

Chapter 11

Physical Resource Planning

CAPRA Accreditation Standards

* 0.4 Comprehensive Master Plan

Standard: There shall be a comprehensive park and recreation system plan, which is basically an inventory of existing conditions and recommendations for future programs and services, acquisition and development of areas and facilities, and administration. The plan shall be officially adopted by the appropriate governing body, updated regularly, be linked with a capital improvement budget and a phased development.

Commentary: The Agency should have a multi year plan , which includes: goals and operational objectives, anticipated workload and population trends, anticipated personnel levels, and anticipated capital improvements and equipment needs. The planning process and its "end product" are essential to effective agency management. The Agency should have a clear written articulation of goals and objectives and a plan for achieving them. The plan should cover successive years beyond the current budget year and should contain provisions for updating, at least annually.

The plan should reflect transportation patterns, population profiles, demand projections, private facilities, socioeconomic factors, aligned and impacted agencies, organizations, and groups, and many other variables.

Suggested Evidence of Compliance: Provide a copy of the current Plan, with date of official approval; describe linkage to the Agency's capital improvement budget and a phased development.

0.4.5 Feasibility Studies

Standard: Where deemed advisable or required by law, there should be special or feasibility studies prior to construction to determine the appropriateness of certain special facilities (community centers, fitness centers, golf courses, swimming pools, zoological parks, etc.).

Commentary: This should also include archeological, historical, geological, and ecological studies if they appear to be of significance in the development of an area or facility. Special consideration should be given to environmental hazards, specifically toxicity.

Suggested Evidence of Compliance: Provide copies of studies.

0.5 Site Plans

Standard: There should be site plans for all areas and facilities.

Commentary: The plans should relate to a specific park site or special use area, delineating areas of activity, circulation patterns, building locations, parking areas and other components of overall development. The plan may include cost estimates for long-range operations.

Suggested Evidence of Compliance: Provide copies of the site plans.

7.0 FACILITY AND LAND USE MANAGEMENT

7.1 Acquisition of Park and Recreation Lands

Standard: The agency should have written policies and procedures for the acquisition of lands for park, recreation, conservation, and historical-cultural purposes.

Commentary: This authority usually originates in state enabling acts, is delegated to local governments and is implemented through local charters and ordinances. Lands may be acquired for park purposes through purchase, acceptance of gifts and bequests, and on occasion, through right of eminent domain. The utilization of lands may include joint use and cooperative agreements and lease agreements with other entities. Because land costs rise rapidly as areas are developed, planned acquisition is crucial. Acquisition of lands shall be for both current and projected needs of the community and based on policy and planning.

Suggested Evidence of Compliance: Provide policy and procedures for land acquisition and the citation of legal authority to acquire lands.

7.2 Development of Lands

Standard: The agency should have written policies and procedures for the development of park and recreation lands and facilities.

Commentary: The need and use of areas and facilities in relation to the current program goals of the agency should be reviewed annually. The review should reflect a concern for optimum usage and coordination with the total area and facility resources of the community. Applicable open space and design standards should be considered.

Suggested Evidence of Compliance: Provide the land development policies and procedures.

7.3 Defense Against Encroachment

Standard: The agency should have procedures for protecting park and recreation lands and facilities from encroachment.

Commentary: Proper planning often requires the acquisition of lands for park and recreation purposes well in advance of the community's need for full development of programs and facilities. During this interim period, particularly, there may be encroachment pressures for both public and private purposes. Vigilance and determination are needed to preserve and protect the long-term public interest in these lands. If lands held in reserve are used and publicized for "use as trails, primitive camping, wetlands, etc.," the community will recognize them as recreation and help resist encroachment. The procedures should include progressive steps to address escalated encroachment issues.

Suggested Evidence of Compliance: Provide the procedures regarding defense against encroachment.

7.4 Disposal of Lands

Standard: The agency should have written procedures regarding the disposal of park and recreation lands.

Commentary: From time to time demographic shifts may change the need for recreation

services in certain geographic districts. Need for greater public interests, such as interstate highways, may make it necessary to dispose of park lands in specific areas. In such cases negotiations should insure that the public recreational benefits are not diminished. In many communities the park and recreation departments receive cash and land to provide similar facilities in another location within the community service area. Such disposal should be in accord with the comprehensive plan. In many jurisdictions, law requires a referendum before the local government may sell park, cemetery, riverfront, or waterfront property. Such legislative requirements safeguard the community interests from short-term political decisions base on expediency while allowing negotiation of long-term benefits.

Suggested Evidence of Compliance: Provide the disposal of park and recreation land procedures.