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Executive Summary

[In Progress]

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Purpose

There are many reasons Ramsey is a remarkable city to reside: agricultural roots which provide a sense of authenticity, growing opportunities spurred by new development, extensive parks and trails system to connect residents, and a sense of community drawn from shared experiences. Uniqueness can even be found in the physical shape of Ramsey. Within the winding boundaries formed by the Mighty Mississippi and Wild and Scenic Rum River, a diversity of residents can be found— each with their own individual identity, background, family, means of living, and interests that influenced their reason for calling Ramsey home.

Parks and recreation agencies offer the ability to positively impact their respective communities through safe and accessible ways to recreate. Departments in this capacity work to increase economic value in their city and simultaneously provide ways to improve quality of life for residents. An established parks and recreation department increases the value of property, attracts business opportunities, and reduces costs of health care, costs of social services, and serve as a crime prevention strategy ([source to be cited](#)). On the individual basis, participants in recreation programs gain substantial benefits in both their physical and social health: reduces self-destructive behavior, lowers risk of diseases, improves longevity of life, builds strong bonds within a community and enhances overall wellbeing ([source to be cited](#)). Services from parks and recreation departments are vital to achieve well-balanced human development, further discussed in [Section X]

As Ramsey continues to grow and change, the Parks and Recreation Department is placed in an opportune position to use the momentum to [provide quality services] [build best community it can]. As a city that encompasses 29 square miles, [recent % breakdown of residential vs commercial], and 15% of the area is protected wetlands. The City boasts 500 acres of municipal parkland which contains, [x miles of trails], [x miles of river on the border] and [X program offerings]. With [natural spaces as such], Ramsey is an attractive place to [*In progress: statement in regards to parks system attracting residents/businesses*].

The Recreation Plan will assess current recreation programs in Ramsey, identify the need for future programs, and recommend best implementation practices. [*In progress: hold for information on newness of programming in the city and the framework this document will provide to help shape it for the future and frame the direction we should go*] This document is designed to interconnect with the 2040 Comprehensive Plan and Park System Plan. Additionally, it will support and respond to [initiatives, tactics] from the 2019 approved Strategic Action Plan.

Mission and Core Values

Mission

The City has adopted a mission to work together to responsibly grow our community, and to provide quality, cost-effective, and efficient government services. The Recreation Plan will describe how the Parks and Recreation Department will implement this mission through robust recreation programming in the City.

Core Values

The Parks and Recreation Department will utilize all of the City's Core values in regards to program development, with a focus on the following:

Fiscal Responsibility

The Department will evaluate current and future programs for cost efficiency. Section x will highlight the framework for [program funds allocation/spending].

Cooperation and Teamwork

The Department takes great pride in our partners. We will continue to partner with local public, private and non-profit entities to provide robust programs to residents and promote the local economy. Section x will go into detail on collaborations with other entities.

Excellence and Quality in the Delivery of Services

The Department will study the needs of residents to ensure that programs provided offer benefits on both the individual and community levels. Framework for how these services will be provided can be found in section X.

Adaptability and Continuous Learning

The Department is proud to promote continuous learning for all demographics. We will be adaptable to the needs of residents and trends in recreation to ensure the programs we offer are beneficial to all. Programs will be offered to keep participants engaged encourage new users who may otherwise not participate. The impact of parks and recreation on continuous learning can be found X. Details on integration of adaptability and continuous learning can be found in section Y.

History of Recreation in Ramsey

[Hold for timeline and background of recreation in Ramsey]

[Influence/significance/benefits] of Recreation in Ramsey

Parks and recreation services are not only an important aspect of life in Ramsey, but are among the essential elements for quality of life for residents. Residents interact with the Parks and Recreation Department on a daily basis, directly and indirectly. [Footsteps found on walking paths year round], [greenspaces filled residents making memories], [park facility rentals filled with celebration of life milestones], and [participation in a variety of programs such as yoga, Zumba, line dancing, canoeing, art in the park- just to name a few, provides something for everybody]. The Department provides inviting and safe spaces for residents to [promote active living, spend time in nature, and build strong community bonds].

The Summer Draw Series is just one example of a recreation program that has become a staple of summers in Ramsey. Residents converge in the downtown [describe setting of concert, art in the park, opportunity for businesses, reason to reside in Ramsey/show their friends & family the City]. [Programs such as these create a deeper importance/value to the City and its residents, as all recreation programs can]

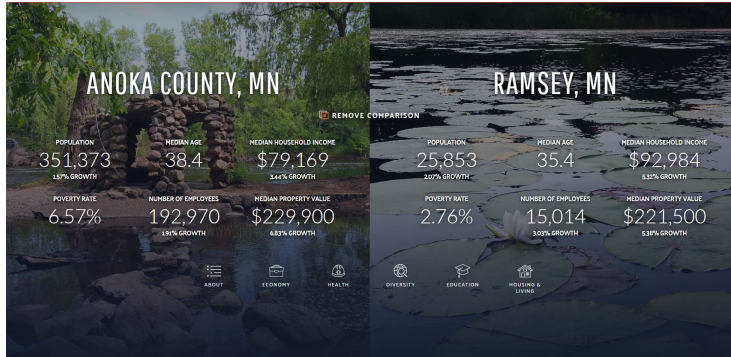


CHAPTER 2: Trends

Demographics

Introduction

Introduction text



Demographics in Ramsey

As of 2016, 26,251 people in 8,973 different households called Ramsey home. Steady growth can be seen since the year 2000, when the population was under 20,000 people (Metropolitan Council, 2016). The Council projects this trend to continue through 2020, and a population increase to 34,700 by the year 2040.

