacts with organizations and individuals
- Working with community groups to influence decision-making
- Identifying opportunities to reduce duplication of services with outside agencies and businesses
- Optimizing our existing facility use potential
- Use of social media to promote our identity, programs, and facilities
- Contact with outside marketing professionals to promote our Department at a low cost
- New normal
- Positive climate for utilizing volunteer assistance

**External Threats (These are outside factors or situations that can affect the Department in a negative manner.)**

- Community belief that going towards privatization is the smart way to go
- Individuals/Neighborhood association's influence over decision-making
- Emerald Ash Borer and Gypsy Moth readiness for these invasions and associated costs
- Reduction in CDBG funding
- Reduction in LAWCON funding
- Competition from outside organizations and businesses for programs and participation
- Budget reductions from Council related to shared revenues
- Negative effects from School District budget cutting:
  - increased charges to the City for facility use
  - reducing/elimination of school athletic programs
- State Budget Impacts on City Budget and operations
- Impacts of State mandates on City staff (collective bargaining, health care, retirement, staffing levels/shifts)
- Uncertainty of public reaction to service cuts
- Operating expenses exceeding the threshold of what individuals and organizations are able to afford
- Relationship with the Eau Claire Area School District
- Elimination of Transit and the impact on transportation to Fairfax Pool
- Community expectations of operating at the same level to provide programs and services with reduced resources
- Public understanding service level challenges due to scarcity of resources (both human and financial)
- Soil contamination at Owen Park

## MISSION STATEMENT

The team then discussed the Department’s current mission statement and discussed areas where changes or improvements should be considered. A mission statement is a “succinct statement that articulates the organization’s purpose (the end result an organization seeks to accomplish), its business (a description of the primary means used to accomplish the purpose), and values (the values or beliefs shared by the employees of the organization).”

The group discussed the mission statement at all three of the discussion sessions and felt it was important to shorten the overall introductory statement or vision of the Department so that it could be more readily used and made more accessible to its staff. Team members noted that few staff members were familiar with the Department’s current mission statement. Team members also felt that the mission statement should include references to the use of technology and social media, as well as provide a stronger emphasis on sustainability and green technologies.

The following is the approved mission statement of the Department:

### **City of Eau Claire Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department Mission Statement**

***To provide exceptional park, recreation, and forestry services  
that will enrich our citizens and visitors.***

**This is accomplished through our values of:**

1. Maintaining open and effective relationships with the community by communicating to the public using a variety of methods, including the City website and social media.
2. Being an ambassador for the City and a steward of the natural environment.
3. Providing innovative organizational approaches to providing services.
4. Providing qualified and professional staff to direct, supervise, and lead department objectives.
5. Operating the department in the most cost-effective manner possible.
6. Providing the best balance possible between the various recreation programs and park facilities through periodic evaluation so that the widest variety of opportunities are available to promote the health and wellness of our citizens.
7. Ensuring that facilities, parks, and the community urban forest are acquired, built, managed, and used in a sustainable, planned, and systematic manner to meet today’s needs and those of the future.
8. Providing safe programs and facilities.



## IDENTIFICATION OF STRATEGIC ISSUES & VISION STATEMENTS

The strategic planning team then worked on updating the list of strategic issues facing the Department. A strategic issue is:

*A fundamental challenge affecting an organization's mission, mandates, product, services, facilities, customers or users, costs or management.*

If not dealt with, it will lead to:

- A significant problem or crisis within the organization
- A major missed opportunity

Generally, a strategic issue is not a current problem and generally can be quite complex. To help the team determine whether an issue should be considered as an operational issue or strategic issue, the table found in Appendix C assisted the team in distinguishing between the two. As noted in this table, it may be difficult to determine whether a particular issue is purely operational or strategic; many times an issue may fall somewhere in between.

In 2006, five strategic issues were identified within the Department. The planning team went through an exercise to determine if any of the original five strategic issues should be eliminated or revised. The process revealed that all five strategic issues were still relevant for the Department, subject to some revisions and modifications.

The planning team also identified two additional strategic issues facing the Department. This included an issue related to “healthy communities” and one related to environmental factors.

