

Build (Recommendations)

Based on the needs determination framework established through the Discover and Balance Phases, an outline of recommendations for the Marshall Parks and Recreation System has been developed to guide the Parks Department and Parks and Recreation Board in their approach to decision making over the next 15-20 years. These recommendations focus on achieving the goals and metrics identified with input from the Board, stakeholders and the community. In addition to the recommendations this section includes plans, diagrams, and concept images to support and convey key recommendations.



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Recommendations

Introduction

The following section outlines the core recommendations of the master plan. These recommendations were developed based on the data and input received throughout the Discover and Balance phases of the planning process.

Recommendations are organized into five focus areas:

1. Parkland
2. Trails and Connectivity
3. Park Amenities
4. Programs and Events
5. Maintenance & Operations



1. Parkland



Introduction

This focus area of recommendations looks at system-wide opportunities to improve the parks and understand the impacts of those actions have on the parks system. As identified in the Balance section of this plan, there does not appear to be a need for additional parkland based on total acres benchmarks, but Marshall is lacking in several smaller park classifications and in walkable parks. This lack of distribution of the parkland throughout the city combined with the level of development in the existing parks and the percentage of the parkland total dedicated to the golf course (43%), does create the opportunity for the strategic addition of parkland to increase access to park amenities and expand recreation offerings throughout the city.

The recommendations in this section outline criteria and considerations for future parkland based on the priority recreation needs and roles desired by the Marshall community, current opportunities present to the City of Marshall, and the impacts of additional parkland on maintenance and operations resources.

Recommendations

1.1 Additional Parkland

Outcome: Establish a structure for assessing opportunities for future land acquisition and expansion of existing parks.

1.2 One Community Park - Hab Center

Outcome: Identify the needs met and impacts associated with development of the Hab Center as a new park.

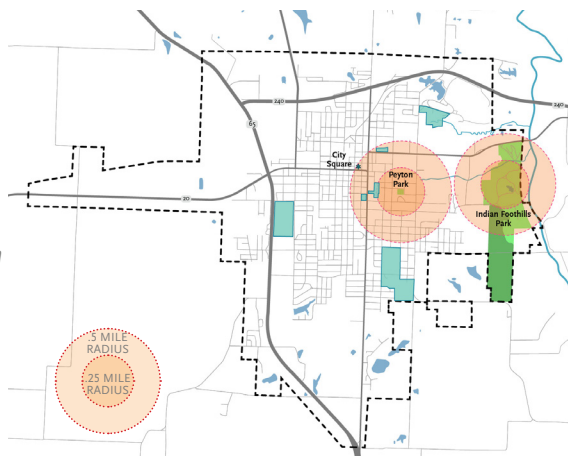
1.3 Impact of Expanded Parkland

Outcome: Establish an understanding of the resource needs and cost impact of parkland expansion/acquisition.

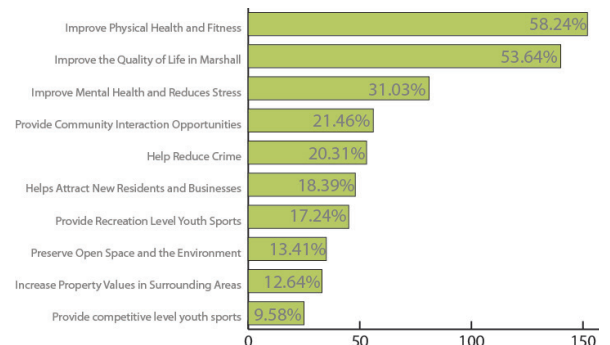
Supporting Data

- Existing parks system walkability assessment is defined by a one-half mile radius, or ten-minute walk, and is restricted by major roadways and access barriers.
- Land acquisition for trail development and preservation ranked 3rd for initiatives the City of Marshall could take to improve the parks and recreation system per the Community Needs and Interest Survey.

EXISTING PARKS WALKABILITY



MOST IMPORTANT TO THE FUTURE OF THE CITY OF MARSHALL

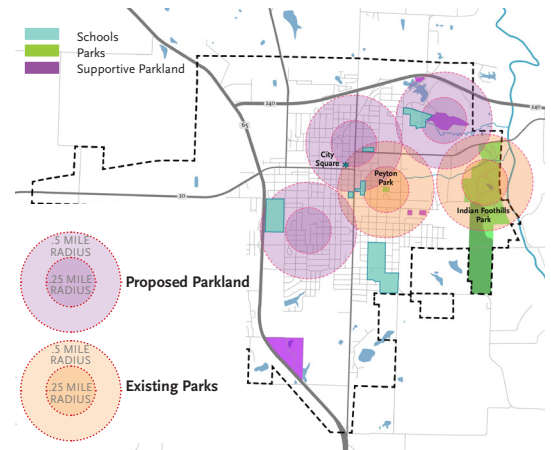


1.1 Additional Parkland Acquisition

The benchmark analysis indicated a capacity to add parkland with a focus on smaller parks. The community desire for expanded recreation opportunities and trails, along with the limited ability for most of the Marshall community to walk to an existing park, provide catalysts for potential expansion of the parks system. Using the recommendations below, Marshall can assess potential value to the community and prioritize any future growth of the parks system. These recommendations should be applied to the evaluation of future parkland purchases and donations.

1.1.1 Acquisition for Expanding Amenities – The evaluation of potential land to expand existing parks or add a new park should prioritize properties having characteristics and locations allowing for expansion or addition of amenities, programs, and/or events desired by the community and parks department. Considerations for evaluating additional parkland include:

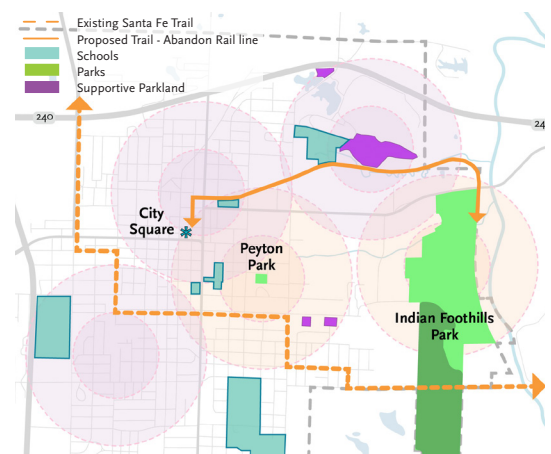
- The current parks are situated on the east side of Marshall and much of the city lacks walkable access to a city park.
- Look to establish Neighborhood Parks (5-15 acres) in locations of the city that capture large segments of the population within a 0.25-0.5 mile walking radius from the park. Amenities within these parks should include those desired by the surrounding community and promote community gathering.
- Opportunities to enlarge existing parks should be evaluated to determine if the property allows for development of desired amenities or uses. Expansion property should also be prioritized to allow for preservation of natural resources or increase buffers to noncompliant adjacent uses.
- Identify priority amenity or program needs to be included in the new property, this will assist with proactive evaluation of potential land acquisition locations and sizes. i.e. Soccer / Multiuse Fields, Pickleball Courts, Splashpad, etc.
- Be strategic in land acquisition. Not all land or locations are ideal for park development. Perform a site analysis based on desired uses including questions such as:
 - *What is existing on the site?*
 - *What's the topography of the site?*
 - *Is the site woodland or is it open?*
 - *Is there a body of water or streams?*
 - *How accessible is the site for cars and pedestrians?*



1.1.1 Conceptual Locations for Walkable Parks System

1.1.2 Acquisition for Connectivity - In addition to park development, strategic land acquisition can support the creation of a trail network. Trail development should prioritize connection opportunities for residents to access parks, link parks, and connect to local destinations such as schools and retail.