Within the 26,251 residents: 31.51% are households of married families with children, 9.06% are unmarried families with children, 39.58% are families without children, 15.4% lived alone, and the remaining 4.45% are non-family households. (The American Communities Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). [Hold for state/county comparison]

Age is dynamic, yet insightful look into the population of a city. It is essential for city planners across the board to understand how a population ages in order to offer appropriate and relevant services. [Hold for state/county comparison]



Needs and development of people change over time, to account for these differences, age groups are frequently used to classify programs. Age categories can be broken down into the following: 1-5 years, preschool; 6-12, youth; 13-18, teen; 19-54 adult; and 55+, senior. [could break down and state needs/development for each group, build a case for necessity of parks & rec for all, reinforce benefits, careful to not be redundant with benefits section]

In Ramsey over 40% of households have children. With a significant proportion of the population raising their young, the need for youth development and family programs is reinforced.

"Using recreation areas and park land as a medium for learning creates a fun and relaxed atmosphere where students want to participate. Children have a natural affinity for environmental education, making it an effective springboard for the inclusion of many other areas of study, according to biologist E. O. Wilson, who notes that children are naturally "biophilic" - or drawn towards wildlife and to the outdoors. (Mann & Hensley, 2004)"

[\(source\)](#)

"Recreation and the Adolescent Brain There was a time when researchers thought the brain ceased to develop after childhood. But more recent evidence suggests that the brain continues to develop throughout adolescence. Knowing how the brain develops during adolescence has implications for understanding some of the ways adolescents approach participation in recreation activities. These include:

- Young to middle adolescents' brains promote a tendency for participation in intense and exciting situations.
- Adolescent brains propel them toward liking novelty and seeking out multiple forms of simultaneous stimuli.
- Young and middle adolescents' brains are still developing the capacity for good decision-making and planning skills (sometimes known as executive functioning).

• By virtue of the ways their brains are developing, adolescents are particularly vulnerable to threats, emotions, and misinterpretation of other's intentions and emotions.

The adolescent brain is primed for youth to develop enduring habits. It calls for a "shaping" process of learning through experience, direct interaction, self-reflection, evaluation, and critical thinking skills and peers.

The early activation of emotions and passions can be harnessed for positive ends. A variety of new recreational experiences and opportunities can be directed by youth to enjoy doing this time and are often manifested by developing passions in leisure and hobbies. These changes leading to increased sensation seeking can promote risk taking behaviors and dangerous behaviors. Executive functioning skills such as good decision-making and problem solving evolve a bit after the emotion center in the brain is highly activated. The misinterpretation of social cues, poor emotional regulation and executive functioning explains to some degree why youth often make poor judgments in emotionally charged situations, and why they are prone to risk behaviors will occur. [\(source\)](#)

Adult programs are targeted to a range of ages and interests, as these opportunities are typically available to anyone ages 18 years and older. People aged 65 and older, which was 16.64% of Ramsey residents in 2015, are the target market for senior programming. However, some parks and recreation agencies are beginning to classify the 50 plus age group as "[adults and seniors](#)."

As the Baby Boomer generation (born between 1946 and 1964) ages, there will be a greater need for senior programming and services as well as changes in promotion methods.

"Supports Seniors: The number of citizens over 65 is increasing. More than ten percent of California's population is 65 or older (CSDC, 2002). Life expectancy in the early 1900s was 47 years and today is 75 years. More than 80% of us will live past 65. With this increased life expectancy comes a longer retirement. Seventy-five percent of males and 64% of women aged 65-69 are not in the work force (Monroe, 1999). Inactivity also increases with age. By age 75, about 1 in 3 men and 1 in 2 women engage in no physical activity at all (CDC, n.d.b). Recreation can enhance active living, helping limit the onset of disease and impairment normally associated with the aging process."

Recreation activities that include physical activity help the aging population lead independent and satisfied lives helping them remain mobile, flexible and maintaining their cognitive abilities." [\(source\)](#)

Economy

Introduction

[Introduction text]

State of the Economy in Ramsey [HOLD FOR UPDATED STATS]

In 2016, 6,334 people held jobs in the City of Ramsey. The jobs breakdown is as follows: 34 % manufacturing, 9% retail, 6% accommodation and food services, 6% administrative and waste service, 6% educational services, 6% wholesale trade, and 33% remaining in all other trades (Metropolitan Council, 2016).



Recreation

Introduction

[Introduction text]

Recreation Trends in Ramsey

The 2016 Community Livability Report (NCS, 2016) included a representative sample of 462 Ramsey residents. Some of the key findings:

- While 87% of residents rated the City as an excellent or good place to live, a little over half of residents gave the overall image a positive rating (lower than results from comparison communities).
- Only 50% rated recreation opportunities and 55% of fitness opportunities within the City as positive.
- Just 52% of residents rated education and enrichment activities as positive,
 - while cultural, arts, and music activities were much lower at only 37% giving a positive report.
- In regards to governance, 77% of citizens rated City parks as positive, but only 53% rated recreation centers as positive.
 - *As there is not a City-owned recreation center in Ramsey, respondents may have been referring to school facilities or private businesses.*
- Around 40% of citizens stated they had attended a City-sponsored event and only
 - 17% have volunteered in the community, which are both lower than comparable communities.
 - Major City-sponsored events prior to 2017 include Safety Camp, The Draw Summer Event Series, Happy Days, pet clinics, recycling events, Nite to Unite, and the spring business expo.