As done in 2006, each strategic issue is formatted by incorporating an overall or summary issue statement, which is then grouped with contributing issue statements. These contributing issue statements are included in the plan as they provide greater detail and definition to the overall strategic issues.

In addition, the team developed a vision statement for each strategic issue. This vision represents an optimal outcome of how the planning team would like to see the Department positioned relative to each strategic issue within approximately 5 years.

The following is the updated listing of strategic issues and vision statements:

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE**

**How can Department personnel improve its responsibilities and interaction with its customers?**

1. How can the staff improve its customer service with the public when undertaking our roles of providing services and facilities to the community?
2. How can we maintain our service excellence with periodic staffing turnover and possible staff reductions?

**VISION/OUTCOME:** *“Department staff is well educated, trained, and motivated to provide positive interaction with the public that ensures that the customer feels that they are important, valued, that they are the reason we are in business, and that they are satisfied with the product they receive.”*

## **PRIORITIZING SERVICES, PROGRAMS, EVENTS, AND FACILITIES**

**How should the Department gather input, process, prioritize, plan, implement, and maintain its services, programs, events, and facilities to respond to the recreational needs of a changing population and address needs currently not met?**

1. How does the Department plan for needs created by the future growth and expansion of the City?
2. How do we meet the needs of a changing population or underserved group through changes or improvements to programs or facilities?
3. How do we interact with outside groups in planning facilities (i.e., how does the City respond to single voices attempting to set policy or direction)?
4. How will the Department document plans and secure funding for future developments?
5. How does the Department receive input from the community in a timely manner?
6. How do we provide the correct balance between quality and quantity of our facilities and programs?
7. How do we staff and provide upkeep for new facilities with shrinking budgets?
8. How can we get community and elected officials to understand the need to maintain and upgrade our existing facilities and infrastructure (i.e. Fairfax Pool)?
9. How should the Department determine its level of support for delivering services and providing facilities with the School District?

**VISION/OUTCOME:** *“The Department offers excellent services, programs, and facilities that meet the changing needs of the community.”*

## MARKETING

**How does the Department promote its image and visibility and have the community recognize the importance of the Department as a leading provider in park, recreation, and forestry services?**

1. How can the Department better “market” or “brand” its product and in the process improve its image and recognition both in the community and within the organization?
2. How can we better educate the community on the value-added benefits of our Department?
3. What role will social media have on marketing and influencing the perception of our Department?

**VISION/OUTCOME:** *“Through increased visibility of the Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Department, its programs and facilities, the citizens of Eau Claire see the Department as a valuable community asset that is important to our quality of life and sense of community.”*

## PERSONNEL AND STAFFING

**How does the Department organize its staff to create a more flexible environment to provide services and programs that are responsive to community needs?**

1. How do we organize our staff to create a more responsive, sustainable, and flexible organization?
2. How can the Department work to improve employee scheduling so that we can continue to provide quality services and programs in the most efficient and economic manner?
3. How can we meet customer and service demands with less people while budgets continue to decline?
4. How do we make effective changes to staffing at our parks and facilities, balancing the needs of the users while properly maintaining the facilities?
5. How do we train or cross-train our staff and keep them current on ever changing technologies?
6. How do we recognize staff, division, and Department accomplishments?
7. How should the Department plan for a possible consolidation of City, County, or School District operations?

**VISION/OUTCOME:** *“Department staff has the capability and flexibility to provide services and facilities in an economically responsible manner while providing quality service to the community.”*

## FUNDING

**How should the Department continue to fund programs, services, and facilities?**

1. How do we fund future capital improvements?
2. How can we meet budget goals when proposed funding mechanisms conflict with positions of certain community interest groups (i.e. parkland dedication fee, boat launch fee, etc.)
3. How will the Department fund programs, services, and facilities from alternative funding sources as traditional funding sources become more unreliable?
4. How can we move toward a parkland dedication ordinance and subdivision development ordinance to keep up with demands of expansion?
5. How do we optimize existing facility use potential?
6. How do we identify fee thresholds yet set prices for cost recovery?

