

DRAFT - RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT TOOLS

There is a strong and growing trend in the United States of recognition by public leaders that parks, recreation, trails, open space and related “Quality of Life” amenities are not secondary services provided by governmental agencies, but that they are integral to creating communities where people want to live. These services should be seen as **investments** in the long-term vitality and economic sustainability of any vibrant and attractive community. The City of Steamboat Springs recognizes these factors and is poised to create improvements that will enhance the City for years to come.

The following **Goals, Strategies, and Action Steps** are outlined to create a process for focus and implementation. An **Action Plan** follows each goal and a summary of the **Action Plan items** follows at the end of this section. Over the next 5 to 10 years there will be many influences that will have an impact on the success of this plan. Funding availability, City staff buy-in as well as political and community support will play significant roles in the implementation process.

Maximizing **Implementation Efforts and Organizational Development** goals will help provide a base from which master plan priorities and decisions can be made. Maximizing **Partnership Opportunities** goals will work as a driving force to bring all players to the table and help determine the best course to maximize leisure and recreation opportunities within current resource potentials.

GOAL ONE: MAXIMIZE IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS

Strategy 1.1: Collaborate to Strategically Achieve the Goals of the Master Plan

The success of any plan can be directly related to how it is implemented. The following objectives and strategies provide guidance on how to approach the implementation of this plan to be successful.

Action Step:

- Increase communication and collaborations between the City and partnering agencies and organizations to prioritize and implement the recommendations of the Master Plan using the following steps:
 - Identify internal priorities (annually, over five years) – At the end of **Section VII**, all goals and supporting objectives are prioritized as:
 - **Immediate priority** - Actions that need to be taken in order to implement any short, mid, and long-term objectives
 - **Short-term priority** – meaning that some action should be taken within the next 1 - 2 years
 - **Mid-term priority** – meaning that some action should be taken within the next 3 to 5 years
 - **Long-term priority** – meaning that some action should be taken at 5 years or beyond
 - **Ongoing** – meaning that this action is already taking place or should be put into place immediately, and should continue

- The City of Steamboat Springs must be willing to dedicate staff time to implement this Master Plan using the strategies outlined above.
 - Assign staff to fulfill the recommendations
 - Identify specific actions
 - Gain Council/Parks and Recreation Commission input (if needed)
 - Identify outside partners and actions
 - Set timeframe, deadlines and identify key decision points
 - Assess resources needed for implementation
 - Identify timing for funding approval
 - Incorporate into agency annual work plan
 - Assign tasks for the department's annual work plan
 - Assess department workloads, roles, and responsibilities
 - Incorporate tasks into individual personnel goals and annual evaluations

Strategy 1.2: Inform and Empower Staff to Implement Master Plan Recommendations

Assure that all levels of staff are informed of, and are set up to work together to implement, the recommendations and strategies of the Master Plan.

Action Steps:

- Inform all levels of staff of the direction of the Master Plan and allow for input, encouraging buy-in and knowledge from all staff members.
- Provide cross-departmental staff teams/team members (as appropriate) with education, development opportunities, necessary equipment, and supplies.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	CIP/FUNDING	TIMING
GOAL ONE: MAXIMIZE IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS			
Strategy 1.1: Collaborate to Strategically Achieve the Goals of the Master Plan	Staff, Parks and Recreation Commission	Staff Time	Immediate
Strategy 1.2: Inform and Empower Staff to Implement Master Plan Recommendations	Staff	Staff Time	Immediate

GOAL TWO: ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Strategy 2.1: Define Core Services

As much as the Steamboat Springs Parks and Recreation staff would like, the City cannot be all things to all people. Understanding where the primary focus should be in the delivery of parks and recreation services will allow the City to improve upon those areas while developing strategies to assist in the delivery of other services. The basis of determining core services should come from the vision and mission developed by the City, which reads:

“To provide an environment that promotes and anticipates the recreational, open space and cultural needs of all citizens; to be a catalyst for innovational programming in conjunction with civic, private and the business sector; and to remain committed to being accountable for the maintenance, preservation and development of the natural resources entrusted to us.”

Action Steps:

- Given current budget constraints and staff limitations, core services should be based around those delivering the greatest community benefit. Based on input from staff and community partners, core services currently appear to focus around the following:
 - Park maintenance
 - Facility capital improvements
 - Athletic field provider
 - Trails
 - Special events
 - Introductory level youth sports and activities
 - Clearing house for recreation opportunity information

As a short-term and ongoing activity, staff should continue to meet with community partners, City Council and advisory boards to expand and define the City’s core services as they relate to parks and recreation.