[Statewide/national trends in rec]

CHAPTER 3: (Necessity of Parks/Programs)

Introduction

[Text]

Recreation Needs Survey

Summary

Surveys provide a valuable tool for parks and recreation to appropriately assess current operations, determine the direction they are headed and quantify the need for services [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Public and private entities from the following areas were included: Anoka County Parks, Andover, Blaine, Champlin, Coon Rapids, Elk River, Maple Grove, Nowthen, Ramsey, Rogers, Three Rivers Park District, Elk River School District 728, and Anoka-Hennepin School District 11. The survey highlights recreation opportunities offered, and exposed areas lacking.

Project initiation

Who should be involved? What is the scope of the assessment?

Inventory

Demographics, health, safety, and environmental data for the community (*could be broken down by recreation district*)

- This data may demonstrate the need for specific programs in some areas of the City

Current parks and recreation opportunities offered in, around, and by the City, as well as potential opportunities to be offered by the City

Analysis

Analysis of inventory results used to guide community engagement and determine current state of parks and recreation system

Community engagement

Gather community input through questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, workshops, etc.

Promote engagement opportunities to gain awareness and increase participation

Results used to determine what types of programs are most needed, for which age groups, and in which areas

Needs framework

Develop a framework for recreation program needs based on results of inventory and community engagement phases

Cost estimates

Develop estimates of expenses and revenue for offering range of programs

Final report

Results and recommendations reported to Parks and Recreation Commission, City Council, and the community (*Los Angeles County, 2016*)

Findings

[text]

[what this means for Ramsey]

[text]

Promoting Personal Health

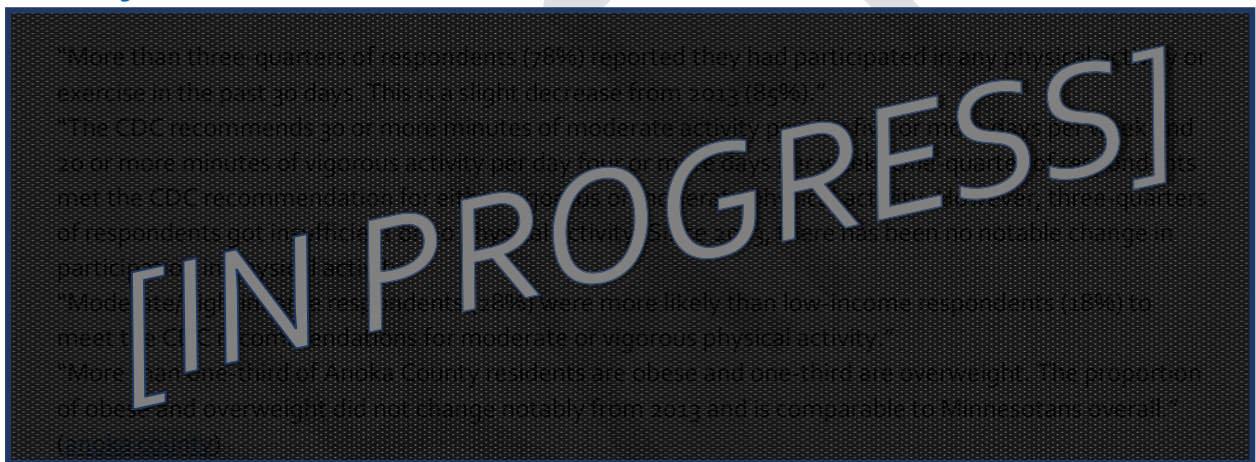
Introduction

[text]

Physical Health


Fitness


Parks and recreation departments provide opportunities for physical activity. Physical activity can reduce the risk of numerous health issues, ranging from diabetes and heart disease to osteoporosis and obesity. The American Planning Association states that exposure to nature can result in lowered blood pressure and cholesterol levels, enhanced survival after a heart attack, and improved recovery after surgery. The US Centers for Disease Control found that creating places and opportunities for physical activity could lead to a 25% increase in the number of people who exercise at least three days a week ([Recreation Management, 2007](#)).




Income Low-income respondents have different community concerns compared with moderate/high-income respondents.

Moderate/high-income respondents are concerned about:

 unhealthy eating

 lack of physical activity or exercise

 obesity


Low-income respondents are concerned about:

 affordability of health care and dental services


 smoking

Age Many community concerns are shared across age, however, there are some differences.

