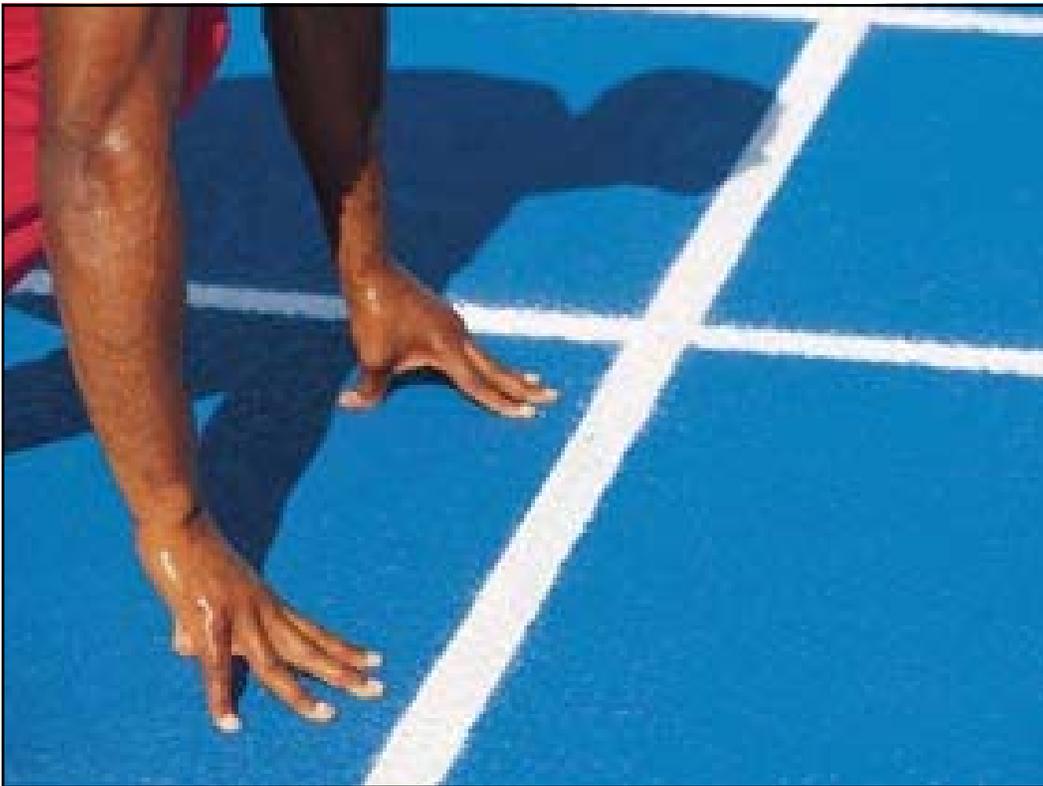


Comprehensive Recreation Program Plan



City of Covington
2002



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Dave Erickson, Director
Victoria Throm, Administrative Assistant

MISSION OF THE PARKS DEPARTMENT

The mission of the Covington Parks Department is to provide quality cultural and recreational opportunities and safe, functional and aesthetically pleasing parks, open spaces and facilities which meet the leisure needs of residents and visitors to the community regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or ability level.

VISION FOR RECREATION

In a healthy community, residents participate in a range of recreation activities of their own choosing. Those recreation activities are typically offered by multiple public and private organizations. By participating in recreation activities, residents are physically and mentally healthier, and they are better connected to their neighbors and to the community.

ALL RECREATION PROGRAMS OFFERED AND/OR SUPPORTED BY THE CITY WILL

1. Be Accessible.
2. Promote Developmental Assets.
3. Promote the efficient use of public recreation facilities.

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INTRODUCTION

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The City of Covington recognized the importance of parks and recreation to the overall health and livability of the community and therefore established a parks, trails and open space element in its Comprehensive Plan in 2001 and formed a Parks Department in 2002.

The Comprehensive Recreation Program Plan focuses specifically on the provision of publicly supported recreation activities and programming within the city. It establishes a specific role for the city as a recreation service provider and supporter of others in the recreation business. Additionally, it establishes a set of service priorities and a pricing policy to guide the expenditure of public resources in support of recreation programs.