Strategy 2.2: Create and Implement a Cost Recovery Philosophy and Policy

It is important for City to develop a **Pricing and Cost Recovery Philosophy** that reflects the values of the community and the responsibility it has to the community. This philosophy will be especially important if the City moves forward in the development of new programs, additional and/or expanded facilities, and as it strives for sustainability and determines how much it is willing to subsidize operations.

One means of accomplishing this goal is applying a process using an industry tool called the **“Pyramid Methodology.”** This methodology develops and implements a refined cost recovery philosophy and pricing policy based on current “best practices” as determined by the mission of the agency and the program’s benefit to the community and/or individual.

Critical to this philosophical undertaking is the support and understanding of elected officials and, ultimately, citizens. Whether or not significant changes are called for, the agency wants to be certain that it is philosophically aligned with its residents. The development of the core services and cost recovery philosophy and policy is built on a very logical foundation, using the understanding of who is benefiting from parks, recreation, and natural resources service to determine how the costs for that service should be paid. An overview of the **Pyramid Methodology**, is found in **Appendix XX**.

Action Steps:

- Develop ongoing systems that help measure cost recovery goals and anticipate potential pitfalls utilizing the following points:
 - Understand current revenue streams and their sustainability.

- Track all expenses and revenues for programs, facilities, and services to understand their contribution to overall department cost recovery.
- Analyze who is benefiting from programs, facilities, and services and to what degree they should be subsidized.
- Fees for programs should acknowledge the full cost of each program (those direct and indirect costs associated with program delivery) and where the program fits on the scale of who benefits from the program or service to determine appropriate cost recovery targets.
- Program fees should not be based on ability to pay, but an objective program should be in place that allows for easy access for lower income participants, through availability of scholarships and/or discounts. In many instances qualification for scholarships and /or discounts mirror requirements for free or reduced cost for lunch in schools.
- Define direct costs as those that typically exist purely because of the program and change with the program.
- Define indirect costs as those that typically would exist anyway (like full time staff, utilities, administration, debt service, etc.)

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	CIP/FUNDING	TIMING
GOAL TWO: ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT			
Strategy 2.1: Define Core Services	Staff, Parks and Recreation Commission	Staff Time	Short-term
Strategy 2.2: Create and Implement a Cost Recovery Philosophy and Policy	Staff, Parks and Recreation Commission	Staff Time Consultant – Up to \$30,000	Mid-term

GOAL THREE: FORMALIZE PARTNERSHIPS¹

Strategy 3.1: Maximize partnerships with governmental agencies through the development of Inter-Governmental Agreements (IGAs).

An ongoing relationship and partnership with the Steamboat Springs School District is vital in delivering recreational opportunities to the community. Additionally, other partnership opportunities with governmental agencies such as Routt County could also exist.

Action Steps:

¹ The term “partnership” here is used to represent a commonly understood concept in the parks and recreation industry referring to a collaboration or alliance with another entity. It is not intended to represent the legal definition of partnership, establishing a very specific and rigorously defined relationship.

- The City should work with the School District to establish an Inter-Governmental Agreement that creates opportunities for both agencies for the use of fields, gyms, and multipurpose spaces. Outcomes of this process should include:
 - Recognizing the different missions of each agency but the need for shared resources
 - Examining ways to manage negative impact (wear & tear) on facilities
 - Examining ways to manage supervisory staff and maintenance costs
 - Creating evaluation and enforcement guidelines for both parties
 - Examining an agreement that will determine if each agency pays for use of the other's facilities or if use is reciprocal
- Seek partnership agreements with Routt County for trail and open space development as indicated in the in the 2004 Steamboat Springs Community Plan (Chapter 8, Open Space, Recreation, and Trails Strategies)
- Seek to create a formal written agreement (IGA) when working/partnering with all governmental agencies **See sample IGA's in Appendix XX**

Strategy 3.2: Formalize All Partnerships

The City of Steamboat Springs has numerous opportunities to partner with other organizations and agencies to increase and improve recreational offerings for the community. The development of formal written partnership agreements that outline expectations and benefits for all parties involved will improve the delivery of services. An example of this would be a formal partnership for the use of the athletic fields that are located on school district property in Whistler Park.