Young respondents are concerned about:

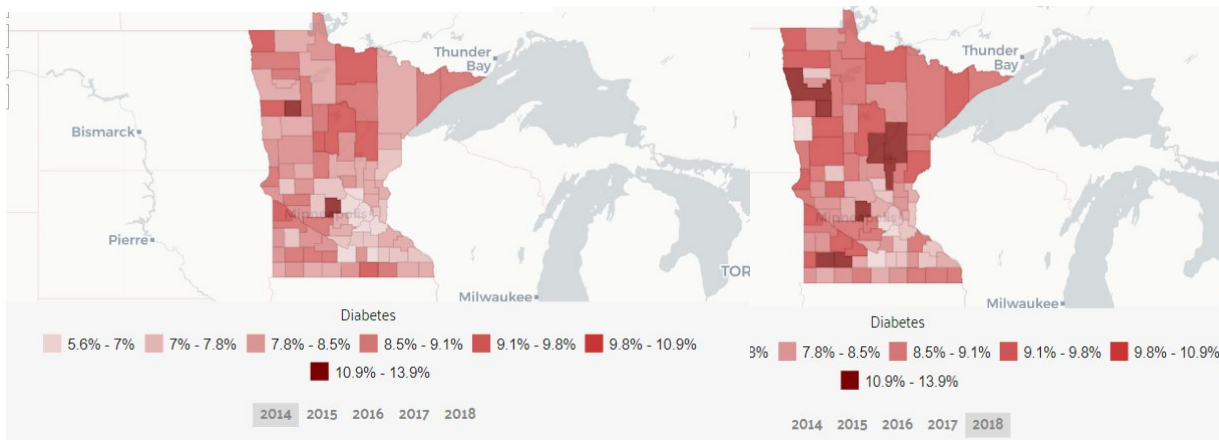
 mental health problems

Older respondents are concerned about:

 drinking and driving and illegal drug use

Chronic Disease/Immune

[text]



2014 anoka county @ 8.3% ->
8.5% prevalence of diabetes in 2018 .

Independent Living/Life Expectancy

* Improvements in cognitive performance, balance and body sway following participation in a general exercise program emphasizing have been documented in several well controlled studies of (Chodzko-Zajko, 2003)

* An association between regular physical activity and lowered risks of cognitive impairment was suggested in a study of elderly persons. Researchers concluded that regular physical activity may protect elderly populations against Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Community-based physical activities provide socialization opportunities and help keep seniors active. Seniors who live alone are often cut off from the community mainstream, losing their ability to go out and recreating into their homes, thus increasing their health risks. Seniors who are isolated have a higher risk of depression, increases with age (Chodzko-Zajko, 2003). Community-based exercise programs have reduced feelings of alienation and loneliness. There is more understanding. Activity can have beneficial effects on various aspects of health and well-being. Studies confirm that recreation and physical activity help seniors live longer and happier lives.

* A possible association between life expectancy and well-being is reported by a review of 38 studies of older adults. The review found a positive relationship between regular physical activity and psychological functioning, including mood, self-efficacy, and general well-being (Chodzko-Zajko, 2003).

* By tracking the activities in journals, participants of the Merry Widders senior walking program reported increases in knowledge of neighborhood resources, ownership of personal behavior, socialization and friendship, optimism for the future, goal achievement, and conflict resolution. They also reported decreases in alienation, depression and loneliness. More than 80% of the participants reported improved limb and muscular activity, indicating they could move around the house better and lift their arms higher (Exchart & Aven, 2001).

Older adults involved in an organizational/recreation activity scored significantly better on the happiness scale than those who were not involved (PRFO, 1992). Benefits such as having fun, feeling less lonely, reduced depression, fewer doctor visits, less medications, decreased pain, having more energy, generally feeling better, sleeping better at night, reduced medical costs, making friends, and having something to look forward to were identified through participant's personal testimonies of "Active Options", a fitness and recreation program for persons over 62 years of age (Katzenmeyer, 1997).[\(source\)](#)

Mental Health

Depression/Stress

"One-quarter of Anoka County residents have been told by a health care professional that they have anxiety (24%) or depression (23%). Female respondents were twice as likely to report having depression



Quality of life/self-esteem/growth/satisfaction

[text]

[job/life productivity]

[text]

Promoting Community Health

Introduction

Livability

Safer Neighborhoods

Many local officials rate preventing youth crime as a top priority for their community. Providing youth with positive ways to fill their free time can reduce their risk to commit a crime (NRPA, 2017). Parks and programs serve students to provide safe places to go and engage in stimulating activities when school is not in session. Parks staff ensure parks and public spaces are properly maintained for safe use and provide an additional figure outside of home and school for developing youth to look up to.

Parks and recreation systems can be key players in successfully addressing and preventing small crimes. For example, burglaries and thefts dropped 90% in a Philadelphia precinct after police helped neighborhood volunteers clean up vacant lots and plant gardens (California State Parks, 2005). Before the improvements, the precinct experienced an average of 40 crimes per month, but that fell to just four per month after the community was involved in beautifying the area. By offering trail or land clean-up programs, agencies can aid in reducing crime and improving the areas image.

[safety camp] [home alone safety]

Community Pride/Identity

Public parks and recreation agencies ensure community members have equal access to recreation opportunities, regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, ability, ethnicity, or age. Agencies have the ability to create community “buy-in” and bring people together through nature (NRPA, 2017). Parks and recreation systems foster social interactions, which aid in developing a sense of belonging (Bradley, 2013). Whether visiting a neighborhood park or attending an art class, residents have the chance to meet new people in an inviting setting. This can create community ties and make living in the area more desirable.

Family Development Parks often serve as places for families and friends to enjoy public spaces in each other’s company (Bradley, 2013). Playgrounds may serve as a meeting place for young families, and as a family develops, they are able to use other park amenities, such as sports fields, trails, and open spaces. Families that recreate together tend to be closer and more cohesive, and have a greater chance of staying together (California State Parks, 2005). A very important aspect of parks and recreation programs is that children and families can create lasting memories in these spaces. By providing the opportunity to create those special memories, recreation agencies create a positive relationship between people and parks and often encourage future participation.

