City of Marietta Comprehensive Recreation Master Plan 2009-2019

Prepared for

Marietta Parks and Recreation Department

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Mission Statement:

The Goal of the Marietta Parks and Recreation Department is to provide safe, enjoyable recreation and leisure opportunities for our diverse population, to preserve and beautify our parks and green areas and to promote environmental awareness.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Citywide Parks & Facilities Master Plan will function as the City of Marietta's system-wide recreation plan for the ten-year period beginning in 2009. At adoption it will become the Recreation section of the Community Facilities Element of the City of Marietta Comprehensive Plan 2006 – 2030.

1.1 WHAT IS A SYSTEM-WIDE RECREATION MASTER PLAN?

A system-wide recreation master plan is a reflection of the city's objectives, needs and priorities for the provision of leisure space, facilities, and programs. As such, it serves as a guide for the formulation of local policy and the decision-making process while addressing the quality and location of recreational opportunities necessary to meet the needs of present and future residents of the City of Marietta.

The functional objective of a system-wide recreation master plan is to achieve a balance between the benefits and effectiveness of providing parks, facilities and programs and the costs and efficiency of their development and operation. This is accomplished by involving all stakeholders – residents of the City of Marietta (users), professional staff from the Parks, Recreation and Facilities Department (PRFD), representatives of the Marietta City School Board, the Parks, Recreation and Tourism Committee, appropriate private sector stakeholders and elected city officials. To accomplish this stakeholders are involved from project inception through completion. Consensus among stakeholders is critical to the ultimate success of this Plan. To achieve consensus, meetings were held with the public, surveys were administered and evaluated, interviews were conducted and workshops were held. In this way the interests and desires of all stakeholder groups was elicited.

The system-wide recreation master plan then translates community needs and demand for parks, facilities and programs into recommendations that can realistically be implemented within a given planning period. In addition, the Citywide Parks & Facilities Master Plan (the Plan) advances a financial strategy and budget to guide the implementation of plan recommendations. The timeframe covered by this Plan is the period 2009-2019. The Plan addresses both the active and passive recreational needs of the city, includes recommendations for land acquisition; improvements to existing recreation sites; development of new parks and facilities; greenways, trails and linkages; and a capital improvements program. NOTE: The City Club, Marietta is included in the facilities inventory and overall acreage but there are no recommendations for future capital improvements in the Plan.

1.1.1 PLANNING APPROACH

There are four methods that can be utilized to accomplish preparation of a system-wide recreation master plan. Each method places an emphasis on a different aspect of the physical and social characteristics of a city. These methods are commonly referred to as the resource, activity, economic, and behavioral methods.

The resource method emphasizes the resource instead of the user, and physical and natural resources are used to determine the types and quantities of recreation opportunities. This technique is most effective in areas where there are well-defined resources such as greenspace requiring protection.

The activity method relies on past participation in recreational activities as a determinant for provision of future opportunities. This technique is effective when applied to a homogeneous population base in cities and counties with populations under 50,000, but tends to result in recommending more of the same type of facilities.

The economic method is weighted such that a city's economic base and fiscal resources determine the quantity, type and location of recreation facilities. Economic factors are more important than social or natural factors, and this method is most effective in moderate size and larger jurisdictions having diverse populations.

The behavioral method focuses on recreation as an experience. Human behavior and events influence choices as to how, where and when people use leisure time. This methodology is weighted toward public participation and leisure surveys as part of the planning process and is effective in urban and urbanizing areas.

Typically, a combination of methods using the positive aspects of two or more is successful when applied to cities that have experienced rapid growth, have become more densely developed and possess significant recreational resources. Based upon the City of Marietta's demographics, physical character and the type of parks and facilities that comprise the recreation system, a combination of the economic and behavioral methods are deemed an appropriate technique for developing the Citywide Parks & Facilities Master Plan. The Plan also utilizes aspects of the resource method when considering unique natural resource areas, greenspace, trails and linkages.

1.1.2 PLANNING PROCESS

The process used to prepare the Plan consists of four steps – a needs assessment, benchmarking, recommendations and the formulation of a realistic financing and implementation program.

Needs Assessment

The needs assessment consists of developing and administering the public input mechanism, conducting an inventory of Marietta parks, facilities and programs, preparing a community profile and design populations and formulating standards for acreage and facilities which, when applied to the design populations will result in a determination of "Marietta-Specific" needs for parkland and facilities.

Benchmarking

Subsequent to developing the needs assessment, the resulting standards for acreage and facilities were compared with those of adjacent communities. In this, the benchmarking aspect of the Plan, further comparisons are made to determine to what extent Marietta resident's needs are met by city parks and facilities, and if it is necessary and possible to utilize other public, quasi-public, educational, cultural, and private facilities to address some of these needs.

Recommendations

The Plan recommendations section contains an overall ten-year vision for the city's recreation system, advances general goals and specific objectives by which goal attainment can be measured, and makes recommendations for land acquisition, improvements/retrofitting of existing parks and facilities, and for the development of new parks, trails, and linkages. In addition, the Plan contains recommendations for programs and services delivery, and addresses system-wide maintenance needs throughout the planning period.

Financing and Implementation

The financing and implementation section of a system-wide recreation master plan is one of the key elements of the study. This section of the Plan presents order-of-magnitude cost estimates for recommended improvements, identifies funding opportunities, matches projects with the appropriate funding mechanism(s), and develops both a short-range (five-year) and long range (ten-year) implementation program and capital budget.

2.0 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The development of a needs assessment constitutes the initial step in the recreation planning process for the City of Marietta. It engenders preparation of a community profile; conducts an analysis of an inventory of system-wide parkland, facilities and programs; records and evaluates information received from the multi-level public input process; and leads to the formulation and application of standards that result in a modified needs assessment.

The community profile presents a demographic overview of the Marietta community, examines growth trends and establishes design populations for the ten-year planning period.

A comprehensive inventory was conducted to identify and evaluate city owned and operated recreation sites and facilities, and to include other public, quasi-public and governmental recreation areas that are deemed to contribute to meeting the recreational needs of Marietta residents. Programs offered by the PRFD are included in this inventory.

The public input process was undertaken in order to ascertain specific opinions and desires of the community relative to existing recreational opportunities, and to elicit thoughts and suggestions relative to future system-wide needs. The process involved several levels of input, including:

- Public informational meetings
- Stakeholder interviews
- Small group workshops
- Analysis of a telephone survey
- Analysis of a website-based survey

Information gathered as result of the community profile, inventory and through the public input process is used to determine the present and future need for parkland, active and passive facilities. "Marietta-Specific" standards for acreage and facilities are developed and applied to the design populations, generating needs throughout the planning period.

2.1 COMMUNITY PROFILE

The community profile initially examines the Marietta community, focusing on planning documents that have been prepared that are of relevance to the recreation planning process. Demographic characteristics of the city are presented in order to obtain a picture of the city's population and age structure. Using recent land use planning documents an overview of both past and future physical growth is presented to facilitate the location of future recreational facilities proximate to residential concentrations. The final part of the community profile involves developing design populations spanning the ten-year planning period, which are used to develop the modified needs assessment in a latter section of this Plan.

2.1.1 RELEVANT PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Several planning documents and related materials have been prepared of relevance to this Plan. These include: studies completed for the city, Cobb County plans, State documents, and information derived from quasi-public entities.

Comprehensive Plan

The *City of Marietta, Georgia Comprehensive Plan 2006 – 2030* was prepared to conform to the 2005 Georgia Department of Community Affairs guidelines. The plan focuses on "smart growth" and includes a community assessment, community participation program, and community agenda. The plan must be updated on an annual basis.

Identified within the plan are several issues pertaining to the recreation system, including: a lack of community centers and gathering places and a lack of recreational space and opportunities.

The plan advances the following goals of relevance to recreation:

- Encouragement of redevelopment activities to include provision of parks and open space
- Revitalize existing parks and develop new parks for active and passive use
- Facilitate the completion of trail projects

Livable Center Initiatives

Two Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) plans have been completed; one addressing the downtown area and the second for a smaller area adjacent to Interstate 75. Each of these plans includes provision for parks, open space, and greenways/trails.

Envision Marietta

Envision Marietta prepared in 2001 by EDAW primarily identifies the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities of the downtown area, and establishes a future land use concept such that downtown will remain a focal point for pedestrian activities and interaction.

The LCI plan advocates the following recreation improvements:

- An emphasis on new pocket parks

- Integration of greenspace into high density and redevelopment projects
- Establishment of linkages between downtown and Kennesaw Mountain, the Marietta Conference Center and to other city parks
- Add open space within the Roswell Street and Coryell Street corridors, the Victory Heights locale, and in the West Dixie area.

Delk TOD LCI Study

The *Delk TOD LCI Study* prepared in 2004 by the Basile Baumann Prost & Associates, Inc. project team addresses a study area proximate to a proposed bus rapid transit station proximate to the Delk Road and Franklin Road corridors.

The plan envisions six distinct centers (two town centers and four neighborhood centers), linked by streetscapes, greenways, and trails. Specific elements of the plan relevant to the recreation system are:

- Developing seven plus miles of multi-use greenway
- Developing trails along major thoroughfares
- Developing town greens
- Developing neighborhood parks
- Providing parks and plazas throughout the project area

Redevelopment Plans

As the city is practically built-out, the bulk of new development is anticipated to occur through the redevelopment process. Two redevelopment plans have been prepared and the city has established three tax allocation districts, each of which has its own redevelopment plan.

Powder Springs Street Master Plan

Prepared in 2002 by Jordan Jones & Goulding, Inc. for the city and the Marietta Housing Authority, the *Powder Springs Street Master Plan* studied a corridor comprised of mixed uses without commonality, characterized by traffic congestion, blight and unstable land use.

The plan itself is prepared for the entire corridor, and for the Johnny Walker Homes area. Aspects of the plan that address recreation include:

- Greenspace and parks are proposed throughout the study areas four neighborhoods
- An open space network can be developed consisting of expanded linkages and parks
- Connectivity can be achieved through new trails and linear parks

Cherokee-Church Street Historic District & Kennestone Area Study

A joint venture between Kennestone Hospital and the City of Marietta, the *Cherokee – Church Street Historic District & Kennestone Area Study* was developed in 2006 by the Sizemore Group. The study area is located just east of Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park and is subdivided into nine sub-areas.

Significant recreation-related aspects of the plan include:

- Parks and open space to the north of Tower Road
- Trails along Cogburn Avenue, North Avenue, Roselane Street, and Lacy Street
- A mutli-use trail along the western boundary of the study area
- Completion of the Kennesaw Mountain to the Chattahoochee River Trail

Tax Allocation District Redevelopment Plans

The city presently has three tax allocation districts: the City Center South Renaissance TAD, the Franklin/Gateway TAD and the City Center Perimeter TAD. Each of these districts has a redevelopment plan.

While espousing the benefits of open space, the project areas that are the focal points of these studies do not incorporate specific proposals for parks, greenspace, or trail features. However, the redevelopment of Henry Park was funded by TAD dollars.

Bikeway/Trails Plan

The city is endeavoring to provide a multi-use trail system that will interconnect with systems of adjacent jurisdictions and provide linkages to recreational amenities, neighborhoods and employment centers within the corporate limits, and to the Silver Comet Trail in Cobb County.

Five trail segments are in various stages of planning and design:

- North Segment – In the planning stages, this segment will extend to the northwest along Old Highway 41 through the northern portion of Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield, linking with the City of Kennesaw
- Intown Segment – Under design, this segment roughly follows Atlanta Street and links the square and intown parks and facilities
- South Segment – presently in the preliminary design phase this segment extends southward along Atlanta Street, linking with the City of Smyrna, and will ultimately become a link in the Kennesaw to the Chattahoochee River Trail
- University Segment – in the preliminary engineering phase, this segment will extend east along the south loop then meander through the campuses of Southern Polytechnic and Life University
- Powder Springs Segment – in the planning stage, this segment follows Powder Springs Road to the southwest

Cobb County Plans

The most relevant plan prepared by Cobb County is the *Parks And Recreation System Master Plan* prepared by Lose & Associates, Inc. in 2002. This plan focuses on county parks and facilities but incorporated information relevant to each of the county's municipal recreation systems.

The plan applies NRPA standards for both acreage and facilities to determine deficiencies throughout the ten-year planning period. Recommendations are advanced for administrative functions, staffing and departmental organization, operations, ADA accessibility, maintenance along with general recommendations for improvements to parks and facilities.

State Recreation Plans

The *State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan* (SCORP) has just completed the five - year update process. The Parks, Recreation & Historic Sites Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources is responsible for preparation and updating of the SCORP. During the past decade, SCORP has evolved into a policy and guidance document, providing general direction for statewide recreation facilities development. As part of the 2008 - 2013 update, a statewide survey and seven public forums were held at different locations throughout the state to determine local, regional and state park recreation issues and needs.

The SCORP determined that the primary reasons that Georgia residents participate in outdoor recreation are: to have fun, to be with family and friends, to relax, to exercise and improve health, and to experience/enjoy nature.

Participation levels are higher among the highly educated, upper income, middle-aged (under 55), whites and Hispanics, with children, and living in urban areas. Barriers to recreation included: not enough time, not enough money, not being afforded enough information, poor condition of parks and facilities, and not feeling safe.

The following strategic actions are proposed for cities and counties in the SCORP:

- Provide a variety of recreational opportunities proximate to population centers
- Promote greenspace within residential areas
- Promote outdoor events and programs that will attract overnight visitors
- Partner with the private sector
- Encourage planning that addresses conservation and natural resources
- Develop corridors linking recreation sites and residential areas
- Stay current with resident demand for parks and facilities
- Endeavor to educate regarding the value of recreational resources

- Apply for project funding through the Department of natural Resources
- Pursue a wide range of funding options including SPLOST, impact fees, partnering and foundation grants

National Recreation and Parks Association

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) promulgates guidelines for recreation system acreage, park size and service areas and for individual facilities. These guidelines were originally developed in the mid-1990's and have not been updated since. As such, they form the baseline for developing more specific standards based upon user participation data. Once modified, these standards are used in preparing the needs assessment. The accepted NRPA standard for park acreage is:

- 6.25 – 10.50 acres per 1,000 persons.

NRPA also provides an approach to system-wide master planning including guidelines for developing recreation system classifications and advances standards for a wide range of both active and passive recreation facilities.

2.1.2 MARIETTA DEMOGRAPHICS

The City of Marietta, located in the northwestern portion of the Atlanta Metropolitan Area was established in 1834. It is an historic city, and one of the oldest in the Atlanta area. Marietta is the county seat of Cobb County and offers residents a charming downtown area, historic areas, and beautiful parks.

Marietta occupies a land area of approximately 22 square miles and is the seventh largest city in the State. According to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), the 2006 population was 61,261.

Population

The 2000 U.S. Census placed the Marietta population at 58,784. According to the Comprehensive Plan, population within the city is increasing, but at a decreasing rate. The DCA in 2006 estimated the Marietta population growth rate at 4.3 percent.

The most recent estimates for the city's population were made in 2006 in the Comprehensive Plan, by the DCA and by Claritas, Inc. These estimates are:

- Comprehensive Plan – 60,996
- DCA – 61,261 (Per Individual Community Profile)
- Claritas, Inc. – 60,157

As the city is almost completely built out, future population growth will result predominantly from infill and redevelopment within established neighborhoods, provided that adequate infrastructure and city services can support such development.

Age Distribution

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the median age of Marietta residents was 30. The present (2006) breakdown by sex is 50.5 percent male and 49.5 percent female. DCA estimates that in 2006 19.7 percent of the population were under the age of 18, and 10.4 percent were above the age of 65. The *Residential Market Research Update* prepared for the Marietta Redevelopment Corporation by Claritas, Inc. made the following observations regarding the city's age distribution:

- While the city's school age population increased by 18 percent during the first half of the decade, enrollment growth is now flattening out
- The trend towards reduced population in the 20 – 34 year age cohort could result in fewer births over the next five years
- The fastest growing age groups are the 45 – 64 year cohorts, which have grown by 25 percent since 2000

The Comprehensive Plan analyzes age distribution and provides forecasts (per DCA data) of the various age groups through the year 2025. The following points were made that are of relevance to the recreation planning process:

- Approximately half of the city's population are of working age (25 – 64 years)
- The largest age groups at present are the 25 - 34 year and 35 – 44 year age cohorts
- The Marietta population is aging

The implication of age distribution on the recreation planning process will be significant, as changes in the age structure of the community will be reflected in program offerings and service delivery.

By the end of the ten-year planning period, the 18 – 44 year cohort will comprise 55 percent of the total population. These individuals are the primary participants in adult sports programs. The next largest cohort with 15 percent of the total population will be the 45 - 64 year group. The 45 to 64 year age group represents those that have an increasing interest in non-sports programs, cultural arts and in passive-use activities. The school age population (5 – 17 years) will account for 14 percent of the Marietta population. This is the principal age group that participates in programmed youth athletics. The over 65-age group will represent 10.4 percent of the total population. The recreational focus of these individuals also includes passive-use activities and cultural arts, but includes an emphasis on participation in senior citizen programs.

Race and Ethnicity

The 2000 U. S. Census indicated that whites represented 49 percent of the population, 29 percent was African-American and 17 percent Hispanic/Latino. The fastest growing group is Hispanic/Latino, a trend that is expected to continue throughout the ten-year planning period. According to DCA estimates, approximately 22 percent of the city's population will be Hispanic/Latino at this time.

Recreation needs and demand can vary greatly based upon ethnicity. For example, the Hispanic/Latino population will typically gravitate toward both organized and free-play soccer and family-oriented passive use activities. Within north Georgia counties there has been a significant increase in participation in soccer programs, and in some municipalities there are all-Hispanic/Latino leagues.

The racial character of the Marietta population is important to this Plan, and will be considered in developing recommendations for both active and passive recreational opportunities.

Income

Per the 2000 U. S. Census, the per capita income for Marietta was $24,409, lower than that of Cobb County, Georgia and the United States. Median household income was $40,645 and median family income was $47,340. Eleven percent of Marietta families had incomes below the poverty level in 2000.

By 2019, per capita income is anticipated to increase by approximately 50 percent, to $36,550.

Increasing income levels indicate that Marietta residents will have a higher percentage of disposable income and the ability to increase participation in recreation programs and activities.

Educational Attainment

In 2000, 15 percent of Marietta residents possessed a college degree, and six percent held post-graduate degrees. DCA forecasts that by the year 2019, educational attainment levels will increase to the point that 18 percent of residents will hold college degrees and seven percent will have post –graduate degrees.

Educational levels of the population can be a determinant of the type of recreational opportunities desired. The educational attainment of a city's population can also be an indication of the type of recreation facilities and programs that should be provided.

Based upon what has occurred in adjacent municipalities (Roswell, Alpharetta and Sandy Springs) and in counties along the northern tier of the Atlanta region, as educational attainment levels increase, participation in arts, cultural and environmental programs increases, and indicates that expanded programs in these areas are likely to be supported.

2.1.3 CITYWIDE GROWTH TRENDS

The City of Marietta is bounded on the north by the City of Kennesaw, on the east by East Cobb County, to the south by Dobbins Air Force Base and the City of Smyrna and on the west by Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park. As there is minimal room for physical expansion through annexation future growth will focus on infill development, small-scale and large-scale redevelopment and the revitalization of existing neighborhoods.