Action Steps:

- Create and Implement a Partnership Policy
- Formalize all partnerships in a written format. A “Sample Partnership Policy” has been provided in **Appendix XX**. A policy should provide:
 - An outline of what types of partnerships are appropriate
 - Approval and procurement procedures
 - Monitoring and evaluation criteria
 - Risk management and exit strategies

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	CIP/FUNDING	TIMING
GOAL THREE: FORMALIZE PARTNERSHIPS			
Strategy 3.1: Maximize partnerships with governmental agencies	Staff	Staff Time, Partnering Organizations	Short Term
Strategy 3.2: Formalize All Partnerships	Staff	Staff Time, Partnering Organizations	Immediate

GOAL FOUR: ESTABLISH PARK MAINTENANCE STANDARDS

Strategy 4.1: Understand How Park Maintenance Dollars are Being Spent

It is very difficult to recommend a set dollar amount that should be spent on park, trails and open space maintenance, as there are a variety of environmental and climatic variables, and the value regarding maintenance levels is different from community to community. Better understanding how current dollars are being spent is the ground work for understanding where adjustment may be made to plan more efficiently for the future. Planning and pro-active attention to standards that are specific to Steamboat Springs can help identify the priorities.

Action Steps:

- Develop criteria that would define the City's maintenance standards. Maintenance practices should be articulated in the form of a Maintenance Guidelines and Procedures Manual.
- Track labor hours and equipment use for park and athletic field maintenance tasks allowing for accurate estimating for what it takes to keep parks and athletic fields to the standards desired by the City. Tracking labor costs and equipment costs for maintenance tasks will also allow for:
 - More accurate estimating of maintenance costs for new parks and athletic fields based on recorded historical data
 - Establishing true costs for maintenance of facilities
 - Greater understanding of the impacts of maintenance budgets fluctuations
 - Improved staffing projections for new and existing facilities
 - Improved maintenance at facilities resulting in safer conditions
 - Improved scheduling of maintenance activities
 - Improved ability to apply maintenance cost to programming and facility use fees
 - Ability to apply maintenance costs directly to overall program costs

Strategy 4.2: Determine True Cost of Special Event Support.

The demand on the parks maintenance department for support for special events is great, totaling over 3000 man hours annually. For many of the special events that the parks maintenance department supports, the cost of that support (i.e. trash pick-up, set-up and tear down, late night shifts) is waived to event organizers.

Action Steps:

- Judiciously track cost of special event support to determine true costs
- Determine need to create a separate Special Events unit whose primary focus is special event support. This will allow for more efficient resource allocation, better communication and a better focus on expected services
- Determine appropriated cost recovery that should be derived from special event support by the Parks, Open Space and Recreational Department (Would be part of development of a **Pricing and Cost Recovery Philosophy** as described in Goal Two)

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	CIP/FUNDING	TIMING
GOAL FOUR: ESTABLISH PARK MAINTENANCE STANDARDS			
Strategy 4.1: Understand How Park Maintenance Dollars are Being Spent	Staff	Staff Time	Immediate, Ongoing
Strategy 4.2: Determine true cost of special event support	Staff	Staff Time	Immediate, Short Term

GOAL FIVE: PURSUE TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE FUNDING

Strategy 5.1: Research Potential Traditional Funding Opportunities

The City has the ability to use traditional funding mechanisms to enhance the quality of life and expand parks and recreation opportunities to the community. The citizen's survey indicated initial support for dedicated tax revenue for parks and recreation operations. Other forms of traditional funding for park and recreation services include fees for programs and services. As part of a **Pricing and Cost Recovery Philosophy**, as described in Goal Two, determination can be made as to what tax subsidy levels should be, depending on the what provides the greatest community benefit. The philosophy could also assist in determining if a resident and non-resident fee should be create for all or some parks and recreation services.

Action Steps:

- Further explore community willingness for a dedicated tax to support parks and recreation programs and services
- Determine need for a resident, non-resident fee structure

Strategy 5.2: Pursue Alternative Funding to Implement the Master Plan

Alternative funding methods such as GOCO grants have already been instrumental to expansion of recreation facilities. Allocating resources (assigned staff time, matching funds, etc.) to pursue alternative funding should be considered. The creation of a parks and recreation foundation will expand the grant opportunities available to the City. Creating a volunteer transfer tax or volunteer lodging tax which gives residents and visitors an option of contributing to a designated parks and recreation fund could also be a source of alternative funding.