[parks as valuable spaces for families in just green spaces, making memories and rentals for larger occasions]

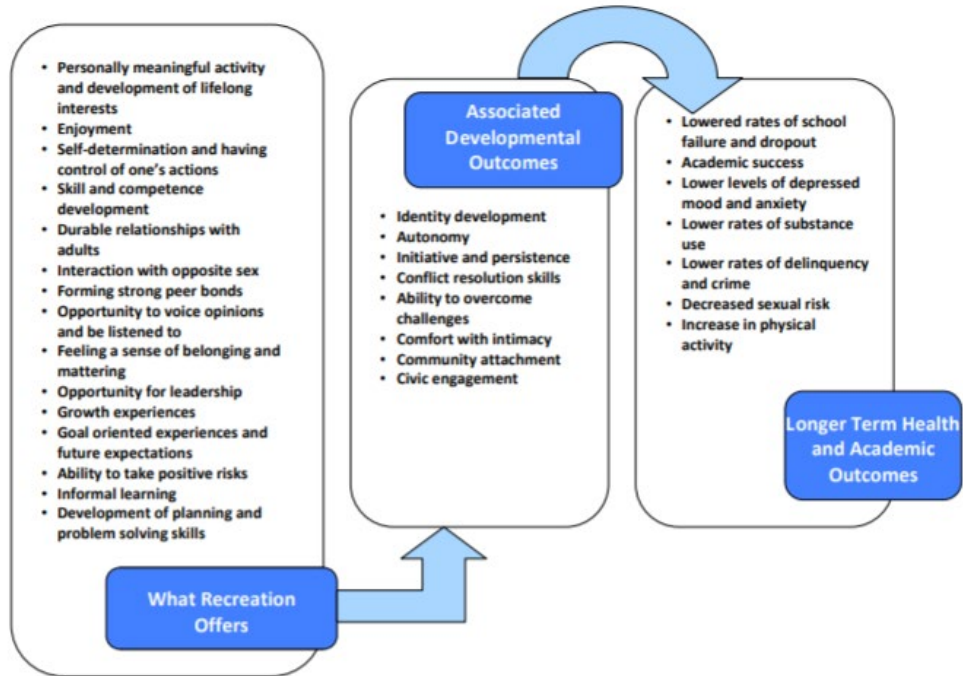
Youth Engagement/“Smart Learning”

(nature deficit disorder) (smart learning)

Nine outcomes are particularly important results of participation in our at-risk-of-time (OSI) program. These outcomes occur for park users, families, and the wider community and include: 1. reducing juvenile delinquency 2. contribute to increasing positive and reduce negative behaviors 3. expose youth to less violence 4. improve children’s educational performance 5. help youth of the future work force and the national economy 6. increase the employment of youth 7. increase the ability of youth to become adults 8. help youth develop self-esteem 9. help youth develop a sense of community. Parks and recreation departments have a role to play in addressing these issues. “Parks and recreation departments have a role to play in addressing these issues. “Parks and recreation departments have a role to play in addressing these issues.” (Bridges)

[IN PROGRESS]

Figure 3-1: Recreation Influences on Developmental, Health, and Academic Outcomes



Economic Development

Economic Growth and Value Operations and capital spending pertaining to parks and recreation created \$2,834,173,626 in economic activity, and supported 22,411 jobs in Minnesota in 2013 (The [Economic Impact..., 2015](#)). Nationally, parks and recreation created nearly \$140 billion in economic impact, added \$68 billion in GDP, and one million jobs. The National Association of Home Builders reports that the presence of parks seriously influences 65% of homebuyers. A 2001 study conducted by

the National Association of Home Builders found that 60% of survey respondents would be more likely to choose a neighborhood near parks or open spaces, and are willing to pay more to live near a park. Municipalities with strong parks and recreation systems benefit from improved health and a greater sense of community. This all leads to lower healthcare costs, higher property values, and a higher standard of living. Research shows that areas with a high quality of life attract and retain high quality workers. Communities with high quality parks and recreation programs can have a major impact on quality of life. Parks and recreation programs are essential for creating a healthy lifestyle.

[IN PROGRESS]

Encourages Investment

[text]

Property Values

[text]

CHAPTER 4: (Current State of Parks/Programs)



Goals and Strategies

Initiative: Offer a diverse and robust offering of recreational opportunities to engage the entire community and satisfy wants and needs, as well as promote community health and wellness.

Goal 1: Offer numerous recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities.