**VISION/OUTCOME:** *“The Department has adequate funding to keep pace with its mission of providing excellent services, facilities, and programs to the community.”*

## HEALTHY COMMUNITY

**How can the Department contribute to providing new policies, programs, and events that address wellness, child obesity, fitness, the elderly, and lifetime activities within the community?**

1. How does the Department empower other agencies to participate in healthy community initiatives?
2. What is the role of the Department in developing such policies and providing these programs and events in the community?

**VISION/OUTCOME:** *“The Department is a leading provider of programs, events, and policies to promote the health and wellness of our citizens, addressing issues of wellness, child obesity, fitness, the elderly, and lifetime activities.”*

## ENVIRONMENT

**How does the Department ensure that its facilities, parks, urban forest, and other natural resources are enhanced for future generations?**

1. How do we identify, address, and implement “green and sustainable” initiatives?
2. How does the Department gain support of the community and elected officials in pursuing “green” management practices, and funding of sustainable projects?
3. How will the Department respond to threats to the urban forest and waterways, and gain public acceptance and support of such action plans?
4. How can we enhance the environment of our City’s waterways?
5. How can the Department improve its recycling processes?

**VISION/OUTCOME:** *“The Department is a steward of our environment and natural resources using sustainable practices that enable future generations to enjoy our resources.”*

## BARRIERS TO ADDRESSING STRATEGIC ISSUES

The team continued their work by updating the list of potential barriers that were identified in the 2006 plan. It is important to identify and be aware of these barriers as they could pose a threat to successfully fulfilling the vision/outcome statements listed under each strategic issue. They include:

- Lack of expertise on how to “market” the Department.
- Lack of available staffing time to do substantial marketing efforts and placing it as a higher priority than current job responsibilities.
- The length of time it takes to complete some of the projects and processes.
- The reduction in budget and revenue dollars and the increased competition for grant funds.
- The cost of new initiatives, including green/sustainability technologies.
- Coordination with Public Works-related impacts in park improvement projects.
- Constant changes in technology and ability to keep pace with those changes.
- Lack of flexibility in operations (however, this has significantly improved since 2006).
- Excessive credibility given small groups of people/individuals on community-wide issues.
- Interdepartmental policies and practices of the City.
- Mixed message the Department receives on service delivery to the public.
- Limited City-owned facility space for programming and storage.
- Uncertainty with the collective bargaining issues and impact on Department.
- Pending retirements of several department directors and upper level management and its uncertain impact on the Department.
- Fee threshold of individuals, teams, and community user groups.
- The relationship with the School District and how our programs will be impacted by priority/cost for facility use.

## STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The final step in the process of updating the 2006 plan was to review the recommendations or action steps contained in the 2006 plan and eliminate those actions that were completed or no longer applicable. In addition, the planning team then discussed and identified new actions steps that would be necessary to address each of the strategic issues.

Once the list of recommendations was finalized, Department staff developed an implementation schedule relating to each strategic issue and assigned a staff member or Division as being responsible for its implementation or completion. As noted in the implementation schedule, many of the recommendations/actions are ongoing, while a number of the recommendations will not be undertaken for several years.



## CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

*How can Department personnel improve its responsibilities and interaction with its customers?*