The 2002 Comprehensive Recreation Program Plan is the first separate plan that the City of Covington has developed for recreation. Although the current and proposed parks and open space system will accommodate much of the formal and informal recreation activities, recreation services meet a distinct set of objectives for the community. Therefore, a recreation program plan is needed. This separate plan allows for a clearer focus on the City's specific recreation mission. This document accomplishes two things: 1. It outlines a specific focus for city services; 2. It codifies policy and practice.

This document progresses from the general to the specific. The opening sections discuss the role that recreation plays in the community. This is followed by a discussion of the vision and principles which have guided the development of this plan. The next section outlines general goals for Covington's involvement as a service provider. Subsequent sections look at specific objectives for each of the five population groups. Finally, the document outlines actions the city will take to implement these policies.

PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY OF RECREATION

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From the days of the early Greeks, recreation and the use of leisure time have been seen as an integral part of an individual's and a community's well-being. In the earliest days, recreation was seen as an opportunity for rejuvenation, self-fulfillment and individual growth. Skipping ahead several centuries, the public sector became heavily involved in recreation as the United States became increasingly urbanized during the mid-19th and early 20th centuries. Since that time, public sector recreation has evolved through essentially four stages:

- o Regaining natural settings in the urbanized areas in order to allow people, mostly youth, to engage in play (recreation) activities that mimicked those available in rural settings;
- o Overcoming negative urban influences by improving the physical, intellectual and moral life of urban residents;
- o Meeting consumer demand for specific recreation activities and services; and finally,
- o Providing open space that can be used for whatever recreation purpose individuals find enjoyable and practical.

As governments reassessed their role in service delivery during the 1990's, public recreation agencies have shifted their focus away from solely being a provider of services. They are now providing citizens with access to recreation in ways that tap the full capacity of a community's public and private recreation resources. This often takes the form of joint operating agreements, common with schools and private organizations, and contracting out public sector programming.

Today, Covington's recreation services reflect the legacy of these philosophies. The recreation offerings provided by the Covington Community Center provide a good example.

THE RECREATION SYSTEM IN COVINGTON

THE RECREATION SYSTEM IN COVINGTON

Presently, the Covington Community Center provides the majority of recreational programs in Covington. Programs include: basketball, baseball, softball, and soccer. These programs serve elementary and junior high boys and girls in the community. The Community Center also runs aerobics classes for adults and classes such as music for pre-schoolers, rubber stamping and creative writing. Other known interests that have been determined include: gymnastics, dance lessons, high school and adult league sports and a theater group.

VISION FOR RECREATION

In a healthy community, all residents participate in a range of recreation activities of their own choosing. Those recreation activities are typically offered by multiple public and private organizations. By participating in recreation activities, residents are physically and mentally healthier, and they are better connected to their neighbors and to the community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles provide a qualitative guide for all of the city's recreation programs. Regardless of the population served or the specific program offered, recreation programs offered and/or supported by the City of Covington will be guided by the following general principles:

Accessibility: Provide access to all individuals to ensure that barriers (such as finances, disability, transportation etc) do not prevent participation in quality recreation services. Methods to achieve this goals include: Appropriate pricing, scholarships, partnering, brokering, and information and referral.

Developmental Assets: Use the framework of Developmental Assets to guide the design of recreation programs, especially for youth and teens. The Search Institute developed the framework of "40 Developmental Assets" (Appendix A), to guide the involvement of the entire community to promote healthy youth development. Employing this framework will ensure that City-sponsored recreation programs actively work to promote the healthy social/emotional growth of young people; and that City-sponsored activities support the work that schools, families, and other organizations do to promote the healthy development of young people.

Efficient Use of Facilities: Efficiently use the resources invested in publicly owned and operated recreation facilities including, but not limited to, City, County and School District sites. The Parks Department seeks to achieve full use of existing and future park buildings and facilities distributed throughout the city to effectively meet recreational needs.