Strategies:

1. Inventory existing recreation programs, services, infrastructure, and trends at the local, regional, and national level
2. Understand local demographic and recreation trends

3. Understand community wants and needs – through questionnaires, observation, focus groups, open house events, etc.
4. Provide a range of formal and informal opportunities for the community to enjoy outdoor space and build connections with their community
5. Offer diverse recreation and leisure programs for people of all ages and abilities to promote health and wellness
6. Develop partnerships with local schools, nonprofits, businesses, and government entities to offer expanded recreation programs in varied facilities
7. Improve current and future program offerings through detailed planning, implementation, and evaluation

Goal 2: *Expand senior programming as baby-boomers age.*

Strategies:

1. Understand size and location(s) of aging population
2. Gather community input on wants and needs for recreation opportunities that is targeted for seniors (ages 55+), both formal and informal
3. Monitor local, regional, and national trends regarding senior recreation programs
4. Develop multi-faceted groups and clubs with a social aspect, in areas such as the arts, physical activity, volunteering, hobbies, and education
5. Provide low-impact activities to promote health and wellness

Goal 3: *Ensure equitable access to recreation programs.*

Strategies:

1. Develop fee setting policy based on community vs. individual benefit and funding sources
2. Implement formal fee assistance policy and application process for Ramsey residents and have this information readily available to public
3. Appropriate funds for scholarship program, whether through general budget, grants, donations, sponsorships, or local philanthropic organizations
4. Ensure reasonable accommodations are available upon request in all recreation programs and services, as mandated by the ADA
5. Develop an adaptive recreational sports program for activities where integration actions would change the fundamental nature of the program

Program Philosophy

Summary The program philosophy determines the City’s role in providing recreation programs and services. The mission, vision, and goals shape this philosophy to ensure proper use of resources when prioritizing future programs. As the program philosophy is developed, various evaluation factors must be understood:

Cost recovery

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- Facilities
- text
- Staffing
- text
- Administrative Support
- text
- Funding
- text
- Community Support
- text
- Demand

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[IN PROGRESS]

CHAPTER 6: Plan

[IN PROGRESS]

Program categories – determines priority and funding/fee setting

- Community events – one-time events, little to no fees, some recovery via sponsorships or additional sales
- Parks & Recreation Department – essential to recreation and community needs, direct costs subsidized
- Partnership – beyond basic programs and directed at audience with greater ability to pay, usually recover direct costs
- Contracted – very specialized, fees based on market rate but should require coverage of direct/indirect costs

Evaluation

[IN PROGRESS]

Partnerships

Partnerships are opportunities to expand recreation programming while devoting less resources. Partnerships may be with schools, other recreation agencies, or private businesses. However, for any partnership to be successful, both parties must receive equal value in the exchange.

Facilities

Facilities are one of the most important components of offering programs, as they can limit or expand opportunities. Currently, programs are held at Ramsey City Hall, Elmcrest Park, and Central Park, which are all high-use spaces. Fitness classes have been held at PACT Charter School, but school programs take priority and the school year is their high-volume season. Eventually having facilities dedicated to parks and recreation will improve the quality and quantity of program offerings.

Marketing

Program promotion must be greatly improved if this is to grow and be well known by the community. The largest issue in 2017 was that many residents did not know about program opportunities. There must be a method to mass-distribute information in a reliable manner.

Social media posts should be made further in advance, especially if it is a higher-cost event or if registration closes early. People typically interact with posts and events on Facebook, but it may be too late. For example, a post was made for a senior day trip the week registration closed and a couple registered the evening before registration closed. Due to low enrollment, the trip was cancelled; if the social media post was made earlier, the event may have been able to continue.

Yard signs are another effective method. In 2017, they were used for a movie night and the summer adventure program. They were used in City Hall and other locations. A general "Ramsey Parks & Recreation" sign would be best. The sign used last year had a lot of information, but it does not include time-sensitive information.

Future Programs

Traditional programs are great opportunities as they can typically yield high attendance. It is recommended that low-maintenance programs continue to be available, such as yoga, etc., and other contracted services. They require little City resources outside of facilities and funding.

Inclusion

The greatest program area lacking in and around Ramsey is adaptive and inclusive recreation. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act outlines program access obligations, which states that recreation programs and facilities must be accessible to people with disabilities (Great Plains ADA Center).

How does a public entity meet this obligation? The best way is to have all facilities, equipment, and outdoor areas fully compliant with accessibility standards. In the real world, however, this can't always be the case. Limited budgets, lack of resources, and technical infeasibility can make bringing existing facilities and equipment into compliance difficult, if not impossible. The ADA regulations provide flexibility for this reality by providing exceptions for actions that cause "undue hardship." Public entities are also not required to take actions that change the "fundamental nature" of an activity or service. There is no exemption, however, for the obligation to provide program access to individuals with disabilities. This obligation is more than just "getting people in the door." Program Access requires that use of facilities and services be equal to what other individuals receive, and it must be provided in an integrated setting with other members of the community.

While some agencies may have an Inclusion/Adaptive Recreation Specialist who develops access plans for participants with disabilities, there are not many options for adaptive recreation in the cities I've visited. Anka-



Fee Setting

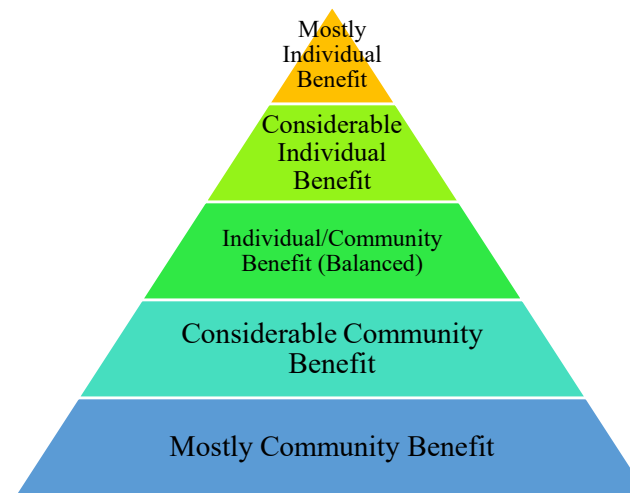
Cost Recovery

Direct costs are all the costs directly associated with running a program. These are specific, identifiable expenses such as supplies, instructor wages, facility rental, etc. Direct costs would not exist without the service. **Indirect costs** are the costs that are associated with the program, but would still exist without the specific program.