Action Steps:

- Identify opportunities to increase community support and revenue opportunities such as grants, partnerships, sponsorships, and volunteers
- Assign staff resources and/or investigate the possibility of creating a park and recreation foundation to apply for such funding
- Develop a "Wish List" to identify philanthropic opportunities that align with these needs
- Once identified, aggressively apply for grant funding
- Create new and formalize existing Sponsorships (see **Sample Sponsorship Policy** in **Appendix XX**) with equity agreements that are reviewed annually

- Research opportunity to create volunteer transfer or lodging tax

Strategy 5.3: Create a Park Land Dedication/Fee-in-lieu of Policy

Action Steps:

- Utilizing current levels of service provided by parks as determined by the park inventory and citizen input conducted as part of this plan, a park land dedication/fee-in-lieu policy should be created that, at minimum, replicates current level of service for future developments. This should also be considered for infill development since they too have a direct impact on level of service. Sample Park Land Dedication/Fee-in-lieu policies can be found in Appendix XX.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	CIP/FUNDING	TIMING
GOAL FIVE: TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE FUNDING			
Strategy 5.1: Research Potential Traditional Funding Opportunities	Staff	Staff, Parks and Recreation Commission	Mid/long - term
Strategy 5.2: Pursue Alternative Funding to Implement the Master Plan	Staff	Staff Time	Ongoing
Strategy 5.3: Create a Park Land Dedication/Fee-in-lieu of Policy	Staff – Parks and Planning	Staff Time	Short to Mid Term

GOAL SIX: STRENGTHEN RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE STEAMBOAT SPRINGS COMMUNITY

Lack of programmable indoor space and aquatics facilities is a limitation for the creation and/or expansion of City recreation programs. This situation will only get more complex if future increases in the school population, as projected by the school district, come to pass. Until new facilities are built or additional partnered facilities are identified, an evaluation of current programs and proposed new programs will need to be performed annually to ensure the City is meeting and will continue to meet community needs and expectations.

Strategy 6.1: Enhance recreational opportunities for identified populations

Action Steps:

- Consider future activities and events (non-sport) for adult populations. Events and activities that do not duplicate what area recreation providers are currently offering may fill service gaps and avoid duplication of service.
- Research the feasibility of a teen-friendly area within the proposed Phase IV of the Ice Arena to include concessions, a game room or interactive play area, and other amenities.

- Place an emphasis on programs that are shorter in time commitment as current behavioral trends relative to leisure behaviors suggest a declining interest in participating in “long-term” session commitments.

Strategy 6.2: Continue assessment of current recreation facility condition and conduciveness

Action Step:

- Continue to evaluate the adequacy of recreational spaces using a documented approach that includes: space limitations relative to type of activities that can be provided; health and safety concerns; storage limitations; conduciveness of space to type of activity; and other space characteristics that adversely affect recreational program provision.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	CIP/FUNDING	TIMING
GOAL SIX: STRENGTHEN RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES			
Strategy 6.1: Enhance recreational opportunities for identified populations	Staff	Staff Time	Short Term
Strategy 6.2: Continue assessment of current recreation facility condition and conduciveness	Staff	Staff Time	Short/Mid Term

GOAL SEVEN: ENHANCE RECREATION SERVICES MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Strategy 7.1: Strengthen financial management practices