Trusted Community Resource: Provide recreation services and facilities where the consumer can expect quality staff, programs, and facilities which will ensure that:

- o Staff and volunteers are well-trained and knowledgeable;
- o Programs are developmentally appropriate;
- o Vulnerable clients are cared for; and
- o Programming is universally of high quality.

The public must trust the city, volunteers, partners, and contractors to maintain quality in all recreational services.

Coordinated: Fill specific niches within the array of public and private recreations services in the community through city programming. Each year new demands arise that cannot be fully met by existing recreation providers. City staff will work with other recreation organizations to facilitate coordination of activities and the joint offering of recreation activities. When the demands are consistent with stated goals and objectives, and resources are available, new recreation services and facilities will be created to address needs in our changing community. From time to time, as community needs and services availability evolve, historic precedent does not ensure that a program will continue to be offered.

**GOALS FOR THE CITY OF COVINGTON'S
INVOLVEMENT IN RECREATION**

GOALS FOR THE CITY OF COVINGTON'S INVOLVEMENT IN RECREATION

Covington, like most other cities, has a variety of public and private, scheduled and informal, structured and unstructured, recreation opportunities available to its residents. Whether it be through the direct provision of recreation programs or through the use of schools, parks or other open space, the City seeks to achieve the following specific goals in the delivery of structured recreation programs and activities.

Goal 1 Ensure that the City provides recreation opportunities which allow all residents to enjoy the positive benefits of recreation.

The City will continue to provide, develop and maintain recreation facilities that are consistent with the overall Parks and Open Space System Plan.

The City will focus its programming and activities on introductory and basic skill development geared to address the needs of specific target populations. Services to non-target populations and advanced and highly selective activities will be provided through the community's private recreation organizations and/or other public agencies.

The City will maintain and facilitate the use, by the broad community, of its parks and open spaces and developed indoor and outdoor facilities.

Goal 2 Place special emphasis on the city's recreation programming and spending to meet the needs of teens, youth, seniors, persons with disabilities and those with limited opportunities for recreation.

Public has indicated a desire to see programming emphasis placed for these groups.

Goal 3 Design and deliver programs in coordination/partnerships with other recreation providers in the City of Covington.

While resources may, in the future, be available for the City to be the largest sole provider of recreation services, it should not, attempt to fulfill all the recreational needs of its residents. In addition, other organizations may be in positions to provide certain services at lower costs or with greater effectiveness than the city. This means more than simply contracting for services.

Goal 4 Promote the full utilization of the city's current and future recreation facilities as appropriate.

The plan strives to make full use of each facility and to promote increased integration of the target population as appropriate with other groups.

Goal 5 Build strong community recreation programs, facilities and special events which:

- o promote a sense of identity and cohesion;
- o bring neighborhoods together;
- o increase the levels of Developmental Assets among youth;
- o integrate people of various ages, economic and cultural back-grounds;
- o foster pride in the community; and
- o provide Covington residents with preferential access to city sponsored activities and programs.

Research conducted by the National Recreation and Parks Association documents that recreation has a powerful socializing and community building effect (Appendix B). All members of the Covington community can benefit from participation in recreation activities. The City will continue to program to maximize use by its residents. The city will also continue its active role in facilitating and producing an ongoing series of community events. Examples of these include: Holiday Tree Lighting, City Birthday Party.

Goal 6 Understand and plan for future needs and trends in recreation by actively:

- o monitoring changes in Covington demographics;
- o assessing the changes in capacity of Covington recreation providers; and
- o seeking regional solutions to assist in meeting Covington's recreation needs.

Recreation needs and trends are always in a state of change and development. Covington population is both aging and growing more diverse. The range of other public and private recreation providers and opportunities is constantly changing. Examples of changes in demand include: The explosive growth in girls and women's participation in organized recreation and sports, and the growth in popularity of skate parks and climbing walls for teens and young adults. The changes in the mix of providers and capacity are seen in the growth in private youth sports organizations and the desire by the schools to reinstitute organized sports programs at the middle school level. Each of these changes has a substantial impact on the city's programming, its partnerships and its facilities. In order to be positioned to respond appropriately to these shifts in demand, the City will need to actively work to maintain an understanding of new trends and opportunities through partnerships, interlocal agreements, and collaboration with other public, private for profit and not-for-profit organizations.