Existing land use patterns within the city depict that over the past decade residential land uses have increased while commercial land use has decreased. The portion of the city located west of the Loop is predominantly residential in character, consisting of traditional subdivisions. Higher density residential development is the primary land use north of Lawrence Street to

Cobb Parkway. High-density residential nodes also extend from Fairground Street east to Cobb Parkway, and south of Roswell Street to the South Loop. Commercial and industrial land uses occupy much of the land within the Cobb Parkway, Interstate 75 and Powder Springs Street corridors.

The Comprehensive Plan identifies several areas of land use that in the future will require special attention. Those of relevance to this Plan are noted below:

- Land use changes are most likely to occur in the Powder Springs Street corridor, the Franklin Road corridor, the North Marietta Parkway/Allgood Road locale and the area surrounding Kennestone Hospital
- Areas where development may impact natural and recreational resources include Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, the Etowah River Basin and the city's historic districts
- Unattractive areas in need of redevelopment – residential neighborhoods inside the Loop, West Dixie and Roswell Street
- Large and small parcels throughout the city that are presently abandoned
- Areas conducive to infill development inside the Loop and the Allgood neighborhood

2.1.4 DESIGN POPULATIONS 2009 – 2018

This Plan covers the ten-year period from 2009 to 2019. The recommendations contained in this Plan for future park acreage and facilities needs are based upon target year design populations. To prepare this Plan, three design populations are necessary – year 2009 (to determine present surpluses/deficiencies), year 2014, and year 2019.

To determine current surpluses or deficiencies the year 2009 population is applied to both the acreage and facilities standards developed in the modified needs assessment. The determination of future needs utilizes the design populations for the remaining five-year periods through the year 2019. As it is intended that this Plan be reviewed every five years and updated accordingly, the projections for 2014 and 2019 are of primary importance to the recreation planning process.

A significant variable to consider in developing the design populations is the city's current annexation potential. According to the Comprehensive Plan, the feasibility of annexation is limited to three contiguous parcels adjacent to the northern city limits, one parcel on the south, and a few smaller parcels to the east of Interstate 75. The ability of the city to significantly increase its population during the next ten years will require either annexation or significant infill/redevelopment.

The City of Marietta Planning and Zoning Division utilizes the population projections prepared by DCA in the Comprehensive Plan. These projections are for five-year increments, beginning in 2005 and ending with the year 2030. As previously stated, the design populations used in this Plan will be for the years 2009, 2014 and 2019.

Table 2-1 presents the city's population projections.

Table 2-1 Population Projections City of Marietta 2005 – 2030

	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Population	65,728	72,708	79,687	86,667	93,647	100,627

Source: City of Marietta Comprehensive Plan 2006, Department of Community Affairs.

The most recent population estimates by Claritas for the year 2007 show a population of 60,758, substantially less than the projections made in the Comprehensive Plan. City officials desire that the design populations for this Plan be based on the revised estimates, with future growth being based upon the annual incremental growth estimates (1,400 per year) taken from the Comprehensive Plan.

The design populations (rounded to the closest 1,000) used for the recreation planning process are therefore as follows:

- 2009 – 62,000
- 2014 – 67,000
- 2019 – 72,000

3.0 INVENTORY OF PARKS, FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

A comprehensive inventory was conducted of all City of Marietta parks and facilities in September 2007.

The inventory identified 55 recreation sites that are available for use by residents of the Marietta community. Of these sites, 24are city parks, two are indoor facilities, and five are school recreation areas. The city has purchased six parcels of greenspace with restricted uses that are included in the inventory. There are 9 Cobb County parks proximate to the city, two of which are within the corporate limits. Two National Park Service recreation areas are proximate to the city and there are two universities possessing recreational resources. Finally, there are five primary private facilities available for use by city residents; however, the city cannot develop facilities, maintain or program these sites, and therefore they are mentioned in the inventory, but are not counted in the inventory.

The system-wide facilities inventory classifies recreation sites by type, determines their acreage, provides a general description of the site, evaluates utilization, assesses the condition of facilities and identifies any needs for maintenance to either the site or to individual facilities.

3.1 DEFINITIONS

Throughout the Plan, certain terms relating to the City of Marietta recreation system are used to describe recreational resources. Some, or all of these definitions could be modified as part of the needs assessment process. The following terms are therefore defined:

- **Recreational Resources** - Sites that consist of land and/or water that afford recreation opportunities for city residents or visitors.
- **Recreation System** - The total of all recreation resources within the city that are under the jurisdiction of the PRFD.
- **Recreation Site** - A parcel of land and/or water dedicated for use for specific recreation purposes (also referred to as "parks" or "parkland").
- **Recreation Facilities** - Improvements made to a recreation site such as ball fields, soccer fields, courts, and playgrounds etc. that provide recreational opportunities for users.
- **Recreation Supply** - The total acreage of recreational resources under jurisdiction of the city and available for use at a given time.
- **Pocket Park** - A small recreation site with or without facilities meeting some of the active or passive recreational needs of a discrete segment of the immediately adjacent residential neighborhood.
- **Neighborhood Park** - A basic unit of the park system, generally meeting informal, non-programmed active and passive recreation needs of a local neighborhood(s).
- **Community Park** - The principal unit of the recreation system, the community park meets a broader range of active, passive and programmed athletic needs and serves a large geographic segment of the community.
- **Athletic Complex** - A recreation site devoted in its entirety to programmed athletic fields and support activities.
- **Linear Park** - A park or greenway typically passive in nature that has the potential to link other components of the recreation system together as part of a continuous park environment.
- **Special Use Area** - A recreation site that is devoted to a single type of facility or use.
- **Indoor Facility** - A recreation center, community center or other facility devoted to meeting singular or multiple active and/or passive needs. A recreation center typically contains one or more gymnasiums with sports courts. A community center is generally smaller than a recreation center and does not contain gymnasiums.

- **School Recreation Area** - A recreation site located at a school where a joint-use agreement or an informal agreement is in place permitting use of certain specific school recreation facilities by the PRFD.

- **Private Or Quasi-Public Recreation Site** - A recreation site operated and maintained by a non-governmental agency, non-profit organization, sports association or civic group(s).

- **Passive Parks** - A recreation site that is devoted to passive-use facilities that primarily allow for individualized activities as opposed to organized athletics.

- Restricted Greenspace – Lands that were acquired through the Governor's Greenspace Program that may only be used for passive activities, properties that were acquired through divestiture of federal lands that primarily for the purpose of outdoor recreation unless specifically approved by the Department of the Interior, or land donations from private parties intended for passive use only.

- Unrestricted Greenspace – Lands that were acquired through private donation that may be undeveloped or used for passive activities at present, but may be converted to active/organized uses in the future.

- **Undeveloped Land** - A site presently undeveloped that is owned or leased by the city and is dedicated to, or is being held for, recreational purposes.

3.1.1 PARK CLASSIFICATIONS AND CRITERIA

The majority of City of Marietta parks are classified as either pocket parks, neighborhood parks, or smaller community parks. Table 2 provides a general classification system for parks, and includes criteria relating to service areas and size.

Table 3-1 NRPA Classifications and Criteria for Parks and Open Space

CLASSIFICATION	GENERAL DESCRIPTION	SERVICE AREA	SIZE CRITERIA
Pocket Park	Addresses Limited, Isolated Or Unique Recreational Needs Or Resources	Up To 1/4 Mile	2500 Sq. Ft. to 1.5 Acres.
Neighborhood Park	A Basic Unit Of The Park System, Focuses On Informal Active And Passive Recreation, Meeting Some Of The Social And Recreational Needs Of Users.	1/4 - 1/2 Miles	1.5 - 10.0 Acres
Community Park	Serves Broader Purpose Than A Neighborhood Park, Focuses On Meeting Community-Wide Needs.	1/2 - 3 Miles	10.0 - 50.0 Acres
Regional/Large Urban Park	Serves Broader Purpose Than Community Parks And Meets Wider Range Of Active And Passive Recreational Needs.	Entire Community	75.0+ Acres
Athletic Complex	Consolidates Heavily Programmed Athletic Fields And Related Facilities Into Larger Sites Strategically Located Throughout The Community.	Variable	40.0 - 80.0+ Acres
Special Use Area	Park Or Recreational Facility Oriented Towards A Specific Use.	Variable	Variable
Indoor Facility	Community Center, Cultural Center Or Recreation Center Devoted To The Provision Of Multiple Active Parks And/Or Passive Needs Of The Community.	Variable Within Community	Typically Located
School Recreation Area	Generally Provides A Venue For Indoor And/Or Outdoor Active Recreation, Complementing Other Parks.	Variable	Variable
Greenway/Linear Park	Passive Use Area Which Links Parks Or Other Recreational And Cultural Facilities Forming A Continuous Park Environment.	Determined By Resource Availability	Variable

Source: Modified Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, NRPA 1994.

Note: NRPA uses 30.0 acres as the guideline for minimum acreage of Community Parks. The City of Marietta has determined that 10.0 acres is the benchmark for their purposes.

3.1.2 CITY OF MARIETTA PARKS

The Marietta recreation system is comprised of 27 developed facilities that are either owned or leased by the city.

Pocket Parks

There are nine pocket parks, all of which are less than one acre in size. The majority of these consist of landscaped areas and some include a few recreational facilities.

Alexander Pocket Park

A triangular property that has not yet been developed. It is bordered by Alexander Street, Frasier Street and South Marietta Parkway.

Figure 1: Alexander Park

Bell Bomber Park

Bell Bomber Park is a triangular portion of property located between S. Cobb Drive and Fairground Street. It is only accessible by crossing a busy roadway and receives low utilization. An historical marker demarks the site.

Figure 2: Bell Bomber Park

Flournoy Park

Located at the intersection of Roswell Street and Haynes Street adjacent to the Cobb County Courthouse in the downtown area, Flournoy Park is accessible on foot from a sidewalk. The site is level and utilization is low to moderate. The site is in need of maintenance and planned improvements include new sidewalks and landscaping funded by the SPLOST program.

Figure 3: Flournoy Park

Gantt Park

Gantt Park is a landscaped triangle located northwest of downtown at the intersection of Maple Avenue and Holland Street. The park is accessible on foot, via a sidewalk. The park receives low utilization.

Figure 4: Gantt Park

Gramling Street Park

Gramling Street Park is a small wooded site that is bisected by a creek. Located south of downtown close to the intersection of Gramling Street and Bolan Street, this park receives low utilization.

Figure 5: Gramling Street Park

Hill Park

Located just east of the square at the intersection of Lemon Street and Waddell Street, this small well-landscaped area is attractive and accessible from the adjacent sidewalk. The level site is well maintained by volunteer labor. Utilization is low.

Figure 6: Hill Park

Lake Park

Lake Park is linear in character, extending along Lake Drive north of the South 120 Loop. The park occupies a wooded site, parallels a stream bank, contains minimal improvements and receives low utilization. Accessibility is severely limited by a lack of parking and no sidewalks. Erosion control along the stream bank is an issue.

Figure 7: Lake Park

Monarch Park

Monarch Parks consists of two small adjacent parcels proximate to the intersection of Kennesaw Avenue and Church Street in downtown Marietta. The park is accessible to foot traffic and is well landscaped. Utilization is low.

Figure 8: Monarch Park- North

Figure 9: Monarch Park- South

Woods Park

Located to the northeast of the square, Woods Park is accessible by sidewalk and contains trees and landscaping. Additional landscaping is needed and the PRFD anticipates site improvements. Utilization of this park is low.

Figure 10: Woods Park

Table 3-2 presents a summary of the facilities present at the city's pocket parks.

Table 3-2 Pocket Parks

	Alexander	Bell Bomber	Flournoy	Gantt	Gramling	Hill	Lake	Monarch	Woods
ACREAGE	.23	1.25	0.25	0.10	0.68	0.20	0.56	0.20	0.10
Active Acres	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Passive Acres	.23	1.25	0.25	0.10	0.68	0.20	0.56	0.20	0.10
SITE FEATURES									
Topography	Level	Rolling	Level	Level	Level	Level	Rolling	Level	Level
Wooded	Light-removal needed				Heavy		Heavy		
Water Feature					Stream		Stream		
Landscaped		Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes		Yes	Yes
PASSIVE FACILITIES									
Dog Sanitation Station				Yes					
Fountain			1						
Flag Pole			1						
Play Equipment					Yes				
Memorials		Marker				Yes			
Picnic Areas							Yes		
Patio Area			Yes						Yes
Benches			Yes			Yes	Yes		Yes
Swing Seat							1		
Concrete/Brick Pavers			Yes	Yes		Yes			
Butterfly Garden								Yes	
Decorative Lighting			Yes						
ACCESSIBILITY		Poor	Good	Fair	Fair	Good	Poor	Good	Good
UTILIZATION		Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

3.1.3 NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

The seven neighborhood parks in Marietta vary in size from approximately one and one half acres to 6.70 acres. These parks are generally smaller than the norm for neighborhood parks as large parcels were not available when many of these parks were developed; however, they do serve discrete neighborhoods.

Birney Park

Located northeast of the downtown area just west of Fairground Street, Birney Street Park is a narrow parcel bisected by a stream. The northern portion is undeveloped and needs pedestrian access. Adjacent residents are using the north portion of the park as a road. Utilization of this park is low due primarily to a lack of facilities at the site and few parking spaces.

Figure 11: Birney Park

Henry Memorial Park

Henry Memorial Park was recently redeveloped. The park is located on a level site at the intersection of Henry Drive and Reynolds Street north of the City Club. The park contains both active and passive facilities.

Figure 12: Henry Memorial Park

Lewis Park

Lewis Park is a very attractive park that contains a large number of recreational facilities for its size. The park is located on Campbell Street in northern Marietta on a rolling site. The southeast portion of the park contains trees and landscaping. The ball field is used for practice only. Utilization of Lewis Park is moderate/heavy. A number of improvements are planned, including the addition of water fountains, improved parking, and playground expansion.

Figure 13: Lewis Park

Merritt Park

Merritt Park is located east of Interstate 75 on Wallace Road. The site area is small and utilization is moderate. The park is located within a meadow and facilities are ADA accessible. A large rock outcrop limits the width of the entryway. Improvements are programmed, and may include modification of the park entrance and improved parking.

Figure 14: Merritt Park

Victory Park

Located in eastern Marietta on North Park Drive, Victory Park is linear in appearance and is located on either side of Victory Drive. The park contains a small stream, and thanks to a new playground receives moderate utilization. The tennis courts are in need of replacement or removal.

Figure 15: Victory Park

West Dixie Park

This park is located on West Dixie Avenue, just east of the City Club. Parking is very limited and hence utilization of this park is low. There is a stream on the property and noticeable erosion. Some of the facilities are in need of maintenance.

Figure 16: West Dixie Park

Whitaker Park

Whitaker Park is located in northeast Marietta, to the east of Interstate 75. The site is characterized by rolling topography, is attractive and well landscaped. Facilities are predominantly passive-use and parking is available on-site. The park receives high utilization.

Figure 17: Whitaker Park

Table 3-3 presents a summary of the city's neighborhood parks.

Table 3-3 Neighborhood Parks

	Birney	Henry	Lewis	Merritt	Victory	West Dixie	Whitaker
ACREAGE	1.50	3.50	6.70	4.90	4.80	2.14	2.30
Active Acres	0.00	3.50	6.70	4.90	0.00	0.00	0.00
Passive Acres	1.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.80	2.14	2.30
SITE FEATURES							
Topography	Rolling	Level	Level	Level	Rolling	Rolling	Rolling
Wooded	Yes		Partially	Partially	Yes	Yes	
Water Feature	Stream				Stream	Stream	
Landscaped		Yes	Yes				Yes
On-Site Parking		Yes	Yes	Yes	Adjacent		Yes
ACTIVE FACILITIES							
Ball Fields			1 UL				
Multi-Purpose Fields				1 UL			
Open Grassed Play Fields		1					
Tennis Courts			4 L		2 L		
Basketball Courts		2 – ½ Courts					
Playgrounds	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
Walking/Jogging Trail		Yes	Yes	Yes			Yes
PASSIVE FACILITIES							
Pavilions	1	1		1	2	1	
Picnic Tables			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Grills				Yes		Yes	
Benches			Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes
Gazebo							1
Concrete/Brick Pavers							
Flag Display							
Water Fountains				1			
Pedestrian Bridge					1		
Off-Leash Dog Run			Yes				
Children's Garden		1					
ACCESSIBILITY	Poor	Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Fair	Good
UTILIZATION	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate	Low	Low	High

L = Lighted amenity

3.1.4 COMMUNITY PARKS

There are two community parks in the city – Hickory Hills Park and Laurel Park.

Hickory Hills Park

Located in southwest Marietta, Hickory Hills Park serves a large residential area. The site is relatively level and is dominated by two large open grassed fields with a perimeter walking trail. There is a vacant parcel adjoining on the north, which is presently school property. Utilization is moderate to high, with the fields used for free-play activities such as soccer. This site has excellent potential for the inclusion of new facilities that would meet much of the recreational demand of the community residents.

Figure 18: Hickory Hills Park

Laurel Park

Laurel Park is located off of Manning Road in the western portion of the city, just across from Mountain View Park Cemetery. Site topography is level to rolling with two medium size ponds and a grassy meadow. A portion of the site is heavily wooded.

The park offers users a wide range of recreational opportunities, including both active and passive pursuits. The park has good accessibility from adjacent neighborhoods and receives heavy utilization.

Figure 19: Playground at Laurel Park

Figure 20: Lower pond at Laurel Park

Table 3-4 summarizes community park facilities

Table 3-4 Community Parks

	Laurel Park	Hickory Hills
ACREAGE	25.00	10.95
Active Acres	15.00	10.95
Passive Acres	10.00	0.00
SITE FEATURES		
Topography	Rolling	Level
Wooded	Partially	
Water Feature	2 Ponds	
Landscaped	Yes	
On-Site Parking	Yes	Yes
ACTIVE FACILITIES		
Basketball Courts	1	
Tennis Courts	13 L	
Tennis Pro Shop	2	
Open Grassed Play Fields	1	Entire site
Volleyball Courts	2 Sand	
Shuffleboard Courts	2	
Playgrounds	1	No
Walking/Jogging Trail	Yes	Yes
PASSIVE FACILITIES		
Pavilions	2	
Rental Pavilion	1	
Picnic Tables	Yes	
Grills	Yes	
Benches	Yes	
Glider Benches	Yes	
Fishing	Yes	
Restrooms	Yes	
ACCESSIBILITY	Good	Good
UTILIZATION	High	Good

L = Lighted

3.1.5 PASSIVE-USE PARKS

Marietta has two passive-use parks, each of which contains more than 25 acres. Both are located in the southern portion of the city along the eastern border of Dobbins AFB.

A. L. Burruss Nature Park

Located on South Cobb Parkway proximate to Dobbins AFB, A.L. Burruss Nature Park is a heavily wooded site containing a creek and is accessible from a parking lot. Within the park are unique natural areas and an extensive trail system.

Figure 21: Trail at A.L. Burruss Nature Park

Figure 22: A.L. Burruss Nature Park - Bridge over creek

Wildwood Park

Wildwood Park is located on Barclay Circle north of A. L. Burruss Nature Park. This site is surplus Federal property, is wooded and contains hiking and jogging trails and picnicking facilities.

