

5.0 MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

5.1 MAINTAINING THE PARKS SYSTEM

The Parks Maintenance staff takes pride in the ability to provide a well maintained park system that increases the quality of life for those who live, work, play, and visit the City of Longview. The community values the importance of natural open space in addition to well-maintained parks. From the community survey and other public input, feedback has indicated that 60% of the public would support both upgrading existing parks and support new installation/construction followed by 31% willing to support only upgrading current facilities. Only 7% would support focusing only on new installations or construction. There was an underlying perception that was brought to the surface at the Community Open Houses, that older parks receive less attention than the Lake and newer parks. The thought behind this perception is as the city continues to grow and annex to the west and the hills the City is focusing on those areas for development and maintenance. This perception can cause a disparity between neighborhoods within the city limits.

The Parks Services Division maintains parks; sports facilities; boulevards; grounds of City Hall and the library; trails; undeveloped park lands; and beautification sites throughout the city. Responsibilities include care of turf; shrubs and flowerbeds; irrigation and water systems; trail maintenance; installation and maintenance of playground equipment; cleaning and maintenance of restroom facilities; and oversight of park amenities such as tennis courts, fountains, athletic fields, skate park, and boat launch. The Urban Forestry Division is responsible for the care and maintenance of 14,000+ street, park, and city owned property trees located throughout the city. Maintenance includes pruning, removal, stump grinding, insect and disease control, planting of replacement trees, hand watering, staking, hazard evaluations, and sonic tomography. The City will continue to focus efforts on existing parks and facilities to ensure that the community assets are maintained and preserved for the future while looking at ways to enhance the park system in a fiscally responsible way.

5.2 MANAGEMENT OF PARKS SERVICE

Starting in 2007 and ending in 2010, the parks division was directed to reduce the work force to maintain operation at minimum staffing levels through the recession. The division lost 6 employees throughout that time period, 1 park foreman, 1 park manager, 2 park maintenance technician II, and 2 part time staff members. The City has been able to maintain the parks within the resources available at a basic standard level of care, while aiming for the high standard the community values. The current effort of the parks division focuses on keeping the parks clean and safe for patrons; but does not allow for the enhanced or preventative maintenance and has extended the life of replacement scheduled projects. The maintenance and projects not currently being pursued have the potential to affect the long term investment that the community has made in park lands and facilities. Delayed maintenance and upkeep could be more costly to the City and should only be used in the short term.

To ensure that parks and facilities are managed efficiently and enable projects and plans to be implemented responsibly, a tiered "Park Maintenance Level of Service Plan" will be implemented. This tiered level of service will guide decisions made by division management on expectations, work load, and tasks able to be complete to the standard needed. This plan will identify three operating levels of maintenance. Each level specified will include a description of the level and what is included

and excluded in each level.

The Park Maintenance Level of Service Plan (Figure H) will serve as a starting point for the next 6 years. Since the adoption of the 2009 Plan, the City has ensured that all parks and facilities have received the basic level of maintenance needed to protect the assets of the City. As additional resources become available, the higher level of service standards should be implemented to enhance and protect the investment of the community.

At the adoption of the 2016 - 2022 Comprehensive Plan, the parks maintenance division will have been operating at the basic level (LEVEL C) of service for 7 years. This includes 7 years of deferred maintenance and preventative care that will need to be addressed to protect park lands and facilities. As projects arise, work load, capacity, and ongoing maintenance requirements will need to be taken into account before decisions are made to move forward.

To move above the Level C basic level of care, additional resources are needed to provide for more or expanded opportunities throughout the City. The resources required are not solely money to support projects, but also include additional work force to carry out the projects and the future maintenance needs of the park facilities.

5.3 PARK MAINTENANCE LEVEL OF SERVICE

The City of Longview parks and urban forest require routine care and maintenance. To guide decisions on staff time, work load, and resources, three levels of operation will be implemented:

LEVEL C - The basic level of care for City of Longview Parks. This level includes the services that keep the City of Longview's parks clean and safe for park users. This level includes routine maintenance and mandatory preventative tasks.

LEVEL B - The second tier for level of care for the City of Longview Parks. This level includes the basic level of service with enhancements such as landscaping of shrub beds, a more frequent level of maintenance, and small projects and larger preventative tasks not previously taken on due to budgetary/employment restrictions.

LEVEL A - The highest tier for level of care for the City of Longview Parks. This level includes the basic level of service with additional enhancements to include additional maintenance and frequency, implementation of capital improvement projects, planning and implementing replacement schedules, and ability to take on additional facilities.