Program are sorted into the pyramid based on numerous factors:

- **Access** – is this service accessible to everyone equally? Is participation limited by certain factors?
- **Responsibility** – is the organization responsible for providing the service, through legal mandates or mission?
- **Anticipated impacts** – what is the impact on existing resources, other users, and the environment? What happens if the service is not provided?
- **Social value** – what is the perceived value by constituents, city staff and leadership, and policy makers? Is it a community builder?
- **Benefit** – who receives the benefit of the service?
 - **Mostly community benefit** – Includes programs and services which mostly benefit the community as a whole. They can increase property value, increase safety, address social needs, and enhance quality of life. These programs are typically offered for little to no charge, but may include revenue from additional services.
 - **Considerable community benefit** – Promote individual physical and mental well-being. These are typically beginner level programs intended for skill development. As they provide considerable community benefit, they cost recovery is generally less than 100%
 - **Balanced individual and community benefit** – Promotes mental and physical well-being, but provides a higher level of skill development. Often targeted to groups who can pay for them. Fee is often set to recover 100% of direct costs and portion of indirect costs



- **Considerable individual benefit** – Specialized services that are targeted to specific groups who have the ability to pay for them. Some programs may be competitive, and fees are set to recover 100% of direct and indirect costs
- **Mostly individual benefit** – These program have profit center potential and may be in the same market as the private sector. These programs are designed to recover all direct and indirect costs, as well as a profit margin

Once programs and services are assigned a location on the pyramid, cost recovery goals must be established. Community needs and policy maker perspectives must be accounted for, but the organizations overarching financial goals and objectives must be understood. Besides the benefits filter, there are other influential factors to be considered:

- **Commitment** – what is the intensity of the program, what is the commitment of the participant?
- **Trends** – is the program traditional or is it a fad?
- **Marketing** – what is the effect of the program in attracting customers?
- **Relative cost to provide** – what is the cost per participant?
- **Economic conditions** – what are the financial conditions of the community?
- **Financial goals** – what are the financial goals? Fully subsidized programs or generate excess revenue?

Non-residents

It is common for parks and recreation agencies to offer a reduced rate for their residents. This encourages residents to participate in activities where they live, which helps develop community identity and increase engagement. For example, Elk River Parks & Recreation adds a \$5 non-resident fee to programs under \$49 and a \$10 fee for programs \$50 and over. [St. Paul Parks & Recreation](#) adds a 50% surcharge to the regular resident rate, which is much greater than other agencies. St. Paul has such a drastic difference due to the high demand of their programs and the fact they recently began allowing non-residents to participate in youth sports.

Evaluation

Revenue and expenses should be recorded and analyzed regularly. This allows for comparison of budgeted and actual cash flows so that future budgets can be planned accordingly. For program fees that are set at the market rate, competitors' prices should be tracked accordingly.

Fee Assistance

Many agencies offer financial assistance to those who qualify, but there is not a uniform policy as communities have varying needs and available resources. Fee assistance is necessary to allow all users who want to participate in a program do so. Eliminating economic barriers is key to growing an involved community, as well as enriching people's lives through parks and recreation. Communities may fund these programs through community foundations, grants, sponsors, or other program revenues. Information on fee assistance programs in surrounding communities is below:

[Anoka-Hennepin Community Education](#) – Apply by calling the community education office of the desired program.

- Youth – families who qualify for free or reduced-price meals may request fee assistance.
- Adult – contact adult learning registration line to request assistance and eligibility information.
- Early learners – ECFE activities, classes, and tuition are based on a sliding scale.

[Elk River Parks & Recreation](#) – Fee assistance is available for Elk River residents. Please inquire when registering for more information.

[Fridley Parks & Recreation](#) – Fee assistance is available to Fridley residents who meet the MN School District Free or Reduced Lunch Program guidelines. You must apply in person with proof of residency and Free/Reduced Lunch statement from the school. Call the Recreation office for more information.

[ISD 728 Community Education](#) – Fee assistance is available for most youth programs (except childcare, outings, some private lessons, and BTW training).

[Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board](#) – Minneapolis residents must meet the current Income Guidelines, complete an application, and provide additional documentation as outlined:

- City of Minneapolis proof of residency AND one of the following:
- Copy of the two most recent pay stubs of all income earners in your household
- Copy of your previous year's federal tax return
- If you have no income and do not file income taxes, attach a brief note explaining that you have no income

Income Eligibility Guidelines

Full Leadership Fee Waiver Family Unit Max Income	Half Leadership Fee Waiver Family Unit Max Income
1 \$12,060	1 \$18,090
2 \$16,240	2 \$24,360
3 \$20,420	3 \$30,630
4 \$24,600	4 \$36,900
5 \$28,780	5 \$42,260
6 \$32,960	6 \$49,440
7 \$36,140	7 \$55,710
8 \$41,320	8 \$61,980
Each Additional Member \$4,180	Each Additional Member \$6,270

Fee assistance is only for the instructional portion of fees and does not cover extra fees due to supplies, admission costs, or field trips. If the application is approved, register for classes at your local recreation center. Fee assistance is good for the calendar year applied for, and an application must be resubmitted every year.