- Connectivity development can include easement agreements or long-term lease access to facilitate trail and trailhead development. These can be considered if acquisition of parcels is not feasible or desired.
- Marshall has an opportunity to start this trail network via the abandoned rail corridor north of Indian Foothills Park.
 - *The abandoned rail line should be the priority when adding new land. This will allow direct access from the town square to the Hab Center (when online) and Indian Foothills Park.*
 - *The new formed greenway can act as a transportation spine while enhancing connectivity to other parks, neighborhoods, schools, and retail.*
- *Cities across America have had success transforming abandoned rail corridors to pedestrian greenways. These trails promote walking, running and biking, and often become the backbone to trail systems and connections to key locations throughout a city.*
- *Grant funding is available for the design and development of these recreation trails.*
- *Refer to recommendation section 2.2 for the proposed external trail system.*



1.1.2 Conceptual Locations for Walkable Parks System

1.2 Add One Community Park (16-99 acres) - Hab Center

The Hab Center master plan provides the opportunity to develop a community scale park with a focus on athletic fields and supported by amenities to make this a park for all. The development of this park would take pressure off Indian Foothills Park, allowing it to remain a park with a balance of active and passive recreation. Considerations for the Hab Center Park development include:

- If phased development is required, a first phase should include a variety of core, revenue generating, facilities and supporting amenities to establish a community park. *An example would be: improved existing ballfield, soccer field, restrooms, parking, a shelter, playground and loop trail.*
- Development will require additional operations and maintenance staff.
- Development should explore opportunities for partnership including: Marshall Public Schools, Missouri Valley College, Fitzgibbon Hospital, Little League, YMCA, etc.
- Further planning, design, and implementation of the Hab Center park should be lead by the Department of Parks and Recreation and the Parks and Recreation Board.

1.3 Impact of Expanded Parkland

Growing the parks system with new parks or enlarging existing parks should be a strategic decision to increase recreation opportunities and meet community needs as identified by the previous recommendations in this section. Expanding the parks system will also have an immediate impact on the operations of the Parks and Recreation Department. The following considerations should be integral to any plan for expansion of the existing parks system:

- Any additional park development will require staffing and budget increases to properly operate and maintain the property and amenities. These costs should be included in all discussions of costs associated with the projects.
- Identify what amenities and programs the expansion will provide. Recognize amenities or programs that are new, and not currently offered in the parks system, may have steeper operations and maintenance costs.
- What revenue generation or partnership potential does the proposed expansion include?
 - If the proposed expansion brings revenue generating amenities the development of these amenities may assist with future implementation or offset operations and maintenance costs through the revenues.
 - Marshall Parks has a successful history of partnerships to provide recreation opportunities that cannot be provided solely through the Department of Parks and Recreation. New park development should prioritize partnerships for development and programs. These partnerships will help offset operational costs while expanding recreation opportunities to park users.



Hab Center Concept Master Plan (by others)



Existing Ball Field (#15 on master plan)



Hab Center Landscape

2. Trails and Connectivity



Introduction

Paved walking trails were identified as the most important amenity to provide and expand in the community needs and interest survey responses. This identified importance to the community and the limited amount of trail development in the existing parks provides a strong foundation for continual investment and expansion of trails. This section will focus on ways to expand internal park trails and increase connectivity throughout the City of Marshall.

This Parks Master Plan looks to establish a baseline for trail development to ensure the community wants and desires are met. Identifying and implementing trail opportunities will help promote overall community walkability, increase daily park use, and encourage outdoor activity. The impacts of trail development align with the community’s aspirations for parks and recreation to play a role in improving physical health and fitness, and improving the quality of life for residents of Marshall.

Based on the needs determination and community input the following recommendation categories have been established for Trails and Connectivity:

Recommendations

2.1 Internal Park Trails

Outcomes: Establish standards to improve trails within existing parks and incorporate into future parks.

2.2 External Trails

Outcomes: Identify improvements and connections to enhance community-wide pedestrian access and park access.

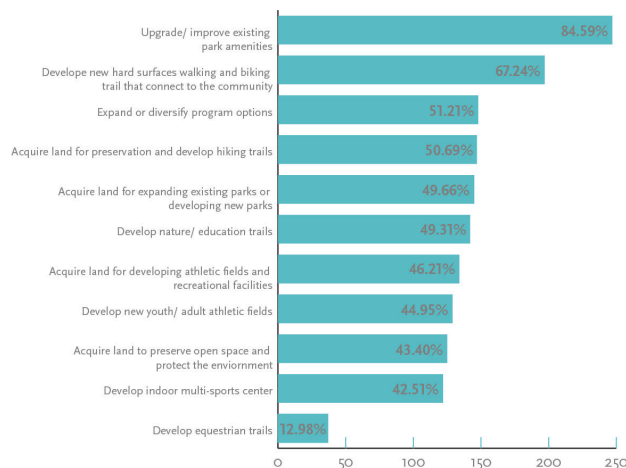
2.3 Trail System Support

Outcomes: Define standards for trail access and identity.

Supporting Data

- Residents identified ‘paved walking trails’ and ‘nature trails’ as the most important amenity to provide and expand, per the Community Needs & Interest Survey.
- “Develop new hard surface walking and biking trails that connect to the community” had the second highest percent of “very supportive” per the Needs & Interest Survey.

“VERY SUPPORTIVE” INITIATIVES TO IMPROVE THE PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM



2.1 Internal Park Trails

These recommendations establish standards for development and improvements to trails within existing parks, and the incorporation of trails into the planning of future parks. The development of internal loop trails will increase accessibility within the parks and provide a foundational recreation amenity within each park that can be used by all in the community.

Recommendations for internal park trails are:

2.1.1 Internal Loop Trails in all Parks:

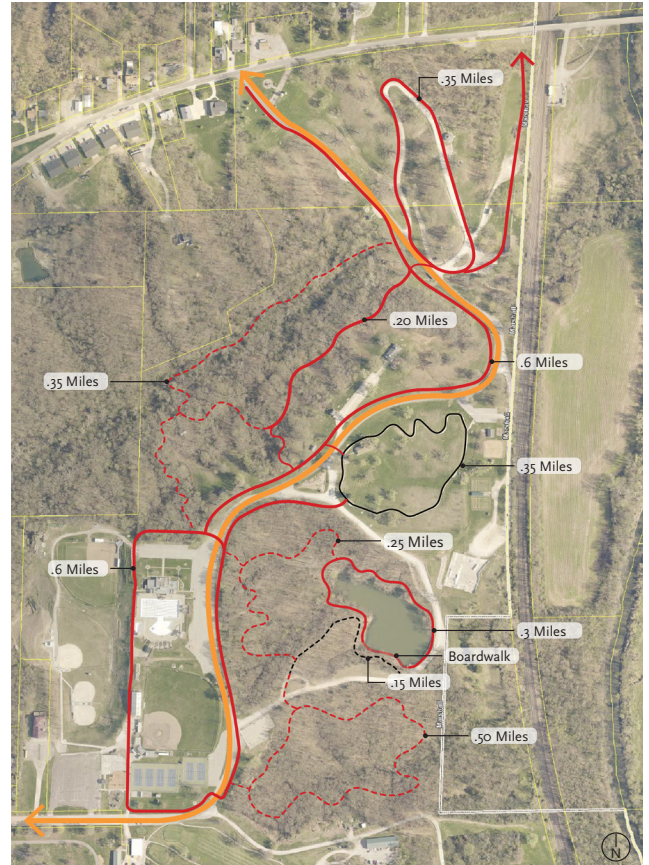
- All parks should include a loop trail. This trail should prioritize maximizing the trail length, and including connections to park entries, parking lots, and park amenities.
- Where loop trails are not feasible, or appropriate due to size of the park, provide accessible walks linking park entries, parking, and park amenities.
- Trail alignment and access should be planned with visibility and security in mind, this include signage and lighting.

2.1.2 Accessible Trails: internal trails should meet ADA and relevant design guidelines. Where all trails cannot meet guidelines, design should prioritize development of one accessible loop or key connections within the park.

2.1.3 Minimum Trail Width Based on Use: Establish standard widths for trails within parks based on the level of use desired for the trail type. These include:

- Minimum four feet (4') wide – sidewalks and connections
- Minimum six feet (6') wide – loop trails and primary circulation
- Minimum ten feet (10') wide – multiuse trails

2.1.4 Secondary Trail System: Natural surface and mowed trails may be included as secondary trail systems and education walks through natural resource areas within parks.



Proposed Indian Foothills Park Trail Plan

—	Existing Paved Trail	+2 Miles	Proposed Paved Trail
- - -	Existing Natural Trail	+1 Miles	Proposed Natural Trail
—	Proposed Paved Trail		
- - -	Proposed Natural Trail		



Park trail with bench and information sign



Proposed Peyton Park Trail Plan

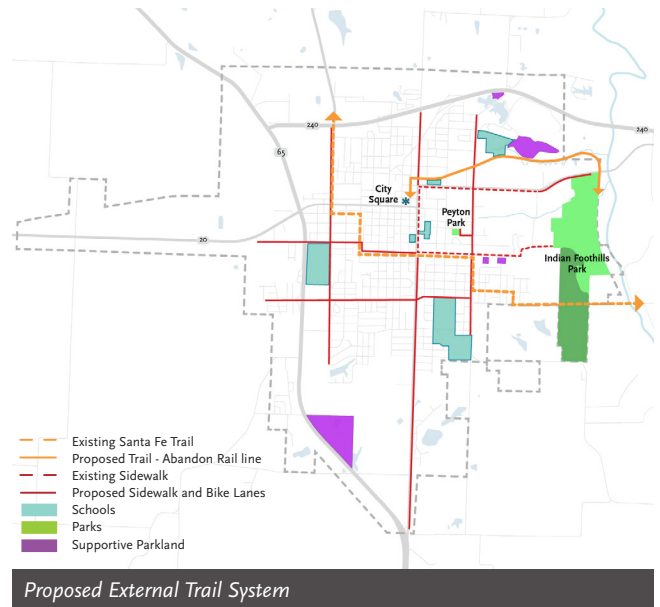
2.2 External Trails

This set of recommendations looks at how Marshall's existing parks, schools, and neighborhoods can be connected, and how this trail network can link Marshall to regional trails such as the Santa Fe Trail. Development of these trails and connections ties into parkland recommendations section 1.1.2 - Land Acquisition for Connectivity and should be used to develop priorities for alignments throughout the city.

Recommendations focused on external trails are:

2.2.1 Access to Parks: Improve connections to and from parks with sidewalks and protected bike lanes from schools, neighborhoods, and along primary roadways. Improve street crossings at high traffic areas with signage and signals. These improvements will create circulation routes to parks for pedestrians and bicyclists. Primary routes identified include:

- Lincoln, O'Dell, and Maimi for North/ South access
- Eastwood, Yerby/ Vest, and College for East/ West access.



2.2.2 Connections to Neighborhoods: Expand connections from primary roadways to neighborhood streets, creating greater walking and biking access for residents to parks. With limited amount of pedestrian walkways in the city, additional sidewalks would help with safety and encourage walking throughout the city.

2.3 Trail System Support

This set of recommendations define components of a trailhead and trail identity. These items focus on enhancing trail visibility and user experience.

Recommendations for trail system support include two key elements:

2.3.1 Trailheads: Incorporate trailheads at desired access points along trail routes.

- Trailheads provide gathering locations and identify trail access points.
- Trailheads can be located in parks or along external trail routes.
- Typical trailhead amenities include: parking, shelters, restrooms, seating, trail information signage, and playgrounds.
- Trailheads can be categorized as “Major” or “Minor”.
 - *Major trailheads are prominent access points, typically along external trail routes and can include a significant number of trailhead amenities.*
 - *Minor trailheads are typically bike and pedestrian entry points within parks or along external trail routes. They can be limited to a bench, trash receptacle and small signage.*

2.3.2 Signage: A critical component to trailheads and an overall trail system.

- Identity signage at trailheads and along routes denote the trail as part of the Marshall trail system, or a trail within a specific park.
- Signage/kiosks at trailheads share information and provide trail overview.
- Signage along the trails to identify distance, connections, and access points.
- Educational signage identifying points of interest, historical information, or ecological information along the trail.



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Introduction

This focus area of recommendation looks at system-wide opportunities related to park amenities. The Marshall parks system is predominately an amenities based system. These park amenities are provided for community use and partnerships. These amenities form the primary structure for recreation programs within Marshall Parks. This was reflected in the community and stakeholder input, where the quality and availability of park amenities were a focus of the responses received.

The recommendations in this section outline a vision for existing, expanded, and future amenities throughout the parks system as a foundation for implementation over the next 15-20 years.

Based on the needs determination and community input the following recommendation categories have been established for Parks Amenities:

Recommendations

3.1 Existing Amenities

Outcomes: Establish a plan to address current amenities within the parks.

3.2 Added or Expanded Amenities

Outcomes: Establish a vision to address current park amenity needs, desires, and opportunities.

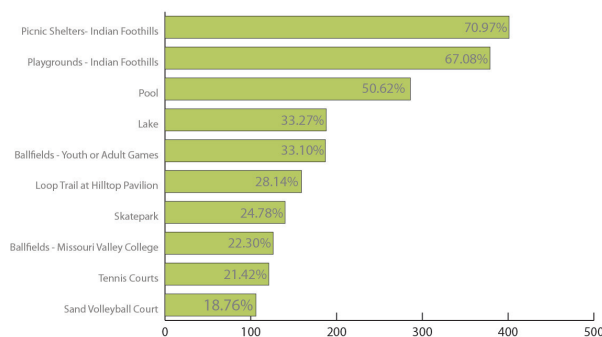
3.3 Natural Resource Based Amenities

Outcomes: Establish a vision to enhance amenities with a focus on nature and outdoor education.