Recommendation	Staff Person	Date
1. Continue to provide periodic customer service training for all staff relating to interaction with the public, and providing a better understanding of the concept of service to the customer and proper methods of delivery of the service that encourages them to be positive representatives or ambassadors of the Department. (This may be as often as every 3-4 weeks for seasonal staff.)	Dawn Comte	Ongoing
2. Develop periodic training sessions with the Active Net software to keep current with upgrades and understand the capabilities of the software.	Dawn Comte	Ongoing
3. Continue to implement the clothing uniform program for Department personnel to make staff visible and approachable to the public.	Dawn Comte Todd Chwala	Ongoing
4. Continue to have meetings involving all staff to enable them to see the bigger picture (role) of the Department and their importance to the mission of the Department.	Phil Fieber Dawn Comte Todd Chwala	Ongoing
5. Make the mission statement prominently visible on the Department's website, social media sites, publications, and brochures for both the staff and public.	Phil Fieber Dawn Comte Todd Chwala	12/31/11
6. Create and adopt a Department slogan (motto) and incorporate it on the Department's website, publications, brochures, and uniforms.	Phil Fieber Dawn Comte Todd Chwala	12/31/11
7. Initiate an awards or incentive program for employees that would recognize employee excellence.	Dawn Comte	12/31/11
8. Outline future changes in the organizational structure of the Parks Division and make available to the employees.	Todd Chwala	12/31/11
9. Initiate an employee recognition program, such as employee of the month, and post on Facebook and City website or other public locations.	Dawn Comte	12/31/11
10. Work to have staff present and visible at facilities (evenings and weekends) when the public uses such facilities.	Phil Fieber Todd Chwala Dawn Comte	12/31/11
11. Include a customer service focus on all employee orientation.	Dawn Comte	
12. Review current policies regarding refunds, issue resolution, and front line employee decision-making which may conflict with established Department policy.	Dawn Comte	12/31/11

## PRIORITIZING SERVICES, PROGRAMS, EVENTS, AND FACILITIES

How should the Department gather input, process, prioritize, plan, implement, and maintain its services, programs, events, and facilities to respond to the recreational needs of a changing population and address needs currently not met?

Recommendation	Staff Person	Date
1. Use evaluation tools, such as "survey monkey," to regularly assess services, facilities, and programs.	Dawn Comte	Ongoing
2. Educate the Waterways and Parks Commission to follow their mission as being advocates and ambassadors of the City's waterways and parks.	Phil Fieber	Ongoing
3. Use more community engagement groups (i.e. the Fairfax Pool Group) to obtain citizen input on facilities and operations.	Phil Fieber Dawn Comte Todd Chwala	Ongoing
4. Brainstorm ideas with the various athletic leagues to keep team fees down and increase participation.	Phil Fieber Dawn Comte	Ongoing
5. Continue to meet periodically with the Urban Forestry Alliance, DNR, and other West Central WI communities on forestry-related issues.	Todd Chwala	Ongoing
6. Organize a work group with the Eau Claire School District to periodically meet to discuss use of facilities and joint programming.	Phil Fieber Dawn Comte	Ongoing
7. Organize a work group with the Eau Claire Senior Center to periodically meet to discuss senior's recreational and leisure needs.	Dawn Comte	Ongoing
8. Develop a system to track citizen input (phone calls, emails, surveys) to better determine public input on issues, programs, and facilities.	Dawn Comte	Ongoing
9. Implement a new program or event periodically and evaluate its success.	Dawn Comte	Ongoing
10. Form a "friends" group or donor program to make improvements to the Forest Hill Cemetery.	Todd Chwala	2010 or after
11. Complete the 2011 community survey of the parks and facilities. a) Review existing services, facilities, and programs and update, eliminate, add, re-purpose as needed to meet community needs. b) Develop an action plan to address deficiencies identified.	Phil Fieber	12/31/11
12. Re-energize the Hobbs consortium group to identify possible improvements/changes to the operation of Hobbs Ice Arena.	Phil Fieber Dawn Comte	12/2011
13. Update the 1988 City's Waterways Plan.	Phil Fieber	2012
14. Review the Parks Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and make recommendations to the Plan Commission to update the chapter.	Phil Fieber	2012
15. Update the 2008-2012 Five-year Parks and Open Space Plan.	Phil Fieber	2013

16. See out a private provider to develop columbaria in one of the cemeteries.	Todd Chwala	2013 or after
17. Complete the fiber optic connections to Forest Hill Cemetery.	Todd Chwala	2013 or after
18. Study the feasibility of consolidating the operations of Forest Hill Cemetery and Lakeview Cemetery.	Todd Chwala	2013 or after

**MARKETING**

How does the Department promote its image and visibility, and get the community to recognize the importance of the Department as a leading provider in park, recreation, and forestry services?