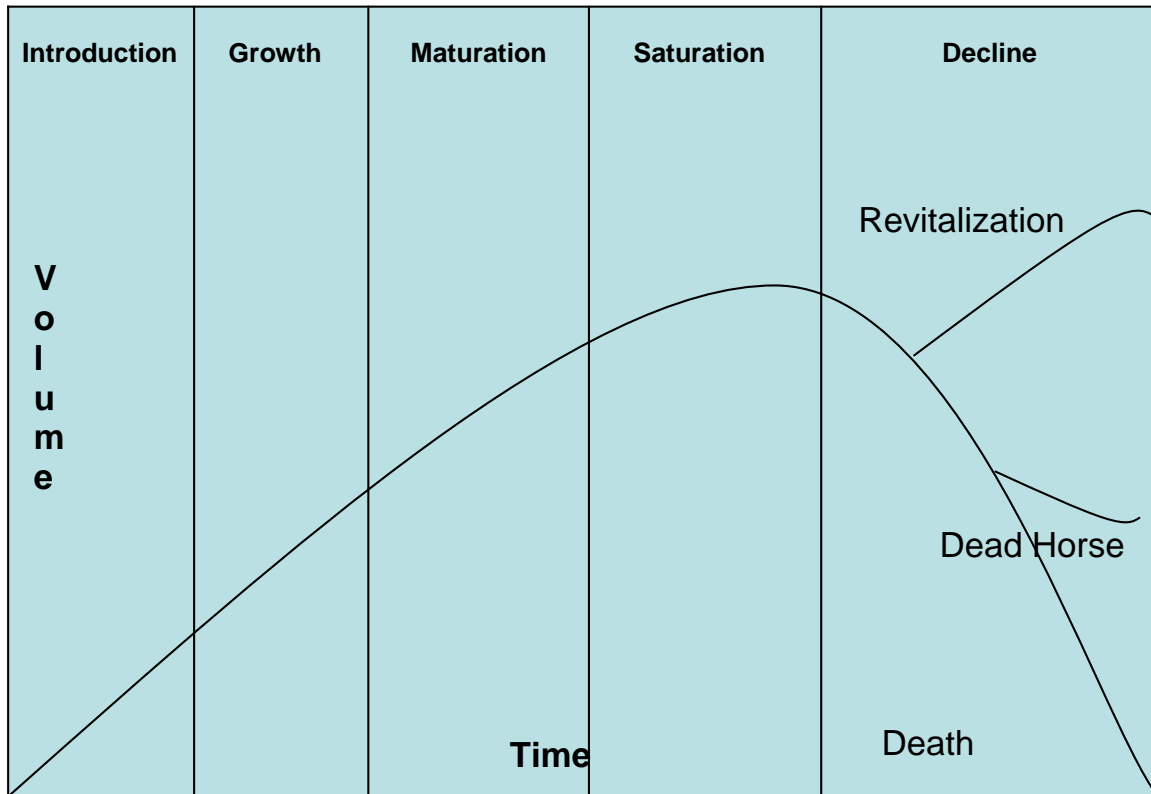
Action Steps:

- Determine the direct and indirect costs for each program, activity and event provided in order to manage financial resources more effectively, and be able to articulate the true costs of providing services to the community.
- Use a cost recovery philosophy (**see Goal Two**) that reflects the values of the organization including the community, staff and leadership. A philosophy that guides decisions relative to resource allocation is invaluable for making financial management decisions such as allocating subsidy and determining fair and equitable pricing of services. Developing and adopting a subsidy and cost recovery philosophy will be important as the Department works to sustain services.
- Consider charging a fee for all events establishing a value for users. Psychological pricing suggests that “free” services are not viewed by users as quality services, and often does not convey that there is a real cost for providing that service.
- Establish policy for use in determining the appropriateness of waiving fees for a particular program, service or event support.
- Determine, on an annual basis using the policy developed in the previous action step, if a fee established for a particular program, service or event should be waived.

Strategy 7.2: Develop recreation service planning methods

Action Steps:

- Establish service objectives to ensure that a program, activity or event is needed or desired and that it is measured to determine success and effectiveness. Objectives are established at the on-set of event planning so as to determine event intent, and success indicators. They must be measurable.
- Consider undertaking a Service Assessment that provides an intensive review of organizational services including programs, activities, events, facilities and parklands. The Assessment utilizes a series of filters to assist in the determination of the organization's level of responsibility in the provision of each service. Results of the Assessment indicate whether the service is "core to the organization's mission," or if there is significant duplication of community efforts to provide a service, therefore, direction to reallocate resources elsewhere. Current resources, their allocation, and cost recovery/subsidy levels for all organizational services are also analyzed as a part of this step in the process.
- Conduct an analysis of the Program Life Cycle at the conclusion of each program, activity or event. Once program evaluations are completed, a program, activity or event's stage of existence should be considered as decisions are made relative to the future of any service. For example, if registrations continue to decline, staff may wish to evaluate the merits of attempting to re-vitalize a program with a new name, adjusting scheduling to another date or time, modifying a program's format, or simply discontinuing the program reallocating resources elsewhere. A graphic representation of this Life Cycle and the stages in a program, activity or event's life is illustrated below:



- Conduct formative (mid-term) and summative (post) participant evaluations for each program, activity and event that address participant satisfaction, facility appropriateness and future interest. Formative evaluations are necessary only when programs are offered for extended periods of time (eight week sessions as opposed to one week sessions). Response return is dependent on how evaluations are distributed and collected. Distribution should be strategic and be done with the greatest return in mind. It is a good practice to consider an incentive for completion and return of evaluations. These are critical to Department decision making.
- Conduct staff evaluations that include program, activity and event description and details; objective review and analysis; participations, budget information including revenues and expenditures (consistently applied for each service), participant evaluation data; and future recommendations.