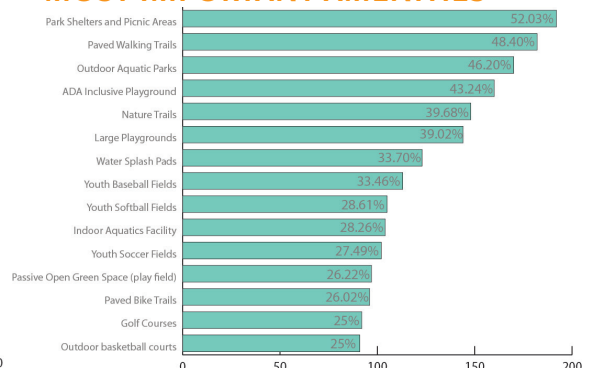
Supporting Data

- Residents identified *Park Shelters, Paved Walking Trails, and Outdoor Aquatic Park* as the top three “very important” Amenities that Marshall Parks should provide or expand per the Community Needs and Interest Survey

AMENITIES RESIDENTS USE THE MOST



MOST IMPORTANT AMENITIES



3.1 Existing Amenities

While the NRPA benchmarking analysis indicated that overall the amenity offerings in the Marshall Parks System is in-line with other communities with populations under 20,000, this plan looks at more than just the number of amenities provided in the parks.

This section of recommendations is focused on addressing needs and opportunities specific to the City of Marshall. Input and assessment of the existing park amenities identified quality concerns, desires for improvements, and recreation trends to be addressed throughout the parks system.

Below are recommendations for the existing park amenities throughout the Marshall Parks System:

3.1.1 Shelters:

- The parks department has prioritized updating and replacing shelters and this should be continued. Community input supported the unique architectural styles used throughout the parks. While this adds identity to the shelters, the cost and long-term maintenance requirements of multiple types and styles of pavilions should be considered. The recent replacement of Seminole Court and Battle of Marshall have shown that custom build shelters is still the most cost effective approach.
- All shelters should include a playground and accessible walks to parking and surrounding amenities to support rental use.
- New amenity areas within Marshall parks should include an appropriately sized shelter.
- For information on additional shelter locations and suggested sizes, reference the 2014 Parks Master Plan pages 14-15.



North Point Shelter

3.1.2 Restrooms:

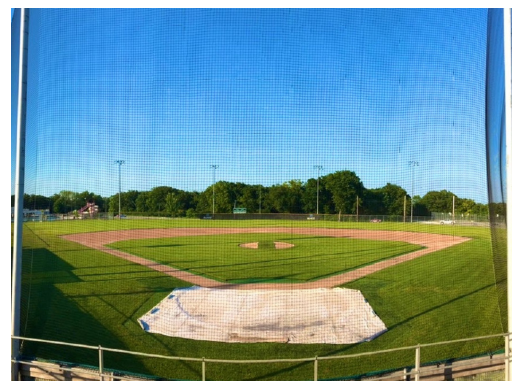
- Along with shelters, restrooms are a key supporting amenity in the parks that has a significant impact on user experience. The overall condition of restrooms within the parks was noted as a concern by the community.
- Update or replace existing park restrooms to increase user satisfaction and desirability of shelter rentals. Where possible consider the addition of restrooms to new shelter construction.
- New amenity areas within parks that will bring large groups and/or hold activities where people will remain for extended periods of time should include a restroom if one is not already located nearby.



Restrooms

3.1.3 Ballfields:

- Ballfields are an amenity that serves the three primary uses of Marshall parks; department run programs (baseball/softball), partnership programs (Little League and MVC), and public use.
- While an existing use MOU is in place for the fields, the Parks Department should evaluate the level of maintenance put into the fields and identify the delta between what is necessary for youth program needs and partnership needs. If a delta exists, consideration should be given to revising the MOU to compensate Marshall Parks for this additional work, or establish the baseline understanding of what level of preparation Marshall Parks will provide.
- Priority improvements that would benefit park use and partnerships includes the addition of restrooms and accessible parking at the Lyon Bowl fields.



Ballfields

3.1.4 Aquatic Center (pool and bathhouse):

- While ranking third most used from the survey responses, the aquatic center has experienced a decline in use and revenue, combined with increasing maintenance and operations cost, over the past five years. Additionally, several program and operations items have been assumed by the YMCA in recent years including swim lessons and lifeguard staffing.
- A feasibility study should be performed to assess current performance, necessary improvements, trends, and how to best serve the community.

3.1.5 Playgrounds:

- All developed parks should include at least one playground. Playgrounds should provide a variety of play experiences throughout the parks system.
- Playgrounds should be accessible from parking lots and shelters.
- The use of resilient playground surfacing will reduce maintenance costs and increase access for all.
- Include shade at playgrounds as a core component. This can be integrated into the play equipment, provided by nearby shelter, or provided by selecting playground sites with existing tree cover to be preserved.

3.1.6 Basketball Courts:

- Add a shelter and drinking fountain at the Indian Foothills Park courts to support users and provide a space for activities near the courts.
- Evaluate parking needs and determine if the small gravel parking area and paved lot at the tennis courts (25 spaces) is adequate to support both amenities. If determined adequate, provide a painted crosswalk and signage for crossing Osage Drive. If parking is required at the basketball courts, provide a paved lot and organize parking to maximize the number of spaces and eliminate cars from backing out on to Osage Drive. This may become more important with the continued development of bike trails in the woodland around the courts.
- The courts currently provide a location for futsal. If demand increases for one or both of these uses, futsal specific courts may be needed.

3.1.7 Tennis Courts:

- These new courts support a variety of public play and partner programs.
- One growing use of the courts in Marshall identified in the master planning process, and reflected in national trends, is pickleball.
 - Pickleball programs and leagues are revenue opportunities, but will require coordination with scheduling for tennis and maintaining court time for public use.
 - Manage courts for all three user groups, providing dedicated time for each use. If demand for pickleball continues to grow, development of pickleball courts should be considered in the parks system.

3.1.8 Sand Volleyball Courts:

- While the courts are no longer used for leagues or programs, 20% of respondents to the community input survey said they use the courts.
- Maintain the courts for public use and pursue partnerships for expanded programs and leagues. Only two courts and the condition of supporting amenities may limit interest from potential partners and participants.
- If a redevelopment opportunity would meet a greater community need, consider replacement or relocation of these courts.



Aquatic Center



Playgrounds



Basketball Courts



Tennis Courts

3.1.9 Skate Park:

- This is a destination amenity for Marshall and serves a typically under served age group in parks. The Skate Park Association of America (SPAUSA) notes skateboarding is one of the most popular sports for the 6 to 18 age bracket.
- Amenities including a formal parking lot, lighting, and small shelter would increase security and expand the opportunity for activities and programs.

3.1.10 Disc Golf Course:

- Another destination amenity for Marshall. Continue the partnerships that feature the course for league and tournament play along with public use.
- Development of a defined parking lot near hole #1 and Seminole Court Shelter would organize this area for disc golf events and park users.