[Saint Paul Parks & Recreation](#) – Helps pay for youth classes and activities. Can be requested by families who meet the following requirements:

- Youth must live in Saint Paul, be 18 years old or younger, and qualify for free/reduced lunches. Proof of residency must be demonstrated prior to final registration.
- Youth who qualify can receive up to \$100 in fee assistance per year. Parents may request up to 50% of the cost of an activity. Refunds will not be issued for unused credits. Cannot be used for facility memberships, season passes, or daycare fees.

Minnesota Free and reduced-price Lunch Benefits, Minnesota Department of Education

Schools that participate in School Nutrition Programs accept applications for free and reduced-price school meal benefits at any time. Approval is based on comparison of the household's income to current U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) household income guidelines. Schools send an Application for Educational Benefits form to the households of all enrolled students at the beginning of each school year. A letter accompanies the form and explains school meal benefits and how to apply.

Households that have already been approved for the following public assistance programs are not required to but can complete an Application for Educational Benefits using case number(s) instead of household income information:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
- Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

Children approved for these programs may be "directly certified" for free school meals based on data supplied to MDE by the Minnesota Department of Human Services. For more information, see Direct Certification.

2021-2025 Household Income Guidelines

For a household of one, free meals are provided for annual income up to \$31,980 per year or \$2,665 per month. Reduced-price meals (free for households with a maximum of income between \$31,981 and \$45,510 per year or \$3,666 - \$3,771 per month) are provided for income guidelines documents outlines income thresholds for household sizes up to eight (plus an additional amount to add per person above eight) and various time measurements of income.

Proposed Fee Assistance Policy

The fee assistance policy should be clearly outlined on the website, as well as in major online or printed publications. An added barrier to participation may be the fact that those needing assistance must reach out to apply, which may be embarrassing. For youth scholarships, fee assistance should be based on qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches. If a uniform policy is desired for all types of programs, as sliding scale based on income and household size may be useful. Many agencies seem to forget about adults needing fee assistance as well, and

a sliding scale would make the application process easier. Similar to the Minneapolis Parks and Recreation Board, there could be two classes of scholarships – full fee waiver and half fee waiver, or other percentages based on current funding sources and community need.

Due to limited funding for scholarship programs, fee assistance is typically capped per individual or household. This could be determined by approximating the following way:

$$\begin{aligned} \# \text{ of people needing fee assistance} &= \text{Total customer base} \times \% \text{ of pop meeting fee requirements} \\ \text{Fee assistance cap per person} &= \text{Total scholarship funding} / \text{Number of people needing fee assistance} \end{aligned}$$

[IN PROGRESS]

Other program development practices that have been shown to be effective in achieving positive youth development outcomes by incorporating eight standard characteristics that are aligned with positive youth development. These standards have been identified by the National Academy of Sciences on Youth and Communities (2002) and address: 1. physical and psychological safety 2. structure that is developmentally appropriate 3. supportive relationships 4. opportunities to belong 5. positive social norms 6. support for efficacy and motivation 7. opportunities for skill building 8. integration of family, schools, and community efforts. Achieving these standards is also critical to recruiting and retaining program participants. Many of the reasons youth join and drop out of programs are related to the perceived presence or absence of these program characteristics. Due to their growing autonomy, adolescents have considerable say regarding whether they choose to join or leave a program. The negative experiences reported by program participants are indicative of how adult leaders fail to be effective in implementing youth development practices. Park and recreation departments can and should be important players in creating an overall youth development service system. Planned, purposeful programs need to be carefully crafted and efforts need to be more married to help young people develop the knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, and behaviors necessary to successfully transition to adulthood. The work done by park and recreation departments is critical in helping youth reach their full potential' (2003:6)

Park Systems Plan

Strategic Action Plan – Initiatives and Tactics

- **Increase economic growth and development:** Recruit new industry and market-ready major retail businesses to Ramsey
 - Improved parks and recreation opportunities build community identity and involvement, which can make it more appealing to potential businesses
- **Leverage outside funding sources:** Optimize use of non-city funding through joint projects, grants, and partnerships
 - Some third party organizations put their resources into offerings and do not require partner to have inputs. This allows for expanded opportunities with little financial investment. Professional organizations may offer grant funding. Recreation programs can also increase public and private partnerships that expand programming.
- **Improve and maintain the safety of the community:** Reduce illegal drug activity in the community
 - Recreation programs/facilities provide safe environments. By offering recreation opportunities relevant to the demographics, they are much more likely to take advantage of sponsored programs. Teen centers serve as a safe and productive space for out of school time activities.
- **Create a strong positive image for residential neighborhoods, business districts, and key corridors:** Improve the image of residential neighborhoods, business districts, and key corridors
 - Parks are often the heart of a community or neighborhood and, if properly maintained, create a strong positive image of the area. Hosting formal and informal activities and programs in parks shows they are well liked and the area is safe.
- **Enhance community engagement:** Identify opportunities for community volunteer work and citizen recognition

- Recreation centers, nature preserves, and other facilities often host volunteer programs. Agencies may utilize volunteer work to run programs and events planned by staff. As community members find something they are passionate about, they more are likely to volunteer for that cause.

CHAPTER 7: Conclusion

DRAFT