Strategy 7.3: Assess existing organizational structure

Action Step:

- Consider placing both Recreation Services and the Howelsen Ice Arena into one division (Recreation Services). As the Ice Arena and its programs are recreational services in and of themselves, this will allow for more consistent management and operations of all recreational services within the Department. After review, it may also allow for operational efficiencies as well.

Strategy 7.4: Consideration of outsourcing of parks and recreation services

Outsourcing of parks and recreation services should only be done after careful consideration of the capacities and expertise of both the outsourcing organization and the entity that may be contracted to provide the service, as well as gaining a thorough understanding of the true costs and revenue potential of providing the service in-house versus outsourcing.

Action Steps:

- Perform a "Service Assessment" process which leads to the determination of the "fit" for each service as it relates to the organization's values, vision and mission; the economic attractiveness of the service; whether there is high or low alternative coverage; and the competitive position of the organization in providing the service. These filters all lead to management strategies that can include: aggressive marketing, divestment, or collaboration....the latter two of which can direct the organization to consider outsourcing as an alternative. The Assessment is one tool by which you arrive at the decision to outsource, or not, and it also adds credibility and justification the process, and is defensible.
- Determine all costs, both direct and indirect for any service under consideration. It is critical that all costs that would be assumed by another entity and thus saved by Steamboat Springs be included. Implement the cost recovery philosophy (**created in Goal Two**) that places the service in the correct level of the pyramid model to allow maximum revenue potential. This information can be utilized as one of the tools to determine an agreement for outsourcing/concessions for services that would be beneficial to the Department, City and the community.
- Determine assumptions of importance to the community including parameters for fees, hours of operation, limitations on service, and other considerations. An outsourcing/concessions agreement also includes components that deal with revenue sharing, maintenance and capital improvements.
- If outsourcing seems to be a reasonable approach, prepare a request for proposals for service highlighting desired service outcomes and all assumptions and seek responses from the non-profit and private sector. Park and recreation services are outsourced in some Colorado Resort Communities and are primarily focused around golf course operations **such as golf courses in Steamboat Springs and Glenwood Springs.** As another type of example, for other types of services the Town of Vail contracts the operations and programming of many of its Town owned recreation venues to the Vail Recreation District, another public entity. These facilities include the John Dobson Ice Arena, Vail Gymnastic Center, public tennis courts and athletic fields. The City of Pueblo contracts operations of the City owned zoo to a non-profit organization.
- Use a partnership policy (**See Goal Three**) to determine the best type of partnership and with whom to partner. This policy helps define the expectations of the City and

partner organization. A partnership policy and cost recovery philosophy that guides these decisions for making financial management decisions will be important as the Department works to sustain services.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	CIP/FUNDING	TIMING
GOAL SEVEN: ENHANCE RECREATION SERVICES MANAGEMENT PRACTICES			
Strategy 7.1: Strengthen financial management practices	Staff	Staff Time/Consultant Costs (See Goal Two)	Short Term
Strategy 7.2: Develop recreation service planning methods	Staff	Staff Time/Consultant Costs - \$20,000 for Service Assessment	Short/Mid Term
Strategy 7.3: Assess existing organizational structure	Staff	Staff Time	Short Term
Strategy 7.4: Determination of outsourcing of parks and recreation services	Staff	Staff Time	Mid term

GOAL EIGHT: IMPROVE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Strategy 8.1: Enhance marketing efforts

Action Steps:

- Evaluate the recreation guide’s distribution, website use and access and other promotional tools and publications to assess their ease of access and use. Programs, activities and events should not rely on fliers and posters as primary publicity methods.
- Consistently use the Department’s logo and develop a Department “brand” (vision statement). Additionally, staff uniforms with the logo displayed clearly assist in marketing efforts, but also allow for easily identifiable leaders, of particular importance in youth programs.

Strategy 8.2: Develop a comprehensive volunteer program

Action Step:

- Develop a comprehensive volunteer management system that includes the promotion, recruitment, training and management of volunteers and their service hours. This will provide the community with the opportunity to intimately connect with the Department providing resources and possible cost savings, and educate and inform the community about

the Department and its operations. This effort will require staff resources for the management and oversight of the program.