**PROGRAM OBJECTIVES FOR SPECIFIC
POPULATIONS**

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES FOR SPECIFIC POPULATIONS

In sharpening the focus of City recreation services, the City has established a specific set of programmatic objectives and priorities for serving various groups.

During different stages of life, the types of recreation one uses and the goals for that recreation change. Covington has grouped its services around five stages of life and persons with disabilities. These are:

Children and youth	(Under age 12)
Teens	(13-18)
Young Adults	(19-24)
Adults	(25-54)
Seniors	(55 and over)
Persons with Disabilities	(All ages)

The following sections define the specific objectives and roles the City will take in serving these population groups.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH

What is the City's role in serving children and youth?

- o Directly provide recreational services that respond to community demand, make effective use of City facilities, and assure increased safety for City youth.
- o Facilitate the use of City owned space and attract partners who can provide specialized complimentary programming.
- o Provide scholarships and other recreational partnerships to promote access to both City and community recreation services to Covington residents who have barriers due to low-income or a lack of transportation to facilities.
- o Develop and maintain coordination among recreation providers by collecting and providing access to information about services to residents.

What are the benefits of recreation for children and youth?

- o Recreation provides opportunities to explore and master roles, develop skills and enhance senses.
- o Recreation builds a youth reservoir of Developmental Assets, building blocks of resiliency, and competence.
- o Recreation teaches basic skills, constructive use of time, boundaries and expectations, commitment to learning and social competency.

What are some examples of recreation for children and youth?

INFANTS/PRESCHOOLERS

Playgroups, Arts Exposure, Tumbling and Gymnastics etc.

SCHOOL AGE YOUTH

TEENS

What is the City's role in serving teens and youth?

- o Provide recreation facilities designed to meet specific needs of teens.
- o Directly provide recreational services that respond to community demand and provide opportunities for constructive use of non school or work time.
- o Facilitate partnerships with other recreation providers to meet teens recreational needs.
- o Promote ready access to recreation programs.

What are the benefits of recreation for teens?

- o Recreation develops teens abilities to build advanced skills, including the competition and physical conditioning needed for these activities.
- o Recreation facilities and programs give teens a safe place to "hang out" make friends and develop interpersonal, as well as leadership skills.
- o Recreation helps teens learn how to constructively use leisure time, which is a protective factor against risks for outcomes like substance abuse.
- o Recreation assists teens in developing civic responsibility by volunteering to serve others in their community.
- o Recreation strengthens and expands a teens acquisition of Developmental Assets.

What are some examples of recreation for teens?

Late night drop in program, skateboard/in-line skating, gymnastics, arts and crafts etc.

ADULTS

What is the City's role in serving all adults?

- o Schedule and maintain space for programs and activities.
- o Maintain coordination among recreation providers by collecting and providing access to information about services.
- o Coordinate use of City facilities by private providers.

YOUNG ADULTS

What are the benefits of recreation for young adults?

- o Recreation promotes healthy socialization, facilitating opportunities to create a balanced life.
- o Recreation increases access to organized/pro-social activities.
- o Recreation provides opportunities for preventative health maintenance within a casual atmosphere.
- o Recreation promotes stress reduction through creative and physical activities.

What are some examples of recreation for young adults?

Swimming, sports leagues, tennis and golf, dance and art, fitness

ADULTS

What are the benefits of recreation for adults?

- o Recreation increases mastery of and self confidence in chosen activities.
- o Recreation is an important means of reducing stress, increasing coping skills, and protecting health.
- o Recreation helps adults to meet others socially, to build community, and to increase communication between people of diverse backgrounds.

What are some examples of recreation for adults?

Swimming, sports leagues, tennis and golf, art and education programs, walking

SENIORS

What is the City's role in serving all seniors?

- o Directly deliver specialized recreational services for retired adults, particularly where a subsidy is needed or desired.
- o Build and sustain public/private partnerships for senior recreation.
- o Scan the environment for unmet and emerging needs.
- o Integrate senior recreation with that of other age groups, to promote intergenerational activities.