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Staff Person</b>	<b>Date</b>
1. Identify opportunities for staff to be more visible during regular work hours and at events.	Dawn Comte	Ongoing
2. Televis Waterways and Parks Commission meetings on CATV or the internet.	Phil Fieber	Ongoing
3. Develop additional video segments televised on CATV focusing on the parks, and the Department's facilities and programs.	Phil Fieber	Ongoing
4. Contact businesses to become partners in sponsoring ads.	Phil Fieber Dawn Comte	Ongoing
5. Work with the Community Parks Association to identify ways the Association could assist in marketing and fund raising efforts.	Phil Fieber Dawn Comte	2011
6. Submit an application for the National Recreation and Parks Association accreditation.	Phil Fieber	2011
7. Develop a program to use social media such as Twitter, Facebook, UTube to promote and inform the public about events, programs, "how to" segments for the Department, as a method of providing "low cost" advertising.	Dawn Comte	2011
8. Capitalize on "traditional" media sources, such as television and radio, to provide "free" public service promotions of programs and events.	Todd Chwala Dawn Comte Phil Fieber	2011
9. Provide educational/informational signage of projects occurring within the parks and facilities to better inform the public of improvements undertaken by the Department.	Todd Chwala	2011
10. Assess the marketing effort with Otter Creek Marketing relating to the use of Fairfax Pool.	Dawn Comte	2011

11. Create and adopt a Department slogan (motto) based on the Department's mission statement and incorporate it in the Department's website, publications, brochures, and uniforms.	Phil Fieber Dawn Comte Todd Chwala	12/2011
12. Initiate an employee recognition program to highlight Department staff and accomplishments using social media, City website, news media, public meetings, etc.	Dawn Comte Todd Chwala	2012
13. Hire a consultant to provide the Department with a "road map" or plan to succeed in promoting programs and services offered.	Dawn Comte Todd Chwala Phil Fieber	2012
14. Contact the marketing department at the University to establish an intern program to assist in marketing efforts.	Phil Fieber	2012
15. Schedule a Department brainstorming session on other innovative marketing ideas or create a Department marketing committee.	Dawn Comte	2012
16. Develop a consistent signage system within the parks that includes a recognizable logo.	Phil Fieber Todd Chwala	2013
17. Coordinate with DECI to better promote and market park and recreation events in the Downtown and vicinity.	Phil Fieber	2013

**PERSONNEL AND STAFFING**

How does the Department organize its staff to create a more flexible environment to provide services and programs that are responsive to community needs?

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Staff Person</b>	<b>Date</b>
1. Make the Department's mission statement and vision readily accessible and visible to Department employees.	Phil Fieber Dawn Comte Todd Chwala	Ongoing
2. Develop a plan to restructure staffing, responsibilities, and pay scales at Hobbs Ice Center.	Phil Fieber	2011
3. Develop a plan to consider a change of work hours for maintenance staff at Fairfax Pool.	Dawn Comte Todd Chwala	2011
4. Prepare a plan in response to future retirements of supervisory employees that will provide documentation of these supervisory job responsibilities and recommendations for a smooth transition as retirements occur.	Phil Fieber Dawn Comte Todd Chwala	2012
5. Develop a plan to provide front-line employees with on-going training and cross-training opportunities so that they can expand their knowledge base and provide better and more efficient service to the Department.	Phil Fieber Dawn Comte Todd Chwala	2012

6. Provide computer access that is readily available to all employees in need of access to the City's computer network.	Todd Chwala	2012
7. Study options to develop a "lead worker" or "working foreman" concept.	Todd Chwala	2012
8. Review the current staff responsibilities and seek to provide front-line employees with greater decision-making responsibilities within their work environment.	Todd Chwala Dawn Comte	2012
9. Study current staffing schedules in relation to actual hours of facility operations.	Todd Chwala Dawn Comte	2012

**FUNDING**

How does the Department continue to fund programs, services, and facilities?