Strategy 8.3: Enhance the value of community collaborations

Action Steps:

- Develop a database of all local recreation service providers allowing the Department to become the community’s clearinghouse for recreation services in Steamboat Springs. Working with all local providers, this clearinghouse would allow all agencies (private, public or non-profit) the opportunity to stay abreast of what each other is providing, encouraging collaborations and diminishing duplication of services. The clearinghouse can also be used to disseminate information about available recreation services to the community. Collaboration with the local paper distributing this information to the community on an annual or bi-annual basis could also assist in this effort as well.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	CIP/FUNDING	TIMING
GOAL EIGHT: IMPROVE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS			
Strategy 8.1: Enhance marketing efforts	Staff	Staff Time	Short Term
Strategy 8.2: Develop a comprehensive volunteer program	Staff	Staff Time/Resources up to \$50,000	Mid Term
Strategy 8.3: Enhance the value of community collaborations	Staff	Staff Time	Mid Term

GOAL NINE: PLAN AND IMPLEMENT CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS TO THE INVENTORY OF DEVELOPED PARKS

Strategy 9.1: Establish park design standards

Action Steps:

- Establish standards for park design, furnishings, and equipment that meet expectations for quality in a world-class resort community. This includes maintaining or increasing LOS even though currently it may seem to exceed typical expectations or “national standards.” The population being served is not limited to full time residents, it also includes part-time residents and visitors. The standards should reflect the fact that the parks and recreation facilities in Steamboat Springs are economic generators for the local economy as well as amenities for residents. The standards should respect and reinforce Steamboat Springs’ “authenticity” and its history and heritage. Avoid turning Steamboat Springs into a “theme park.” The standards should allow for creativity and diversity within the park system while maintaining consistency through the quality of the materials and design.
- Use signage, landscaping, and other elements to identify and brand parks and facilities as being part of an overall system.
- Establish standards to identify suitability for large special event use including guidance to proper amenities, location and size for such use.
- Consider policies and ordinances to assure that private recreation facilities in new developments adequately satisfy the need generated by these developments, or that adequate funds are generated by new developments to provide additional city-owned and operated facilities. This is particularly a concern for infill development since impact fees and land dedication are currently tied to annexation.
- Provide ongoing coordination with the developers in the expanding areas of the city to assure that opportunities within new developments are not missed and that LOS is achieved equitably throughout the old and new parts of Steamboat Springs.
- Provide a definition for “open space” that clearly identifies and differentiates developed parkland from open space, so that standards can be appropriately applied to the different uses.

Strategy 9.2: Bring existing parks up to standards

Action Steps:

- Upgrade parks with low GRASP[®] scores. The target score for a neighborhood park is 19.2 points. This equates to four components with appropriate modifiers (comfort and convenience features) in place. A site that does not achieve this score is Brooklyn Park. This site offers excellent play opportunities; they could be enhanced as neighborhood destinations with additional amenities through partnership with the school district. Other sites with low scores include the library grounds, the small triangle park at the south entry to town, and Strawberry Park Field. These sites could be enhanced with comfort and convenience features such as benches, display gardens, interpretive signage, etc., to raise

their LOS. Parks that scored below the target and could have new or upgraded components added to them include Brooklyn Park, Casey's Pond, Rita Valentine, and Heritage Park. In Brooklyn Park the outdated playground could be updated and other improvements could be made as described below. Rita Valentine Park is mostly undeveloped and is suitable for a wide range of components and activities.

- Upgrade components with low GRASP[®] scores. Sometimes a score of one is acceptable for a component. For example, tournament or heavily programmed facilities may score a one for neighborhood use, but score high for community use (the tennis center is an example). Components with low scores that *should* be addressed include the playground at Brooklyn Park, the water access at Casey's Pond (a new dock is on order and planned for installation at this time), and the overall event facilities at the Rodeo Grounds. Components that *may* be upgraded include expanding or updating the playgrounds at Emerald and Howelsen Parks to suit them better to their role as destination play areas. Both of these are excellent opportunities to create an identity for Steamboat Springs and "brand" the parks.
- Update existing smaller parks such as Brooklyn Park with amenities such as loop walks, picnic shelters, and restrooms where appropriate. Casey's Pond is an ideal site for a loop walk. Loop walks are popular features enjoyed by a wide range of users, and they contribute to a healthier citizenry. Iron Springs is a small park that could be enhanced with simple amenities such as art and shade. Lithia Springs is an appealing small area with historic and natural qualities that could be upgraded with a loop walk and other amenities. Little Toots Park could be enhanced as a destination-play park geared to families and birthday parties, etc.
- Restrooms in many of the City's parks are too small and are designed for seasonal use. Steamboat Springs is a year-round outdoor community, and as such should provide for comfort and convenience in the parks throughout all seasons. An overall plan for restrooms in parks should be developed to determine when and where restrooms should be provided, which ones should be for year-round use, etc.
- The parking situation in several parks, notably Lincoln and Ski Town Parks should be addressed with an overall parking plan that looks at a variety of on-site and off-site options, combined with transit, bike, and pedestrian access enhancements.