3.1.11 Horseshoe Pits:

- A partnership with the Saline County Horseshoe Club, this amenity is not as popular as it was in the past. Efforts have begun to increase the draw of this area through the additional of bags/cornhole pads with the horseshoe pits.
- In addition to the added activities, improved shelter and restrooms are necessary to increase visibility and activate this area of the park.
- Similar to sand volleyball courts, if use continues to decline, relocating this activity and re-purposing this area of the park should be considered.

3.1.12 Archery Range/ Marshall Bow Hunters:

- Continue to foster the relationship, promote community events, and ensure shared use agreement benefits the parks department and organization.

3.1.13 Dog Park:

- While not a park amenity, the parks department currently removes trash at the dog park. This partnership is another example of how the Parks Department maximizes its resources for the community. With this relationship in place, a dog park is not necessary within a city park at this time.

3.1.14 Mountain Bike Trail:

- The trail is another strong partnership amenity with existing demand and potential as a destination for a variety of user types and ages.
- Continued development should focus on long-term maintenance, supporting amenities, and integration into the overall park trail system.

3.1.15 Wedding / Gathering Area:

- If use is steady or continues to increase look to add more permanent seating and platform and consider the impact of increased use on maintenance when establishing rental rates.

3.1.16 Park Signage and Furnishings:

- Develop a standardized entry signage package with a standard font and style, signifying a Marshall park.
- Scale of the signs, landscape, and lighting at entrances can be park specific.
- Community and Regional Parks may include electronic signage with parks and community announcements.
- Internal parks signage and site furnishings should be standardized to reinforce Marshall Parks and simplify maintenance and replacement.



Skate Park



Disc Golf



Marshall Bow Hunters



Wedding Area

3.2 Added or Expanded Amenities

The recommendations below address amenities needs that go beyond the existing park development or respond to trends in recreation that align with community desires for the parks system. Some of these recommendations may be achieved within the existing parks and others may bring their highest value to the community through development of additional parkland.

3.2.1 Playgrounds: *NRPA Benchmarking - add one full playground*

- Explore a nature playground at Indian Foothills Park to complement the existing inclusive destination playground. Locations will require future design studies, but two options identified that could also include outdoor education elements are:
 - Locate along the creek near the new Seminole Court shelter. It would replace older equipment at the shelter and activate the creek.
 - Locate a nature play experience at the woodland edge as identified in the 2014 Master Plan.

3.2.2 Multi-use Fields: *NRPA Benchmarking - add three fields*

- While the YMCA has added youth fields, the addition of multi-use fields with supporting amenities within parks would allow for flexible athletic programs and community events. It would provide a space for soccer programs and public use which is a highly sought after amenity by residents.
- Locations will require future design studies and should be spread out in multiple locations. Considerations identified in the planning process include:
 - Renovation of Lyon Bowl fields #1 and #2 to remove backstops and dirt infields and develop a multiuse field.
 - Remove / relocate sand volleyball and horseshoe and grade out hillside for development of a multiuse field.
 - Develop fields at Hab Center and/or future neighborhood parks.

3.2.3 Pickleball Courts/ Futsal Courts:

- Provide dedicated areas for these fast growing and community inclusive sports. These activities are currently played on existing tennis and basketball courts, but dedicated space for these courts will increase the opportunities for use and potential revenue generation through programs and tournaments.
- Locations to be explored in exiting parks and future park development.

3.2.4 Performing Arts/ Community Event Area:

- Adding a space for performing arts and community events to be held would promote community interaction and provide a location for expanding events as desired by the community.

3.1.5 Splash Pad:

- This amenity is desired by the community to expand water play access, season, and daily hours. The location(s) for this amenity, its accessibility, and impact on the aquatic center should be explored further. Below are several options:
 - Within the aquatic center to bring more value to paid entry.
 - Outside aquatic center as free amenity and way to balance changes to aquatic center operation schedule.
 - Smaller splash pads in multiple parks for neighborhood use, with the aquatic center remaining primary paid water play destination.



Nature Playground



Pickleball Courts



Outdoor Performing Arts Area



Splash Pad Addition

3.3 Natural Resource Based Amenities

Over 75% of survey participants identified Nature Programs and Outdoor Adventure as one of their top five desired program and activities for the Marshall Parks System.

A focus on preserving and enhancing natural resources within the parks system will not only provide park users with a desired recreation opportunity, but can improve the ecological health of parks and reduce the demand on maintenance resources. For these reasons, the identification of natural resource based amenities should be a priority for all existing and future parks. Recommendations to guide this focus on natural resource amenities include:

3.3.1 Lake Minesa Enhancements:

- Create a loop trail along the lake with outcrops, boardwalks and fishing piers to enhance water interactions.
- Establish a riparian landscape planting on the edge of the lake to improve water quality and wildlife habitat.
- Perform annual water quality and sediment level testing. This testing will alert the parks department to issues and allow proactive planning for resource allocation necessary to address issues.

3.3.2 Nature Based Education Opportunities:

- Develop nature-based day-camp areas, outdoor education classrooms, and signage along park trails to provide expanded programming opportunities.
- Explore partnership opportunities with schools, scout groups, universities and other organizations for program development and participation.
- Provide a curated experience for kids and families within woodlands, meadows, and water interaction throughout the parks system.

3.3.3 Enhance Tributary Creek Interactions below Osage Drive Crossing:

- Explore a nature-based play experience that incorporates natural features and materials and encourages water interactions to promote play and education.

3.3.4 Evaluate Turf Conversion and Implement Restoration Plans:

- With much of the park being turf hillsides, explore areas of the disc golf course and unprogrammed open areas to convert to native meadows. This approach will help reduce yearly maintenance, promote biodiversity, and increase opportunities for nature based events and programs throughout existing and future parks.
- Tree planting plans and existing tree assessments should be integrated into maintenance and operations planning as a proactive approach to successional planting of woodlands and park tree canopy.



Lake Minesa



Outdoor Classroom



Tributary Creek Interaction



Native Prairie/ Meadow

4. Programs and Events



Introduction

While the Marshall Parks and Recreation Department offers several successful programs and community gathering events, the current staffing structure and resources available to the department limit the potential to significantly expand these offerings. As a parks system without an indoor recreation facility and the staffing capacity to organize and facilitate program offerings, Marshall Parks and Recreation has leveraged park resources and partnerships to maximize program opportunities for the community. Marshall Parks and Recreation has established a core offering of introduction level youth sports and a focus on events within the parks. These programs and events are made possible through partnerships with community organizations, and compliment those offered by secondary providers.

With this understanding, as we looked at the future of programs and events it was clear they will remain dependant upon the current structure of partnerships and outside providers for success. There are opportunities to expand offerings identified as important to the community, but like other elements within the parks system, they face challenges to achieve the growth and provide the level of services desired by the community. Being able to find a balance between additional offerings for the community and revenue generation will be critical in the success of future programs and events.

Based on the needs determination and community input the following recommendations have been established for Programs and Events:

Recommendations

4.1 Existing Programs and Events

Outcomes: Identify current offerings and recommendations for continued success or modification.

4.2 Additional or Expanded Offerings

Outcomes: Identify program areas for consideration to expand or add to the department offerings based on community input and resources available to the Department of Parks and Recreation.