Figure H

City of Longview Parks Maintenance Operations

Level of Service Plan

| LOS | Description | May Include | May Exclude |
|----------|---|---|--|
| A | Highest level of care; includes basic level and greatest standard of care with division, park, and facility enhancements. | Level C & B PLUS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Plantings • Capital Improvement Projects • Add. Urban Forest Management • Additional Turf Maintenance • Maintenance of Special Facilities • Upgrades to facilities | N/A |
| B | Enhanced level of care; includes basic level and higher standard of maintenance and frequency, and small projects | Level C PLUS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape Beds • Shrub Installation • Edging • Small projects • Preventative Urban Forest Tasks • Frequent Maintenance | Annual Plantings Large Projects |
| C | Basic level of care; regular maintenance to ensure cleanliness and safety and contribute of quality of life in Longview. | Standard Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mowing And Trimming • Playground Safety Inspections • Restroom Cleaning • Trash Removal • Ball Field Dragging • Irrigation Maintenance • Lighting Maintenance Preventative Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Fertilization • Pruning • Tree & Structure Evaluations | Landscape Beds Edging Annual Plantings Water Features Large Projects |

5.4 PARK MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Decisions on capital projects and program enhancements should be based upon the long term maintenance costs and benefits to the city.** When planning and designing a project, the total cost of the project should be considered prior to making a decision: cost of the project, operating costs, and on-going maintenance costs. Many larger projects become the Public Works Department assignments. The City of Longview Parks and Recreation Department have skilled employees with institutional knowledge. When possible, having involvement from the Parks and Recreation Department in the decision making process may aid in future cost savings of maintenance and operations. Capital project funding is more readily available than operational funding for larger projects and decisions to move forward should take into consideration the operating impacts the implementation of such a project could incur.

2. **Monitor and manage urban forest health within the City of Longview.** One of the City's greatest assets is the street tree program. Management of the forest should be considered a priority to maintain the investment in the program and the beauty and quality of life it provides to the City. Even during the most critical budgetary times, the upkeep and maintenance of forest health will need to be addressed. Management of the forest should be addressed yearly and coincide with an adopted Urban Forest Management Plan. A removal and replacement plan should be approved to plan for the aging tree population.
3. **Staff the Parks Division to meet the long term needs of the parks and urban forest.** With the urban forest reaching maturity in areas throughout Longview and many of the park amenities scheduled for replacement, staffing levels do not currently meet the demands. At this time, there is only one manager for the Parks Division. This person oversees the day to day operations as well as budgetary and future management decisions. When the budget allows, a position for a supervisor/foreman should be added. This position can help with the supervision of field workers and allow the manager to coordinate the larger projects and plans for the park and forest system. In addition to a foreman, the Office Assistant should move into the Administrative Assistant position moving the employee from 75% to a full time position. This move would allow for the Parks Manager to lessen the amount of administrative talks from their work load and enable more focus on management of the division.
4. **Document all assets, amenities, and needs at each park and then reevaluate the condition and need on an annual basis.** This inventory allows for the long term management of the park system. This list will enable management to plan priorities and workload in accordance to the list and budget for repairs and upgrades as needed. An annual evaluation of the park inventory supports a replacement schedule for park structures such as shelters, restrooms, and playgrounds. This list will be used to assign frequency and critical need when planning for the future.
5. **Continue with the current division of maintenance responsibility for sport facilities.** The City will continue to maintain the sport field facilities currently hosting department activities or not currently being managed by a youth sports organization. Upon signed agreement, all other sport facilities should be maintained by the youth sports organization taking full responsibility for the fields. Should a youth sports organization no longer care for the facility, they will relinquish their field use agreement. If this occurs, the city will take over maintenance of the facility and maintain it to a standard that protects the asset, but not maintained at a level that will detract from other maintenance operations.
6. **Seek partnerships where equitable viable options are available.** The division should actively pursue partnerships with other departments, governmental agencies, businesses, non-profit groups, and volunteer organizations to help aid in the enhancement and maintenance of the park system. The City would benefit from working with other stakeholders within the community to be able to provide a wide variety of assistance in land easement, sponsorships, monetary donations, in-kind donations, and volunteer hours.
7. **Target areas for trails and make the extension or installation of trails a priority.** The City is deficient in trail mileage to total population ratio. Trails and paths continue to be the number one amenity sought out or asked for within the parks system. If land becomes available through annexation or development, trail connectivity should be discussed as part of the planning process. Additionally, as part of seeking partnerships, working with private

and public land owners to allow public access for trails should become a priority.

8. **Begin to create a strategy for succession planning.** Within the next five years, there is a potential for the division to retire four key positions and with that will go well over 100+ years combined internal working knowledge. Without beginning a process for identifying and developing internal/external team members with the potential to fill these positions, there could be a decrease in the availability of experienced and capable employees that would be prepared to assume the roles as the positions become available.
9. **Develop and adopt an Integrated Pest Management Plan.** Currently the division follows a working draft version of an IPM plan. The division should continue to explore different outside vendors, investigate a wide array of technologies, and continue to monitor trends and what other municipalities are doing throughout the industry to be able to provide for a more comprehensive IPM plan.