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Staff Person</b>	<b>Date</b>
1. Continue to seek opportunities for grant funding assistance for facilities, services, and programs, and look for opportunities to coordinate with other organizations in addressing community recreational needs.	Phil Fieber	Ongoing
2. Continue to involve user groups in cost sharing responsibilities in the development and maintenance of park and recreational facilities.	Phil Fieber Todd Chwala Dawn Comte	Ongoing
3. Look for additional funding support from the room tax revenues with increased events being held in the City's parks and facilities.	Phil Fieber	Ongoing
4. Continue to develop "friends" groups to assist in the development, maintenance, and operation of facilities.	Phil Fieber	Ongoing
5. Encourage a "donation friendly" environment within the City for the donation of funds and services for park facilities, and promote the Department as a charitable organization.	Phil Fieber	Ongoing
6. Provide more information to the community and City Council that documents the economic, health, environmental, and social importance of the Department.	Phil Fieber	2011
7. Bid all concession operation products to get a better price.	Dawn Comte	2011
8. Collect Active Net charges from all customer transactions or set a standard transaction fee.	Dawn Comte	2011
9. Create a fee schedule or cost recovery system for services and facilities such as for scoreboard use, press boxes, use of PA systems, forestry services, etc.	Phil Fieber	2011
10. Study the feasibility of selling naming rights to facilities.	Phil Fieber	2011

11. Assess the feasibility of an “urban forestry” surcharge per parcel to assist in forestry operational expenses.	Todd Chwala	2012
12. Research other Parks, Recreation, and Forestry Departments for innovative ideas for funding.	Phil Fieber Dawn Comte	2012/Ongoing
13. Implement a “reservation/cancellation” policy with a set fee structure.	Dawn Comte	2012
14. Discuss options with Department of Community Development regarding City reconsideration of parkland dedication provisions.	Phil Fieber	2012
15. Develop a policy and procedure with the Public Works Department and Community Development Department to formalize requirements for development agreements pertaining to the planting of boulevard trees within new subdivisions.	Todd Chwala	2012

**HEALTHY COMMUNITY**

*How can the Department contribute to providing new policies, programs, and events that address wellness, child obesity, fitness, the elderly, and lifetime activities within the community?*

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Staff Person</b>	<b>Date</b>
1. Identify other agencies that would be beneficial to partner with to participate in a healthy community initiative.	Phil Fieber	2011
2. Explore partnerships the Eau Claire School District in providing a “healthy lifestyles” program for youth.	Phil Fieber	2011
3. Establish criteria for existing programs/facilities/services that foster healthy choices and lifestyles.	Phil Fieber Dawn Comte Todd Chwala	2011
4. Take an active role in the programs, activities, and events sponsored by the City’s Wellness Team.	Phil Fieber Dawn Comte Todd Chwala	2011
5. Develop “healthy” menu options at concession stands.	Dawn Comte	2011
6. Take an active role in the ACHIEVE Initiative by continuing to have the Department represented on the Community Health Action and Response Team.	Phil Fieber	2012
7. Assist in the creation and development of a Health and Wellness Chapter in the City’s Comprehensive Plan.	Phil Fieber	2012
8. Explore partnerships with the hospitals, other area health care providers, and Senior Center in providing leisure activities for seniors.	Phil Fieber	2012
9. Sponsor more “active” special events (rather than longer programs) that promote exercise and healthy lifestyles.	Dawn Comte	2012
10. Expand the “safe routes to school” program to include the City’s parks and recreational facilities.	Phil Fieber	2013

11. Study the feasibility of implementing a fee-based incentive system where fees are reduced for regular enrollees, or participants in active programs or events, or for non-smokers, etc.	Dawn Comte	2013
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**ENVIRONMENT**

*How does the Department ensure that its facilities, parks, urban forest, and other natural resources are enhanced for future generations?*