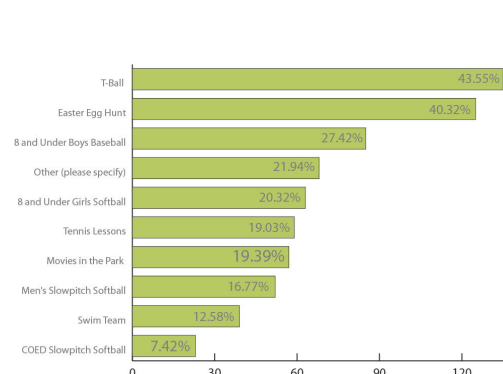
4.3 Cost Recovery and Partnerships

Outcomes: Identify an approach to balance community desires and participation trends with opportunities to grow or expand program and event offerings.

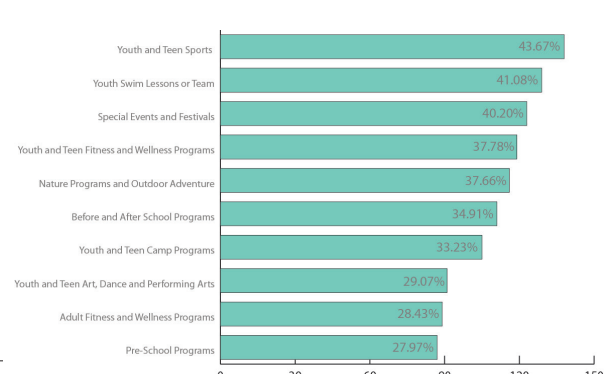
Supporting Data

- 90% of respondents said they strongly agree "Providing Community Interaction" was important for Marshall
- Community input showed the value residents receive from programs while also noting opportunities to improve and expand program offerings.
- Events are highly valued by the community.

MOST ATTENDED PROGRAMS



MOST IMPORTANT PROGRAMS



4.1 Existing Programs and Events

The successful program and event offerings from Marshall Parks and Recreation are noted below along with recommendations for how they should be maintained or modified based on community input and review of recreation trends.

Recommendations for Existing Programs and Events are:

4.1.1 Recognize Program Partnerships and Outside Providers:

- The number of partnerships and the ability of the Parks Department to find shared value for the community and partners when it comes to offering recreation programs is a strength of the department. These partnerships should be maintained and expanded if possible, to provide recreation opportunities for the community that cannot be provided solely by the Parks and Recreation Department. These partners include, but are not limited to:
 - YMCA, Missouri Valley College, Marshall Public Schools, Marshall Junior Tennis, Fitzgibbon Hospital, and volunteer groups are just a few examples of partnerships that support Marshall parks.

4.1.2 Youth Programs:

- The Parks Department does successfully offer youth ball programs and swim team. These are popular and combine parks staff and volunteers to facilitate the programs. These programs should remain a core offering of the Parks Department and clearly coordinated with partners that the city will provide these programs to prevent duplication of services.
- While these programs are popular and appreciated by the community, it was noted by stakeholders and the community that these programs both end by late June/early July, and there are no program offerings for children after that time. The Parks Department should look for opportunities to offer youth activities that extend throughout the summer:
 - Additional instructional sports leagues or programs organized around individual activities such as disc golf, tennis, skate park, and nature based learning (fishing, hiking, archery, etc.) are options.
 - The potential development of multiuse fields, enhances natural resource opportunities, and the continued development of mountain bike trails would expand the potential for these programs.

4.1.3 Events:

- Prioritize free or nominal cost community events in the parks. These were identified as very important to the community in the survey. These events also create opportunities for the community to come together, which is a role the community identified as important for parks and recreation to play for the City of Marshall.
- It was noted in the survey responses that the community would like to have more events throughout the year. To expand the number of events and engage the entire Marshall community, consider events that will attract diverse age and demographic groups to participate. These can be culturally based, holiday based, or focused on themes that were important to the community including health and wellness or outdoor activities.
- With limited staff and budget to fund and facilitate most events, and a history of limited participation in fee based programs, the Parks Department should leverage the community support identified for these activities in the survey to engage partners for participation in sponsoring and running the events.
 - Have an annual event calendar to share with partners and the community
 - Engage partners for events: city departments, Fitzgibbon Hospital, service organizations, county and state agencies, local businesses, etc.
 - Engage community groups connected to event themes as partner for planning and facilitating events.

4.2 Additional or Expanded Offerings

While the Parks Department has limited capacity to expand offerings it is important that the programs being offered are successful in providing value to the community, and not just being offered because they have always been offered. The Parks Department should also be prepared to replace programs if needed, and if the opportunity to add programs is presented, know what types of programs should be added to address community desires. These recommendations provide a structure and guide for the Parks Department to manage the program offerings and be prepared to replace, add, or expand programs that best meet the desires of the community.

Recommendations for Expanded Offerings are:

4.2.1 Proactive Management of Programs/ Events:

- Due to limited staffing, history of limited participation in fee based programs, and strong partnerships with outside program providers (YMCA, Little League, Marshall Public Schools, etc.), Marshall Parks should proactively manage and evaluate the programs offered through the parks department to ensure they are providing strong programs that are self-sustaining and align with the internal resources available. Actions to be taken include:
 - Review performance, solicit participant feedback, and evaluate offerings from outside providers annually to determine the success of each program/event and value it brings to the community.
 - Consider elimination of programs/events that are decreasing in participation and replace with new or expanded emerging programs/events to allow for increased participation and partnerships.

4.2.2 Prioritize New or Expanded Offerings:

- The following types and benefits of program/event offerings were desired by the community and should be prioritized when evaluating new offerings or partnership opportunities as they are likely to generate significant community interest. Consider individual or multiple of these offerings that will appeal to all ages in the community:
 - Youth Sports
 - Fitness and Wellness
 - Nature and Outdoors
 - Special Events and Festivals

4.3 Approach to Cost Recovery and Partnerships

Whether programs are offered directly through the Parks Department or in coordination with partners using Marshall parks facilities, there are costs incurred by the Parks Department associated with these programs. Marshall should look to increase the cost recovery of programs and events to support these offerings and strengthen its ability to provide additional recreation opportunities. In this approach it is important to maintain no or minimal cost recreation opportunities that benefit the community as a whole while structuring partner agreements and user fees on individual programs to cover the operational costs at a minimum.

The following recommendations outline an approach to Cost Recovery and Partnerships:

4.3.1 Balance Programs:

- Balance the identified program desires of the community with the expectation for access to the program and cost recovery needs of the parks and recreation department.
 - History and community feedback show fee-based activities and programs have limited participation and success.
 - Clearly identify which programs and events are intended to be free to participants (greater community benefit) and which are fee based (greater individual benefit) to recover costs associated with offering the program or event. Understanding these expectations will assist in partner outreach and establishing level of participation expectations.
 - Continue to work with partners to identify opportunities to expand offerings to the community through shared resources where the Parks Department can provide locations for programs/ events that are facilitated by partner organization.
 - Even with partnership program offering, there are still costs incurred by the Parks Department. At a minimum these costs can include preparing fields or other areas of the parks and then cleaning up following the program. The costs associated with partnering for these programs should be quantified and the parks department should be compensated through fees charged or MOU agreements with the entities running the programs.