Figure 23: Wildwood Park- Picnic Pavilion

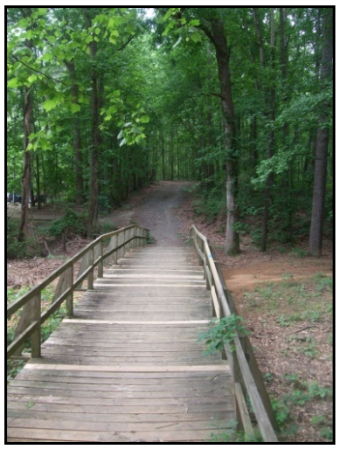

Figure 24: Wildwood Park- Bridge and Trail

Table 3-5 summarizes the city's passive-use park facilities.

Table 3-5 Passive-Use Parks

	A. L. Burruss	Wildwood
ACREAGE	45.66	28.11
Active Acres	0.00	0.00
Passive Acres	45.66	28.11
SITE FEATURES		
Topography	Rolling	Rolling
Wooded	Yes	Yes
Water Feature	Stream	
On-Site Parking	Yes	Yes
ACTIVE FACILITIES		
Playgrounds	1	1
PASSIVE FACILITIES		
Pavilions	1	3
Picnic Tables		Yes
Nature Trail	1	
Hiking/Jogging Trails	Yes	Yes
ACCESSIBILITY	Fair	Good
UTILIZATION	Low	Low

3.1.6 SPECIAL USE AREAS

There are six special use areas that are a part of the Marietta recreation system. The Aviation Baseball/Softball Complex is dedicated for programmed athletics, Brown Park serves as an historical/cultural site, Custer Park has two small ball fields and an area that is regularly used for soccer, Glover Park (the Square) is an event site, the Marietta Golf Center is dedicated for use as a driving range, and the City Club, Marietta golf course facilities are open for public use.

Aviation Baseball/Softball Complex

Located on Aviation Road just south of the South Loop, this complex consists of three athletic fields that accommodate softball, football and soccer. The baseball field was previously leased to the school district, and has been subleased for football and soccer. That contract has expired and the baseball field is now controlled by the Parks, Recreation and Facilities Department. The site is at the top of a small hill and the layout could be improved. The site has limited access and has the potential for high utilization.

Figure 25: Aviation Baseball/ Softball Complex

Brown Park

Brown Park is situated on West Atlanta Street, north of the Confederate Cemetery close to the intersection of North Marietta Parkway and Powder Springs Road. The park is passive in character, well landscaped, and the gazebo is used for wedding ceremonies. Utilization is low to moderate. Anticipated improvements include a bike path and trail head, a memorial wall, historic sculptures, and the starting point for an interpretative tour through the Confederate and City Cemeteries.

Figure 26: Brown Park

Custer Park

Located in northeast Marietta, Custer Park (10 acres) contains athletic facilities including two baseball fields and a soccer field. Youth baseball programs, and both youth and adult soccer programs are offered at this site. Support facilities include concessions, restrooms and a scorer's building. Utilization of Custer Park is moderate to heavy on a seasonal basis.

Figure 27: Custer Park

Glover Park

Glover Park is the focal point of downtown Marietta. It is the site of many special events, concerts, weddings and other downtown activities. The site is well landscaped and well maintained. There are entry points at each corner and at mid-block. Utilization is high. Planned improvements include replacement of brick pavers.

Figure 28: Glover Park

Figure 29: Glover Park

Marietta Golf Center

The Golf Center is located east of Interstate 75 on Gresham Road. The site is kept in good condition and utilization is very high. The focal point of the site is a driving range and instructional activities.

Figure 30: Marietta Golf Center

Marietta City Club

Located close to the downtown area, the Marietta City Club consists of a resort, conference center and public golf course. The resort is owned by the City of Marietta, and Classic Golf Management manages the golf course. The location is well landscaped and facilities are well maintained.

Figure 31: Marietta City Club

The conference center/resort includes a hotel, 18-hole golf course, tennis courts and swimming pool. There is a pro shop and many of the grounds amenities typically found at a golf resort. The Club hosts public guests and corporate events.

Table 3-6 presents a summary of the city's special use areas.

Table 3-6 Special Use Areas

	Aviation	Brown	Custer	Glover	Golf Center	City Club
ACREAGE	7.00	2.20	10.0	1.16	25.00	108.00
Active Acres	7.00	0.00	10.0	0.00	25.00	108.00
Passive Acres	0.00	2.20	0.00	1.16	0.00	0.00
SITE FEATURES						
Topography	Level	Level	Level	Level	Level	Rolling
Wooded	Partial					
Landscaped				Yes		Yes
On-Site Parking	Yes	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes
ACTIVE FACILITIES						
Ball Fields	2 L		2 L			
FootballSoccer Fields	1 L		1 L			
Batting Cages	Indoor					
Conc./Restroom/Scorer's Bldg.	1		1			
18-Hole Golf Course						1
Driving Range					1	1
Putting Green					1	2
Golf Instructional Facility					1	1
Golf Pro Shop					1	1
Playground				1		
PASSIVE FACILITIES						
Specimen Trees				Yes		
Brick Pavers				Yes		
Decorative Fencing		1		Yes		
Gazebo		Yes		1		
Benches		Yes		Yes		
Covered Stage				1		
Monuments/Memorials				2		
Assembly Area				Yes		
Central Fountain				1		
Water Fountain	1		1			
ACCESSIBILITY	Poor	Fair	Good	Good	Fair	Good
UTILIZATION	Moderate	Low	Mod/High	High	High	High

L = Lighted

3.1.7 INDOOR RECREATION

There are two indoor recreational facilities, both of which have in town locations. Both facilities are dated and portions of each have been upgraded.

Elizabeth Porter Center

The Elizabeth Porter Center is located on Montgomery Street, just north of downtown. The site contains a recreation center and outdoor recreational facilities.

Figure 32: Elizabeth Porter Center

Lawrence Street Recreation Center

This facility is comprised of a recreation center, outdoor swimming pool, and playground. Utilization of the recreation center is high, but low for the swimming pool with the exception of City Schools and PRFD day camp users.

Figure 33: Lawrence Street Recreation Center

Table 3-7 summarizes the city's indoor facilities.

Table 3-7 Indoor Facilities

	Elizabeth Porter	Lawrence Street
ACREAGE	1.80	2.11
Active Acres	1.80	2.11
Passive Acres	0.00	0.00
SITE FEATURES		
Topography	Level	Level
On-Site Parking	Yes	Yes
ACTIVE FACILITIES		
Tennis Courts	2 L	
Playgrounds	1	1
Concrete Pad	1	
Swimming Pool (25 Yd. X 25 Yd.)		1
Wading Pool		1
Recreation Center	1	1
Full Court Basketball Courts	1	1
Cross Court Basketball Courts	2	
Game Rooms	1	1
Computer Room/Homework Rooms	1	
Kitchens		1
Meeting Rooms	1 w/Divider	
Locker/Shower Rooms		2 - Pool
Administrative Offices	Yes	Yes
Storage Rooms	Yes	Yes
Restrooms	Yes	Yes
ACCESSIBILITY	Good	Good
UTILIZATION	Low/Moderate	Gym – High Pool – Low

L = Lighted

3.1.8 GREENSPACE

The City of Marietta was a participant in the Georgia Greenspace Program in 2001 and 2002. As a participant the city received a total of $666,835 during the two years that the program was funded. Interest earned on these funds totaled $34,012, for a total of $700,847 in greenspace funds. Subsequent to purchasing permanent greenspace $166 in unspent funds were returned to the State.

The following is a summary of the city's greenspace purchased through the Georgia Greenspace Program. These properties are restricted to passive use as part of that program

- Franklin Road tract – 1.08 acres
- Mallory Drive tract – 6.692 acres
- Crest Hill Cemetery tract – 3.957 acres
- Walthall Street tract – 1.297 acres
- Lockheed tracts – 14.233 acres

Figure 34: S. Cobb/ Fairground Greenspace. East View to Aviation Baseball/ Softball Complex.

The following properties are additional greenspace not purchased through the Georgia Greenspace Program.

- S. Cobb/Fairground tract – 13.48 acres
- Barnes Mill tract – 1.35 acres
- 369 Alexander Circle - 0.576 acres

The S. Cobb/Fairground tract was acquired through the federal surplus lands program as part of the Dobbins Air Force base divestiture. The Barnes Mill tract was a donation by the developer of the Glen Ivy townhome project. The 369 Alexander Circle property was a remnant of a subdivision built in the area.

The total greenspace acreage resulting from purchases made as part of the Georgia Greenspace Program is 27.259 acres. The three additional properties listed increase available greenspace to 42.67acres.

3.2 TRAILS

Marietta is presently in the planning/design phase of trail development. The trail system as envisioned will accommodate pedestrians and bicycles, and when completed will link several parks, activity centers and afford opportunities to access trail systems in adjacent communities.

Five trail segments are proposed: 1) the North Segment which will connect to the City of Kennesaw trail system and link the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park to the downtown area; 2) the Intown Segment which links the square with downtown parks and facilities; 3) the South Segment (Atlanta St. segment) which extends from downtown to South Cobb Drive along Atlanta St., linking to the City of Smyrna trail system; 4) the University Segment, extending east from Atlanta Street proximate to Southern Polytechnic and Life universities, proceeding to Highway 41 and linking to Franklin Road along Rottenwood Creek, and eventually linking to the Cobb County trail system that will connect to the Chattahoochee; and, 5) the Powder Springs Segment which will follow Powder Springs Street to the southern portion of Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park.

3.3 MAINTENANCE FACILITIES

The PRFD operates a centralized full-service maintenance facility on a tract of land adjacent to Lewis Park. The maintenance building is relatively new and contains administrative offices, a shop and storage for equipment. There are outdoor areas for storage of maintenance equipment on-site. All park and facilities maintenance activities are undertaken from this facility.

3.3.1 SCHOOL RECREATION FACILITIES

At present, the PRFD has no formal joint-use agreements in place for the use of school recreational areas. There are however, informal agreements that have allowed the PRFD to utilize several school recreation facilities over the years.

Formal joint-use agreements can be a valuable tool in the recreation partnering process. As an example, Marietta presently does not have nearly enough indoor facilities to meet the needs of a population that is approaching 70,000. A typical joint-use agreement would afford the city the opportunity to access school gymnasia and other outdoor facilities and would facilitate the expansion of program offerings.

The PRFD presently uses the gymnasiums at Burruss Elementary, Westside Elementary, Dunleith Elementary and at the 6th Grade Academy.

The running track at Marietta High School has been used on occasion for youth track meets or to host the GRPA District track meet.

The 6th Grade Academy has a six-lane track and a football field with spectator seating; however, the condition of the track is inadequate for use. A gymnasium that has been used for recreation programs is housed indoors, and four tennis courts in unusable condition are also located at the site.

Marietta City Schools has a Community Schools component that provides recreation and leisure education at a variety of school sites and conducts a day camp program.

3.3.2 COBB COUNTY PARKS

There are ten Cobb County recreation sites that are proximate to, or located within the City of Marietta. The following presents a summary of these sites and the recreational facilities offered at each site. Each of these parks is owned, programmed and maintained by the Cobb County Parks, Recreation Cultural Affairs Department.

3.3.3 IN-CITY PARKS

The two Cobb County sites that are located within the corporate limits of the city are: Fair Oaks Park and Larry Bell Park/Perry Parham Fields.

Fair Oaks Park

Fair Oaks Park (35 acres) is located in the southern portion of Marietta and receives heavy utilization. Park facilities include two baseball fields, two soccer fields and multi-purpose softball/football field, two concessions buildings, a multi-purpose court, playground facilities and three pavilions. The twelve court tennis center is presently being renovated to include new court

surfaces and lighting. There is a recreation center at this site. Programs offered include: youth football, adult flag football, youth basketball, youth and adult soccer and tennis. There are no joint-use agreements in place between the city and Cobb County.

Larry Bell Park/Perry Parham Fields

This multi-purpose recreation site (34 acres) is located in south central Marietta and includes the Civic Center, Jennie T. Anderson Theater, an indoor aquatics center and a gymnastics center. Outdoor facilities include four baseball fields with batting cages (Perry Parham Park), playgrounds (including equipment for the handicapped), a pavilion, four tennis courts, and a running/jogging/walking track. Support facilities include concessions, restrooms and a full service maintenance facility. Programs offered by the county include: youth baseball, aquatics and gymnastics and park utilization is generally heavy. This park was deeded to Cobb County by the city in 1971. Cobb County has agreed to make facilities available to the PRFD on a cooperative basis.

3.3.4 OTHER COBB COUNTY PARKS

Eight other Cobb County parks located outside of the city are utilized to varying degrees by city residents. These parks offer a wide range of both active and passive recreational opportunities and are owned, programmed, and maintained by the Cobb County Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department. A summary of facilities found at each of these parks follows.

Al Bishop Park

Located southwest of the city, Al Bishop Park is an athletic complex consisting of softball fields and a centrally located control building. The park also has a picnic pavilion.

Bells Ferry Park

Bells Ferry Park is located north of Marietta and facilities at this site include softball fields, batting cages, tennis courts, playgrounds, a pavilion, and concessions.

Jim R. Miller Park

Jim R. Miller Park is located on the southwest side of the city. This park hosts trade shows, equestrian events, and concerts. Facilities present include: exhibit halls, a market plaza, equestrian areas, a lake with a bathhouse, campsites, a fitness trail, pavilions, and concessions. The site has a carnival midway, too.

Lost Mountain Park

Lost Mountain is located due west of Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park and serves primarily as a venue for programmed athletics. Facilities include: baseball and softball fields, batting cages, football/soccer fields, concessions, playgrounds, pavilions, a tennis center, a recreation center, walking trails, and fishing ponds. The park also serves as the location for the West Cobb Senior Center.

Oregon Park

Oregon Park is also located to the west of Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park and includes baseball fields with batting cages and concessions, tennis courts, disc golf, playgrounds, picnic pavilions, and a walking trail.

Sewell Park

Sewell Park is located east of Interstate 75 and includes baseball fields, batting cages, concessions, tennis courts, a walking trail, playground, picnic facilities, and an outdoor swimming pool.

Shaw Park

Located north of the city, Shaw Park consists of active facilities and a community center. Facilities include: baseball fields with batting cages and concessions, tennis courts, a multi-purpose court, pavilions, and playgrounds.

Terrell Mill Park

Terrell Mill Park is located east of Marietta and contains softball, soccer, and tennis programs. Other facilities include a playground, picnic pavilions, and concessions.

3.3.5 UNIVERSITY RECREATION FACILITIES

Two universities are located within the city – Life University and Southern Polytechnic University. The campuses adjoin each other in the eastern part of the city, and can be accessed from Cobb Parkway (U.S. 41). Each of these universities offers recreational facilities including athletic fields, indoor centers, and trails.

Life University

The Sports Health Science Center includes a gymnasium and wellness center. Adjacent on the south is the Sports Complex & Track, consisting of a multi-lane running track, tennis courts, and rugby field. The campus also contains a a 19th Century Historic Village and a running trail that connects to the city trails in Burruss and Wildwood Parks. A cooperative use agreement allows citizens to utilize this connection during daylight hours. and. The other facilities have limited public use.

Southern Polytechnic University

The campus of Southern Polytechnic has expanded rapidly during the past decade. Within the campus are four recreation facilities – the Recreation and Wellness Center, the Outdoor Recreation Complex, and the Athletic Gymnasium and Walter J. Kelly, Jr. Field. Use of these facilities is restricted to students, alumni, faculty/staff, and to guests ages 16 and over.

The Recreation and Wellness Center includes a multi-purpose gymnasium with two basketball courts, two volleyball courts, four badminton courts, and a perimeter walking/jogging track. There is a 25-yard swimming pool with six swimming lanes and an outdoor sunbathing area. The facility houses weight training and cardiovascular areas, also.

The Outdoor Recreation Complex includes three softball fields, a multi-purpose field, and a soccer field. There are nine tennis courts and a one-half mile jogging trail, also.

The Athletic Gymnasium is the home of the university's basketball teams. Basketball camps are offered for youth grades K – 12.

Kelly Field is home to the baseball team.

3.3.6 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SITES

Proximate to the City of Marietta are two National Park sites: the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area (CRNRA) and the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park. The CRNRA is a series of passive-use parks located along a 48-mile stretch of the river extending from Lake Lanier south to I-75 in Atlanta. Two units of the CRNRA are located in Cobb County to the southeast of the city.

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park is a National Park that forms a portion of the western boundary of the city.

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area

Two contiguous units of the CRNRA are located on the Cobb County side of the Chattahoochee – Sope Creek and Cochran Shoals. Sope Creek is accessed from Paper Mill Road and Cochran Shoals can be accessed from either Columns Drive or Powers Ferry Road.

The combined acreage of these units is 970 acres, affording residents of Marietta and surrounding communities a wealth of passive-use recreational opportunities. Sope Creek contains a large number of intertwined hiking and bicycle trails, interpretive information, picnic areas, a leashed dog area, scenic vistas, and a small pond. Parking is available close to the entryway.

Cochran Shoals, located immediately to the south of Sope Creek, affords users trails, a continuation of the bicycle trail from Sope Creek, viewing overlooks of the Chattahoochee River, extensive wetlands, picnic facilities, and a leashed dog area. Parking is available at both entryways.

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park occupies a land area of 2,888 acres, which contain a preserved Civil War battleground from the Atlanta Campaign. The battles were fought at this location between June and July of 1864.

The main entry is from Stilesboro Road at the north of the park. Additional entryways are from Burnt Hickory Road, Dallas Highway and from Powder Springs Road at the southern extent of the park. The Visitor's Center is accessed from Stilesboro Road, and a roadway from the Visitor's Center leads to the top of the mountain.

There are three battlefields within the park, the largest of which is located at Cheatham Hill. Other historic features include earthworks, cannon emplacements, monuments and interpretive signage.

Within the park are 17.3 miles of interpretive walking trails linking many of the historic aspects of the Civil War battlefields. There are two large loop trails (north and south) connected by a series of smaller trails at the central portion of the park.

3.3.7 PRIVATE/ NON-PROFIT RECREATION

Residents of the city have a range of private recreation facilities that can be utilized on a fee-for-play basis. The most prominent of these are the YMCA, YWCA, Salvation Army, the Boys and Girls Club, and Wolf's Indoor Soccer Complex. A summary of these facilities follows.

James T. Anderson Boys and Girls Club

Centrally located within the city, the Boys and Girls Club offers facilities and programs designed to accommodate the needs of area youths. There is an indoor gymnasium with a basketball court, a game room, and an art studio. Outdoor facilities include a baseball field and basketball court.

After school programs are offered on a year around basis and these are extended to full day programs for an eight-week period during summer months.

Other programs focus on fostering character and leadership, education, career development, health and life skills, and the arts.

McCleskey – East Cobb YMCA

The YMCA is located in Cobb County, east of Marietta, and residents of the city can utilize the facilities through monthly memberships.

The YMCA facilities include an indoor swimming pool, gymnasium with basketball courts, racquetball, tennis and volleyball courts and a climbing wall. Fitness areas are devoted to circuit training, free weights, and various exercise stations.

Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is located close to the square and has indoor and outdoor recreational facilities.

The facility has an indoor gymnasium with basketball courts and an outdoor soccer field. After school programs are offered, as are karate and fitness.

Wolf's Indoor Soccer

This indoor soccer facility is located in northeast Marietta and hosts soccer tournaments, camps, and training programs. Free play is offered, also.

The facility includes an 80-foot by 100-foot indoor field with an Astro-Play turf surface. The arena seats approximately 100 spectators. There is a picnic area within the facility, and concessions and restrooms are available. The arena is available for rental by families and groups.