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Staff Person</b>	<b>Date</b>
1. Remove undesirable and invasive plants from all parks and waterways.	Todd Chwala	Ongoing
2. Continue to have a staff member on the City's "Green Team."	Todd Chwala	Ongoing
3. Encourage employees with knowledge in recycling, green and sustainable practices, and the environment, to take active an active role in informing the public about the importance of our natural resources.	Todd Chwala Dawn Comte Phil Fieber	Ongoing
4. Identify ways to reduce water consumption at the parks and other facilities.	Todd Chwala	2011
5. Develop a recycling program in the parks that has a strong marketing and public awareness component (possibly an ordinance requiring recycling by park users).	Todd Chwala	2011
6. Reduce the amount of plastic soda bottles sold at vending machines and at the concession stands.	Dawn Comte Todd Chwala	2011
7. Develop "rain gardens" where feasible to reduce runoff from parks and facilities.	Todd Chwala Phil Fieber	2012
8. Implement the various components of the action plan prepared for the Emerald Ash Borer disease and market the plan to the public and media.	Todd Chwala	2012
9. Require user groups to participate in clean-up and recycling at their events.	Todd Chwala	2012
10. Consider green and sustainable practices and alternatives for all projects undertaken by the Department.	Todd Chwala	2012
11. Encourage the use of recyclable materials for park projects.	Todd Chwala	2012
12. Continue to look for potential new open space areas and eliminate those areas that are underutilized.	Todd Chwala	2012
13. Provide educational/informational signage of recycling and green projects occurring within the parks and facilities.	Todd Chwala Dawn Comte	2012
14. Update the 1988 Waterways Plan (also see pg. 20).	Phil Fieber	2012





# **APPENDIX A**

**TREND AND BACKGROUND  
INFORMATION  
FOR THE  
CITY OF EAU CLAIRE**

## GROWTH TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS

(From Comprehensive Plan and State Demographic Service Center)

Eau Claire was incorporated in 1872, at which time the City had a population of 2,293. The lumber industry created a population boom in the years following as the City's population swelled to over 21,000 persons by 1885, and Eau Claire was Wisconsin's third largest city, twice the size of Madison. However, soon thereafter, lumbering began to decline with the depletion of the timber forests to the north, which led to mill consolidations and closings. Between 1885 and 1890, Eau Claire lost 20% of its population. Despite the loss of the lumber industry, Eau Claire was able to make a transition to a diversified manufacturing base by the early 1900s and saw steady population growth through the 1940s when its population reached 36,058 in 1950.

The City's population has continued to grow steadily during the last half of the twentieth century, with a broad-based economy featuring regional retail and medical centers, education, service businesses, and a diversified industrial base. The State of Wisconsin projects that growth through 2030 will increase at approximately the same rate as in the past 30 to 40 years. The table below summarizes the actual and projected change in population, households, and land area between 1960 and 2030.

### Eau Claire Growth Trends and Projections

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Area in Square Miles</u>
1960	37,987	12,221	19.27
1970	44,619	14,274	21.30
1980	51,509	18,359	27.32
1990	56,856	21,118	29.62
2000	61,704	24,016	32.10
2010*	66,300	27,074	33.90
2020*	74,474	30,327	37.54
2030*	80,970	33,189	39.09

\*estimates

(Source: Wisconsin Department of Administration and City of Eau Claire)

Between 1960 and 2000, the City experienced steady and consistent growth. The population increased by almost 24,000, an average annual rate of increase of slightly over 1% for the 40-year period. The number of households increased by almost 12,000, an average annual rate of increase of 1.2%. Over the same period, the area of the City increased by almost 13 square miles, a total expansion in corporate boundaries of 66%, and an average annual rate of expansion of 1.4%.

Between 2000 and 2010, the City's growth rate slowed. The population increased by 4,596 person or an average of 460 persons per year (an average annual rate of increase of .7%). Housing likewise slowed during the decade. 3,058 housing units were added to the housing inventory or approximately 306 units per year (an annual increase of approximately 1.2%).

However, housing construction averaged only 194 units per year during the last 5 years of the decade.

The population is projected to increase to 80,970 by 2030. The average number of persons per household, which was 2.57 in 2000, is projected to continue to decline slightly to 2.4 persons per household in 2030. The total number of households is projected to increase to 33,189 by 2030.

Based on the projected increase in population and the historic average annual boundary expansion between 1960 and 2000, the area of the City is projected to increase to 39.09 square miles by 2030. However, this estimate appears to be high because of the incorporation of the Village of Lake Hallie, which limits the growth of the City to the northeast.