Strategy 9.3: Prepare new master plans for key parks and facilities

Action Steps:

- Prepare new master plans for individual parks throughout the system. Key parks to consider are Emerald, Howelsen, and the Rodeo Grounds. This could be done in a phased approach over several years. Look at each park's role in the overall system and make sure that the park does at least one thing really well. Look for options in Emerald and Howelsen Parks that would reduce the congestion and traffic by moving some components to new sites such as West Steamboat. Continue to seek ways to alleviate access issues at Emerald Park. The plan for the Rodeo Grounds should address updating and renovating the facilities without losing the "Old Steamboat" image they provide.
- Consider re-purposing parts of existing parks to accommodate new needs and trends, such as disc golf and wheel parks. Reconfiguring existing parks and/or moving some amenities from existing parks to new locations can accomplish some of this.

- Provide a dog park as a short term solution in an existing park. Provide a dog park at a new location, as a long term solution, preferably one where water is available.

Strategy 9.4: Add new parks and facilities

Action Steps:

- Look for unique opportunities to increase the LOS for parks. Eagle Scout Park is an example of how small pieces of the downtown area can contribute to the quality of life in Steamboat. This park provides a good example of how small bits of green space can be claimed for art, education, ecology, and passive use. There is a small spot by the water in Eagle Scout Park that could be improved into a nice seating node with a simple bench in the shade of the trees found along the creek here. Similar opportunities might be found in other small places within the downtown area, such as Ski Town Lions Park. These spaces will become more important as infill occurs in the downtown and more people live there. These spaces also add to the visitor experience and overall image of Steamboat Springs for tourists.
- Develop undeveloped park sites, including Rita Valentine and Bear River. Consider additional sites, such as the one near the airport as potential locations where some facilities could be moved from existing parks to reduce congestion in the core area. Coordinate plans for new parks with modifications to existing ones to assure that the parts are all working together as an overall system that delivers the full range of services for the community.
- Coordinate with developers and others to identify opportunities to create new community park facilities in the expanding areas of the city. Consider moving some existing components out of the downtown area (some of the ball fields and sports fields, for example) to reduce congestion in the downtown parks, and make them easier to operate and maintain.

Strategy 9.5: Extend the Greenway/Blueway and improve access to parks and trails

Action Steps:

- Incorporate the Yampa River as a Blueway. This is one of the City’s most important amenities.
- Improve access for kayakers, tubers, fisherman, and wildlife enthusiasts where possible. Access to the river should be extended to the north and west where none currently exists.
- Provide signage, maps, and other public information resources to let people know more about the Blueway.
- Provide safe and convenient connections from neighborhoods throughout the City to the Greenway/Blueway. This could include additional trails, upgrading pedestrian crossings on Lincoln Avenue, etc.

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	CIP/FUNDING	TIMING
GOAL NINE: Plan and Implement Capital Improvements to the Inventory of Developed Parks			
Strategy 9.1: Establish park design standards	Staff	Staff Time, Consultant – up to \$50,000	Short Term

Strategy 9.2: Bring existing parks up to standards	Staff	Staff Time, Consultants up to \$150,000	Short Term to Long Term
Strategy 9.3: Prepare new master plans for key parks and facilities	Staff	Staff Time, Consultants up to \$150,000	Short Term (dog park) Mid Term (plans) to Long Term (construction)
Strategy 9.4: Add new parks and facilities	Staff	Staff Time, Consultants up to \$150,000	Short Term to Long Term
Strategy 9.5: Extend the Greenway/Blueway and improve access to parks and trails	Staff	Staff Time, Consultants up to \$150,000	Short-Term to Long-Term