4.3.2 Additional Pool Activities:

- With the decline of attendance and loss of revenue, explore ways to increase pool cost recovery and attendance. This may include modifying passes and fees, extending pool hours, adding activities, amenities, or incentives to increase attendance and revenues.
- A feasibility study as recommended in 3.1.4 will help identify the status of the pool and actions to address any opportunities.

5. Maintenance & Operations



Introduction

The long-term success of recommendations presented in the previous sections of the master plan will require more than just the initial vision and investment of implementation. Complimentary maintenance programs and operational procedures at the amenity/event level and at the overall parks and recreation system level are recommended. These allow city leaders, staff, and residents to understand the true costs of maintaining the parks system and guide decisions ensuring the parks system best serves the community with the resources available.

Based on the needs determination and community input the following are recommendations for Maintenance and Operations:

Recommendations

5.1 Prioritize Existing Park Amenities

Outcomes: Establish priority list of existing maintenance needs and life-cycle planning

5.2 Additional Park Amenities

Outcomes: Approach for integrating new amenity and park development

5.3 Modes of Care

Outcomes: Provide a tool for documenting and communicating the quantitative impact of maintenance

5.4 Staffing

Outcomes: Identify staffing needs based on master plan recommendations

5.5 Budget

Outcomes: Understanding of funding sources and leveraging capital investment funds for plan implementation

Supporting Data

- The primary supporting data for recommendations in this section is the vision for Marshall Parks and Recreation outlined in Parkland, Trails & Connectivity, Park Amenities, and Programs & Events.
- Community input showed a consistent desire for maintaining what the park system provides, this section focuses on a process for quantifying that maintenance and incorporating that effort into planning discussions and costs.



Maintenance

The condition and care of the parks was a common theme in the community input and planning team evaluation of the parks. These are keys to the long-term success of the parks and have a daily impact on community perception and use of the parks.

The approach to park and amenity maintenance can be defined by many factors that a parks department needs to balance, and a community needs to prioritize. For the Marshall parks system, the following factors were consistent across community and staff input: the age of an amenity, department resources and priorities, and level of use. The following recommendations are intended to establish a foundation for the Parks Department to create a maintenance plan that responds to the identified factors and provide tools for communicating the maintenance approach while being flexible as priorities and needs change over time.

5.1 Prioritize Existing Park Amenities

The age and condition of several park amenities was a top response when the community was asked why they do not use the parks. These same amenities were at the top of the list when asked what amenities the community uses most in the parks. As a result, this plan has identified these amenities as priorities for maintenance and/or replacement.

5.1.1 Shelters: Destinations within the parks for day use and special events, shelters are a key amenity and bring all members of the Marshall community to the parks. Shelters are also signature elements within the parks and when they are in poor condition or no longer serve the needs of the community due to age and accessibility, they have a significant negative impact on use of the parks

- **Indian Foothills Park** – Current recommendations for shelters in the park align with those proposed in the 2014 park master plan. While Battle of Marshall and Seminole Court are recently and currently being replaced due to outside circumstances, several of the older shelter in the park require repair or replacement to be functional and meet the needs of park users.
- **Peyton Park** – the existing shelter should be replaced and consideration given to location and its relationship to a new restroom. A new shelter of a similar size to the existing shelter would be sufficient to meet the park needs and level of use.

5.1.2 Restrooms: A critical supporting amenity within the parks, the condition and accessibility of the exiting restrooms scored high as a concern for residents and deterrent to spending significant time within the parks. When restrooms are in poor condition or no longer serve the needs of the community due to age and accessibility, they have a significant negative impact on use of the parks. :

- **Indian Foothills Park** – existing restrooms should be prioritized for repairs and evaluated for replacement if they do not meet accessibility guidelines, or current conditions do not meet the needs expressed by the community. Additional restrooms near park shelters will increase the desirability of those shelters for use and rentals.
- **Peyton Park** – similar to the park shelter, the restrooms are in need of replacement. The size of a new restroom should align with the level of use in the park and be coordinated with a new shelter.

5.1.3 Playgrounds: Both a destination amenity and supporting amenity that elevates the value of shelters, fields, etc. for users within a park. Playgrounds should be prioritized for maintenance or replacement when needed.

- **Indian Foothills Park** – While the destination playground has been a success, the smaller, support playgrounds throughout the park should not be overlooked when repairs and replacement are needed. Playgrounds at each pavilion should be evaluated for condition and play value and ranked for maintenance need and replacement prioritization. As support amenities they increase the desirability of those shelters for use and rentals.
- **Peyton Park** – with one playground repairs and replacement should be evaluated and prioritized when needed. Community input should be obtained to determine the style of play and priority play features at the time of replacement to ensure the new playground will reflect the desires of the park users. This input should be from children as well as adults.

5.1.4 Aquatic Center: the priority maintenance need to maintain existing level of service is painting and gel coating the slide.

5.1.5 Proactive Measures: a common theme with the park amenities addressed above and others within the parks system is that once constructed park amenities are maintained reactively while being expected to last as long as possible. While this helps stretch the capital dollars available to the Parks Department. This approach is contradictory to long-term success. It compounds issues as amenities age and become more difficult to maintain, no longer meet current standards or expectations of the community, or suffer catastrophic failure. With a reactive maintenance approach these situations require a significant investment in repairs or replacement, as they are not planned for in the current budget.

It is recommended Life-cycle Maintenance and Replacement Schedules be developed for the priority amenities noted above, and all amenities over time. This plan will provide a guide for regular maintenance and repair of amenities to incorporate in budgeting and staff scheduling to ensure the condition and appearance of the amenities remain up to code and the expectations of staff and the community. Similarly, replacement schedules allow for anticipated capital investments to upgrade amenities and keep them performing at the level desired by the community. This planning approach will allow the Parks Department to be flexible when unexpected expenses arise, as preventative care can allow amenities to extend beyond their replacement timeline while still performing at a high level in years that emergencies or a higher priority item presents itself.

5.2 Additional Park Amenities

As amenities are replaced or added to the parks, maintenance and life-cycle costs should be included to provide an understanding of the full amenity cost.

5.2.1: Initial budgeting for new amenities should include an annual operations or maintenance cost along with capital development costs. This allocation ensures there is funding in the annual budget for preventative maintenance. This annual maintenance fund can be tracked independently, similar to the Capital Improvement Fund, or under the Expenditures.

5.2.2: The planning and implementation of all new or expanded amenities should include a lifecycle maintenance and replacement schedule. This schedule will form the basis for annual maintenance budgeting and items from this list should tie back to budget summary and annual reporting.

5.3 Implement Modes of Care and Maintenance Standards

Successful park maintenance is a combination of clearly defined standards for care and the available resources to achieve this standard on a consistent basis. The standard of maintenance plays a significant role in establishing the image of the parks system. Public perception of parks, whether accurate or not, can impact decisions regarding use of parks, attendance at events, sense of safety, and how visitors talk about the Marshall Parks System to friends and family.

While the feedback from the community and stakeholders in this master plan process indicated that the parks department does an overall good job of maintaining the parks. There are challenges faced by the department to establish a level of maintenance with the resources available. The level of care currently achieved is often dictated by capacity and need, and not by a defined standard. Challenges can include accomplishing planned and unplanned projects, seasonal staffing levels needed to complete daily tasks, and the ability to take on new or unique maintenance needs. These challenges will continue to grow as the parks evolve, community expectations change, and if the park system grows.