## PARKS PLAN CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

(From 2008–2012 Park and Open Space Plan)

The 2008 – 2012 Park and Open Space Plan is based on a number of broad general conclusions, which relate to existing conditions and trends that are expected through the timeframe of the plan. Some of the assumptions identified in the last plan remain the same, while others have been revised to reflect conditions and trends that have changed since the previous plan.

The following is a list of general conditions and trends that will serve as a basis for considering project demands and the availability of resources to complete such projects over the next five years.

1. Competition for the tax dollar within the City will continue to increase as shared revenues and CDBG funds decline. The need for interagency cooperation in providing and maintaining parks and other recreation facilities will need to increase.
2. Over the next five-year period, Eau Claire's population will continue to grow at a rate slightly less than one percent per year, which is similar to that experienced during the past few years.
3. Residential construction will be focused within the southeast and northwest quadrants of the City. Commercial and residential construction will increase on the City's northeast quadrant with the Highway 53 Freeway completion.
4. The City will continue to experience growth through annexations in similar fashion as the City has experienced in recent years.
5. Enrollment at the Chippewa Valley Technical College and the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire will not significantly change over the next five years.
6. The demand for family activities and facilities will increase.
7. Tourism will continue to grow in Eau Claire creating demand for facilities and activities that can accommodate large numbers of people. These activities will draw people to the City.
8. The Senior Citizen population will continue to increase creating greater demand for facilities and activities for this population group. In addition, the Senior Citizen population will be more active than past generations, thus, creating further demand for facilities.
9. There will be an increased demand for higher risk recreation facilities such as skate parks, challenge courses, etc.
10. Enrollment with the Eau Claire School District will experience a small decline in the school age population, until 2010, which at that point a small increase is forecast.
11. The number of people with the ability to pay for services and facilities will increase. However, the number of people unable to pay will also increase. Facilities and activities for both groups will need to be balanced.



# **APPENDIX B**

**RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN  
INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL  
INFLUENCES**

	Opportunities	Threats
Strengths	<p><b>INVEST</b></p> <p>Clear matches of strengths and opportunities lead to comparative advantage.</p>	<p><b>DEFEND</b></p> <p>Areas of threat matched by areas of strength indicate a need to mobilize resources either alone or with others.</p>
Weaknesses	<p><b>DECIDE</b></p> <p>Areas of opportunity matched by areas of weakness require a judgement call: invest or divest; collaborate</p>	<p><b>DAMAGE CONTROL/DIVEST</b></p> <p>Areas of threat matched by areas of weakness indicate need for damage control</p>



# **APPENDIX C**

**OPERATIONAL  
VS  
STRATEGIC ISSUES**



## Operational Versus Strategic Issues

Issue:

issue is:  Primarily operational  Primarily strategic

	Operational	←————→	Strategic
1. Is the issue on the agenda of the organization's policy board (whether elected or appointed)?	No		Yes
2. Is the issue on the agenda of the organization's chief executive (whether elected or appointed)?	No		Yes
3. When will the strategic issues' challenge or opportunity confront you?	Right now	Next year	Two or more years from now
4. How broad an impact will the issue have?	Single unit or division		Entire organization
5. How large is your organization's financial risk/opportunity?	Minor (≤10% of budget)	Moderate (10–15% of budget)	Major (≥25% of budget)
6. Will strategies for issue resolution likely require:			
a. Development of new service goals and programs?	No		Yes
b. Significant changes in revenue sources or amounts?	No		Yes
c. Significant amendments in federal or state statutes or regulations?	No		Yes
d. Major facility additions or modifications?	No		Yes
e. Significant staff expansion?	No		Yes
7. How apparent is the best approach for issue resolution?	Obvious, ready to implement	Broad parameters, few details	Wide open
8. What is the lowest level of management that can decide how to deal with this issue?	Line staff supervisor		Head of major department
9. What are the probable consequences of not addressing this issue?	Inconvenience, inefficiency	Significant service disruption, financial losses	Major long-term service disruption and large cost/revenue setbacks
10. How many other groups are affected by this issue and must be involved in resolution?	None	1–3	4 or more
11. How sensitive or "charged" is the issue relative to community, social, political, religious, and cultural values?	Benign	Touchy	Dynamite