5.5 PROVIDING RECREATION SERVICES

The Recreation Division staff takes pride in the ability to provide a high quality recreation programs that increase the quality of life for those who live, work, play, and visit the City of Longview. The top three reasons why citizens chose City of Longview recreation programs are to get exercise and be healthy, attend special events, and participate in family activities. It is the goal of the recreation division to be the leader for healthy living and to create long lasting memories that invoke family and community bonding.

Recreation provides comprehensive, year-round programs, activities, and special events designed to meet the needs of all Longview citizens. The division offers programs primarily at the McClelland Center, Woman's Club Building, Recreation Building, Elks Memorial Building, Senior Center, Longview Schools, city parks, local businesses, and partnering organizations.

Programs are funded through a combination of fees, sponsorships, donations, and general fund resources. The Recreation Services Division is responsible for the administration of recreation programs and activities offered by the City including special events such as Concerts in the Park, Movies in the Park, Mud Day, and Extreme Machines. There are six full-time employees, approximately 24 part-time employees, 150 - 200 volunteers donating 1000's of hours of time, and approximately 50 individuals instructing programs on a contractual basis.

5.6 MANAGEMENT OF RECREATION SERVICES

Starting in 2008 and ending in 2010, the recreation division was directed to reduce the work force to be able to continue operation at minimum staffing levels through the recession. The division lost two program areas (teen and senior) which consisted of one full time and 75% time Recreation Specialist. Additionally, the Recreation Division eliminated the full time Front Office Administrative position. Programs were suspended or removed and the City has been able to maintain the programs within the resources available at a minimum staffing level, while aiming for the high standard the community values. The current effort of the recreation division focuses on keeping the programs safe, fun, and affordable, but has not allowed for many new programs or enhanced services. The recreation needs of the community are being met to the best of the staffing ability. When the Recreation Specialist positions were removed, two underserved and vulnerable populations were no

longer receiving planned recreation programs. The City understands the importance services to these two populations and made concessions to provide a free after school program for 6th - 12th grade at “The Boulevard” and to maintain the facility for senior center activities. When the Recreation Division removed the full time Front Office position, the office hours open to the public went from 8:00 - 5:00 pm down to 11:00 - 5:00 pm operated by a part time employee.

To ensure that recreation programs are managed efficiently and enable projects and enhancements to be implemented responsibly, a tiered “Recreation Services Tiered Management Plan” will be implemented. This tiered level of service will guide division management for decisions on expectations, work load, and tasks able to be complete to the standard needed. This plan will identify 3 operating levels of maintenance. Each level specified will include a description of the level and what is included and excluded in each level.

The Recreation Services Tiered Management Plan (Figure I) will serve as a starting point for the next 6 years. Since the adoption of the 2009 Plan, the City has ensured that all recreation programs have received the basic level of service to meet the needs of the citizens. As additional resources become available, the higher level of service standards should be implemented to enhance and protect the investment of the community. At the adoption of the 2016 - 2022 Comprehensive Plan, the recreation division will have been operating at the basic level (LEVEL C) of service for 5 years.

To be able to provide for a shift from the basic level of care, Level C, the division would need additional budgetary and staffing resources. Beyond internal resources, the division should continue seeking out partnerships with internal and external stakeholders to provide a higher level of service to the community. This is to include, but is not limited to, a Friends of Longview Parks and Recreation, a Volunteer Program, a Scholarship Program, and a Sponsorship Program.

5.7 RECREATION SERVICES TIERED MANAGEMENT PLAN

The City of Longview recreation programs require proper planning, oversight, staffing, and evaluation to be successful. To guide decisions on staff time, work load, and resources, three levels of operation will be implemented:

- LEVEL C** - The basic level of service for City of Longview. This level includes the services that meet the basic needs of the City of Longview’s citizens. This level includes on going after school programs, historically successful enrichment programs, some new programs, and ongoing special events.
- LEVEL B** - The second tier for level of service for the City of Longview. This level includes the basic level of service with enhancements basic facility improvements, a more frequent level of program enhancements, new classes and events, and larger partnerships within the city.
- LEVEL A** - The highest tier for level of service for the City of Longview. This level includes the basic level of service with additional enhancements to include capital improvement projects, expansion of programs and program areas, planning and implementing replacement schedules, additional free or reduced programs, and large scale community events.