YWCA

The YWCA is located proximate to downtown Marietta and primarily offers programs to young women of the community.

Health, wellness, fitness programs, and a range of programs focusing on leadership and averting domestic violence are offered to members.

3.3.8 DISTRIBUTION AND ACCESSIBILITY

The distribution of, and accessibility to, city parks is a function of their geographic location, travel time, and visibility - i.e. the ability to know when one is approaching a park.

Parks need to be located within higher density populated areas to receive proper utilization. Ideally, residents of Marietta should not have to travel an excessive amount of time to reach parks affording both active and passive recreational opportunities. In highly urbanized areas, travel times to neighborhood parks should not exceed five minutes and travel to community parks should not exceed fifteen minutes.

The majority of city parks are clustered north to south within one-half mile on either side of the Church Street/Atlanta Road corridor. Two smaller concentrations are present to the east of Fairgrounds Street and south of Roswell Street, and to the west of Powder Springs Street south of Whitlock Avenue. There are only two parks located to the east of Interstate 75.

This clustering of parks leaves the northern, northeastern, and northwestern portions of the city underserved, most noticeably in active recreation pursuits.

The most significant disadvantage is the predominance of small pocket and neighborhood parks coupled with the lack of larger community parks. This is a reflection of a lack of available land within the city. It is possible that this location disadvantage can be overcome by investigating the potential for providing linear parks that would link several of the smaller parks, creating a network of parks and facilities that would afford opportunities for all city neighborhoods.

Several of the city parks are difficult to access due to a lack of visibility, sidewalks or on-site parking. The PRFD has a signage program ready for implementation that will provide both directional and entryway signage at all parks. This will alleviate some of the accessibility problems.

3.3.9 ANALYSIS OF SUPPLY

For the purposes of developing a parks and facilities master plan, the “supply” of parkland only includes those parks, facilities and greenspace that are under the jurisdiction of the city (owned or leased). These criteria include county parks owned or leased by the city - or used by city residents - but excludes Federally owned recreation areas and private facilities. However, these recreation sites are all still available for use by residents of the Marietta community.

The total acreage of city parks, including undeveloped parks and greenspace is 339.07 acres. In addition, the inclusion of Cobb County parks located within the City of Marietta (Fair Oaks Park and Larry Bell Park) increase this acreage to 408.07 acres. Applying the 408.07 acres to the City of Marietta estimated 2007 population of 60,758 equates to a supply of 6.71 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons.

3.4 PROGRAMS

The PRFD offers a range of athletic programs, day camps, senior activities, and festivals and events. Some of the athletic programs offered by the PRFD are privately operated. The following presents a summary of current program offerings.

3.4.1 ATHLETIC PROGRAMS

Athletic program offerings include youth basketball, adult and coed softball, flag football, tennis, bowling, track, and seasonal competitions.

Youth Basketball

Youth basketball is offered from November through January and includes boys and girls, ages six through fourteen. Practices and league games are held at city recreation centers and at school recreation areas.

Softball

Adult softball and coed softball leagues were offered by the PRFD in the past during the spring, summer, and winter seasons. All games were played at the Aviation Road Complex. In the past six years, a lessee provided these programs. A softball component in the city no longer exists.

Tennis

Tennis programs are offered at Laurel Park on a year-round basis by a private operator (Allcourt Tennis Academy) through the PRFD. These are junior programs and include four different tiers of lessons correlating to a player's ability. Allcourt, also, offers an Elite Program at the same location. In addition, a complete range of USTA and ALTA programs are conducted for youths and adults.

Track

The PRFD operates youth track program including meets in other locales during the February to April time frame. The 6th Grade Annex track was used for this program for years. However, deteriorating conditions render the track unusable and the program was moved to Life University for the spring of 2008 at considerably higher costs of use. The program was suspended in the spring of 2009 because no facility was available.

Seasonal Competitions

During baseball, football and basketball seasons the PRFD sanctions the local competition in the National Football Leagues Punt, Pass and Kick program, the Pitch, Hit and Run program of Major League Baseball, and the National Basketball Association's Two Ball competition.

3.4.2 DAY CAMPS

Fee-based summer camps are offered by the PRFD at Laurel Park and free camps are offered at the Lawrence Street Recreation Center, Elizabeth Porter Recreation Center, and at the Fort Hill Housing Authority site (Note: the Marietta Housing Authority reimburses the city for all

expenses to conduct the camp). Camp programs include swimming, games and competitive events, arts and crafts and field trips, among other activities.

The Laurel Park day camps are comprised of two age groups – Thumbkids (ages six through eight) and Laurel Starz (ages nine through twelve). Camps consist of eight, one-week sessions beginning in early June. The sessions run for seven hours daily, with extended camp hours available at a small extra charge.

3.5 SENIOR CITIZEN PROGRAMS

The PRFD offers programs for senior citizens over the age of 50. These programs include fishing at Laurel Park and the Cob County Senior Games.

The Cobb County Senior Games was started by the PRFD in 1991, as a cooperative venture with several Cobb County agencies. The games consist of several events including: track and field, golf, tennis, swimming, bowling, bocce ball, horseshoes, billiards, shuffleboard, a free throw competition, ping pong and fishing. Events begin in April and conclude in mid-May. Events are held at several locations throughout the county and include an opening ceremony luncheon and a closing awards picnic.

3.5.1 FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Throughout the year, the PRFD is responsible for offering a wide range of festivals and events that are held at locations throughout the city, predominantly at Laurel Park and Glover Park. Festivals and events include:

- Love The Loop
- Daddy Daughter Dance
- Arbor Day Festival
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Evening Concerts
- Taste Of Marietta
- May-retta Daze Arts & Crafts Festival
- Brown Bag Concerts
- Take A Kid Fishing
- Fourth In The Park
- Art In The Park
- Antique Festival
- Harvest Square Arts And Crafts Festival
- Holiday Tree Lighting
- Santa On The Square

3.6 STAKEHOLDER INPUT TO THE PLANNING PROCESS

In order to develop a meaningful Plan that contains recommendations that are truly reflective of user demand it is necessary to elicit input in such a way that all stakeholder groups have the opportunity to participate. A multi-level mechanism was utilized to achieve the desired level of input from Marietta stakeholders. This process included: public informational meetings, stakeholder interviews, a statistically valid telephone survey, an interactive website survey, and a small group workshop. This process allowed for all stakeholder groups to have the opportunity to provide substantive input. The following summarizes the input derived from each of these input mechanisms that in many cases support and reinforce the statistical survey.

3.6.1 PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

During the month of October 2007, four public informational meetings were held at different geographic locations throughout the city. The public informational meetings were structured as open forums, with participants having the opportunity to comment on any aspect of the Marietta recreation system that they felt needed to be addressed in the Plan.

Each meeting consisted of a brief presentation explaining the objectives of the Plan and the process used in its preparation. A facilitated discussion followed during which those in attendance had the opportunity to voice their opinions relative to issues and opportunities facing the Marietta recreation system.

3.6.2 OCTOBER 9 – MARIETTA CENTRAL LIBRARY

The discussion at the initial public informational meeting addressed several aspects of the recreation system, and also focused on Hickory Hills Park. The following is a summary of comments received.

General Comments

- Consider adding multi-use trails to all parks
- Improve park accessibility
- Retain Glover Park as the focal point of the recreation system
- Provide additional trash cans in parks
- Establish non-profit park advocacy groups
- Initiate a Park Ranger program for security
- Park “rules” should be clearly posted and duplicated in Spanish

Recreational Activities

- Consider rock climbing
- More activities for teens
- Parks should be designed to accommodate specific activities

Recreation System Limitations

- Lack of facilities and equipment
- Poor marketing program

Future Recreation System

- Well-maintained, safe parks that are attractive
- Parks located within walking distance of neighborhoods
- Playgrounds should be age-specific
- Tree preservation should be a priority

Hickory Hills Park

- Evaluate the feasibility of incorporating a children's bicycle trail
- Security should be a priority, including adequate lighting
- Complete redesign of this park is necessary with consideration given to the transitional nature of adjacent neighborhoods
- Initiate an "adopt-a-park" program at Hickory Hills Park
- Include a multi-use trail
- Provide for adequate vehicular circulation and parking

3.6.3 OCTOBER 11 – DUNLEITH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The public informational meeting at Dunleith Elementary School secured general input relative to the Marietta recreation system and also specific input relative to Hickory Hills Park.

General Comments

- Security at city parks is a concern
- Consideration should be given to adding water features at parks
- A skate park should be developed at a suitable location – one that is accessible and that would have low impact on surrounding neighborhoods
- Consider the property at Hunt Street and North Forest for development as a pocket park

Hickory Hills Park

- Design Hickory Hills to incorporate facilities for special events – include pavilions
- Include a wide range of playground equipment
- Design open grassed playfields to accommodate children's activities, limiting adult league play activities
- The redesigned park should have good "curb appeal"
- Include a range of passive-use amenities
- Establish some type of park conservancy foundation to support Hickory Hills Park

3.6.4 OCTOBER 16 – MARIETTA HIGH SCHOOL

The meeting at Marietta High School was the best attended of the four public informational meetings. Comments received at this meeting were both general and specific and addressed trails, dog parks, future improvements and Victory Park.

General Comments

- Incorporate parks into future mixed-use developments
- Convert the parking lot at Marietta Middle School back into a park
- Consider developing playgrounds that include a sprayground
- Partnering with corporations to facilitate an adopt-a-park program should be a consideration
- Include skate parks in the Plan
- Establish a site for fishing in one of the city parks
- Consider the expansion of existing parks and facilities
- A park with a recreation center should be developed on Franklin Road
- Ensure there is an adequate budget for maintenance and park improvements

Trails

- Include a linkage to the trail from Kennesaw Mountain
- Incorporate sidewalks into the trail system
- Include trails and benches in passive parks for seniors
- Investigate the feasibility of creating a canoe trail

Dog Parks

- An additional dog park will be needed as the one at Lewis Park is often overcrowded
- Improve the dog park at Lewis Park
- Enforce regulations at dog parks
- Consider developing dog parks within larger city parks

Victory Park

- The Kiwanis Club is a potential funding source for park improvements
- Improve the tennis courts
- Remove willow trees that are impaired and add landscaping
- Drainage is an issue during periods of heavy rain
- Remove large boulders blocking water flow
- Do not need a trail
- Additional greenspace is desired

3.6.5 OCTOBER 17 – SAWYER ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Comments received at the final public informational meeting addressed general concerns, trails, the potential for partnering, and Merritt Park.

General Comments

- The lack of security lighting is a concern
- There are no city parks in southeast Marietta
- Incorporate educational programs at the dog park at Lewis Park
- Include open space in new developments and redevelopment projects
- There is not enough recreational land adjacent to schools
- Create historical and educational opportunities at city parks
- Incorporate community gardens at parks

Trails

- Add bike trails within, and as linkages to, city parks
- There is a lack of east-west bike trails
- Multi-use trails are lacking in parks
- There is a need for more connectivity in trail planning
- A community wide trail system would be a unifying influence

Partnering

- Neighborhoods should take a more active role in their parks
- Partnering with schools could expand recreational opportunities
- Involve Eagle Scouts and other scouting programs to accomplish smaller park projects
- More community volunteerism is needed
- Create non-profit organizations whose role it would be to improve the recreation system

Merritt Park

- Merritt Park is too crowded during the day or nearly abandoned at night
- The park does not present a welcome feeling
- Additional security lighting is needed
- Concern exists relative to potential illegal activities at Merritt Park

3.7 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

In order to target input from specific stakeholder groups, the PRFD provided a contact list that included representatives of public and private schools, athletic associations and related groups, quasi-public and private recreational facilities, other municipal and governmental recreation agencies, and representatives of city government.

Interviews were transmitted to each of the individuals and groups on the contact list and the results are summarized below.

3.7.1 SCHOOLS

The following comments are taken from interviews conducted with representatives of area schools.

- The lack of vacant land will constrain expansion of the recreation system
- Program offerings should be expanded as should the trail and greenway system
- Consideration should be given to providing additional athletic facilities at city parks
- A trail linkage to the Silver Comet Trail would be of benefit to a large number of residents
- The provision of facilities for families and youth should be a high priority
- Consider a dedicated millage and/or TAD as alternative methods of financing recreation system improvements

3.7.2 ATHLETIC ASSOCIATIONS

Response received from area athletic associations included the following suggestions.

- Expansion of the football and cheerleading programs should include a youth football field
- At present, there are not enough parks, facilities or trails to meet the demand of city residents
- A centrally located football field(s) is needed, perhaps proximate to the CCT bus facility
- Additional ball fields, playgrounds and pavilions should be incorporated into Plan recommendations
- There is a need to expand youth football programs
- A bond referendum would be a possible funding source

3.7.3 PRIVATE AND ACCESSIBLE NON-PROFIT RECREATION PROVIDERS

Responses received from quasi-public and private providers included the following comments.

- There is a lack of suitable land available for new parks and facilities, and the city should be seeking to identify and acquire such land now, and not later
- A wider range of recreational facilities are needed at city parks
- New parks are needed in the western portion of the city; also in the areas between Cobb Parkway, Interstate 75 and GA 120; and proximate to Franklin Road

- Additional youth and adult soccer fields are needed along with areas for walking and jogging
- Include concessions when new athletic fields are constructed
- Additional family-oriented programs are needed
- All potential funding mechanisms should be evaluated
- Partnering with businesses, schools and the service community to develop joint programs would be of benefit to all residents of the community

3.7.4 OTHER GOVERNMENTAL RECREATION PROVIDERS

The following suggestions were made in responses received from other governmental recreation providers.

- Sizeable tracts of public green space for passive recreation are lacking, particularly as relates to walking trails, biking and for running activities
- The lack of available land puts user pressure on sites such as Kennesaw Mountain NBP, which is not suited for a wide range of recreational activities
- Consideration should be given to incorporating Hyde Farm as part of the recreation system
- Both hard and soft surface trails are needed
- The city should work with Cobb County and the NPS to afford trail linkages along Powder Springs Road to Kennesaw Mountain NBP, along Whitlock Avenue, along Burnt Hickory, and to complete the Mountain to River trail through the city
- Partner with the NPS to provide bikeway/trail linkages between CRNRA Units
- Advance acquisition of parkland as suitable sites become available should be a high priority of the city

3.7.5 REPRESENTATIVES OF CITY GOVERNMENT

Elected and appointed officials of the city provided the following responses.

- There are not enough parks and trails within the city
- A lack of funding is a constraint to recreation system improvements
- Additional parks and facilities are needed in the northern and eastern sides of the city
- Additional soccer fields, dog parks and trails are needed
- Programs targeting senior adults are needed, including active programs
- Consider senior memberships at the City Club

- More youth soccer and lacrosse programs should be added
- Consider TAD's as a funding vehicle for recreation system improvements together with SPLOST and grants

3.7.6 TELEPHONE SURVEY

During April and May of 2007 a telephone survey consisting of 609 interviews was conducted by the A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service and Research at Kennesaw State University. Questions focused on eliciting input relative to awareness of the city's recreation system, utilization of parks and facilities, securing an evaluation of the recreation system, use of recreation systems of other political jurisdictions, and for recommendations to improve the city's parks and facilities. Interviewers fluent in Spanish were used to elicit responses from that segment of the community.

3.7.7 AWARENESS

Approximately 35 percent of residents indicated a lack of familiarity with the recreation system. Those between the ages of 18 and 24, minorities and persons residing in Marietta for less than five years were the least familiar with the recreation system.

About one-half of respondents indicated a desire for parks in close proximity to their neighborhood, with 31 percent having a preference for active parks and 42 percent for passive-use parks. The majority of those surveyed would prefer renovation of existing parks as opposed to developing new parks and facilities.

Funding preferences most preferred included SPLOST and user fees. However, a dedicated millage, impact fees or tax allocation districts were not an optional choice.

Finally, most respondents felt there is a need for improved communication on the part of the PRFD.

3.7.8 UTILIZATION/ACTIVITIES PARTICIPATION

About half of those surveyed utilized city parks, and the older the respondent, the higher the utilization rate. Parks receiving highest utilization are Laurel, Glover, Lewis and Hickory Hills, in that order. Twenty-one percent visit a city park about once weekly and 24 percent visit less than once a month. Fifty-three percent have a park within five minutes travel time of their residence, and for 36 percent, a park is ten minutes or less travel time from home.

Activities having the greatest rates of participation include walking, children's activities, tennis and dog walking. Of those under 13 years of age activities preferences are for playgrounds, swimming and biking, respectively. For those between the ages of 13 and 17 years, favored activities include basketball, football and swimming, respectively.

3.7.9 RECREATION SYSTEM EVALUATION

Approximately 55 percent of respondents rated city parks and facilities as excellent or very good. Regarding the range of activities present, 59 percent rated them as excellent or good. The overall appearance of parks and facilities was judged to be excellent or good to 69 percent of those responding. Sixty-five percent indicated they feel safe while visiting city parks. The

overall satisfaction rating for city parks was excellent or good according to 66 percent of respondents.

Newer residents of the city tended to give slightly lower evaluations than did those that are longer time residents.

3.7.10 USE OF OTHER RECREATION SYSTEMS

Survey respondents were asked if they used the recreation systems of Cobb County, State, Federal, or private recreation facilities. Responses indicated similar percentages of use for each of these categories.

3.7.11 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Provision was made in the survey for open-ended comments to be made. The majority of these comments focused on potential system-wide improvements that would enhance the user's experience. The following suggestions were made, in order of preference:

- Add security measures
- More greenspace is needed
- Maintenance practices should be improved
- Additional children's facilities and activities are needed
- Trails and bikeways should be more of a priority
- Additional swimming opportunities should be afforded

3.7.12 INTERACTIVE WEBSITE SURVEY

The city placed the recreation survey on their website in April 2007, containing the same questions as were used in the telephone survey. This gave all residents and nonresidents the opportunity to express their opinions relative to the recreation system. The following summarizes substantive responses received from the website survey.

- Over 75 percent of those responding were Marietta residents
- Only 16 percent believe the city has enough parks while 52 percent desire additional parkland
- Approximately 77 percent visited a Marietta park within the past year
- With regard to this Plan, 11 percent of respondent's desire additional active parks, 35 percent favor passive-use parks and 53 percent would prefer a balance of both active and passive parks
- Most of those responding (72 percent) favor making improvements to existing parks and facilities
- The survey response rated recreational activities, park appearance, safety and general satisfaction with the recreation system as "good"

- The majority indicated that the overall condition of parks is better now than five years ago
- With regard to youth activities participation, children under the age of 13 favor playgrounds, swimming and basketball while those between the ages of 13 and 17 are participant's in basketball, swimming and soccer
- Preferences for funding recreation system improvements favored SPLOST 50 percent), revenue bonds (45 percent), user fees (20 percent) and a tax increase (12 percent) respectively
- Forty-two percent would prefer the PRFD publicize the recreation system using e-mails while 20 percent would prefer direct mailings, 18 percent favor use of the PRFD website and 14 percent would like to see publicity via the local newspaper

3.7.13 SMALL GROUP WORKSHOP

A small group workshop was held the evening of November 13, 2007 in a downtown location. The group included stakeholders representing various groups and organizations. The small group exercise was designed to gather specific information and input regarding the adequacy of parks, facilities and programs; land acquisition potential; to determine future system-wide needs (outdoor and indoor); the role of trails, greenways and linkages; and to elicit input relative to funding mechanisms.

3.7.14 ADEQUACY

The consensus of workshop participants was that city parks, facilities, and programs are generally inadequate, not located to serve user groups, lacking a wide enough range of active and passive facilities, and that programs did not meet the needs of all age groups.

Although Laurel and Lewis parks were judged to be adequate, the remaining city parks are inadequate. Specifically, the northeast and southeastern sectors of the city are not well served by parks. Passive-use parks are lacking.

With the exception of Laurel Park and Glover Park, facilities are in need of upgrading. The city's pocket parks are particularly in need of new or renovated facilities. Specific needs cited by the group include: bathrooms, water fountains, play equipment, trails, and outdoor courts.

Many of the programs offered by the PRFD were judged to be outdated. Program needs that are the most critical include programs for senior citizens, special needs groups, and youths. Suggestions for additional programs included: chef classes, fitness and conditioning, after school programs, re-education, tutoring, youth sports (including baseball and soccer), and a greater variety of summer camps.

3.7.15 LAND ACQUISITION

It was generally agreed that there is a lack of land of suitable size and geographic location to develop new, larger parks. Some of the most critical needs for land is in the vicinity of Franklin Road and Canton Road. Suggestions for increasing the amount of city parkland included the idea of requiring developers to set aside a percentage of land for parks, acquisition via use of

bonds, and that the city should take control of those Cobb County parks located within the corporate limits.

3.7.16 FUTURE NEEDS

In addition to parkland, the following facilities needs were mentioned: multi-purpose athletic fields, at least two recreation centers, the renovation of the Lawrence Street Recreation Center, community centers, playgrounds, tennis courts, pavilions, a skate park, aquatic center, roller hockey, trails and athletic fields.

New facilities should target youth, the 30 – 54 year age group and seniors.

3.7.17 TRAILS, GREENWAYS AND LINKAGES

A citywide trail system is needed, one that will have trail widths of at least 10 feet that will afford linkages between parks and to schools and major city activity centers. Specifically, immediate trail needs are along Burnt Hickory to Whitlock and on to Glover Park and along Cheatham Hill to Dallas Highway.

3.7.18 FINANCING MECHANISMS

A wide-range of financing mechanisms were discussed including SPLOST, impact fees, a bond referendum, dedicated millage matching funds and increased user fees. There were no objections voiced to consideration of any funding mechanism that would facilitate system-wide improvements.

3.8 MODIFIED NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The intent of a modified needs assessment is to first determine the adequacy of system-wide acreage and facilities, and to develop "Marietta-specific" standards for the recreation system to identify present and future needs for additional park acreage and for active and passive recreation facilities. This is accomplished by examining present standards in use together with participation data, resulting in standards and criteria that are appropriate to the City of Marietta. These are then applied to the design populations developed in the community profile section of this document.

The National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) has advanced general guidelines for both system-wide recreational acreage and facilities that can be utilized as baseline criteria for developing Marietta standards. These NRPA standards are not intended to be representative of all municipalities, and NRPA does caution against universal application, due to user demand varying from place to place nationwide.

The Marietta modified needs assessment utilizes NRPA guidelines as a baseline and adjusts these standards to reflect actual park and facilities utilization, user participation rates, and perceived demand as expressed throughout the input process. The resultant standards for acreage and facilities used in the modified needs assessment are therefore "Marietta - specific" and should be responsive to meeting recreation needs throughout the ten-year planning period.

3.8.1 RECREATIONAL PLANNING CRITERIA FOR THE CITY OF MARIETTA

Acreage and facility standards are developed as part of performing the needs assessment. As part of the needs assessment process, the following recreational planning criteria are established for the Marietta recreation system:

- The recreation system should be people-oriented, reflecting to the extent possible both demand and desires of system users for both active and passive facilities
- Recommendations must take into consideration the lack of available recreation land, while focusing on redevelopment activities as a source of new parkland
- Plan recommendations need to reflect long-term growth within the city and provide adequate geographic coverage of present and future populations
- Recommendations made in the Plan must be feasible and cost-effective.

3.8.2 PARKLAND ACREAGE STANDARDS

System-wide acreage planning standards are typically used as guidelines to determine the amount of parkland necessary to meet present and future recreation demand. The NRPA local close-to-home space guidelines recommend a community endeavor to provide between 6.25 to 10.50 acres per 1,000 persons. In addition, the standard for linear parks is presently 0.16 miles per 1,000 persons.

Vacant land suitable for the development of larger parks (30+ acre parcels) does not exist, and in all probability will not exist on a wide scale during the planning period within the present corporate limits of Marietta. Input derived from the public informational meetings, the website survey, stakeholder interviews and from the small group workshop indicate that most likely the city will rely on a combination of neighborhood parks, a limited number of community parks, open space and linear parks to meet recreational demand.

The City of Marietta presently has a total of 408.07 acres of local close-to-home space (including the City Club golf course and those Cobb County parks that are located within the corporate limits, and a 2007 population of 60,758, or 6.71 acres per 1,000 persons.

Using the standard for local close-to-home space listed above as a benchmark, "Marietta - specific" system-wide planning guidelines were developed. The criteria that influenced the development of these guidelines were:

- Stakeholder input received as result of the public informational meetings
- Tabulation of the website and telephone surveys
- Results of the stakeholder interviews
- The small group workshop
- Program participation trends
- Population forecasts and geographic distribution of the population

With the Marietta population anticipated to increase by approximately 8.1 percent by the year 2014, and by an additional 7.4 percent between the years 2014 and 2019, the PRFD has adopted the standard of 6.25 acres per 1,000 persons for parkland. It is their intention to acquire land over the ten-year planning period such that by the year 2018 the acreage deficit will be erased. Table 3-8 depicts the system-wide acreage needed to meet this standard.

Table 3-8 System-Wide Parkland Needs City of Marietta 2009, 2014 and 2019

YEAR	POPULATION	STANDARD	ACRES REQUIRED	DEFICIT (SURPLUS)
2009	62,000	6.25 Ac./1,000 Persons	388	(20)Ac.
2014	67,000	6.25 Ac./1,000 Persons	419	11 Ac.
2019	72,000	6.25 Ac./1,000 Persons	450	42 Ac.

Note: The city's supply of 408.07 acres includes two Cobb County parks (Larry Bell Park and Fair Oaks Park) that are located within the corporate limits and available for use by city residents, dedicated greenspace, and the 108-acre City Club golf course that is also available for public use.

With a total system-wide acreage of 408.07 acres, and using the standards shown in Table 9, the City of Marietta has a present surplus of twenty acres, and will need to provide eleven additional acres by the year 2014 and 42 additional acres by close of the planning period in the year 2019.

While the projected acreage deficits appear to be low, it is worth noting that a significant portion of the city's existing parkland consists of lands that are passive (A. L. Burruss Park and Wildwood Park – 74 acres), land that is permanent greenspace (42.67 acres), and land (108 acres) occupied by a golf course used by an estimated 10 percent of the city's residents.

3.8.3 FACILITIES PLANNING STANDARDS

Standards governing the provision of specific recreation facilities were developed to address both active and passive recreational facilities. These standards are based upon the potential level of service for particular types of facilities, including ball fields, multi-purpose fields, tennis courts, playgrounds, indoor space etc. Table 3-9 provides a comparison between NRPA facility standards, "Marietta - specific" facilities standards, and the present level of service for each type of facility in the City of Marietta, based upon the current population and number of facilities inventoried.

Table 3-9 Facilities Standards Comparison and Current Level of Service City of Marietta

FACILITY TYPE	NRPA GUIDELINE	MARIETTA GUIDELINE	2007 INVENTORY	2007 INVENTORY INCL. COBB CO. PARKS
Ball Fields	1 Per 5,000	1 Per 8,000	3 – 1 Per 20,300	11 – 1 Per 5,500
Soccer Fields	1 Per 10,000	1 Per 7,000	1 – 1 Per 61,000	4 – 1 Per 15,300
Football Fields	1 Per 20,000	1 Per 20,000	2 – 1 Per 30,500	2 – 1 Per 30,500
Multi-Purpose Fields	No Guideline	1 Per 20,000	1 – 1 Per 61,000	2 – 1 Per 30,500
Grassed Playfields	No Guideline	1 Per 10+ Ac. Park	4 – 1 Per 15,300	4 – 1 Per 15,300
Tennis Courts	1 Per 2,000	1 Per 1,750	19 – 1 Per 3,200	35 – 1 Per 1,700
Basketball Cts. (Outdoor)	1 Per 5,000	1 Per 20,000	3 – 1 Per 20,300	3 – 1 Per 20,300
Volleyball Cts. (Outdoor)	1 Per 5,000	1 Per 10,000	2 – 1 Per 30,500	2 – 1 Per 30,500
Running Tracks	1 Per 20,000	1 Per 30,000	1 – 1 Per 61,000	2 – 1 Per 30,500
Swimming Pools	1 Per 20,000	1 Per 50,000	1 – 1 Per 61,000	2 – 1 Per 30,500
Playgrounds	No Guideline	1 Per 4,000	14 – 1 Per 4,400	17 – 1 Per 3,600
Pavilions	No Guideline	1 Per 4,000	13 – 1 Per 4,700	17 – 1 Per 3,600
Park Trails	No Guideline	1 Per 10+ Ac. Park	8 – 1 Per 2.5 Parks	8 – 1 Per 3 Parks
Multi-Purpose Trails	1 Per City	1 Per City	Under Development	Under Development
Nature/Interpretive Trail	No Guideline	1 Per Passive Park	1 – 0.5 Per Passive Park	1 – 0.5 Per Passive Park
Recreation Centers	No Guideline	1 Per 35,000	2 – 1 Per 30,500	3 – 1 Per 20,300
Community Centers	No Guideline	1 Per 35,000	0 – 0 Per 61,000	0 – 0 Per 61,000
Cultural Arts Center	No Guideline	1 Complex Per City	0 – 0 Per 61,000	1 – 1 Per 61,000
Concessions/RR Bldgs.	No Guideline	1 Per 4 Fields + 1 Per 10+ Ac. Park	1 – 1 Per 7 Fields	4 – 1 Per 5 Fields
Maintenance Facilities	No Guideline	1 Per Community Or Larger Park	1 – 1 Per System	2 – 2 Per System
Parking (Athletic Fields)	50/Athletic Field	75/ Athletic Field	N/A	N/A

3.8.4 COMPARISON OF FACILITIES PLANNING STANDARDS

While no two cities have exactly the same demand for recreational facilities, it is of interest to compare the facilities standards developed for the City of Marietta with those of neighboring cities. Table 3-10 provides a comparison of the facilities planning standards for Marietta with those presently being used by the cities of Roswell, Alpharetta, Smyrna, Kennesaw and Sandy Springs, has some similar demographic characteristics to those of Marietta.

Table 3-10 Comparison of Facilities Planning Standards

FACILITY TYPE	MARIETTA	KENNESAW	ROSWELL	ALPHARETTA	SMYRNA	SANDY SPRINGS
Ball Fields	1/8,000	1/ 2,500	1/ 2,000	1/ 2,000	1/3,500	1/8,000
Soccer Fields	1/7,0 00	1/8,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/6,000	1/12,000
Football Fields	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/5,000	1/30,000	1/40,000
Multi-Purpose Fields	1/20,000	1/25,000	None	None	1/10,000	1/40,000
Tennis Courts	1/1,750	1/3,000	1/ 2,000	1/ 2,000	1/ 2,000	1/2,500
Basketball Cts. (Outdoor)	1/20,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/2,000	1/10,000	1/20,000
Volleyball Cts. (Outdoor)	1/10,000	1/10,000	1/5,000	1/8,000	1/10,000	1/20,000
Running Tracks	1/30,000	1/30,000	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/40,000	1/60,000
Swimming Pools	1/50,000	1/30,000	1/50,000	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/30,000
Playgrounds	1/4,000	1/5,000	1/6,000	1/ 4,000	1/ 4,000	Varies
Pavilions	1/4,000	1/5,000	1/5,000	1/3,000	1/ 4,000	Varies
Multi-Purpose Trails	1/City	1/City	1/City	1/20,000	1/City	1/City
Nature/Interpretive Trails	1/Passive Park	1/Passive Park	1/Passive Park	None	None	1/Passive Park
Recreation Centers	1/35,000	1/25,000	2.5 sq.ft/. Person	2.5 sq.ft/. Person	1/20,000	1/30,000
Community Centers	1/35,000	1/25,000	None	1/20,000	1/20,000	1/Commun ity Park
Cultural Arts Center	1/City	1/10,000	None	None	None	1/City
Concessions/RR Bldgs.	1/4 Fields + 1/10+ Ac. Park	1 /4 Fields	1/ 2.5 Fields	3/Reg. Park, 2/Comm. Park	1/4 Fields	1/4 Fields
Maintenance Facilities	1 Per Comm. Or Larger Park	1/Comm. Park	1/Dist. Park	None	1/Comm. Park	1/Comm. Or Larger Park
Parking (Athletic Fields)	75/Field	65/Field	65/Field	None	None	75/Field

Source: Recreation Plans For Kennesaw, Roswell, Alpharetta, Smyrna and Sandy Springs Prepared By Robert G. Betz AICP, Inc.

Facilities Needs

The "Marietta – specific" facility standards as established in Table 10 were applied to the year 2009, 2014 and year 2019 design populations to determine present and future facilities needs. These needs are identified in Table 3-11.

Table 3-11 Facilities Needs 2009, 2014, And 2019 City of Marietta

FACILITY TYPE	2008 SUPPLY*	2009 NEED*	2014 NEED*	2019 NEED*
	M/C/T	T/D/N	T/D/N	T/D/N
Ball Fields	5/9/14	14/8/0	14/8/0	14/9/0
Soccer Fields	2/3/5	5/9/4	5/10/5	5/10/5
Football Fields	2/0/2	2/3/1	2/3/1	2/4/2
Multi-Purpose Fields	1/2/3	3/3/0	3/3/0	3/4/1
Grassed Playfields	4/0/4	4/4/0	4/5/1	4/6/2
Tennis Courts	23/35/54	59/35/0	59/38/0	59/41/0
Basketball Courts (Outdoor)	3/0/3	3/3/0	3/3/0	3/4/1
Volleyball Courts (Outdoor)	2/0/2	2/6/4	2/6/4	2/7/5
Running Tracks	1/2/3	3/2/0	3/2/0	3/2/0
Swimming Pools	1/2/3	3/1/0	3/1/0	3/1/0
Playgrounds	14/17/31	31/16/0	31/17/0	31/19/0
Pavilions	13/17/30	30/16/0	30/17/0	30/19/0
Multi-Purpose Trails	0/0/0	1/1/1	1/1/1	1/1/1
Nature/Interpretive Trails	1/0/1	1/2/1	1/2/1	1/2/1
Recreation Centers	2/1/3	3/1/0	3/2/0	3/2/0
Community Centers	0/0/0	0/2/2	0/2/2	0/2/2
Cultural Arts Centers	0/1/1	1/1/0	1/1/0	1/1/0
Concessions/Restroom Bldgs.	1/4/5	5/13/8	5/13/8	5/13/8
Maintenance Facilities	1/2/3	3/6/3	3/7/4	3/8/5
Parking (Athletic Fields)	N/A	1,350	1,500	1,950

* **M – Marietta, C - Cobb County, T – Total, D – Demand, N – Need.**.

3.8.5 ADDITIONAL FACILITIES NEEDS

The public informational meetings, surveys, stakeholder interviews and the small group workshop results identified a desire for some facilities not presently available to Marietta recreation system users. These include: a skate park, all-inclusive recreation centers, community centers, dog parks, trail linkages, and renovations to existing facilities where needed.

3.8.6 ADDITIONAL PROGRAM NEEDS

Based upon input received, it is anticipated that during the ten years covered by this Plan additional program offerings will be necessary to meet user demand. Those mentioned most frequently include: active programs for seniors, family-oriented programs, swimming, physical fitness, after school programs, tutoring, and additional camping programs.

4.0 RECOMMENDED MODIFICATIONS TO PARKS

The recommendations section of the Plan contains the overall vision for the recreation system through the year 2019. The vision consists of specific, attainable goals coupled with measurable objectives. Recommendations are made for land acquisition, improvements and/or retrofitting of existing parks and facilities, for new parks, and the incorporation of trails and linkages between parks and local activity centers.

4.1 VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The development of general goals, together with measurable objectives is an important part of the recreation planning process. Goal development that takes into consideration an overall vision, public input, present demand, and forecast user demand provides a rationale for measuring progress toward Plan implementation. Goals are an expression of the City of Marietta's desire to address the needs and demands for recreational opportunities and program and service delivery.

To facilitate an understanding as to the relationship of goals and objectives to the recreation planning process and Plan implementation, the following definitions are provided:

- Goal - A goal is an end result or a desirable condition. It expresses wishes and values, provides direction, and has the support of Marietta residents and city officials.
- Objective - An objective is an identifiable task which, when attained, contributes to achievement of a goal. Objectives should, therefore, consist of measurable actions.

In developing goals and objectives, the principle of "less is more" is a sound guideline. It is typical for planning studies to include multiple goals and objectives, resulting in the inability of implementing agencies to accomplish their intent during the planning period. In this Plan, six general goals are identified, together with specific measurable objectives for each. Each goal is realistic and can readily be accomplished within the ten-year planning period covered by this Plan.

4.1.1 THE "MARIETTA VISION"

In early 2007, the Mayor and City Council met to revise the goals for the Marietta community. The result was the "Marietta Vision", which consists of eight statements that together constitute a roadmap for the city's future. Four of these statements address aspects of the recreation system. The following are taken from the vision statements and are incorporated into the goals and objectives advanced in this Plan.

- The city will strive for compliance with the greenspace ordinances that contain requirements for tree-save plans, including new residential construction
- Revitalization of our current parks, and the establishment of new parks to accommodate active and passive use is encouraged

- Completion of the Stone Mountain to Kennesaw Avenue Trail segment through Marietta should be accomplished by 2009
- Citizen input is to be accomplished through community wide meetings and should be an active part of the planning process

4.1.2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives identified in this Plan address land acquisition, leisure opportunities, recreation sites and facilities, operations and maintenance, safety and security, and financing and implementation.

4.1.3 LAND ACQUISITION

Marietta faces a moderate deficit (42acres) of parkland over the ten-year planning period and therefore the goal for land acquisition will focus on securing land via various methods at locations throughout the city that are suitable for parks. The goal for land acquisition is:

The City of Marietta will endeavor to continue to provide a minimum of 6.25 acres of parkland for each 1,000 residents.

To facilitate achievement of this goal, the following objectives are advanced:

- Advance acquisition of land suitable for development of parks will be a priority pending funding resources
- New parks should be located in areas of higher population density where they can be utilized by adjacent neighborhoods
- Parks should be located to minimize travel times where feasible
- Seek opportunities for providing parkland through partnering agreements, e.g. schools-in-parks in conjunction with the School Board

4.1.4 LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES

Providing a wide range of recreational opportunities for community residents was mentioned during the input process and is a key to meeting demand. If new opportunities are provided in a manner that is commensurate with expansion of the recreation system, utilization of parks and facilities will increase. The goal for leisure opportunities is:

The PRFD will endeavor to provide or facilitate new leisure opportunities not presently available to community residents.