Many public service departments use standards to document the costs of doing business. For example, a public works department will use standards to demonstrate that with every new mile of road to maintain it will require a defined amount of the existing budget or additional funding. This is a tangible cost of doing business that everyone, from the city councils to the voting public, can understand. This ability to express the impact on budget provides clarity when evaluating proposed budget cuts or added responsibilities. Establishing modes of care and maintenance standards will allow the Parks Department to quantify maintenance and plan for maintenance needs when discussing changes to existing parks or the development of new amenities, parks and trails, and facilities. It provides a tool for:

- Quantitatively prioritizing work
- Communicating level of maintenance being provided
- Identifying the cost of maintenance
- Identifying equipment and staffing needs
- Providing flexibility for response to changes in budget or special needs
- Creating a living document for adaptive management and proactive maintenance

See Appendix H for more specific information regarding modes of care and maintenance standards.

Operations

The following recommendations focus on opportunities to successfully address current areas of need, and opportunities to position staffing and budget management of the Marshall Parks and Recreation Department for the realization of this plan.

5.4 Staffing

The recommendations within this master plan look to continue the efficient operation of the parks department, provide additional amenities within the parks, and prepare for possible expansion of the parks system over time based on community desires.

With the implementation of the master plan there will be a need to add staff to manage, operate and maintain these parks, trails, and events. The actual positions needed and timing for their addition will be determined by Parks Department leadership, and should be included in discussions of costs, both capital and operational, related to growth of the parks and recreation system.

The following recommendations identify existing staffing levels and considerations for additional staffing needs based on the master plan recommendations.

5.4.1 Current Staffing:

- Department has 9 FTE positions approved and 8 are currently filled.
- Benchmarking identifies a capacity of 11 FTE for a community the size of Marshall.
- In 2022 a commissioned police officer was added to provide security at the pool. This position is split between the Parks Department and Marshall Police Department.
- When considering expanded amenities or new park development, planning should include staffing requirements for operation and maintenance.

5.4.2 Future Staffing: Based on recommendations in this plan the following are possible future staffing positions to be considered in support of park improvements.

- Natural Resource Staff: arborist, water quality, native landscapes, etc.
- Athletic Fields (if Hab Center is developed)
- Golf Course (currently one dedicated maintenance staff)

5.4.3 Partnerships and Volunteer Groups: Marshall Parks and Recreation has many active and beneficial relationships for the maintenance and operations of amenities and programs. While depending on outside assistance can be difficult at times, it is recommended that Marshall continue these relationships and expand where feasible to supplement the staffing and financial resources currently available to the department. These relationships include:

- Partnerships: YMCA, Marshall Bow Hunters, Marshall Little League, Fitzgibbon Hospital, etc.
- Volunteer Groups: Garden Club, Schools, Service Groups, Disc Golf, Mountain Bike, etc.

5.5 Budget

Revenue for the Marshall Parks and Recreation Department can be an obstacle to implementation, operations, and maintenance of recommendations included in this master plan. The department has been successful in recent years of becoming financially stable through the completion of repayment of City General Funds in fiscal year 2021 and growing a Park Capital Improvement Fund. Additionally, the department had a history of strong partnerships for programs and events, and leveraging available resources for grant funding to improve the parks. While the department has grown the capital improvement fund and acquired grants, these investments have primarily been allocated towards maintaining or replacing existing amenities within the parks. The most recent amenity addition to the parks system was the basketball courts in 2012.

In looking at recommendations for budget, the focus cannot be on how to do more with less. That has been the approach for some time and will not allow for the realization of many recommendations in this master plan that are based on community input and operational needs. These recommendations identify internal actions and external funding mechanisms that the Marshall Parks and Recreation Department can evaluate and implement to meet the master plan goals over the next 15-20+ years. Some of these recommendations focus on institutional change to be managed by department leadership and the Parks and Recreation Board, while others can be individual or project specific approaches to budget management and funding. The recommendations below will require the support and assistance of the Parks and Recreation Board, city leadership, and in some cases, the community, to increase the department financial resources to successfully grow and strengthen the Marshall Parks System and community.

5.5.1 Establish a Cost Recovery Target: This is the balance between self-supporting and subsidized services provided by the Parks Department, and is traditionally managed through partnership agreements, rental fees, and program fees. The need for balance in cost recovery is to ensure the parks department has the financial resources availability to maintain and operate the existing parks system along with the ability to invest in new offerings/updates desired by the community. Factors for consideration:

- *The Parks Department (without golf revenue/expenses) has a cost recovery rate of 11% while the national benchmark is 25%.*
- *75% of parks department revenue is tax based while the national benchmark is 61%*
- *Marshall residents contribute \$7.02 annually in revenue to the parks department (fees) and the national benchmark is \$34.55.*
- With limited program offerings, the existing level of tax based revenue, and experience showing limited participation in fee-based offerings, a focus on managing subsidized expenses over increasing revenue potential is recommended to achieve the cost recovery target.

5.5.2 New Development by Reducing Operating Expenses: The planning process has identified desires of the community for improved amenities and new recreation opportunities along with a stated history of a limited capacity for fee based recreation. The current budget structure provides limited opportunity for new development in the parks due to existing operating costs, need for capital reinvestment, and limited cost recovery from revenue generating amenities and programs:

- Marshall Parks should explore options to reduce costs associated with amenities providing limited recreation value to the community, and use this funding to support capital projects that bring greater value or new amenities to the community.
 - *The last capital amenity addition to the parks was the basketball courts in 2012. (this does not include capital reinvestment for renovation and expansions of existing park amenities)*
- Areas of consideration based on budget review and master plan process observations are noted below as examples:
 - *Conversion of mowed lawn to native meadow planting in areas not used for events an play. (Reduce internal costs)*
 - *Recommendations from the aquatic center feasibility study (reduce cost recovery deficit)*
 - *Evaluation of fee structures and agreements to ensure revenues or returned services cover operational costs invested by the city. (Ensure Parks Department is compensated and receives value in partnerships agreements)*
- This should be an iterative process, proactively managed by the Parks Department and Parks and Recreation Board to evaluate department operation costs annually identify opportunities to best position the department with the financial flexibility to meet the changing needs of the Marshall Community.

5.5.3 Explore Funding Strategies: Parks department leadership should work with the finance department and other city leadership to review existing funding and identify additional funding strategies to ensure adequate channels are in place to meet capital and operational costs associated with the community desired future of the parks. Possible funding strategies, some of which are currently in place, or may have been used by the city in the past include:

- **Traditional Funding** – these are continuous/reoccurring funding sources
 - General Fund
 - Revenue Bonds
 - Impact Fees
 - User Fees
 - Sales Tax
 - Reserve Fund
- **Alternative Funding** – these are one-time or project specific funding
 - Philanthropic
 - Donors and Capital Campaigns
 - Volunteers and In-Kind Services
 - Grants
 - Governmental
 - Foundations
 - Partnerships / Sponsorships
 - Healthcare Investment
 - Marketing Partnership and Sponsorships

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