Figure I

City of Longview Recreation Services Tiered Management Plan

| LOS | Description | May Include | May Exclude |
|----------|---|---|---|
| A | Highest level of service; includes basic level and ability to expand to include division, program, and facility enhancements. | Level C PLUS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Program Areas • Capital Improvement Projects • Large Scale Events • Free Community Events • Expanded Office Hours • Large Program Enhancements • Upgrades to facilities | N/A |
| B | Enhanced level of service; includes basic level and minor expansion in services and program areas. | Level C PLUS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra Afterschool Sites • Expanded Summer Programs • Small Community Events • Additional Free/Reduced Registration • Program Enhancements • Facility Improvements | Capital Improvement Projects Large Scale Events Additional Program Areas |
| C | Basic level of service; ongoing programs to ensure recreational needs are being met, are safe, and contribute of quality of life in Longview. | Standard Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After School Programs • Enrichment Programs • On-going special events • Program registration • Facility Rentals • Senior Center activities • Marketing & Brochure • Adult Sports Leagues | Large community events Expanded Program Areas Small Community Events Standard Office Hours Free/Reduced Offerings Free/Reduced Registrations |

5.8 RECREATION SERVICES & OPERATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

- Decisions on capital projects and program enhancements should be based upon the long term and overall benefits to the city.** When planning and designing a project or program, the total cost of the project should be considered prior to making a decision: cost of the project, operating costs, and on-going maintenance costs. Many larger projects become the Public Works Department assignments. The City of Longview Parks and Recreation Department have skilled employees with institutional knowledge. When possible, having involvement from the Parks and Recreation Department in the decision making process may aid in future cost savings of maintenance and operations. Capital project funding is more readily available than operational funding and decisions to move forward should take into

consideration the operating impacts the implementation of such an enhancement could incur.

2. **Create and implement a cost recovery plan.** This plan would be created to determine the pricing of a class or program by the benefits, type of service, organizational responsibility, historical expectations, anticipated impacts, and social value. This will help establish consistency among services and program areas, explore alternative revenue streams, establish an operation guideline, and will assist the staff in being able to determine pricing.
3. **Staff the Recreation Division to meet needs of citizens and surrounding community.** With continual expanding recreation needs, growing population, and the fact that the City of Longview has the only municipal Recreation Division in the county, the staffing level of the division does not currently meet the needs of the community. The division receives many requests to expand services throughout the city, hold additional events, and provide a wide range of recreational opportunities not able to fit into the available staff's work load. Additionally, without a full time staff person at the front office the division is unable to communicate, register, and connect with our patrons as effectively or efficiently as possible. As the budget allows, the positions of Recreation Specialist and Front Office Assistant would greatly aid in meeting the needs of the community.
4. **Document all assets, amenities, and needs at each program and facility and then reevaluate the need and condition on an annual basis.** An inventory will allow for the long term management of the facilities and programs. This list will enable management to plan priorities and workload in accordance to the list and budget for repairs and upgrades as needed. An annual evaluation of the facilities and programs inventory supports a replacement schedule for facilities and supports decisions for purchases. This list will be used to assign frequency and critical need when planning for the future and remain fiscally responsible.
5. **Continue to work with youth sport organizations, outside organizations, and internally to maximize the use of sport facilities.** The City will continue to partner with youth sport organizations to provide recreational opportunities for youth at the designated youth sport facilities. Working with these volunteer organizations ensures the complexes are being used without additional management and resources from the Recreation Division. The City coordinates sports leagues, tournaments, and special events at parks, trails, and school district facilities. The City should seek outside partners to coordinate facility use of adult sport complexes. City's programs will be considered the first priority and then should be supplemented with outside use.
6. **Seek partnerships where equitable viable options are available.** The division should actively pursue partnerships with other departments, governmental agencies, businesses, non-profit groups, and volunteer organizations to help aid in the enhancement and support of recreation programs. The City would benefit from working with other stakeholders within the community to be able to provide a wide variety of assistance in sponsorships, monetary donations, in-kind donations, and volunteer hours. The Recreation Division would benefit from the creating of a non-profit organization to help seek financial support for programs.
7. **Target populations, areas, parks, and neighborhoods throughout the City to spread recreation services to maximize citizen participation.** The Recreation Division should evaluate where all current programs are being conducted to identify where deficiency in services might occur. Continuing to hold programs consistently at the same facilities might

deter user groups from participating in programs. Additionally, when providing programs throughout the city it will help to showcase city facilities, amenities, and assets.

8. **Capitalize on indoor and outdoor facility rentals.** The Recreation Division should market rental facilities to garner additional revenue. Utilizing rental time when internal programs are not being held within the City's rental facilities should be a priority. The division should create a marketing strategy specific for the use and rental of the facilities and create different pricing strategies to entice a broad range of user groups.
9. **Implement new recreation software.** The Recreation Division must implement a new recreation software system to replace the current system which goes out of service January 2017. The new software will provide the Recreation Division the opportunity to improve operational efficiencies and provide users with a better online experience. The Recreation Division should explore the development and implementation of a Parks & Recreation app for mobile devices.