The following should be accomplished in order to attain this goal:

- The addition of new active and passive facilities as a part of park retrofits and new park development
- Adding programs not provided by other entities as system-wide expansion occurs

- Provide necessary professional PRFD staff to meet the demands of facilities and program offerings
- Improve the marketing programs to publicize the recreation system and programs
- Periodically holding public meetings throughout the community to secure input relative to the recreation system

4.1.5 RECREATION SITES AND FACILITIES

The lack of availability of large parcels of land suitable for new parks will mean that the city will have to develop smaller parks and possibly retrofit existing parks to meet future demand. In addition, a wider range of facilities will need to be developed. The goal for recreation sites and facilities is:

Existing parks and facilities will be upgraded and/or expanded to better serve community residents where appropriate.

This goal can be attained through accomplishment of the following objectives:

- Improve the quality of support facilities where needed
- Determine the feasibility of retrofitting parks to include facilities that would receive higher utilization where possible
- Investigate the feasibility of developing a linear park system that would utilize rights-of-way and easements for trails, coupled with neighborhood park nodes to serve residential areas throughout the city
- Develop linkages consisting of multi-purpose trails, sidewalks and bikeways that would afford access to regional trails, units of the NPS and recreation systems of adjacent jurisdictions (Cobb County, Kennesaw and Smyrna)
- Encourage recreational land set asides as part of redevelopment projects as a means to secure additional parkland
- Assure that park facilities are ADA accessible
- Include walking/jogging trails in all new parks as feasible
- Complete a citywide Marietta trail system

4.1.6 OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

A quality maintenance program is a key element that will allow for park and facilities longevity. Parks that do not receive adequate levels of maintenance quickly deteriorate and become costly to maintain. To promote a quality maintenance program within the Marietta recreation system, the following goal is established:

The city should provide a level of system-wide maintenance that will enhance the life of parks and facilities and attract users.

The following objectives are identified in conjunction with this goal:

- An adequate budget must be in place to accommodate additional maintenance staff and maintenance programs as the recreation system expands
- Assure that maintenance practices utilize sustainable measures
- Park maintenance supervisory personnel should receive annual training and obtain appropriate certifications within their areas of expertise
- A formal Maintenance Plan should be prepared and adopted to address maintenance practices

4.1.7 SAFETY AND SECURITY MEASURES

All users of Marietta parks should be afforded adequate security as a means to enhance their recreation experience. Accordingly, the following goal is established:

The PRFD will endeavor to provide adequate safe and comfortable parks.

Goal achievement can be attained by accomplishing the following objectives:

- Provide for routine patrolling of all parks by Marietta law enforcement personnel
- Use citizen volunteer groups as park supervision assistants
- Provide security lighting proximate to activity centers, support facilities and potential crime locations as determined by staff
- Install security equipment in parks as needed

4.1.8 FINANCING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Improvements to the Marietta recreation system improvements are anticipated to be both extensive and costly as the PRFD seeks to meet acreage and facility deficits. The financing of improvements to existing parks and the development of new parks and facilities will require identification and implementation of multiple permanent funding sources. The goal for financing system-wide improvements is:

To identify some funding sources and methods of funding recreation system improvements that can be implemented.

This goal will be met by achieving the following objectives:

- Establish and maintain a capital improvements funding source throughout the planning period
- Establish and maintain a source of revenue for operations and maintenance
- Consider a public referendum for a parks bond issue as a potential funding vehicle

- Implement several projects during the initial three years at parks throughout the city as a means to demonstrate the quality of facilities that are possible when funding sources are made available
- Leverage local funds where possible with Federal and State grant programs such as the Land & Water Conservation Fund, the Recreational Trails Program and the Georgia Land Conservation Partnership
- Pursue grants from large donors having a history of providing funds for community recreational improvements
- Establish a "Friends-Of-The-Parks" organization
- Enlist the aid of non-profit organizations as part of the implementation process
- Develop "partnerships" with businesses, schools and local universities that might have the ability to make significant contributions for land acquisition and/or facilities development

4.2 PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

The Plan recommendations focus on translating substantive suggestions received from the input process and the results of the needs assessment into strategic initiatives and realistic recommendations for land acquisition; improvements and retrofitting of existing parks; developing recommendations and program elements for new parks; partnering; and, for trails and linkages between elements of the city's recreation system.

In addition these recommendations will examine the city's parks operations and maintenance practices and will advance suggestions for the future staffing needs of the PRFD.

4.2.1 STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

To facilitate the successful implementation of Plan recommendations, strategic principles (initiatives) have been identified to guide the decision-making and capital project implementation process. These principles address specific elements of the Marietta recreation system, and constitute the basis for providing a wide range of recreation opportunities for community residents. Strategic planning is "planning aimed at producing results", and represents a realistic means by which the city can successfully accomplish the implementation process within the framework of the ten-year planning period. The following strategic principles form the basis for Plan recommendations:

- The principle of advance acquisition of land for parks, linear parks and open space is critical to the success of this Plan as parcels of significant size are difficult to identify, and land costs will increase substantially throughout the planning period
- Marietta parks and facilities improvements must have high visibility, be accessible to community residents, and serve population concentrations and potential growth areas of the city

- The development of linear parks containing neighborhood park "nodes" is advanced in the Plan recommendations as a means to afford neighborhood units accessibility to recreational opportunities, while at the same time affording connectivity between elements of the recreation system
- The retrofitting of existing parks and indoor facilities will offer the potential for providing facilities for which significant demand exists without having to acquire additional land
- Marietta's elected officials need to identify and implement a permanent funding mechanism for recreation capital projects that will remain in place for the ten-year planning period, leveraging this mechanism to the maximum extent possible to secure Federal and State funds and foundation grants
- Partnering with public and private schools, colleges, business and industry, quasi-public organizations, private recreation providers, and with the recreation departments of adjacent communities can be an effective means to meet recreational demand while providing additional land, parks and facilities

4.2.2 THE TEN-YEAR CITYWIDE PARKS AND FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

The recommendations contained in this Plan span the ten-year period beginning in 2009, reflect the strategic initiatives and address land acquisition; improvements and retrofitting of existing parks; the development of new parks and facilities; providing linear parks, trails and linkages; opportunities for partnering with other recreation providers and PRFD staffing needs.

4.2.3 LAND ACQUISITION

Based on the population projections on page 15, the PRFD will have to add 42 acres by the year 2019 to maintain the ration of 6.25 acres per 1,000 population.. While it is not certain if it can be achieved, the majority of this acreage should be in the form of a larger community park, supplemented by smaller neighborhood parks, linked in linear fashion. In this manner, city residential areas can be served by new neighborhood parks, with other residential concentrations being linked to existing parks by trails and greenways.

Historically, cities and counties normally do not seek acquisition of parkland until it becomes a pressing need. This typically results in the purchase of land at a higher cost, and possibly in unsuitable or inaccessible locations. The need to acquire parkland well in advance of development cannot be overemphasized. When a parcel of land of appropriate size, and in a suitable location becomes available through donation, or at a reasonable cost, the city should make the acquisition and hold the property for development as a recreation site - even if this results in the land being held for several years.

The following recommendations are made for land acquisition:

- Acquire a minimum of 42 acres of land throughout the city with equal distribution where possible.
- Acquire redevelopment or vacant property within the Franklin Road corridor

- Lease or operate through joint-use agreement the 6th Grade Annex site
- Expand existing parks and recreation sites by acquiring adjacent parcel(s)
- Acquire easements and right-of-way for a linear park system
- Acquire land for neighborhood parks using required "set-asides" from developers involved in redevelopment projects

If successful, these acquisitions will exceed the 42-acre deficit indicated in the needs assessment.

4.2.4 IMPROVEMENTS AND RETROFITTING OF EXISTING PARKS

Several Marietta parks will be improved and/or retrofitted during the ten-year implementation period. These projects will result in the provision of expanded active and passive recreational opportunities for residents and visitors to the city. Recommendations, including the proposed programmatic elements for the improvement and/or retrofitting of existing parks, follow. Where feasible, facilities in these parks should be brought into compliance with provisions of the Americans With Disabilities Act. Where feasible, the following recommendations for park improvements will be considered.

Aviation Park

Aviation Park will be offered to potential contractors or lessees through a Request for Proposal process for operation of the athletic facilities.

Birney Street Park

- Replace pavilion roof
- Add play equipment
- Construct pedestrian bridge
- ADA accessibility

Brown Park

- Assist the Friends of Brown Park as needed to implement the Brown Park/Confederate Cemetery master plan

Burruss Nature Park

- Refurbish existing trail
- Extend trail system
- Nature trail with interpretive facilities
- Pedestrian bridge
- Group pavilion
- Day-use area
- Off-road bike trail
- Paving improvements and additional parking spaces
- Restroom building
- Park lighting
- Remove trees near entrance for improved visibility and traffic safety

Custer Park

Custer Park should be modified to better locate active facilities. This would require preparation of a park master plan that would accomplish reconfiguration. If the PRFD intends to out-source athletic programs at this site, the ball fields and soccer field should be retained. The suggested program is as follows:

- Two lighted ball fields
- A lighted soccer pod allowing for various configurations
- A playground
- Pavilion
- Walking trail
- Concessions/scorer's/restroom building
- 150 parking spaces

Flournoy Park

- Add sidewalks
- Landscaping

Franklin Road

- Parking improvements Trailhead Facilities

Glover Park

- Replace tree canopy as needed
- Repair brick pavers
- Shade structure over playground area

Henry Park

- Park Renovation completed 2008
- Restroom Facility

Gramling Street Park

- Add play equipment
- Walking trail and linkage
- Landscaping

Hickory Hills Park

- Two age- separated playgrounds
- Two grassed playfields
- One multi-purpose athletic field
- Two picnic shelters
- A .6 mile walking trail
- A restroom/storage building
- 110 parking spaces

Hill Park

- Install chess tables

Lake Park

- Install benches
- Landscaping
- Install play equipment if space allows

Laurel Park

- Replace fencing at tennis courts (completed 2008)
- Replace tennis court lighting
- Install viewing areas at tennis courts
- Pond and drainage improvements
- Install trail lighting

Lewis Park

- Replace play equipment utilizing matching funds provided by donor (completed 2009)
- Add dog park amenities to open leash area
- Restroom building
- Add drinking fountains
- Pave parking area adjacent to tennis courts (completed 2009)

Merritt Park

- Extend walking trail
- Entryway improvements
- Small restroom facility
- Paving of driveway and parking lot

Victory Park

- Remove tennis courts or rebuild if agreement cannot be reached at the 6th Grade Annex
- Extend walking trail
- Landscaping and conversation area
- Restroom Facility

West Dixie Park

- Add play equipment
- Walking trail
- Landscaping

Whitaker Park

- Shade structure over playground area
- Restroom building

Wildwood Park

- Dog park
- Large grassed playfield
- Two volleyball courts
- Two picnic shelters
- Two age-separated playgrounds
- Horseshoe pits
- Refurbish existing walking trails
- Repair foot bridges as necessary
- Restroom building
- A maintenance facility
- 100 parking spaces

Woods Park

- Landscaping

4.2.5 NEW PARKLAND AND FACILITIES

New parkland acquisition and facilities will be considered with a primary focus on providing land equally distributed throughout the city where possible. Some of the elements to be considered at the new parks are:

- Large multi-purpose athletic fields conducive to soccer and football play
- Grassed playfield
- Dog park
- Multi-purpose courts
- Horseshoe pits
- A pavilion with picnic facilities
- Walking trails
- Restroom buildings
- Parking spaces
- Playgrounds
- Volleyball courts

Franklin Road Redevelopment Area

The Franklin Road LCI plan identifies four potential parks: a one-half acre town green, two neighborhood parks (5.3 acres and 1.15 acres) and a 17.6 acre floodplain park. Development of the neighborhood parks could include playground equipment, picnic areas, small pavilions and support facilities. The floodplain park would include a multi-purpose trail and would connect to the Rottenwood Creek greenway. Once acquired, these sites would be dedicated to the city and operated and maintained by the PRFD.

4.2.6 INDOOR FACILITIES

Based upon the foregoing analyses, there will be a need for two community centers by the year 2019. No new recreation centers will be necessary, provided the existing centers remain viable. The following recommendations are made for indoor facilities.

Community Centers

A community center typically consists of meeting areas, classroom/exhibit space and kitchen facilities, and could be used to conduct citywide or neighborhood meetings, group events, for classroom programs, or for exercise/fitness programming. A typical community center would range in size from 3,500 square feet to 6,000 square feet.

Recreation Centers

The Lawrence Street Recreation Center is limited in its use, and its proximity to the Elizabeth Porter center allows for unnecessary duplication of some indoor facilities. In addition, the swimming pool infrastructure will require a large capital outlay to remain operational. It is

suggested that the Lawrence Street Recreation Center site be cleared and replaced with a 3,500 square foot community center, a sprayground, and playground equipment.

As the existing building will incur excessive costs for repairs and upgrading, it is proposed that the Elizabeth Porter Center site could be expanded and that the building be renovated and expanded into a large recreation center. The adjacent site containing approximately four acres should be acquired which will expand the site area to approximately six acres.

Possible building renovation and expansion could be accomplished that will result in an approximate 25,000 square foot recreation center. This center, when completed, should contain two gymnasiums, a game room, meeting room(s), kitchen, restrooms, lockers, and storage space.

The tennis courts would remain and additional playground equipment would be added to the site.

4.2.7 LINEAR PARKS, TRAILS AND LINKAGES

The City of Marietta has in place a trail system that will afford connectivity between neighborhoods; activity centers; the downtown area; and, also external connections to the Cobb County trail system. Five segments of this system are either under development or in the planning stages. In addition, various studies (the Downtown Plan, LCI studies and the Powder Springs Road Corridor Study) advocate trail and greenway systems that will become an integral part of the city trail network.

The Plan recommendations build upon this system, proposing trails and linkages that will afford additional connectivity to, and between city parks and the recreational facilities of non-city providers. Portions of this system will result in a linear park network that will utilize existing parks as neighborhood-serving nodes. When completed, the citywide multi-purpose trail system will afford many city and county residents the opportunity to fulfill recreational needs without the need for extensive automobile travel.

The Marietta Trail System

The Marietta trail system is envisioned to consist of five segments: North; Intown; South: University; and Powder Springs. When completed, the trail system will radiate outward from the downtown, ultimately connecting to the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, the Chattahoochee River, the Silver Comet Trail, and to the Cobb County Trail System.

The highest priority segment is the portion of the Kennesaw Mountain to the Chattahoochee River Trail, which will traverse Kennesaw Road and Atlanta Street throughout the city. The northernmost and southernmost portions have been completed.

The University segment of the trail system will link the southern portion of the city to Southern Polytechnic State University, Life University and proceed east to the Rottenwood Creek Trail, and on to the CRNRA trail system.

The Powder Springs segment is an integral part of the Powder Springs Street corridor master plan. This trail segment will traverse the length of Powder Springs Street throughout the city and link to the University segment.

In order to facilitate completion of the citywide multi-purpose trail system, and to afford key linkages to other elements of the recreation system, these segments should be completed within the initial five years of the implementation program.

Linear Parks and Linkages

The linear park concept is a means to afford recreational opportunities using easements, rights-of-way, floodplain and other narrow strips of property to connect to existing city parks - and greenspace and to facilitate development of small neighborhood park nodes to be located within higher density residential portions of the city. This will enable the PRFD to provide a network of smaller parks in a more cost-effective manner, with improved accessibility for maintenance operations.

To accomplish this concept, three additional linear trails are proposed for implementation during the ten-year planning period. The first extends the University segment of the Marietta Trail System to Wildwood Park and then follows the floodplain of Rottenwood Creek east as proposed in the Delk Road LCI Plan.

A second linear segment is proposed in the western portion of the city within the floodplain of Ward Creek. This would include the southern portion of the Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park and extend northeast to Polk Street. This could connect to the Kennesaw Mountain to the Chattahoochee River Trail via a link along Whitlock Avenue.

The third linear park would follow the floodplain of Sope Creek from Custer Park east to Merritt Park. This system would link to the Kennesaw Mountain to the Chattahoochee River Trail via a link along Montgomery Street and Birney Street.

Together with the Marietta Trail System, these linear park or trail systems could easily link to several existing city parks; facilitate creation of new neighborhood parks as part of redevelopment projects while also allowing some of the city's greenspace parcels to be utilized. The following linkages could readily be accomplished:

- North Segment – Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park and Lewis Park
- Intown Segment – Glover Park and Brown Park
- South Segment – Silver Comet Trail and the Chattahoochee River
- University Segment – Civic Center, Perry Parham Park, Softball/Baseball Complex, Southern Polytechnic State University, Life University and Wildwood Park
- Powder Springs Segment – Hickory Hills Park, West Dixie Park and Gramling Park
- Ward Creek Linear Park – Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, the new west Marietta park, A. L. Burruss School, Laurel Park, West Side School, Marietta Middle School, Polk Street Greenspace and Walthal Greenspace
- Rottenwood Creek Linear Park – Burruss Nature Park, Franklin Road Greenspace and Rottenwood Trail

- Sope Creek Linear Park – Elizabeth Porter Center, Birney Street Park, Custer Park, Merritt Road Greenspace, Lockheed School and Merritt Park

4.2.8 PARTNERING

Although many opportunities for partnering are present, this Plan will emphasize those that have the greatest potential to create new parks and trails during the implementation period. The most productive partnering opportunities are those that would involve the development of neighborhood parks, the implementation of the Marietta Trail System, and the development of the linear park system. Partners that could have the greatest impact would be the development community, city schools, and area universities.

Developers

The city is presently involved in several projects, including Envision Marietta and the Delk Road TOD LCI plans, the Powder Springs Street Master Plan and the Cherokee-Church Street Historic District & Kennestone Area Study. Each of these studies advance recommendations for parks, open space and trails. It is anticipated that a significant amount of future growth could result from redevelopment projects..

Redevelopment projects could translate into new pocket and neighborhood parks provided there are mechanisms in place that would require developers to dedicate a percentage of project land areas to recreation. Many cities require by ordinance that developers set aside 20 to 25 percent of the usable site for recreational amenities. In return, they are normally allowed to develop at higher densities than normally permitted by zoning ordinances. The City of Marietta does not presently have such requirements in place, and it is recommended that the Planning Department amend development ordinances to require a minimum of a 20 percent set aside for recreation.

Once these regulatory measures are in place the parkland would be deeded to the city and the PRFD would be responsible for developing and maintaining recreational amenities within these project areas.

City Schools

The City of Marietta has its own school system, which should make building a partnering mechanism easier than if a county school system were present.

One way to establish a partnership is for the PRFD to enter into a formal joint-use agreement that would allow for use of elementary and middle school recreational facilities. This could supplement the city's supply of indoor facilities, and as needed could provide accessibility to athletic fields.

A formal lease or joint-use agreement for use of the track and tennis courts at the 6th Grade Academy would be in the best interests of both the PRFD and school system. The PRFD could upgrade the track and tennis courts, as both facilities would receive moderate utilization if conditions improved. Consideration could be given to leasing the gymnasium as well, effectively adding a recreation center to the city's inventory.

In addition, the "school-in-a-park" concept has met with great success in many Georgia cities and counties. This concept is generally most applicable to middle schools as an elementary school adjacent to a park could attract predators. If the school system deems it necessary to develop a new middle school they would acquire land in addition to what is needed for school construction. The land could then be developed and maintained by the PRFD for use as either a neighborhood or community park.

Area Universities

Both Life University and Southern Polytechnic State University have a wealth of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities; however, only Life University allows public use, and only at limited times.

Two approaches to partnering are presented. It is recommended that the PRFD enter into agreements with each institution that would result in a financial or in-kind partnership for developing portions of the linear park system. The universities could participate in the acquisition and development phases in return for being able to use the trails part time for cross country or other athletic and/or outdoor educational activities.

The second potential opportunity would involve limited, fee-based use of university facilities for PRFD system users.

Corporations and Nonprofits

Partnerships with corporations with or developing recreation facilities could lead to enhanced recreation opportunities for citizens. Also, shared facilities and programming with nonprofit groups could provide enhanced opportunities.

4.2.9 PROGRAMS

The PRFD presently out-sources several programs, including the majority of athletic programs. The programming functions retained by the PRFD focus on day camping, senior activities, limited indoor activities and festivals and events.

With many of the programs that typically are offered by a recreation department presently being offered by schools, universities, quasi-public organizations and by private recreation providers within the city, the PRFD and city officials must decide if expanding program offerings unnecessarily duplicate those already being offered to residents and non-residents by others.

Based upon input received in the telephone survey, which, indicated user satisfaction with the city's recreation system, it is questionable if the PRFD should expand program offerings significantly, or concentrate on improving present program levels, with only minimal expanded offerings.

The recommendation for PRFD programming is to continue to focus on camps, senior programs such as the Senior Games, and festivals and events. In the event that the Elizabeth Porter Center is expanded and the two community centers and cultural arts center are constructed, the PRFD should consider privatizing or out-sourcing the majority of programs at these facilities to organizations presently operating such programs, i.e. athletic associations, the YMCA, and private recreation providers.

4.2.10 PRFD STAFFING

At present the PRFD has as its primary function the development, maintenance and operations of city parks, buildings and grounds. The PRFD also offers a number of programs and is the lead city agency with respect to special events and festivals.

With many programs being offered through the schools, athletic associations and private recreation providers, the programming function of the PRFD could continue to be decentralized, allowing the PRFD to focus on parks development, maintenance, and special events.

The number of PRFD professional staff personnel should increase as the recreation system expands in order to respond to the increased administrative requirements associated with additional parks, facilities, and special event programming, and assistance and workload associated with Adopt-A-Park and Foundation development. The following examines present staffing levels, and advances recommendations for additional professional recreation personnel.

Existing Staff Personnel

At present the PRFD professional recreation staff complement includes 34 employees. These individuals are divided into two primary areas; administration and recreation programming, and facilities maintenance. It is recognized that additional personnel may be needed as facility inventories increase, but the present economic climate does not allow for any expansion in the foreseeable future.

Operations and Maintenance

Operations and maintenance are an integral function of a safe and useful park system. Functions and recommendations for the maintenance area are addressed in Appendix “A“.

4.2.11 SIGNAGE

Both directional and park entryway signage are necessary to facilitate park visibility. A lack of directional signage limits accessibility to park sites and park entryway signage affords a positive first impression. The following signage programs are recommended to correct this problem.

Directional signs are recommended at approaches to all Marietta parks. Such signs are normally installed along highway rights-of-way at a distance of one quarter to one half mile of park entryways and be clearly visible to on-coming traffic. These signs should be large enough to be readily visible and be uniquely designed; using a consistent theme, so that it is clear that a park entrance is being approached.

Park entryway signage is an integral element as to how users perceive the recreation system. Entryway signage comprises the initial view of a park, and therefore should convey a positive impression. Development of themed entryway signage that can be replicated at every park with the Marietta recreation system is recommended. Entryway signage should be large, tastefully designed, colorful and located within an attractively landscaped area at each park entry point.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION

The recommendations presented in this Plan translate the "Marietta – specific" standards for system-wide acreage and facilities into recommendations for land acquisition; improvements/retrofitting of existing parks; for the development of new parks; for linear parks, trails and linkages and for indoor facilities. These recommendations are proposed for implementation during the ten-year planning period.

The financial implementation program section of the Plan establishes project priorities, includes order-of-magnitude cost estimates for land acquisition and recreation site development, identifies realistic potential funding sources and formulates a short-term (five-year) program and a long-range (ten-year) implementation program. Detailed project budgets and a capital improvements program are included as part of the short-term program. All cost estimates included in the financing and implementation program are in 2008 dollars.

5.1 PROJECT PRIORITIES AND THE FUNDING PROCESS

To provide an adequate quantity of parkland, together with both active and passive recreation opportunities will require the city to identify and retain in place permanent funding sources capable of generating several millions of dollars for capital projects, operations and service delivery, and for the maintenance of the recreation system. Typically, 95 percent of the total cost of the implementation program is borne by local government, with the remaining five percent coming from grants, non-profit organizations, donations and partnerships.

Based upon the information received as part of the input process and from discussions with PRFD staff professionals, the following priorities have been established to guide the financial implementation process.

- Implementation of high visibility projects that will benefit the entire community and that are capable of gaining the support of city residents
- Acquisition of land for the development of new parks
- Making improvements to, and/or retrofitting existing parks to provide a wider range of facilities to meet demand of Marietta residents
- Development of a system of linear parks containing park nodes that will afford recreational opportunities to adjacent neighborhoods
- Identification and implementation of a minimum of permanent funding sources that will generate significant revenues for capital projects
- An assurance that ample funding will exist for system-wide operations and maintenance, and for the expansion of PRFD staffing to allow for improved levels of service delivery

A phased program for project implementation is proposed. The first phase includes projects having high visibility and meeting the needs of all sectors of the city. It is anticipated that these projects can be completed most quickly. High visibility projects can stimulate interest and build support for additional improvements to the recreation system. These projects are:

- Improvements to existing parks
- Land acquisition

Future phases include parks and facilities improvements that might not be feasible for funding during the initial five years of the implementation program, and therefore will have to be completed post 2014.

5.2 TEN - YEAR FINANCIAL IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM COSTS

The total cost for recommended system-wide improvements for the ten-year planning period is estimated to be $$54,630,000 $49,664,000 plus a contingency of $4,966,000). Table 13 presents unit cost estimates for land, recreational facilities and support facilities. Land acquisition costs reflect the average price per acre for land in the City of Marietta. Unless otherwise noted, all fields and courts are to be lighted.

Utilizing these order-of-magnitude cost estimates for land acquisition, recreational facilities development and support facilities contained in Table 5-1, cost estimates are then aggregated on a site-by-site basis. These costs are presented in Table 5-2.

Table 5-1 Unit Cost Estimates* Recreation System Improvements By Type

IMPROVEMENT	UNIT COST
Land Acquisition	$500,000/Acre
Land Acquisition (Infill Parcels)	$200,000/Acre
Land Acquisition (Floodplain)	$35,000/Acre
Site Preparation/Infrastructure	$20,000/Acre
Baseball/Softball Field	$250,000
Soccer Field	$200,000
Football Field	$200,000
Multi-Purpose Field	$160,000
Grassed Playfield	$200,000
Tennis Court	$75,000
Multi-Purpose Court (Basketball/Volleyball)	$65,000
Sand Volleyball Court	$15,000
Grass Volleyball Court	$10,000
Skate Park	$300,000
Dog Park	$150,000
Playground	$75,000
Picnic Pavilion	$45,000
Public Use Area	$400,000
Horseshoe Pit	$2,000
Botanical Garden	$300,000
Park Trail (10 Foot)	$30/l.f.
Multi-Purpose Community Trail (12 Foot)	$40/l.f.
Nature Trail	$40/l.f.
Sprayground	$600,000
Recreation Center	$150/s.f.
Cultural Arts Center	$165/s.f.
Community Center	$150/s.f.
Restroom Building	$500,000
Maintenance Facility	$175,000
Directional/Entryway Signage	$50,000
Parking	$1,600/space

***** Unit prices as of 2007.

Table 5-2 Projected Capital Projects Costs By Type And Site

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT	PROJECTED COST
LAND ACQUISITION	
New Parkland (42+/- Acres)	**$21,000,000**
Franklin Road	$4,100,000
6th Grade Academy	Lease
Elizabeth Porter Site Expansion	$800,000
Sub-Total	**$25,900,000**
IMPROVEMENTS/RETROFITTING OF EXISTING PARKS	
Birney Street Park	$100,000
Brown Park	$750,000
Burruss Nature Park	$1,197,000
Custer Park	$1,840,000
Flournoy Park	$28,000
Glover Park	$180,000
Gramling Street Park	$41,000
Hickory Hills Park	$1,856,000
Hill Park	$4,000
Lake Park	$40,000
Laurel Park	$1,219,000
Lewis Park	$272,000
Merritt Park	$367,000
Softball/Baseball Complex	$100,000
Victory Park	$177,000
West Dixie Park	$59,000
Whitaker Park	$115,000
Wildwood Park	$1,800,000
Woods Park	$5,000
Sub-Total	**$10,150,000**
DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PARKS	
New Parks	$3,512,000
Franklin Road Parks	$800,000
Sub-Total	**$4,312,000**
INDOOR FACILITIES	
Lawrence Street Community Center	$525,000
Elizabeth Porter Recreation Center	$3,750,000
Sub-Total	**$4,275,000**
TRAILS AND LINKAGES	
Marietta Trail System (40,000 l.f.)	$1,600,000
Ward Creek Greenway (17,000 l.f.)	$680,000
Rottenwood Creek Greenway (20,000 l.f.)	$800,000
Sope Creek Greenway (10,000 l.f.)	$400,000
Sub-Total	**$3,480,000**
OTHER ITEMS	
Directional And Entryway Signage	$50,000
Planning/Design Fees	$1,497,000
Sub-Total	**$1,547,000**

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Table 5-2 Projected Capital Projects Costs By Type And Site

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT	PROJECTED COST
Total	$49,664,000
Contingency (10%)	$4,966,000
TOTAL SYSTEM-WIDE COSTS	$54,630,000

5.3 POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

There are a wide range of funding sources that have potential applicability to the Marietta recreation system, including land acquisition, for making improvements and or retrofitting existing parks and for the development of new parks, facilities, trails and linkages. At both the Federal and State level, these funding sources typically take the form of grants, matching grant programs or loan programs. Locally, funding sources can include the capital projects portion of general fund allocations, impact fees, special purpose local option sales taxes (SPLOST), a dedicated millage, tax allocation district, user fees, donations, bond referendums, and contributions from non-profit organizations, foundation grants, public/private partnerships, individuals, and corporations.

For the purposes of implementing Plan recommendations, permanent funding sources at the local level must be identified, put into place, and maintained throughout the planning period. As previously mentioned, approximately 95 percent of recommendations will be funded at the local level due to the fluctuating nature of Federal and state grant programs.

The following presents a summary of those potential sources that can realistically be utilized by the PRFD for funding of capital projects.

5.3.1 FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES

Four programs presently afford realistic funding potentials for recreation projects in the City of Marietta. These include the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG); the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF); the Transportation Efficiency Act (TEA); and the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). Each of these programs has qualifications that must be met in order to become eligible to receive funding.

Other smaller programs exist that might be drawn upon during the planning period, but the likelihood of success, coupled with relatively low dollar grants relegate these programs to the background. The publication “Guide to Federal Funding and Assistance for Rivers, Trails and Open Space Conservation” published by the National Park Service is a good source for these other programs.

5.3.2 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS

The Department of Housing & Urban Development sponsors the Community Development Block Grant program. CDBG provides 100% grants for the acquisition, rehabilitation or construction of certain public facilities. Grants are highly competitive, and use of these funds is generally restricted to projects that benefit lower and moderate-income persons.

The city has recently used CDBG funds for improvements to the recreation center ($100,000) and for the purchase of the Hickory Hills Park property ($450,000). Going forward, the CDBG program could be a potential funding source for community centers, recreation centers and pedestrian facilities.

5.3.3 LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND

The Land & Water Conservation Fund, administered by the Department of the Interior has been an unstable source of funding for recreation system improvements over the past decade. LWCF provides 50% matching grants, which can be used for land acquisition and for park development. In Georgia, the LWCF program is administered by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and is highly competitive. In recent years the LWCF grant ceiling has been $75,000 and higher levels of funding have been made available.

During the past five years, the PRFD has not received a LWCF grant. It is feasible that Marietta could secure three to four LWCF grants during the ten-year planning period.

5.3.4 TRANSPORTATION EFFICIENCY ACT

The United States Congress enacted TEA in 1991 to facilitate creation of transportation enhancement activities and alternative methods for pedestrian movement, including trails and bikeways. TEA has been re-authorized a number of times since 1991 for additional five-year periods. Funding is normally available for the acquisition and development of greenways, bikeways and pedestrian trails, provided that proposed projects emphasize the alternative transportation potential of these types of improvements, and not solely their recreational value.

The TEA program provides approximately 80 percent of project planning, design and development funding, with the remaining 20 percent being contributed by the city. Administered by the Georgia Department of Transportation, grant applications can take up to two years for approval and funding. With pedestrian circulation being an emphasis of the city's planning and redevelopment process, TEA grants are a distinct possibility for the future funding of greenways, bikeways and sidewalk networks in the future.

5.3.5 RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM

The RTP is a federal program that is funded through the Transportation Enhancement Assistance program. Since its inception, over 150 projects have been funded throughout Georgia. State funding levels have fluctuated over the past several years, ranging from a low of $401,000 in 1996 and 1997 to over $2.5 million in recent years. The RTP program is particularly applicable for the construction of community-wide and park trail systems.

Grant applications can be submitted once each year, with the maximum award fixed at $100,000. A local government match is required. The PRFD has never received funding from the RTP.

5.3.6 STATE FUNDING SOURCES

There are four current programs and one potential program that could have applicability for funding Plan improvements. These are: the Georgia Land Conservation Partnership (GLCP); the Local Development Fund (LDF); the Recreation Assistance Fund (RAF); the Governor's Discretionary Fund (GDF); and the Line Item Appropriation (LIA).

5.3.7 GEORGIA LAND CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP

The Georgia Land Conservation Partnership Advisory Council was created by Executive Order on December 30, 2003. The Advisory Council is charged with responsibility of overseeing preparation of the state's land conservation plan. The purpose of the plan is threefold: to guide state acquisition of large, strategic parcels of land; to provide loans and grants to cities and counties for greenspace acquisition and protection; and to support incentives to increase land conservation efforts by private landowners, land trusts and philanthropic organizations. The Advisory Council reported its findings on August 31, 2004, and project funding is now underway.

The GLCP predicates that funding for recreation projects is based upon a competitive process, with all Georgia cities and counties eligible for grants. Under this program, the greenspace program will be expanded to include some active recreation projects. Public/private land conservation partnerships will be encouraged, and the former Georgia Greenspace Commission has been merged into the Georgia Land Conservation Authority. The city received $330,047 in 2001 and $336,788 in 2002 from the Georgia Greenspace Program.

The GLCP has established a trust fund and revolving loan fund to pay for open space preservation and recreation projects. Initial annual funding levels have been set at $100 million. The prior requirement that 20 percent of land be permanently protected has been waived. The first GLCP projects were funded in 2007. The Department of Natural Resources has established a website to address, and facilitate the GLCP application process. Grant applications can be submitted at any time during the year.

5.3.8 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

The Local Development Fund, administered by the Department of Community Affairs provides 50% matching grants that can be used for enhancement activities, including development of park sites. The maximum grant award is $10,000, and funding cycles occur approximately every six months. Approximately 35 percent of grant applications are successful. These funds would have applicability for additional development at recreation sites, or for the planning or development of new recreation sites within Marietta. LDF funding is not available every year, and with the exception of a grant to renovate the Welcome Center restrooms, the city has not been a prior recipient of these funds.

5.3.9 RECREATION ASSISTANCE FUND

The Recreation Assistance Fund is administered by the Department of Natural Resources and when funding is available, provides matching grants in the range of $8,000 to $10,000. Future Recreation Assistance Fund grants could be used for land acquisition or facilities development. RAF funds have not been available in recent years, and Marietta has never received funding from this source.

5.3.10 GOVERNOR'S DISCRETIONARY FUND

The Governor's Discretionary Fund is a grant program for the funding of small improvements to park facilities such as ball field lighting, playgrounds and projects of a similar nature. It is administered by the Department of Natural Resources and when funding is available provides 100 percent financing up to a project limit of $25,000.

5.3.11 LINE ITEM APPROPRIATIONS

This program has been funded through the Department of Community Affairs and is applicable to improvements to existing parks and the development of new parks. Projects must first be identified by the local legislative delegation, and approved by leadership of the State House and Senate before being submitted to the Governor's staff for approval.

5.3.12 LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES

Recreation capital projects in cities such as Marietta can be funded utilizing one or more local sources including: the general fund, the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), bond referendums, impact fees, user fees, a hotel/motel taxes, a real estate transfer tax, dedicated millage, tax allocation districts, donations, grants from charitable trusts and foundations, funds raised by non-profit organizations or from public/private partnerships. These potential funding sources and others are summarized below.

5.3.13 GENERAL FUND

The general fund is typically a source for the funding of recreation projects. As such, it should be utilized by the PRFD as a source of funding for capital project funds. The PRFD will only receive $166,129 for capital projects from the general fund in 2008. This represents a small increase above 2007 funding levels. The majority of the funds were for building improvements and were not parks and recreation related.

Over the past five years, capital project funding from the general fund has been inconsistent, with 2008 funds being the largest amount to date. It is recommended that capital projects funds from this source increase significantly for the duration of the planning period.

5.3.14 SPECIAL PURPOSE LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX

Cobb County has not passed a new SPLOST program for the past few years. SPLOST programs can provide funds to county municipalities, and are apportioned based upon population. The next successful Cobb County SPLOST is anticipated to generate significant revenues for recreation projects throughout the county.

5.3.15 BOND REFERENDUMS

Bonds have long been a successful means of financing land acquisition and recreation capital projects in cities and counties throughout north Georgia. Marietta has never passed a bond referendum for recreation purposes. A bond was issued through the DMDA to buy and renovate the Marietta Country Club into the public facility known as the City Club, Marietta. In 1996, the city received $2.3 million from the Cobb County Parks Bond program.. A recent parks bond referendum was passed in the County but to date no land has been purchased in Marietta and there is no indication any will be acquired with those funds. Many cities and counties in Georgia successfully use bonds in combination with other funding alternatives as a means to establish and maintain permanent funding mechanisms.

5.3.16 IMPACT FEES

The City of Marietta does not presently have an impact fee program. If an impact fee program is enacted, new residential dwelling units constructed would then be subject to impact fees. While the amount of the potential revenues that can be derived from impact fees cannot be determined at this time, because the city is approaching build-out status, impact fees as a revenue source for recreation capital projects might not be substantial.

5.3.17 USER FEES

The PRFD charges both resident and non-resident user fees to recreation program participants. Non-resident user fees are somewhat higher than resident fees. The PRFD received $142,211 in user fees in 2007, all of which go directly into the city's general fund. Over the past five years, user fees have remained relatively constant, averaging approximately $153,000 annually.

As new parks and facilities are constructed, additional programs will be offered, and revenues derived from user fees will increase. It is recommended that the PRFD increase non-resident users fees to a rate equivalent to 150 percent of resident user fees. This is a practice presently followed by many city recreation departments throughout Georgia.

5.3.18 DEDICATED MILLAGE

Dedicating a portion of the millage rate for recreation capital projects and departmental operations is becoming a more popular method of funding system-wide improvements in Georgia cities. The present Marietta millage rate is 2.788 mils, which generates $7,200,000 annually. At this rate, one mil yields $2,553,802. From the results of the input process, recreation system improvements will in all probability receive the support of residents of the Marietta community. Therefore, a dedicated millage of 0.5 mils as a funding source for capital projects is recommended for consideration by city officials.

5.3.19 TAX ALLOCATION DISTRICTS

A tax allocation district (TAD) is a means of funding infrastructure and other capital projects in underdeveloped areas, or in areas being redeveloped. The city would receive new property tax revenues as a result of increasing property values that result from the redevelopment process.

Revenues received from a TAD result in improvements that do not raise taxes, or affect a city's present tax revenue stream.

Marietta presently utilizes three TADs for redevelopment projects; however, new TADs cannot be created once the total value of existing TADs plus proposed TADs exceeds ten percent of the total tax digest.

Over $800,000 of TAD funds was dedicated to the renovation of Henry Park, completed in FY2009.

5.3.20 DONATIONS

The PRFD receives donations from the DMDA and are designated for the concert series and Fourth of July fireworks. The City has received some substantial donations from private citizens, too.

There are several large corporate enterprises within the City of Marietta. With the trend towards "greening", several of these business entities might have an interest in being a PRFD partner. Corporate partners are potential sources of annual donations for land and facilities. It is recommended that the PRFD initiate a program seeking donations and in-kind contributions from corporate partners as a potential source for improvements to parks and facilities and to develop citywide trail systems and linkages.

5.3.21 FOUNDATION GRANTS

Local governments throughout the country have increasingly been drawing upon philanthropic organizations and foundations as funding sources for outdoor recreation and conservation projects. Recreation-related grants are offered through the Gund Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, the Mott Foundation, Eastman Kodak, and Dupont among others. These grants can be normally be utilized for planning, acquisition, capital improvements, trails and educational facilities. The Georgia Municipal Association maintains information pertaining to foundation grants. The PRFD has not previously applied for a foundation grant.

5.3.22 NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Non-profit organizations such as conservancies and land trusts can be viable sources for recreation projects. As an example, the Sandy Springs Conservancy has been an active participant and a financial supporter of recreation projects in one of Georgia's newest cities.

Typically such organizations are willing participants in developing linear parks, greenways and passive-use facilities.

While such organizations can be established or utilized in Marietta to support the city's recreation system, their financial role in the implementation of the Plan recommendations cannot be determined at this time until formal partnerships are established.

As partners, non-profit organizations could have an expanded role in specific projects utilizing a formal agreement with the PRFD as a means of defining both the financial and in-kind participation roles. With the exception of the Marietta Tree Keepers and Keep Marietta Beautiful, the PRFD does not presently partner with any non-profit organizations.

5.3.23 PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Public/private partnerships have also been a growing source of funding recreation system improvements throughout the State of Georgia. Joint-use agreements for the use of school facilities are but one method to expand recreation sites (particularly use of indoor facilities). The potential exists for developing additional partnerships with private schools, local colleges and universities, larger churches and private recreational facilities that could be of benefit to both the city and to private facilities.

The PRFD presently partners with the Marietta Downtown Development Authority. The Authority provides funding for the Fourth of July fireworks display, the Concert Series and for seasonal plantings throughout the downtown area.

In addition, the PRFD also partners with the Downtown Business Association (Santa on the Square program) and with Cobb County Senior Services (Cobb County Senior Games).

As citywide redevelopment efforts continue, there will also be increasing opportunities to partner with private sector developers. One means by which increasing the city's recreational acreage can be accomplished is by granting developers density bonuses in return for recreational set-asides. Typically, 20 to 25 percent of a site would be dedicated for recreation in return for permission to increase density and floor area ratios for redevelopment projects. These lands could be made available to the public and dedicated to the PRFD for development as small neighborhood parks. Maintenance would then become the responsibility of the PRFD.

5.4 FUNDING SOURCE APPLICABILITY

Not all of the aforementioned funding sources are applicable for Marietta recreation system improvements. Some Federal and State programs are targeted to specific types of projects while others are appropriate for land acquisition and for the development of both active and passive recreation facilities. Some of these programs are not always funded on an annual basis. Table 5-3 contains a listing of each type of proposed improvement that is addressed by Plan recommendations. For each type of improvement those funding mechanisms with the highest probability of realization are depicted.

Table 5-3 Funding Source Applicability

IMPROVEMENT	ACTION	FUNDING SOURCE(S)*
New Park Land	Land Acquisition	LWCF, GLCP, GF, IF, B, DM, TAD, D
Conversion/Retrofit Projects	Site And Facilities Improvements	CDBG, LWCF, LDF, RAF, GF, B, UF, DM, P/P, F
Improvements To Existing Parks	Renovation/New Facilities	LWCF, LDF, RAF, GDF, GF, B, UF, DM, F
Development Of New Parks/Facilities	Park Development	LWCF, GLCP, GF, IF, B, DM, NPO, TAD
Greenways, Trails And Linkages	ROW Acquisition/Development	TEA, RTP, GLCP, GF, B, DM, D, F, NPO, P/P
Indoor Facilities	Site And Facilities Development	GF, IF, B, DM, P/P
Planning And Design	Consultant Fees	LWCF, RTP, GLCP, LDF, GF, IF, B, DM
Directional/Entryway Signage	Signage Installation And Landscaping	GF

* CDBG - Community Development Block Grant, LWCF - Land and Water Conservation Fund, TEA - Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act Funds, RTP - Recreational Trails Program, GLCP - Georgia Land Conservation Partnership, LDF - Local Development Fund, RAF - Recreation Assistance Fund, GDF - Governor's Discretionary Fund, LIA - Line Item Appropriation, GF - General Fund, IF - Impact Fees, B - Bonds, UF – User Fees, DM - Dedicated Millage, H/MT – Hotel/Motel Tax, TAD – Tax Allocation District, D - Donations, F - Foundation Grants, NPO – Non-Profit Organizations, P/P - Public/Private Partnerships.

5.5 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

The capital improvements program is predicated on balancing of planned expenditures with anticipated revenues over a defined period of time, in this case a five-year and ten-year period. One goal of programming recreation capital improvements is to facilitate incorporation of the initial five-year portion of the program as part of the Short-Term Work Program contained in the city's comprehensive plan.

The initial step in developing the recreation capital improvements program is the determination of the approximate amount of revenues that can potentially be derived from each of the previously identified Federal, State and local sources. Once this has been determined, the recommended Plan improvements are then prioritized and scheduled for implementation by fiscal year. Table 5-4 summarizes the approximate allocation of revenues from each potential revenue source for the ten-year Plan implementation period. Sources from which no funding is anticipated are omitted from this table. The dollar values assigned to each funding source are approximations, and are based upon typical averages for grants and expected levels of local funding over the ten-year implementation period. In the event that Federal or State funding sources become unavailable, the amounts allocated to local sources will have to be increased accordingly.

Table 5-4 Potential Revenues By Source FY 20010 – FY 2019

SOURCE	AMOUNT	
FEDERAL		
CDBG	$400,000	
LWCF	$225,000	
TEA	$2,500,000	
RTP	$400,000	
	Sub-Total	**$3,525,000**
STATE		
Georgia Land Conservation Partnership	$500,000	
Local Development Fund	$60,000	
Governor's Discretionary Fund	$50,000	
	Sub-Total	**$610,000**
LOCAL		
General Fund	$3,000,000	
Impact Fees	Indeterminate	
Bonds	$31,595,000	
User Fees	$1,600,000	
Tax Allocation Districts	$500,000	
Dedicated Millage	$12,750,000	
Donations	$300,000	
Foundation Grants	$250,000	
Non-Profit Organizations	$500,000	
Public/Private Partnerships	Indeterminate	
	Sub-Total	**$50,495,000**
	Total	**$54,630,000**

It would appear that the most logical sources of permanent funding at the local level could include a combination of the general fund, bonds, and a dedicated millage. In the event that a dedicated millage does not become a reality, the amount of the bond referendum would increase. The foregoing analysis would also suggest the retention of a portion of user fees for PRFD capital projects.

Grant opportunities having a reasonable likelihood of success include: LWCF, RTP, TEA, and GLCP.

Table 17 presents the capital improvements program for the implementation of the initial five-year Plan recommendations. Table 5-5 identifies the remaining recreation system capital projects that should be accomplished during the second half of the planning period. These projects are not prioritized by year as it is anticipated that this Plan will be reviewed and updated at the end of the initial five-year implementation program.

Table 5-5 Initial Improvement Program

IMPROVEMENT	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	TOTAL
LAND ACQUISITION						
New Parkland			$11,000,000			**$11,000,000**
E. Porter Expansion			$800,000			**$800,000**
IMPROVEMENTS/RETROFIT						
All Existing Parks*	$5,316,000	$4,834,000				**$10,150,000**
NEW PARKS						
New Parkland				$1,327,000	$915,000	**$2,242,000**
TRAILS/LINKAGES						
Marietta Trail System				$800,000	$800,000	**$1,600,000**
INDOOR FACILITIES						
Lawrence St. Comm. Center				$525,000		**$525,000**
E. Porter Recreation Center				$1,000,000	$2,750,000	**$3,750,000**
OTHER IMPROVEMENTS						
Directional/Entryway Signage		$50,000				**$50,000**
Planning/Design Fees	$373,000	$405,000	$239,000			**$1,017,000**
Sub-Total	$5,689,000	$5,289,000	$12,039,000	$3,652,000	$4,465,000	**0**
Contingencies	$569,000	$528,800	$11,204,000	$365,000	$447,000	**$3,313,000**
TOTAL	**$6,258,000**	**$5,817,000**	**$13,243,000**	**$4,017,000**	**$4,912,000**	**$34,247,000**

* Phase I Projects

When funds become available and the projects included in the above program are completed, new projects from the listing of long-range projects in Table 5-6 should be added to the subsequent capital improvements program.

Table 5-6: Long-Range Projects FY 2014 – FY 2018

PROJECT	APPROXIMATE YEAR	COST
LAND ACQUISITION		
New Parkland	FY 2014	$10,000,000
Franklin Road Sites	FY 2014	$4,100,000
NEW PARK DEVELOPMENT		
New Parks	FY 2015 – FY 2016	$1,270,000
Franklin Road Parks	FY 2015 – FY 2016	$800,000
TRAILS/LINKAGES		
Ward Creek Greenway	FY 2015 – FY 2016	$680,000
Rottenwood Creek Greenway	FY 2014 – FY 2015	$800,000
Sope Creek Greenway	FY 2016 – FY 2017	$400,000
OTHER IMPROVEMENTS		
Planning/Design Fees	FY 2014 – FY 2016	$480,000
Sub-Total		**$18,530,000**
Contingencies		**$1,853,000**
Total		**$20,383,000**

APPENDIX " A "

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

A quality recreation system is represented by sound, attentive maintenance practices. Placing routine and special maintenance tasks as high priorities will ensure that parks and facilities appear attractive and inviting, encourage user participation and satisfaction, discourage vandalism and increase the longevity of the site, equipment and buildings, while decreasing long-term maintenance costs.

In this portion of the Plan, present maintenance practices are summarized and recommendations are made for improving maintenance practices and programs at existing and future park sites.

EXISTING MAINTENANCE PRACTICES

During the ten-year planning period, Marietta will need to expand operations and maintenance activities to meet increased recreational demand.

The facilities inventory and the input process identified specific maintenance issues within the city's recreation system and the need for maintenance operations to expand with growth of the recreation system. During the coming ten years, the following operations and maintenance practices should occur:

- Efforts should be made to improve system-wide maintenance at all park facilities
- It will be imperative that elected officials increase the operations and maintenance portion of the PRFD budget to include funds for additional maintenance personnel and equipment
- Maintenance practices should insure that adequate trash receptacles are located at all city parks and facilities

Maintenance operations are presently undertaken from a centrally located facility adjacent to Lewis Park, and a smaller maintenance facility at Laurel Park. The facility adjacent to Lewis Park is relatively new and includes administrative office space, a shop and equipment storage. The majority of park and facilities maintenance is undertaken from this location.

Some routine maintenance functions are presently privatized. These include: application of fertilizers and herbicides, landscaping, seasonal planting and the application of pesticides. The PRFD also uses contract services for buildings. These services include: elevator operation and maintenance, HVAC maintenance, water treatment services, generator maintenance, security systems and fire sprinkler systems and alarms.

There is no formally adopted Maintenance Plan in place. However, a maintenance plan is being prepared. The plan identifies Mode I – IV level parks in accordance with NRPA guidelines and some of these services are presently being delivered.

An Adopt-A-Park program is not presently in use. The PRFD utilizes an “Adopt-A-Mile” program for roadways and “Adopt-A-Stream” program through the Keep Marietta Beautiful program.

PERSONNEL

The maintenance staff compliment presently consists of 22 fulltime and no part time individuals. These persons assume responsibility for city buildings and grounds maintenance, in addition to maintaining municipal parks and some rights-of-way locations.

Maintenance personnel are supplemented by community service workers and by temporary personnel secured from Labor Ready. Labor Ready provides between two and six persons daily depending upon the season.

PRFD maintenance personnel can also be supplemented by borrowing personnel from the Marietta Public Works Department personnel as needed. These individuals are normally used to assist with paving and construction clean up, depending upon the type of equipment and the number of operators needed.

In addition, probationers are used to accomplish some maintenance tasks and the PRFD is certified for the use of inmates if necessary.

Two to twelve probationers are typically used, mostly on weekends. Their duties primarily consist of grass mowing at the city cemetery and trash collection. Two PRFD supervisory personnel are needed when probationers are employed.

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for developing a sound parks maintenance program begin with an overview of general principles governing maintenance and management of the recreation system for the ten-year planning period. These are followed by recommendations for maintenance personnel staffing to meet present and future needs. Recommendations for other aspects of the maintenance program including privatization, personnel training and cost tracking are also included.

MAINTENANCE PRINCIPLES

The future maintenance program for the Marietta recreation system will be predicated upon adherence to generally accepted maintenance management principles. These principles form the basis from which maintenance activities are carried out, and, when followed usually result in a cost-effective expenditure of funds. The following are basic principles of a maintenance management program:

- Basic objectives and standards for system-wide operations and maintenance should be established and prioritized
- City of Marietta elected officials should provide adequate maintenance personnel, equipment and dedicated sources of funding to accomplish maintenance operations
- System-wide maintenance operations should have as a basis an organized, written and adopted Maintenance Plan.

- Maintenance operations should be programmed for performance in order to optimize economy of time, use of personnel, equipment and materials
- Grounds and facilities maintenance programs and practices should be a principal consideration during the planning and design phases of recreation site development
- An effective maintenance program places a high emphasis on preventive maintenance
- The PRFD maintenance program should be designed to protect and preserve significant natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas when present
- A sound maintenance program should include measures that enhance the safety of both users and employees

FORMAL MAINTENANCE PLAN

During the initial year of the implementation program, the PRFD should complete and adopt a formal Maintenance Plan. This plan establishes maintenance standards and addresses maintenance tasks, procedures and task frequencies. Maintenance standards should be developed on a park-by-park basis. The development of these standards should take into consideration site topography, types of facilities, activities and programs at each site, seasonal weather conditions, supervisory needs and protection from vandalism. Routine and non-routine maintenance tasks should be identified and instructions provided for accomplishing tasks in the most efficient manner. The plan should indicate whether a task is to be accomplished on a daily, weekly, monthly or annual basis. The optimum number of personnel needed to accomplish maintenance tasks will be determined and materials, supplies, tools and equipment necessary for each task will be indicated. The final element of the Maintenance Plan should be an estimate of the man-hours necessary to complete each task.

PERSONNEL NEEDS

Nationwide, there exist several maintenance manpower standards in use to determine optimum maintenance personnel needs for both cities and counties. Any standards used to determine future personnel requirements should be refined as a function of preparing the Maintenance Plan, and updated annually. Personnel needs should also be contingent upon the type and amount of maintenance operations to be privatized. In the event that some privatization occurs, existing personnel duties can be re-designated.

An example of generally acceptable maintenance manpower standards are as follows:

- Athletic Fields/Play Fields - 300 hours per field per year
- Courts - 35 hours per court per year
- Playgrounds - 150 hours per playground per year
- Picnic Areas - 30 hours per acre per year
- Landscaped Areas - 0.5 hours per 1,000 square feet per year
- Turf Areas - 15 hours per acre per year

- Buildings - 1500 hours per year per building
- Walks/Trails - 15 hours per 1,000 linear feet per year
- Parking Areas - 30 hours per 50 spaces per year

In addition to these facilities standards, it is generally recommended that one man-year per ten maintenance persons be allocated for administration.

For example, applying these hourly standards to the new facilities proposed in this Plan equates to a need for a minimum of 35,980 additional man-hours of maintenance annually, or 17 additional fulltime maintenance personnel by the year 2018. During the planning period it might become possible to meet some of the system-wide maintenance needs with part-time staff, prison labor, or by the use of volunteers including athletic association members to accomplish field maintenance functions. Upon completion of the construction of new full service maintenance facilities it is recommended that two fulltime maintenance personnel be assigned to each facility.

PRIVATIZATION

It is recommended that the PRFD investigate expanding the present program of contract maintenance to include additional areas where routine and repetitive regular maintenance is necessary. One effective way to accomplish these maintenance functions is to utilize minimum security, inmate labor from a nearby prison facility. In particular, the privatization of all grass cutting services would provide a cost-effective solution to routine tasks, and could reduce the number of fulltime personnel required, making maintenance personnel available for non-repetitive tasks. This recommendation should not apply to those maintenance tasks where accomplishment of maintenance is directly related to departmental liability.

TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

The training and certification of at minimum supervisory maintenance personnel will facilitate more efficient operations and ultimately result in cost savings to the City of Marietta. The National Recreation and Parks Association recommends training standards and a certification program for maintenance personnel. It is recommended that at minimum, all supervisory maintenance personnel receive certification in their area of specialization.

Of particular importance are programs whereby maintenance personnel are more thoroughly trained or cross-trained in specialized areas such as chemical application, facilities inspection, OSHA requirements and provision for facilities for the disabled.

ADOPT-A-PARK

The PRFD is encouraged to consider establishing an Adopt-A-Park program to assist in the maintenance and management of municipal park sites. This program could be particularly effective if focused on smaller parks, leaving the maintenance of larger parks and indoor facilities to professionally trained maintenance staff. The Adopt-A-Park program could encourage community residents, businesses, area schools, colleges and civic groups to participate in maintenance of facilities that they themselves use, thus reducing system-wide

maintenance costs. Adopt-A-Park programs are extremely popular throughout the nation and are an excellent way to encourage community residents to take a vested interest in their parks.

The program could be administered by the PRFD staff, coordinating the scheduling and activities of local volunteers, and provide equipment and materials to support maintenance operations. The Adopt-A-Park program could create positive public relations for the city's recreation system, and could also stimulate involvement of city residents in other local projects.

WORKLOAD/COST TRACKING SYSTEM

A workload/cost tracking system is recommended for inclusion in the operations and maintenance program as a procedure for tracking maintenance workloads and costs. This type of program can improve the efficiency of operations and result in cost savings. The initial step in program development is to inventory and categorize all of the required maintenance functions and the facilities that are to be maintained. Information needs are then generated as the next step, and a data collection system and reporting mechanism would be developed. Tasks and costs are determined and a system for recording man-hours and material costs is built into the database. Supervisory staff would receive training first, and they in turn would provide training for other staff personnel. The workload/cost tracking system is generally pilot-tested for a six-month or one-year period, and then adjusted as necessary for final implementation. All reported data are evaluated on a monthly basis and unusual variations are noted and corrected.

Software programs for workload/cost tracking systems are presently available for purchase through NRPA and other recreation organizations.

APPENDIX " B "

Aerials of Parks and Greenspace