What are the benefits of recreation for seniors?

- o Recreation promotes socialization and reduces isolation.
- o Recreation helps retired adults learn new skills.
- o Recreation provides opportunities for physical exercise and conditioning.
- o Recreation provides opportunities for seniors to volunteer and serve others in the community.
- o Recreation provides information to seniors to help them manage changes in their health and lifestyle.

What are some examples of recreation for seniors?

Learning new skills, low impact water aerobics, trips, walking, volunteerism etc.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

What is the City’s role in serving persons with disabilities?

- o Integrate recreation for persons with disabilities with other City and community recreation offerings.
- o Directly deliver specialized recreation services for people with disabilities, particularly where subsidy is needed to promote program accessibility.
- o Develop cooperative partnerships with other governments to promote ready access to specialized recreation for their residents.

What are the benefits of recreation for persons with disabilities?

- o Recreation promotes socialization and reduces isolation.
- o Recreation provides opportunities for physical exercise and conditioning.
- o Recreation offers activities that build on or develop new skills.
- o Recreation assures that persons with disabilities maintain involvement in the community.
- o Recreation provides needed respite for caregivers.

What are some examples of recreation for persons with disabilities?

Social outings and groups, physical exercise, performance events, arts etc.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

To meet the goals outlined in the previous section, the Parks Department will undertake the following key activities:

1. Develop programming that provides opportunities for recreation for those with limited access including: teens and youth; persons with disabilities; seniors; and families with limited incomes.
2. Implement a pricing policy which meets revenue targets while maintaining affordability to the general public. This policy provides for:
 - o Offering preferential access to programs for Covington residents;
 - o Increasing the percentage of cost recovery for adult programs as opposed to those for youth, teens, seniors, and persons with disabilities.
3. Encourage and promote community use of facilities during off-peak hours, which generates revenues and reduces the net cost of operating a facility.
4. Establish an information and referral function that tracks and publicizes the availability of all recreation services in the community.
5. Work with other recreation providers to coordinate and jointly offer programs through partnerships and/or interlocal agreements that address the recreation needs of the target populations.
6. Develop specific operating plans for each of the current and future programmed recreation sites.
7. Implement a scholarship program in which eligibility is based on HUD Low/Moderate Income Guidelines.

PRICING POLICY

PRICING POLICY

The Parks Department's Pricing Policy achieves two main goals:

1. It sets fees so that tax revenues used to support recreation activities are directed to the services that are more sharply focused on priority populations.
2. It establishes a pricing policy with three distinct categories.

PRICING POLICY ESTABLISHED

Consistent with the Vision for recreation, the City's recreation services are designed to compliment those offered elsewhere in the community so that all residents have the opportunity to participate in recreation. Once a decision has been made to offer a service, a price will be set. For purposes of this policy, three distinct categories or programs are established: full subsidy, merit pricing, and full cost recovery.

Full Subsidy:

Programs in this category are those that meet the City's goals to provide broad access to recreation through community and special events. Full subsidy programs include those activities that serve a broader public purpose and have largely an indivisible set of benefits. In some instances, nominal fees may be charged in order to regulate attendance or to promote a more orderly activity. Residents will be given preference in signing up and registering, where feasible. There is no expectation of any specific cost recovery objective.

Merit Priced:

Programs in this category provide broad community benefit, through they are delivered for the most part as classes and activities and have many attributes of private good programs. The broad public purpose is achieved in that these activities serve priority and under-served groups.

Merit priced activities have a goal to recover direct program costs. These costs represent the costs directly attributable to the delivery of an activity. This includes direct program staff fees/costs, materials and supplies, and immediate program administration overhead.

Full Cost Recovery:

In setting prices for these activities, the goal is to recover full costs and to price the activity competitively with the local market. Full costs are calculated to be the total of all staff costs associated with an activity, materials and supplies, departmental overhead, and City overhead.

**APPENDIX A
DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS**

APPENDIX B
BENEFITS OF PARKS AND RECREATION

APPENDIX C
DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION