

Bossier Plan

Chapter 6

Parks & Open Space

Louisiana’s “Official Tour Guide” refers to Northern Louisiana as “Sportsman’s Paradise...perfect for hunting duck, deer and fortunes... Sportsman’s Paradise is filled with museums, parks, sporting and cultural events.” The Guide also references Northern Louisiana’s continued rapid growth. Balancing the demands of rapid growth with a desire to preserve and protect Bossier’s precious natural resources and open space areas resulted in the need to plan comprehensively to appropriately manage its limited resources. The leadership of Bossier understands the foresight and preparedness necessary to plan the future responsibly.

A comprehensive and integrated system of parks and recreation opportunities that responds to the needs and values of the residents is an essential part of a quality living environment. A well planned, managed and funded system of parks and public open spaces will help the City and Parish:

- ◆ attract and sustain quality development;
- ◆ contribute to improved community health;
- ◆ enhance the enjoyment and quality of life of residents and visitors;
- ◆ provide a variety of active and passive recreational activities for all persons; and,
- ◆ preserve and enhance the quality and integrity of the natural environment.

The parks and recreation system and natural environment also are an attraction for visitors, which contribute to local tourism and economic development.

The purpose of the Parks and Open Space Element of the Bossier Comprehensive Land Use and Development Master Plan is twofold. First, it is to evaluate the environmental resources of the planning area to ensure long-term conservation and protection of the unique and valued

environmental attributes of the City and Parish. Secondly, it is to evaluate the parks and recreation system so as to ensure that adequate parks, recreational facilities, and open



spaces are provided and accessible for the citizens and visitors of Bossier.

Parks and Recreation Planning Principles

The following parks and recreation planning principles are integrated into this chapter to ensure a balanced emphasis on the public and private sectors; indoor and outdoor opportunities; and, the integration of space, services, and facilities:

- ◆ All people should have **equal access to recreational areas, activities, services, and facilities** regardless of personal interest, age, gender, income, cultural background, housing environment, or handicap;
- ◆ Public recreation should be **highly coordinated among public institutions and private entities** to avoid duplication and encourage cooperation;
- ◆ Public recreation should **incorporate public services** such as education, health and fitness, transportation, and leisure;
- ◆ Facilities should be **well-planned and coordinated** to ensure adequate adaptability to future needs and requirements;
- ◆ The availability of **financial resources should be an ongoing consideration** through all phases of planning, acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of spaces and facilities;

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- ◆ The planning process should offer continuous opportunities for **incremental evaluation and review**;
- ◆ Existing **plans should be routinely considered and integrated** into the decision-making of private landowners, civic organizations, the business community, recreational interests and other area agencies to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated system of public areas and preserved natural resources;
- ◆ There should be **established procedures for acquiring land** for future parks and recreation areas and facilities well in advance of ensuing development; and,
- ◆ The design of spaces and facilities should encourage an **efficient utilization of land** and consider the needs, desires, and opinions of the intended users.

Key Parks and Recreation Issues

Public participation was instrumental in the process of preparing the plan for future parks, recreational facilities, and environmental conservation. The input of local stakeholders was used to understand the needs and desires for enhancement of the existing facilities as well as planned future improvements. During the community meeting series held in September 2001, input was solicited from residents of Bossier City and Bossier Parish. The numerous comments received and issues identified are reflected in the goals, objectives, and actions of this chapter. The public comments, coupled with the input of local stakeholders, members of the Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC) and City-Parish staff resulted in the following key issues:

Natural Resource Conservation

As illustrated in Chapter 2 - Area Profile, the Bossier City-Parish MPC planning area is rich with natural resources. While these areas are sensitive to urban development, they offer opportunities to fulfill other community objectives such as environmental conservation and sound resource management. Throughout the public involvement process there were multiple comments regarding a desire for more green space and an increased value on the area's natural resources. Efforts to merge environmental conservation and adequate provision of parks

and open space into the development process will result in responsible land management and use.

Parks and Recreation Opportunities

To support the stated desires of community residents, as articulated in the community meetings, recreation and open space opportunities should be convenient and readily accessible to all persons in the City and Parish. This is accomplished through development of a balanced and evenly distributed park system that provides active and passive recreation for young children and mature adults, for all levels of income, and for all races and ethnic backgrounds.

Connections and Linkages

A "system" of parks and recreation areas is not complete without linear linkages between facilities and connections

to neighborhoods, schools and other public use facilities. While the areas along rivers, streams and bayous are subject to flooding and undesirable for development, they are ideal as pedestrian linkages and bike trails between parks and other community attractions. Use of excess rights-of-way along streets, alleys and railroads; utility and drainage easements; and shoulders and

wide travel lanes on arterial roadways each offer the benefit of linkages between facilities. Connecting public parks and green areas creates an interconnected system of public spaces that are highly desirable in the Bossier planning area.

Creating Partnerships

Aging infrastructure, changing demographics, and increased demand for recreation programs and facilities have strained the limited resources of local governments and other public entities. Intergovernmental agreements and public-private partnerships create opportunities to use tax-dollars wisely, utilize land efficiently, and conserve precious environmental resources. Joint acquisition, development and ongoing maintenance of public spaces leverages additional resources. Collaboration and coordination among agencies is of mutual benefit for all

"People, even today, want to get away from the noise and confusion of daily life and want to do so on their own. It is not enough for a parks department to offer structured recreational activities. People need to have a place where they can go to stroll or lie in the grass or bicycle whenever the mood strikes them and not just when it is a scheduled activity."

- Alexander Garvin in "Parks, Recreation, and Open Space: A Twenty-first Century Agenda"

interests. It eases the burden on public tax dollars and enhances the quality of areas and facilities.

Adequate Funding

Unfortunately, the funding for parks and recreation is often a lesser priority in comparison to water, wastewater and drainage facilities and safety sensitive services such as fire and police protection. However, parks and public open areas are equally important forms of public infrastructure. While funding for the primary public facilities and services demand sufficient funding to avoid failing conditions, the dollars available for parks and recreation are less certain. Identifying a dedicated funding source and effectively leveraging state and federal grant funds is important to developing and sustaining an adequate parks and recreation system.

Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Goals, Objectives and Actions

The following summary of goals are designed to complement the goals and objectives of previously adopted plans, such as the recently published Bossier City Five-Year Park Recovery Action Program, which was prepared in 2001 by the City of Bossier City Mayor's Office. The following goals and objectives were developed to incorporate the views and values of the citizens who participated in the community meeting series conducted as part of the comprehensive planning process.

An overview of the parks and recreation goals is as follows:

- ◆ Promote the conservation of natural resources through park and recreational land acquisition, open space preservation, and environmentally sensitive planning.
- ◆ Provide a diverse blend of parks, recreation and open space areas throughout the City and the MPC planning area.
- ◆ Encourage the preservation of open space to reflect the unique resources of Bossier's natural environment and to enhance the community's livability, aesthetic quality, and natural beauty.
- ◆ Expand and enhance youth and recreation programs to meet the current and future needs of the City and Parish
- ◆ Promote water activities and programs such that all persons have equal access and opportunity to enjoy the recreational value of local water resources.

- ◆ Continue the parks and recreation area improvement program, including maintenance, renovation and/or redevelopment of existing and new public parks and facilities.
- ◆ Develop an on- and off-street network of pedestrian and bicycle ways, nature trails and linear linkages throughout the MPC planning area.
- ◆ Establish cooperative agreements and coordinated efforts with other governmental jurisdictions, educational bodies, and private sector entities.
- ◆ Identify dedicated funding sources for the acquisition, development, operation and maintenance of parks and recreation areas, facilities, programs and activities.

The overall goal for Bossier's parks and recreation system is to identify, protect, and enhance the natural and built environments and the image of Bossier by providing a diverse blend of parks and open spaces, creating recreational opportunities, and preserving irreplaceable natural resources that contribute to Bossier's rich heritage.

Natural Resource Conservation

At the heart of Sportsman's Paradise, the region possesses a significant inventory of valuable habitat to a variety of animal and plant species. Encroachment on these



Wetlands provide extraordinary natural and beneficial functions for the Bossier area, and should be maintained to sustain wildlife habitat, increased water quality and increased flood storage capacity.

"The natural resource base of a community plays a large role in the ultimate character of the park system."

- Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, NRPA

environments by urban development can have devastating effects. Through innovative land planning and sound resource management, these areas can be preserved and effectively

integrated into subdivisions without compromising private interests. Likewise, restoration of natural areas such as wetlands and forests on open parcels of urban parkland or blighted urban lands can become a catalyst for positive redevelopment and additional tax base enhancement.

Including conservation land in the public park system provides space for extensive, dispersed recreation use while protecting the natural function that the natural resources serve, such as flood storage or erosion control. Preservation of these lands often protects vital ecological process, and landscapes such as flood plains; wetlands; meadows; community forests; aquifer recharge areas; wildlife or plant habitat; archaeological, cultural and historical sites; and agricultural landscapes. Conservation corridors also serve as valuable pedestrian linkages between developed park sites as well as between parks and residential areas.

Goal 6.1: Promote the conservation of natural resources through parks and recreation land acquisition, open space preservation, and environmentally sensitive planning.

Objective A: Encourage the conservation of environmentally sensitive areas, i.e. streambeds and floodplains, wetlands, wildlife habitats, historic and cultural sites, and areas with topographic conditions or severe soil limitations, and encourage conservation through development incentives, regulations and policies adopted mutually by the City and Parish.

Action 6.1.1: Identify and acquire environmentally sensitive areas and conservation sites to preserve as public open space or recreation areas.

Action 6.1.2: Develop a "land-bank" program in which owners of properties in the flood plain are encouraged to deed their land to the "bank" to ensure long-term conservation.

Action 6.1.3: Acquire conservation easements along the Red River, Willow Chute Bayou, Red Chute Bayou, Flat River and other bayou tributaries (Mack's Bayou, Cooper Bayou, Allison Bayou, Alligator Bayou, Fifi Bayou, Connell Bayou, Racetrack Bayou, St. Charles Bayou) and other sensitive lands to protect valuable resources from encroaching development.

Action 6.1.4: Provide development incentives, regulations and policies to encourage the preservation of open space by individuals, corporations, non-profits and public agencies to enhance the livability, aesthetic value and natural beauty of the City and Parish.

Action 6.1.5: Identify the boundaries of the regulatory floodways and consider acquisition through fee-simple or conservation easement methods prior to development, if possible.

Action 6.1.6: Utilize the City-Parish Flood Hazard Mitigation Plan to identify areas of repetitive structure flooding where mitigation activities may result in publicly owned open space.

Action 6.1.7: Create development incentives to encourage preservation and dedication of public parks, open space or conservation easements within subdivisions.

Action 6.1.8: Amend the City and Parish Subdivision Regulations to encourage the use of conservation



Natural resource areas are one of the region's greatest assets.

subdivision techniques, which allow flexibility in lot size, setbacks and other area standards to increase open space, preservation of natural areas, and set-asides for wetlands and other sensitive habitat areas.

Action 6.1.9: Protect the waterfront landscape from encroaching, harmful development while preserving the integrity of the natural environment with natural shorelines and sensitive parks and recreation development and conservation.

Action 6.1.10: Preserve the environmental quality of the Red River and its bayou tributaries as well as area lakes and water bodies by protecting valuable open space and habitats, improving drainage and water quality, and providing sensitive eco-recreational facilities.

Parks and Recreation Opportunities

During the community meetings, area residents expressed their desire for a well-distributed system of parks and recreation areas. A balance of playlots (pocket parks), neighborhood playgrounds and parks, community playfields, parks and greenbelts and open areas will improve accessibility to families throughout the City and the MPC planning area.

A true “system” of parks offers of range of public areas including large centralized facilities intended for persons within one-hour driving time, community wide facilities, neighborhood-level parks and open areas that are within convenient walking distance, and small playlots for densely populated areas. The value of an adequate park system is in its ability to meet the individual needs of all persons.

Goal 6.2: Provide a diverse blend of parks, recreation and open space areas throughout the City and the MPC planning area.

Objective A: Accommodate the current and future needs of Bossier’s residents and visitors by providing small playlots, neighborhood play areas and large community parks.

Action 6.2.1: Develop an even distribution of parks and recreation facilities throughout the planning areas that will provide equitable opportunities and convenient access for all citizens.

Action 6.2.2: Acquire and develop 58 acres of neighborhood and community parks within the identified deficiency areas of Bossier City to meet the current parks and recreation system demand.



Mike Wood Park is Bossier City’s largest “community” park, which offers both active and passive recreation facilities.

Action 6.2.3: To meet the current demand for parks and open space within the five-mile planning area, acquire and develop 166 acres of land in the developed and developing areas of the MPC area.

Action 6.2.4: To meet the projected future demands within the City and Parish, based upon a projected population of 96,000 persons, acquire and develop concurrent with development 118 and 223 acres, respectively.

Action 6.2.5: By the Year 2020, aim to comply with the minimum standards for each park classification both within the City and the MPC planning area.

Action 6.2.6: Acquire lands within future growth areas for parks and recreation facilities, public open space and conservation areas in advance of ensuing development.

Action 6.2.7: Acquire excess rights-of-way, vacated alleys and easements, areas beneath overhead power lines, irregularly-shaped parcels and other non-developable parcels for utilization as playlots and public open space.

Action 6.2.8: Establish a park dedication ordinance, an exaction of land or cash, or impose a parks and recreation impact fee to ensure adequate parks and open space concurrent with development within the City and Parish.

Action 6.2.9: Establish provisions to allow reductions in park acreage in exchange for golf courses and other development amenities that are available and accessible to the general public.

Action 6.2.10: Prepare a parish wide parks, recreation and open space master plan to incorporate the Bossier City Ten-Year Recovery Action Program and the Bossier City-Parish Master Plan, with the specific needs for facilities and improvements within the Parish.

Goal 6.3: Encourage the preservation of open space to reflect the unique resources of Bossier's natural environment and to enhance the community's livability, aesthetic quality, and natural beauty.

Action 6.3.3: Incorporate open space into the entrances to the City and unique areas within the Parish, as well as acquiring land for open space along major transportation corridors to visually enhance those corridors and promote regional recognition.

Action 6.3.4: Increase public open space in flood prone areas through acquisition, relocation and demolition of flood damaged and repetitive loss structures.

Goal 6.4: Expand and enhance youth and recreation programs to meet the current and future needs of the City and Parish.

Objective A: Provide for the recreation and education of youth throughout the City and Parish planning area.

Action 6.4.1: Coordinate with the Bossier Parish School Board to expand after school programs for youth to include a range of activities for all ages.

Action 6.4.2: Coordinate with social service providers, civic clubs and other organizations to co-sponsor ongoing programs and special events.

Action 6.4.3: Advertise and promote youth and recreation programs to inform the public of ongoing and special programs and activities.

Action 6.4.4: Provide adequate resources for youth programs to support organization and coordination efforts.

Goal 6.5: Promote water activities and programs such that all persons have equal access and opportunity to enjoy the recreational value of local water resources.

Objective A: Capture the value and natural assets of the area by improving visibility and enhancing public access to the Red River and other water resources.

Action 6.5.1: Coordinate with the Red River Waterway Commission to further enhance and expand the Ray Arthur Teague Greenway south to the CenturyTel Arena and north to the Riverwalk development. Continue the greenway along the river throughout the planning area and parish.

Action 6.5.2: Provide public access to local bayous and waterways such as the Red Chute Bayou and Willow Chute Bayou.



The Bossier City Municipal Complex is a good example of preserving public open space.

Objective A: Create an attractive living and "green" living environment by preserving open space within neighborhoods, along roadways and natural corridors and key character areas throughout the City and Parish planning area.

Action 6.3.1: Establish development incentives to encourage dedication of open space easements adjacent to collector and arterial street rights-of-way, along bayous and other watercourses, and within major developments.

Action 6.3.2: Consider the use of a density bonus program that rewards increased density for greater open space, increased setbacks, preservation of natural areas, provision of natural amenities and set-asides for wetlands and other sensitive habitats.



A boat launch was recently added to the Arthur Ray Teague Parkway Greenspace, which promotes water activity and provides public access to one of Bossier's greatest assets.

Action 6.5.3: Continue to improve public access to the Red River with recreation easements, boat ramps, fishing docks and public activity areas.

Action 6.5.4: Amend the subdivision regulations of the City and Parish to incorporate provisions for cross access and public right-of-way connections from neighborhoods to the river, bayous and other natural resource areas.

Goal 6.6: Continue the parks and recreation area improvement program, including maintenance, renovation and/or redevelopment of existing and new public parks and facilities.

Objective A: Sustain the quality condition and attractive appearance of public areas and facilities with an aggressive maintenance program.

Action 6.6.1: Utilize the recommendations of the Ten-Year Park Recovery Action Program to adequately maintain and improve the parks within Bossier City.

Action 6.6.2: Utilize the recommended parish wide master plan to determine development and improvement needs and establish an action plan.

Action 6.6.3: Conduct annual physical condition assessments of the existing parks and recreation grounds and facilities to identify necessary improvements and to determine the level of financial commitment required to make necessary improvements.

Action 6.6.4: Develop a City-Parish operation and management plan for development of facilities and delivery of parks

and recreation services, including a continuous maintenance plan with scheduling and personnel tracking.

Action 6.6.5: Provide adequate funding and resources to perform necessary maintenance and repairs and to construct needed improvements at existing and future parks and recreation facilities.

Action 6.6.6: Establish a "Friends-of-the-Park" program to solicit neighborhood involvement in maintaining and policing the public parks.

Connections and Linkages

An interconnected system of bicycle and pedestrian facilities serve as a form of recreation and exercise and have an added benefit as an alternative mode of transportation. Through the community meetings, residents of the City and Parish expressed a desire for a system of nature trails and bike lanes/routes that connect the area's parks, schools, neighborhoods and public buildings. Trails and linkages allow for relatively uninterrupted pedestrian movement to and through the park system and protect users from busy development areas and associated vehicular traffic.

Goal 6.7: Develop an on- and off-street network of pedestrian and bicycle ways throughout the MPC planning area.

Objective A: To improve access to and throughout the park system, provide an interconnected system of paths, trails, lanes, and routes that are multipurpose, accessible, convenient, and connect to residential neighborhoods, parks, schools, workplaces, major open spaces, and other destinations.

Action 6.7.1: Prepare a pedestrian and trail master plan to identify specific routes, development standards and criteria, engineering specifications and a phased implementation plan.

Action 6.7.2: Identify potential greenbelt corridors, bicycle and pedestrian trails and routes and linear parks that can provide a safe and secure connection between parks, schools, neighborhoods and open spaces.



Greenbelts and pedestrian ways are an amenity to neighborhoods, provide public access to other areas and facilities and contribute to pedestrian mobility in the community.

Action 6.7.3: Utilize rights-of-way, easements, natural drainage courses, the Red River and its bayou tributaries for nature trails to link the City's parks and recreation areas.

Action 6.7.4: Extend the nature trail within the Arthur Ray Teague Greenway to connect to downtown and other neighborhoods and activity areas such as the CenturyTel Arena and the planned Riverwalk development.

Action 6.7.5: Establish policies and regulations regarding the use and development of floodways and drainage ways, abandoned railroad corridors, vacated alleys, and other rights-of-way and easements.

Action 6.7.6: Submit applications for federal grants through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and other available programs to leverage funds for bikeway and trail planning and development.

Action 6.7.7: Establish incentives and standards for developments adjacent to the Red River and other bayous and waterways to dedicate recreation easements for public use.

Action 6.7.8: Identify minor arterial, collector and local residential streets that are suitable for bicycle traffic and the designation of bicycle routes or lanes.

Action 6.7.9: Develop a tourist trail connecting monuments, museums and landmarks that are of historic or cultural significance to the City and Parish.

Creating Partnerships

A systems approach to regional parks and recreation planning requires collaboration, communication and coordination among

all vested entities and interested parties. Through agreements created between governmental and other public agencies as well as partnerships between the



Levees, bayous and drainage ways and other easements present opportunities to make connections between parks, neighborhoods and other public activity areas.

public and private sectors, the parks and recreation system benefits in its quality and affordability. Joint acquisition, construction, ongoing operation and maintenance allow efficient use of public dollars while ensuring that facilities are coordinated and connected.

As seen by the increasing participation trends of area facilities, with park patronage exceeding 9,000 users in 2001 and 2,140 youth participants and 171 adult teams participating in baseball, basketball, football and softball programs, it is essential that partnerships are created to generate adequate support for the recreational needs of the region. Such elements are already being formulated through the creation of the Bossier Parish Recreation Facilities Advisory Group.

Goal 6.8: Establish cooperative agreements and coordinated efforts with other governmental jurisdictions, educational bodies, and private sector entities.

Objective A: Form mutually beneficial partnerships with and among the public and private sectors to expand and improve the provision of services and facilities.

Action 6.8.1: Develop an agreement between the City of Bossier City, Bossier Parish and the Bossier Parish School Board to include joint acquisition of land and effective use of school and municipal

buildings and facilities, which will result in higher quality recreation opportunities at a more reasonable cost to the taxpayer.

Action 6.8.2: Establish a partnership with the State of Louisiana to jointly acquire, develop, operate, and manage regional and statewide parks and recreation facilities, activities, programs, and conservation areas.

Action 6.8.3: Coordinate with the Red River Waterway Commission, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and other local, regional, state and federal agencies to provide areas and facilities for use by residents and visitors to the City and Parish.

Action 6.8.4: Establish an intergovernmental agreement between Bossier City and Bossier Parish for the acquisition, development and maintenance of parks within the MPC planning area.

Action 6.8.5: Establish cooperative agreements with developers and landowners in the growth areas of the Parish to develop parkland in new residential areas. This may include the dedication of parkland that would be maintained by the City or Parish.

Action 6.8.6: Encourage private sector participation in the provision of parks and recreation opportunities by permitting innovative land development practices and creating incentives that will result in an efficient utilization of land and provide greater opportunities for the enjoyment of open space and preservation of the natural environment.

Action 6.8.7: Encourage educational institutions and nonprofit organizations to acquire, manage, and operate parks and open space conservation areas.

Action 6.8.8: Establish lines of communication with citizens to assist in the planning, design and development of parks within their respective neighborhoods.

Adequate Funding

As a result of fiscal constraints experienced by local governments over the course of the last two decades, communities and regions have changed their approach to financing infrastructure for new development. Local governments now look to the private sector to share in the costs of public facilities

proportionally equal to the demand placed on these types of facilities by new development. Also, pay-as-you-go local financing approaches are used to spread the cost of facilities over many years rather than imposing an up-front cost on developers and homeowners. The use of state and federal grants and reimbursements are highly competitive, but allow local governments to leverage their dollars efficiently.



Funded by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, the Bossier City Elementary Children's Park is exemplary of a partnership between Bossier City and the Bossier Parish School Board. This park serves neighborhood children and couples as a school playground.

Goal 6.9: Identify dedicated funding sources for the acquisition, development, operation and maintenance of parks and recreation areas, facilities, programs and activities.

Objective A: Provide for an adequate, "first class" parks and recreation system by providing adequate resources, funding and attention.

Action 6.9.1: Conduct a comprehensive parks and recreation needs assessment for the MPC planning area to identify deficiencies and improvement needs of the existing system and future needs, which will determine the level of financial commitment needed to develop and sustain an adequate parks and recreation system.

Action 6.9.2: Identify all potential funding sources, including Federal, State, Parish, City and School Board programs and budgets, donated and volunteer resources, and revenue sources such as user fees, exactions, fee-in-lieu of land, etc.

Action 6.9.3: Develop a capital improvement program for parks and recreation areas and facilities in the City and Parish and identify a five-year plan of priority improvements and a source of funds.

Action 6.9.4: Annually prepare nominations and applications to qualify for grant assistance or other funding arrangements to finance annual capital improvements.

Action 6.9.5: Consider establishing a recreation district, which has the authority to levy a tax to generate revenue toward the development and improvement of areas and facilities.

Previous Plans and Studies

Available plans and studies previously prepared took a more focused approach toward parks and recreation for the planning area were reviewed and considered in the development of this element for the Master Plan. The relevant plans and studies included:

- ◆ **Parks and Recreation Master Plan 1986** – As an update of the original master plan adopted in 1978, this document served to provide an exhaustive analysis of existing conditions, interpretation of surveys and “serve as a guide for the City of Bossier City to use in meeting the City’s current and future recreational needs.” The planning area encompassed a similar five-mile planning limit utilized by the Bossier City-Parish Metropolitan Planning Commission.
- ◆ **Five-Year Recreation Recovery Action Program** – Plans were completed in 1986 and May 2001. Both were formatted to comply with the National Park Service (NPS) Assistance Handbook for UPARR Recovery Action Planning. The recent effort was completed by City of Bossier City Mayor’s Office and was approved by the NPS in December 2001. The planning horizon considered was 2001-2006 where “the key element...(was) to identify, assess, and prioritize park and recreation facility needs.” It consisted of two parts, assessment and an action plan. The assessment portion of the document included sections on citizen participation, and physical, rehabilitation, service, and management issues. Through the completion of this plan, Bossier City is now eligible to apply for UPARR funds.
- ◆ **A Master Development Plan Report** for Cane’s Landing was prepared in 1989. This planning document followed the completion of a pre-development analysis report for the

site, which was to be the final step prior to development. The key elements of the project include open and natural areas, pedestrian and bicycle pathways and public access to the Red River. As indicated in the report, Cane’s Landing will one of if not the only river-oriented regional urban park in the Ark-La-Tex.

- ◆ **A Plan for Action: Bossier City Downtown Study** was prepared in 1980. The report aimed to rejuvenate downtown Bossier City. In doing so, the positive contributions of parks and recreation spaces were noted. With adequate community and neighborhood parks provided, the Action Plan advocated acquisition of “special use parkland.” This action ultimately resulted in the Arthur Ray Teague Parkway Open Greenspace.
- ◆ **Interim Report on Analysis of Existing Conditions (Master Plan for Downtown & Riverfront District (1994))** As a consequent to the passage of the Louisiana Riverboat Economic Development and Gaming Control Act of 1991, the industry has had a visible impact on the City’s riverfront. Evaluations were made of a downtown development district and a larger riverfront development district that encompassed the Cane’s Landing site.

Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities

As a component of this element, an evaluation was conducted of the existing parks and recreation system and the future needs to accommodate the projected future growth within the planning area. The existing areas and facilities are displayed in Figure 6.1. The Bossier MPC Planning Area is served by a system of parks and facilities that provide opportunity for a broad range of recreational activities for residents and visitors. However, the existing facilities are predominately located within Bossier City. A wealth of natural resource and open space areas contribute additional acreage that is not included since it is not within the inventory of City or Parish owned public facilities. The existing public parks and recreation areas are depicted in Figure 6.1 - Existing Parks and Recreation Inventory.

The Bossier City Ten-Year Recovery Action Program identified the following inventory of parks and recreation areas and public open space within the Bossier MPC Planning Area. The Action Program also identified recommended improvements, which are briefly denoted within this plan. The existing facilities include:

Playlots

- ◆ **Bossier Elementary Playlot** (322 Colquitt) - Situated on a half-acre portion of the school campus, the playlot is enclosed by a fence and owned by the Bossier Parish School Board. No recommended improvements were identified in the Action Plan.
- ◆ **Central Park Playlot** (Central Park Drive at Rodney Street) - This 0.72-acre park is adjacent to Central Park Elementary. As a result of its limited use, the Action Plan recommended that it be closed and donated to the Bossier Parish School Board.
- ◆ **Donald Bond Optimist Playlot** (100 Mary Ann Street near Shed Road) - This small park consists of playground activities suited for small children. The Action Plan recommended no improvements.



The Donald Bond Optimist Playlot is a model for public-private partnerships. This playlot was donated by the Optimist Club of Bossier.

- ◆ **Jack Tuttle Playlot** (Preston Boulevard) - This 1.7-acre park consists of an unsupervised playground. Recommended improvements included the installation of picnic tables, benches and grills.
- ◆ **Meadowview Playlot** (Meadowview Drive at Voss Street) - This one-acre pocket park serves as an unsupervised neighborhood playground. Installation of picnic tables, benches and grills were recommended in the Action Plan.

- ◆ **Parkway Playlot** (Parkway Drive at Oriole Street) - This 0.6-acre playlot consists of two tennis courts and 12 parking spaces. No improvements were cited for this park.
- ◆ **Riverwood Playlot** (Plantation Drive) - This 0.27-acre playlot has modular play equipment. No recommendations were made for this playlot in the Action Plan.

Neighborhood Playgrounds and Parks

- ◆ **Bicentennial Park** (John Wesley Boulevard) - This 2.2-acre park consists of a gazebo, monument and sitting areas and is often used for special events such as weddings and other gatherings. No recommendations were made for this park.
- ◆ **Field of Dreams Neighborhood Park** (4801 Swan Lake at Shed Road) - Immediately adjacent to the playfield, this 2.5-acre park consists of various playground activities, three covered pavilions with picnic tables and a lighted jogging trail. It is the only handicapped accessible park in the planning area. One recommendation was made for the bayou to be chemically treated for algae.
- ◆ **Greenacres Neighborhood Park** (Airline Drive) - This 4-acre park includes four tennis courts. The swimming pool was closed, demolished and sold. The Action Plan recommends that the park be declared as surplus and donated to the School Board.
- ◆ **Hooter Neighborhood Community Park** (100 Hooter Street near Fullilove Drive) - The Martin Luther King Community Center is located within this 11-acre park with picnic areas, Head Start Facilities as well as a jogging trail. To improve utilization, recommendations include development of a senior citizen activity area, additional playground equipment, and a storage building.
- ◆ **Mitchell Park** (1518 Cox Street) - This 4.25-acre park is within a residential development, adjacent to a large drainage ditch and the Charlotte Mitchell Alternative School. Facilities include baseball field, a basketball court, a jogging trail and picnic areas. The park also has a community building and playground. No recommendations were made for this facility.

- ◆ **Patricia Neighborhood Park** (3208 Patricia) - Well suited for active recreation users; this park is 3.67 acres and has tennis courts, a ball field, jogging trail, restrooms and a new playlot. No recommendations were made for this facility.
- ◆ **Shady Grove Neighborhood Park** (3949 Wayne Drive at Lake Street) - This heavily utilized 10-acre park has a variety of facilities, including a softball field, batting cage, air-conditioned gymnasium and a community center with



Patricia Park is a popular attraction for area residents due to its facilities and amenities.

meeting and administrative space. Access to the park is provided by a footbridge, which connects to an adjacent neighborhood. Improvement recommendations include striping the parking lots and relocating the park sign to a more visible location.

- ◆ **Ft. Smith Neighborhood Playfield** (701 Coleman Street) This 12-acre park is multidimensional, being used for the Bossier City Council on Aging and having a number of active recreation resources, such as a basketball court, four tennis courts, and jogging trail. Adjacent to Bossier High School, students use the courts throughout the school year. No recommendations were made to improve this facility.

Community Playfields and Parks

- ◆ **Mike Wood Community Park** (2200 Dennis Street) - This 30-acre park has a number of active recreation facilities, anchored by four tennis courts, a basketball court, picnic areas, and swimming facilities. As the premier park of Bossier City, it is well maintained and highly utilized by the community. Recommended improvements included the sign location, drainage, and parking.

- ◆ **Clifford Almond Community Playfield** (4801 Swan Lake at Shed Road) - This 25-acre facility has eight baseball fields complimented by one ADA multipurpose playlot. Nine recommendations were made for rehabilitating this park. Repairs to the fence, pavilion, and storage building are planned for 2002.
- ◆ **Shed Road Neighborhood Park** (4208 Shed Road) - This 13.7-acre park has a variety of facilities including three covered pavilions, picnic areas, benches, and a playlot. Active recreation facilities include two tennis courts, a jogging trail, a basketball court, and four ball fields. The parking area and lighting of the new softball field, which is one of three utilized by Bossier Parish Community College and Bossier Parish



Mike Wood Memorial Park is the most heavily utilized park in the Bossier Park System.

Middle Schools, were recommended for improvement.

- ◆ **Tinsley Athletic Complex** (Tinsley Drive off E. Texas Avenue/US 80) - Partially developed, this 120-acre complex is designed to facilitate organized sporting events and tournaments. The facility includes softball, baseball, soccer and football fields with three concession buildings, restrooms, covered picnic areas, a batting cage and two playground areas. No recommendations were made to improve this facility.
- ◆ **Walbrook Neighborhood Park** (100 Mary Ann Street near Shed Road) - This 33-acre facility is predominately used for baseball by children ages 8

to 14. There are currently four fields and planned future construction will accommodate high school practices and games. Recommendations included the addition of a standardized sign and a drainage culvert. Phase I improvements were completed last year, which included a parking lot overlay, construction of a concession/restroom facility, and storage buildings. Completion of Phase II is anticipated in 2002.

- ◆ **Arthur Ray Teague Parkway Jogging Trail** - The trail extends 5-miles along the Red River. Completed in 2001, there are also several amenities including two small and three large pavilions and a boat launch with parking. No recommendations were made for this linear area. The amenities along the trail were developed in conjunction with the Red River Waterway Commission.



One of the newest additions to the Bossier park system, the Arthur Ray Teague Parkway Greenspace and Trail is an excellent example of a linear facility that reaps the benefits of the Red River.

- ◆ **Golden Meadows Park and Community Center (Mary Drive)** - This 35.36-acre tract remains undeveloped. According to the Action Plan, there is little support for constructing recreation facilities on this site and, therefore, no recommendations were made.

Park Classification System

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) published the Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines to establish nationally applicable criteria for the provision of parks and recreation facilities and open space. These standards serve as a guide for parks and recreation planning, but do not replace reasonable judgment or specific local needs. The needs

and desires of the citizens of Bossier City and Parish justify continued development of parks, recreation and open space to meet the specific needs and requirements of the community.

While national standards are useful, it is important to establish standards that are based upon unique local considerations such as participation trends, user characteristics, demographics, socioeconomics, climate, natural environment and other considerations. Leisure and recreation values are unique to each municipality; therefore, it is important that the standards represent the interests and desires of the community.

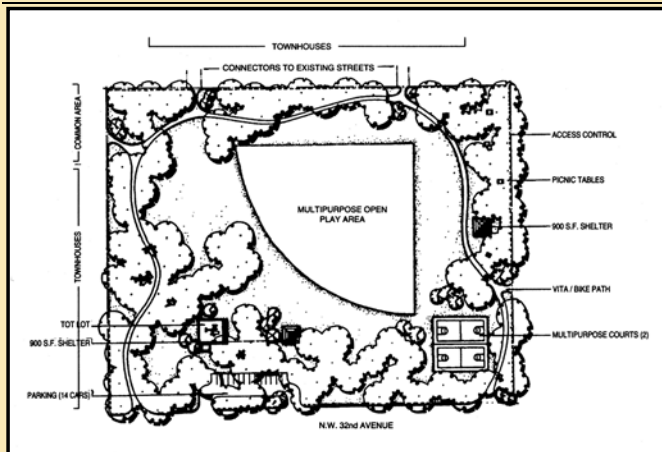
This element borrows from the recently completed Park Recovery Action Program, which was used primarily for the identification and mitigation of rehabilitation issues in existing city-owned facilities. This plan element takes a forward step beyond the recovery program to assess the future needs for parks and recreation facilities within Bossier City and the Parish planning area.

The Action Program established a classification system that includes the following types of facilities. These facilities are referenced throughout this plan element to aid in consistency between the plan documents. However, with respect to the facility development standards, the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) standards were used to identify the use, service areas, size and characteristics of each type of facility. As a result, neighborhood playgrounds and parks are consolidated, as are community playfields and parks, which conform to national standards. The park classification system applies to the City and Parish planning area. The terminology references the service area and population served, which is equally applicable to the City and Parish. The classification is as follows:

- ◆ **Playlots** are intended for active recreational use of immediate property owners such as in apartment complexes and planned communities. There are no specific criteria to guide development of playlots although they should have recreation facilities and park improvements available to meet the identified needs of the immediate development. User input should be a primary determinant for developing playlots. Recommended facilities and improvements include: picnic tables with covers, perimeter

sidewalks, shade trees and native landscaping, drinking fountain, security lighting, a multipurpose open play area, playground equipment, perimeter fencing or landscaping, benches, on-street parking, trash receptacles, and curb cuts and pedestrian crossings.

- ◆ **Neighborhood playgrounds** are generally one or two lots or leftover parcels of land that are centrally located within a neighborhood. Common improvements include playground equipment or a playscape, open play areas,



A typical neighborhood park includes a variety of passive and active facilities for nearby users.

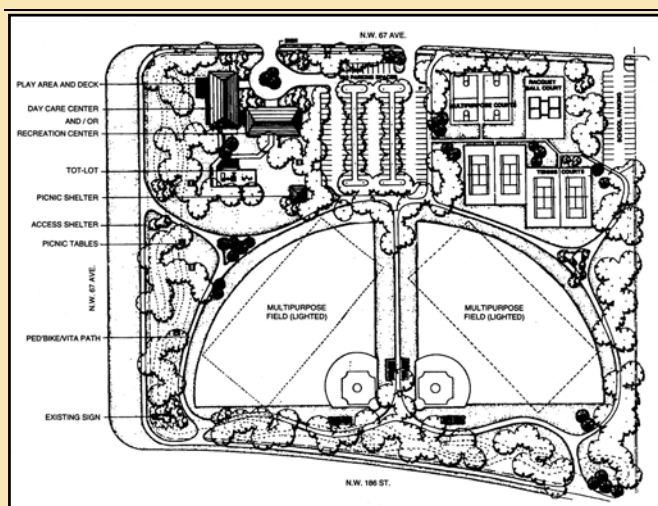
Source: Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines, NRPA

benches, picnic tables, water fountains and other active recreation equipment suitable for the specific site.

- ◆ **Neighborhood parks** should have facilities and improvements to accommodate use by neighborhoods within one-quarter to one-half mile of the park. Ease of access from surrounding neighborhoods, central location and pedestrian/bicycle linkages are key considerations when developing neighborhood parks. Neighborhood parks should be designed to accommodate the needs of all ages and therefore, should have a blend of passive and active facilities available. It is highly desirable to include the neighborhoods in the park design process to ensure it is compatible and accounts for the desires of its intended users. Recommended facilities and improvements include: picnic tables with covers, bar-be-que pits, sidewalks and or a natural walking trail, shade trees and native landscaping, drinking fountain(s), security lighting, a multipurpose open play area, multipurpose play courts, playground equipment and/or a playscape, perimeter fencing or landscaping,

benches, restrooms, on- or off-street parking, trash receptacles, curb cuts and pedestrian crossings.

- ◆ **Community play fields** are large open lands utilized for informal activities or organized league practices. They are largely undeveloped but may include backstops and goals, bleachers, drinking fountains, restrooms, off-street parking, trash receptacles playground equipment and other facilities unique to each site.
- ◆ **Community parks** are to provide active and passive recreation for citizens generally within one mile. The facilities and improvements in community parks must be planned and designed for heavy use by persons of all ages. Where feasible, community parks should be located adjacent to a greenway, which can provide an off-street linear linkage from other areas and facilities. Neighborhood and community input should be a primary determinant of the development program for a community park. Recommended facilities and improvements include picnic tables with covers, barbeque pits, sidewalks and or a natural walking trail, mountain biking trails, exercise stations (optional), shade trees and native landscaping, drinking fountains, security lighting, a multipurpose open play area, multipurpose courts, playground equipment and a playscape, bicycle racks, perimeter fencing or landscaping, street signs indicating "children at play", benches, trash



Community parks are intended for community-wide use, generally within a one-mile service area.

Source: Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines, NRPA

receptacles and enclosures, curb cuts and pedestrian crossings, tennis courts, basketball courts, softball and little league fields with bleachers, soccer/football fields with goals and goal posts, sand volleyball courts, swimming pool, covered pavilions, performance stage (optional), restrooms, fencing for ball fields and athletic courts, a concrete surface for a general play area, off-street parking, and other unique features (as appropriate).

- ◆ **Urban green space or open space areas** include reserved public lands dedicated as public open space. These lands are generally owned by the local government or dedicated through private instrument as a development reserve. These areas are generally undeveloped and used for informal activities. They may also serve as flood collection areas during major storm events. Other examples of open space areas include easements for drainage basins, excess rights-of-way, greenways and street esplanades.
- ◆ **Regional parks** are typically in an area of natural quality for nature oriented outdoor recreation, such as viewing and studying nature, bird watching, wildlife habitat, swimming, picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, camping and trail uses. Regional parks typically include active play areas such as athletic fields. Recommended facilities and improvements include picnic tables with covers, barbeque pits, natural walking trails, mountain biking trails, camp sites with and/or without utilities, nature preserve or wildlife habitat, shade trees and native landscaping, drinking fountains, security lighting, multipurpose open play areas, multipurpose courts, playground equipment and/or playscapes, bicycle racks, benches, trash receptacles and enclosures, tennis courts, basketball courts, softball and little league fields, soccer/football fields with goals and goal posts, sand volleyball courts, swimming pool or beach, covered pavilions, restrooms, off-street parking, and other unique features (as appropriate).

Development Standards

As parks and recreation sites are evaluated for acquisition and development, it is important for the City and Parish to have a standardized list of facilities and equipment desired for each type of park to assess the development feasibility of each site, as identified in the Park Classification System above. There are important considerations in developing parks including the size, shape and orientation of the site; pedestrian, bicycle and

vehicular access and parking; adjoining land use; development constraints such as severe grades, poor drainage and flooding; environmental impacts; and, the anticipated use of the park. In assessing the feasibility of a site, each of these considerations is important.

A variety of sizes and types of parks and recreation facilities and activities are recommended to satisfy diverse individual interests, ensure adequate and equal opportunity, and ultimately encourage use by all persons within the Bossier planning area.

Displayed in **Table 6.1 - Park and Recreation Facility Development Standards**, are the standards for each type of park. These standards are used to determine the locations and needs for existing and future parks. The actual size of the park and the location is often determined by the availability of a potential park site.

As a reference for siting new park facilities, Table 6.2 relates to existing zoning and future land use, transportation improvements and other public facilities and services. Two of the more important factors are location and access, which are influenced by adjacent land uses and the functional class of adjoining streets (residential, collector, arterial, etc.). For example, an ideal neighborhood park is integrated within a neighborhood surrounded by residential dwellings on a local residential street. In comparison, larger community parks, especially those with lighted athletic fields, are best situated adjacent to a major thoroughfare and with adequate separation from homes.

Recommended Facility Development Standards

Displayed in **Table 6.2 - Recommended Facility and Equipment Guidelines**, is the minimum facility and equipment improvements for pocket parks, neighborhood and community parks, which are based upon the population within the park service areas. The facility ratios reflect typical demands for each of the identified park facilities and equipment. Since user characteristics tend to fluctuate by season and by type of user, the ratios may need to be adjusted to better meet the needs of the users at each particular park.

**Table 6.1
Park and Recreation Facility Development Standards**

Component	Use	Service Area	Desirable Size	Acres/1,000 Population	Desirable Site Characteristics
Playlot	Small areas intended primarily for the use of children (toddlers - age 9) containing play equipment, swings, slides, sandboxes and benches.	Less than 1/4 mile radius.	1000 square feet - 1 acre	.1 - .3 acres	Within neighborhoods and close to apartments, townhouses, or housing for the elderly.
Neighborhood Playground	Designed to provide both active and passive short-term activities consisting of distinct play areas for preschool and school age children, shelter structures, open space, multi-use paved courts and areas for field games.	Walking distance, 1/2 mile radius.	4-8 acres	1.5 acres	Usually located adjacent to public schools, easily accessible, centrally located in neighborhood, with safe walking and bike access.
Neighborhood Park	Landscaped natural park of limited size primarily for passive recreational needs of all ages but with designated active areas. Provides scenic and aesthetic value including open lawn space, shrubbery, small picnic areas, nature walks and areas for court games if not provided nearby.	1 to 2 mile radius (Serves entire neighborhoods).	5 - 8 acres	1.5 acres	Should be located in the center of a multiple-family dwelling neighborhood or nearby site.
Community Playfield	Primarily an athletic complex that serves the recreational needs of the community with lighted court and field games area, community center, swimming pool, lawn areas, adequate parking, may have picnic and play area for children.	Within biking distance.	15-25 acres	2/1000	May be a portion of a major community park, but generally one per community, unless however, communities are split by barriers or if sufficient acreage can not be obtained.
Major Community Park	A large natural and /or landscaped area to provide urban dwellers an escape from city congestion without traveling a large distance. Provides both intensive and passive uses. Typical facilities include swimming pool, picnic areas, paths, game courts, gardens, natural areas, pavilion, ample parking, and restrooms.	Within 30-minutes	50-100 acres	1 - 5/1000	Designed to accommodate a large number of people and a wide variety of activities.
Urban Greenspace or Open Space	Passive areas in landscaped or natural state in or near urban areas. May provide bicycle, hiking, and nature trails as a feature or as part of a larger system.	No applicable standard.	Varies.	.75 - 1.0 acres	Natural lands, watershed and waterfront, forests, landscaped borders, parkways, and boulevards, corner parks, medians, downtown aesthetic parks, plazas, malls.

Source: Bossier City Ten-Year Park Recovery Action Program, 2001

Table 6.2
Recommended Facility and Equipment Guidelines

Activity/ Facility	Space Requirements	Size and Dimensions	Orientation	Units per Population	Service Radius	Location Notes
Basketball 1. Youth 2. High School 3. Collegiate	2,400 - 3,036 sq. ft. 5,040 - 7,280 sq. ft. 5,600 - 7,980 sq. ft.	46' - 50' x 84' 50' x 84' 50' x 84'	Long axis north-south	1 per 10,000 persons	¼ - ½ mile	Outdoor courts in neighborhood and community parks, plus active recreation areas in other park settings.
Soccer	1.7 - 2.1 Ac.	195' to 225' x 330' to 360' with a minimum clearance of 10' on all sides.	Fall season – long axis northwest to southeast. For longer periods, north to south.	1 per 10,000 persons	1 - 2 miles	Number of units depends on popularity. Youth soccer on smaller fields adjacent to schools or neighborhood parks.
Tennis	Minimum of 7,200 sq. ft. for a single court. (2 acres for a complex)	36' x 78' Twelve foot clearance on both sides; 21' clearance on both ends.	Long axis north-south.	1 court per 2,000 persons	¼ - ½ mile	Best in batteries of 2-4. Located in neighborhood/ community park or adjacent to a school site.
Volleyball	Minimum 4,000 sq. ft	30' x 60'. Minimum 6' clearance on all sides.	Long axis north-south	1 court per 5,000 persons	¼ - ½ mile	Same as other court activities (e.g. badminton, basketball, etc.)
Football	Minimum 1.5 Ac.	160' x 360' with a minimum of 6' clearance on all sides	Fall season—long axis northwest to southeast. For longer periods, north to south.	1 per 20,000 persons	15 - 30 minutes travel time.	Usually part of baseball, football, soccer complex in community park or adjacent to high school
Multiple-Use Recreation Court (basketball, volleyball, tennis)	9,840 sq. ft.	120' x 80'	Long axis of courts with primary use is north-south.	1 per 10,000 persons	1 - 2 miles.	In neighborhood or community parks.
Open Space	Minimum of 40 percent undeveloped per park	N/A	N/A	5 acres per 1,000 persons	30 minute travel time.	Within neighborhood and community parks or stand alone.

Source: *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, National Recreation and Parks Association, 1995.*

**Table 6.2 (Continued)
Recommended Facility and Equipment Guidelines**

Activity/ Facility	Space Requirements	Size and Dimensions	Orientation	Units per Population	Service Radius	Location Notes
1/4 Mile Running Track	4.3 acres	Overall width - 276' Length - 600.02'. Track width for 8, 4' lanes is 32'	Long axis in sector from north to south to northwest to southeast with finish line at northerly end.	1 per 20,000 persons	15 - 30 minute travel time.	Usually part of high school or in community park complex in combination with baseball, soccer, etc.
Baseball 1. Official	3.0 - 3.85 acres minimum.	Baselines - 90' Pitching distance - 60-1/2' Foul lines - 320' min. Center field - 400' +	Locate home plate so pitcher throwing across sun and batter not facing it. Line from home plate through pitcher's mound runs east northeast.	1 per 5,000 persons	¼ - ½ mile.	Part of neighborhood complex. Lighted fields should be part of a community park or sports complex.
2. Little League	1.2 acres minimum.	Baselines - 60' Pitching distance - 46' Foul lines - 200' Center field - 200'-250'		Lighted - 1 per 30,000 persons.		
Softball	1.5 - 2.0 acres.	Baselines - 60' Pitching distance - 46' min. 40' - women Fast pitch field radius from plate - 225' between foul lines slow pitch - 275' (men) 250' (women).	Same as baseball.	1 per 5,000 persons (if also used for youth baseball)	¼ - ½ mile.	Slight difference in dimensions for 16" slow pitch. May also be used for youth baseball.
Trails	N/A	Maximum 10' width, maximum average grade 5% not to exceed 15%. Capacity: Rural trails - 40 hikers/day/mile Urban trails - 90 hikers/day/mile.	N/A	1 system per region	N/A	Located in greenways, natural areas and parks, and along drainage ways, levees and utility easements. Their purpose is to accommodate walkers, joggers and bicyclists away from traffic.
Golf Course 18-hole (standard)	Minimum 150 acres.	Average length - 6,500 yards.	Site specific.	1 public course per 50,000 persons.	½ to 1 hour travel time.	Located in community park, but should not be over 20 miles from a population center.
Golf- Driving Range	13.5 acres for minimum of 25 tees.	900' x 690' wide. Add 12' width for each additional tee.	Long axis southwest - northeast with golfer driving toward northeast.	1 per 50,000 persons.	30 minute travel time.	Part of golf course complex or privately operated.

Source: *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, National Recreation and Parks Association, 1995.*

Table 6.2 (Continued)
Recommended Facility and Equipment Guidelines

Activity/ Facility	Space Requirements	Size and Dimensions	Orientation	Units per Population	Service Radius	Location Notes
Archery Range	Minimum 0.65 acre.	300' length x minimum 10' between targets. Roped, clear areas on side of range minimum 30', clear space behind targets minimum of 90' x 45' with bunker.	Archer facing north (\pm 45°).	1 per 50,000 persons.	30 minute travel time.	Part of a regional/ metro park complex.
Handball (3 - 4 wall)	800 sq. ft. for 4 -wall, 1,000 sq. ft. for 3 -wall.	20' x 40' - Minimum of 10' to rear of 3 - wall court. Minimum 20' overhead clearance.	Long axis north-south. Front wall at north end.	1 per 20,000 persons.	15 - 30 minute travel time.	4-wall usually indoors as part of multi-purpose facility. 3 -wall usually outdoors in park or school setting.
Badminton	1,620 sq. ft.	Singles - 17' X 44' Doubles - 20' X 44' with 5' unobstructed area on all sides.	Long axis north-south.	1 per 5,000 persons.	¼ - ½ mile.	Usually in school, recreation center, or church facility. Safe walking or bike access.
Field Hockey	Minimum 1.5 acre.	180' x 300' with a minimum of 10' clearance on all sides.	Fall season - long axis northwest to southeast. For longer periods, north to south.	1 per 20,000 persons.	15 - 30 minute travel time.	Usually part of baseball, football, soccer complex in community park or adjacent to high school.
Ice Skating and Hockey	22,000 sq. ft. including support area.	Rink 85' x 200' (minimum 85' x 185") additional 5,000 sq. ft. support area.	Long axis north-south if outdoors.	Indoor - 1 per 100,000 persons. Outdoor depends on climate.	½ - 1 hour travel time.	Depends on community interest.
Swimming Pools	Varies on size of pool and amenities. Usually ½ to 2 acre site.	Teaching - min. of 25 yards x 45' even depth of 3 to 4 feet. Competitive - min. of 25m x 16m. Minimum of 27 square feet of water surface per swimmer.	None - although care must be taken in siting of lifeguard stations in relation to afternoon sun.	1 per 20,000 persons.	15 to 30 minute travel time.	Pools for general community use should be planned for teaching, competitive, and recreational purposes with enough depth (3.4m) to accommodate 1m and 3m diving boards. Located in community park or school site.

Source: *Park, Recreation, Open Space and Greenway Guidelines, National Recreation and Parks Association, 1995.*

Needs Assessment

To assess the adequacy of the existing parks and recreation supply, it is necessary to look at existing population, the supply of parks provided by existing facilities including any planned improvements or expansions, and relate them to planning standards for desirable levels of service. In addition, it is necessary to consider forecasts in future population to determine future needs and to identify deficiencies of the system.

The assessment of need for neighborhood and community parks varies according to the purpose and use of the facilities. Community parks and play fields are intended to function on a large-scale basis serving the parks and recreation needs of an entire community, which may be within an urban area or a developed rural area. They are typically large in size (minimum 25 acres) and include facilities and improvements for area wide activities and assembly events, such as picnic areas, walking/jogging trails, ball fields, and other larger scale activities. Ensuring adequate and equitable recreation and leisure opportunity for all citizens is the objective of community parks.

The use of neighborhood parks and playgrounds is intended for the residents of adjacent and nearby neighborhoods. Having service areas that encompass the entire planning area is not as important for

neighborhood parks. The focus of neighborhood parks is the residential neighborhoods within a reasonable walking distance. Complete service area coverage is not necessary for neighborhood parks rather it is more important to have a well-distributed system to serve the parks and recreation needs of nearby residents. An acceptable walking distance to neighborhood parks is generally 4 to 8 blocks.

In addition to neighborhood and community parks are regional facilities, which serve the needs beyond a single community to encompass several communities within the parish. The service area radius of a regional park is a one-hour drive time. To provide adequate service to the population, regional facilities need to be evenly spaced within near proximity to the regional population base. The purpose of regional facilities is to complement the urban facilities by providing recreation and

open space areas to rural residents and a larger service coverage.

Existing Resources vs. Projected Need

A combination of a standard-based and demand-based approach was utilized to assess the need for additional parks and recreation areas and facilities within the Bossier planning area. The demand-based approach entailed input from the community meetings, through focus group interviews, and meetings with the Master Plan Advisory Committee (MPAC). Utilizing a combination of Bossier City and NRPA standards, the acreage of parks and recreation areas needed in the MPC planning area is displayed in **Table 6.3 - Recommended Parks and Recreation Area Standards**. The need for additional parks and recreation acreage is determined by applying the recommended standards to the existing and projected future population of the planning area.

As shown in Table 6.3, the standards range in size per 1,000

Table 6.3

Recommended Parks and Recreation Area Standards

Classification	Standard	Low	High	Recommended
Playlot	0.1 to 0.3 ac./1,000 persons	7	22	15
Neighborhood Playground and Park	1 to 2 ac./1,000 persons	75	150	113
Community Playfield and Park	3 to 5 ac./1,000 persons	225	374	300
Urban Greenspace / Open Space	0.75 to 1.0 ac./1,000 persons	56	75	66
TOTAL		363	621	494

Source: Bossier City Five-Year Park Recovery Action Program, 2001 & Wilbur Smith Associates

Note: Based upon a Year 2000 planning area population of 74,836 persons

persons. Based upon a 2000 Census population of 74,836 persons within the City and its five-mile planning area, the total acreage need for the planning area ranges from 363 to 621 acres of playlots, neighborhood playgrounds and parks, community playfields and parks, and public open space.

Current Bossier City Needs

The populations of the City and Parish represent their respective needs. Bossier City currently represents roughly three-quarters of the total planning area population. With a 2000 Census population of 56,451 persons, based upon adopted standards, the City should have between 273 and 467 acres with a recommended need of 370 acres. Currently, the City maintains 312 acres of parks and recreation areas, which is 84 percent of the

recommended need. Based upon the applied standards, an additional 58 acres is needed in the City of Bossier City.

Current Bossier Parish Needs

Bossier Parish does not currently own or maintain any public parks and recreation areas within the MPC planning area. Based upon a Year 2000 population of 18,385 persons, the total current need ranges from 89 to 152 acres with a recommended need of 121 acres. Therefore, to meet minimum standards, the Parish needs to acquire and develop 89 acres of parks and recreation areas. To satisfy the recommended standards 121 acres are needed.

It is important to note that there are two Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) within the Parish, including the Bodcau WMA located in the northeastern portion of the parish and the Loggy Bayou WMA in the southeastern corner of the parish. While these areas are outside of the planning area, they do serve part of the need for parish parks and natural areas.

Future Demands

Displayed in **Table 6.4 – Park Resources vs. Demand (Year 2020)**, is a tabulation of the recommended supply necessary to support the projected future population of 96,000 persons within the planning area. The Year 2020 needs for the City and Parish are 411 acres within Bossier City and 223 acres within the five-mile planning area of Bossier Parish.

<u>Classification</u>	<u>Bossier City</u>	<u>Bossier Parish</u>
Playlot	8	7
Neighborhood Playground/	55	51
Community Playfield/	15	135
<u>Open Space</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>30</u>
TOTAL	118	223

To meet the recommended need in the Year 2020, Bossier City will need to acquire and develop a total of 118 acres, which is roughly 6.5 acres annually. It is important to note that the Arthur Ray Teague Parkway Open Greenspace currently fulfills the open space requirement. Since there are no facilities within the five-mile planning area of Bossier Parish, the total future need is 223 acres, as shown above.

Park Service Areas

Evaluating service areas is an effective means of identifying geographic areas that have sufficient park areas available, but more importantly to identify those in need of additional parks and recreation areas and facilities. The existing inventory of playlots, neighborhood playground and parks, community playfields and parks, and schools are shown in **Figure 6.1 – Existing Parks and Recreation Inventory**.

Community Parks

Community parks have a primary service area of one mile, meaning that a majority of persons utilizing these area wide parks generally reside within one mile. The secondary service area extends two miles from the park to account for user patterns associated with the types of activities and facilities available in the community parks. For instance, little league athletic fields draw participation from throughout a larger area than one mile.

Illustrated in **Figure 6.2 – Neighborhood and Community Park Service Areas**, are the service areas of the five community playfields and parks, including Mike Wood Memorial Park, Clifford Almond playfield, Shed Road playfield, the Tinsley Athletic Complex, and Walbrook Park. These five facilities contribute 289 acres to the current inventory of areas and facilities. As exhibited, a majority of the populated areas north of I-20 is within the service areas of the community playfields and parks. The central, southern and far northern areas of the City, including Central Park, Bossier Annex, Pecan Park, Plantation Trace, Westgate Terrace, Bellaire, Southern

**Table 6.4
Park Resources vs. Demand (Year 2020)**

Park Classification	Recommended Supply (Year 2020)	
	Bossier City	Bossier Parish
Playlot	13	7
Neighborhood Playground and Park	93	51
Community Playfield and Park	250	135
Urban Greenspace / Open Space	55	30
TOTAL	411	223

Source: Wilbur Smith Associates

Based upon the current supplies within each of the park classifications, following are the future needs within Bossier City and Bossier Parish:

Gardens, Southgate Estates and Golden Meadows, are currently deficient in the availability of community parks.

There are two additional parks within Bossier City that are currently undeveloped, including Golden Meadows Park and Cane's Landing. These two facilities will contribute to meeting the overall need in the City and Parish when they are developed.

Since there are no community parks outside of the corporate limits of Bossier City, there are significant needs for this type of facility within the MPC planning area. Specifically, the most intensely developed and developing portions of the Parish extending northward between Airline Drive and Benton Road, in the areas along Shed Road and Stockwell Road, east along U.S. 79 and southeast along Sligo Road have the greatest current needs. As the Parish development continues, more facilities will be necessary to adequately serve the requisite need.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are intended to provide residents with ample opportunity for both passive and semi-active recreation activity within close proximity to their neighborhoods. The method of determining the need for neighborhood parks is quite different from an assessment of need for community parks. Whereas community parks are designed for large-scale, area wide events and activities, neighborhood parks are intended to meet the daily recreation needs of nearby residents. The level of activity is limited as a result of the size and location of these parks and the equipment and facilities available. Neighborhood parks should be within a short walking distance (typically one-half mile or less) for the residents of one or more neighborhoods thereby encouraging use and promoting convenience, ease of access, and safety for neighborhood children.

The size of neighborhood parks varies according to the availability of property, method and timing of acquisition, and intended use. One or two vacant lots or several acres may both adequately serve the needs of a neighborhood if there is an even distribution of parks and sufficient facilities and equipment available. National standards recommend a minimum neighborhood park size of 5 acres assuming an adequate and even distribution. Although a 15-acre park may accommodate ball fields and larger recreation and open space areas, three parks that are five acres in size may equally and perhaps better serve the need while providing a broader distribution of neighborhood parks.

Illustrated in Figure 6.2 are the effective service areas of the eight neighborhood playgrounds and parks, including Bicentennial, Field of Dreams, Greenacres, Hooter, Mitchell, Patricia Drive, Shady Grove and Fort Smith playgrounds and Parks. These eight parks provide 50 acres for use by area residents. In addition to the neighborhood parks, also shown are the service areas of the community parks as well as playlots and school properties. Schools provide an assortment of playgrounds, athletic courts and fields, and open space, which, for all intents and purposes, help to meet the neighborhood demand. The community parks are shown because they serve as neighborhood parks for the adjacent residents.

The service area for neighborhood parks is divided into primary and secondary areas. The primary service area is one-quarter mile and the secondary service area is one-half mile. As displayed in Figure 6.2, the one-half service area coverage of the existing neighborhood parks is distributed throughout the most densely populated areas in central Bossier City. However there are several areas in north and south Bossier, including Central Park, Bossier Annex, Westgate Terrace, Southern Gardens, Golden Meadows, Green Acres, Meadowview Park and other neighborhoods that are not within acceptable proximity to a neighborhood park.

Similar to the limited existence of community parks within the MPC planning area, neighborhood parks are of greater deficiency due to their smaller size. Since there are no neighborhood parks within the Parish planning area, there is a significant need for these smaller facilities in the same general areas identified for community parks. Neighborhood parks should be evenly distributed within the subdivisions throughout the planning area.

Achieving a system of neighborhood and community parks that is uniformly distributed may be accomplished in several ways, including pre-development acquisition by the City or Parish, dedication requirements concurrent with subdivision approval, public/private partnerships, and other strategies. While the provision of community parks is generally agreed to be the responsibility of the government entity, there is much less certainty about the responsibility of the entity to provide parks for private development. Requiring the dedication of park land concurrent with a final plat or a development site plan is a

sound method to assure adequate park areas consistent with the demand and impact placed on the public parks system by new development.

Playlots

As displayed in Figure 6.2, there are seven playlots within Bossier City. It is not necessary that these small facilities be evenly distributed throughout the City, but that they are provided to serve dense populations in multiple family and other clustered developments. In areas where there are current deficiencies, there are opportunities for playlots concurrent with new development or redeveloped sites to serve the requisite needs of the immediate population.

Regional Parks

Regional parks are intended for large areas covering a 50 to 60 mile radius and encompassing several communities. While there are no regional parks within the Bossier MPC planning area, there are regional facilities west of the Planning Area in surrounding areas. In Shreveport and Caddo Parish there is the Paul Lynch North Shreveport Metro Park, the Cargill Regional Park and the John M. Ford Regional Park near Cross Lake.

North and east of the Planning Area in Bossier Parish are two Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). Bodcau Wildlife Management Area consists of over 32,000 acres and is located in the northeastern portion of the parish. Loggy Bayou Wildlife Management Area has over 4,200 acres and is located in the southeastern corner of the Parish. Both are owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and serve as flood control project areas. They are jointly managed by the Corps of Engineers and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries. Due to the abundance of native plant and animal species and remote location, both are great resources for camping, outdoor recreation and eco-tourism.

The Cypress/Black Bayou Recreation Area is located northeast of the Planning Area. It is owned and maintained by the Cypress/Black Bayou Recreation & Water Conservation District and provides access to camping, fishing, picnic areas, nature center and petting zoo.

With such resources near the Planning Area, these facilities meet the regional need for this classification of park so it is not necessary for Bossier Parish to duplicate a regional facility in near proximity to Bossier City. Additionally, they provide activities and amenities that are not conducive to populated areas.

Parks and Recreation System Plan

The general plan for future development of Bossier's parks and recreation system was developed through evaluation of existing conditions, planned improvements and projected future needs based upon anticipated development and increases in population. A future plan for the development of parks and recreation areas is shown in **Figure 6.3 - Parks and Recreation System Plan (Bossier City)**. The plan shows the generalized location of proposed neighborhood playgrounds and parks as well as community play fields and parks. In addition, the system plan identifies future bike lanes and trails. Displayed in **Figure 6.4 - Parks and Recreation System Plan (Bossier City-Parish MPC)**, are the generalized locations of proposed neighborhood and community parks to serve the needs of the developed and developing areas of the Parish planning area. As these suburban and rural areas continue to develop, there should be provisions for parks and recreation facilities to meet their requisite needs.

To develop a system of neighborhood and community parks that will adequately serve the existing and projected future parks and recreational needs of the Bossier planning area, the City and Parish need to acquire and develop parks within the identified deficiency areas, as shown on the System Plan. These parks will help to achieve full service area coverage of community playfields and parks and an even distribution of neighborhood playgrounds and parks.

The master plan will be a valuable resource that can be used on a continuous basis in guiding the parks and recreation development program of both the City and Parish. The goals, objectives, and recommended actions of the plan should be referenced in other planning studies and development proposal reports to ensure consideration of existing and planned public parks and recreation areas and open space. As new residential subdivisions are platted and developed, there should be allowances for sufficient land capable of being developed for public park and recreation uses.

Joint Use of School Facilities

School playgrounds, athletic fields and courts provide additional park and recreation areas and, if accessible to the public, will enhance the number and availability of

neighborhood parks within the City and Parish. A reciprocal agreement has been in place for some time primarily for the use of the gym facilities in exchange for use of the Bossier City Civic Center for meetings, graduation functions and other activities. However, with the recent opening of CenturyTel Center the School Board's need for use of the Civic Center has diminished significantly. A reciprocal agreement addresses joint purchase and the use and maintenance of school grounds and equipment, which is mutually beneficial to the School Board as well as City and Parish residents. The sharing of these public resources enables greater efficiency and minimizes duplication.

As displayed in Figure 6.2, the school sites contribute to the service area coverage of the neighborhood parks. While there is some degree of overlap with the neighborhood park facilities, they serve some areas that are not well served by park facilities. If joint use agreements can be reached between the City, Parish and School Board, the coverage of park facilities can be expanded to better serve the area neighborhoods.

Joint use of facilities and inter-jurisdictional agreements reap benefits for all parties and may result in the establishment of park and recreation facilities in unincorporated areas. The development of this plan has created an open forum in which parties have initiated vital dialogue creating the Bossier Parish Recreation Facilities Advisory Group. The initial discussions resulted in the City of Bossier City participating in joint efforts to provide ball field lights at Rusheon Middle School in the amount of \$7,600. While the structure and purpose of the group have not yet been formally established, consideration should be given to expanding the group to include more citizen appointees or ensure public participation in the process. Furthermore, the role of each participating jurisdiction should be clearly defined and ratified by each participating group member. Long term, the Advisory Group could be formalized as a recreation district.

Site Selection Criteria

There are several factors that influence the suitable location of parks and recreation areas. Among them are the surrounding land use characteristics, potential physical development constraints and barriers, and the size and anticipated use of the proposed area. Input from the community should be a primary determinant in the design of park facilities.

An important factor in developing an adequate parks and recreation system is the existence of physical barriers. Barriers

such as arterial roadways and other streets may impede the safety and convenience of walking to a nearby park. Physical obstructions must, therefore, be carefully considered in locating park facilities. The general site selection criteria and principal considerations include the following factors:

Topography:

- ◆ Minimum 50 percent of site should have a maximum gradient of 4 percent with runoff drained from developed areas; and,
- ◆ Desirable views should be preserved and protected.

Soils:

- ◆ Natural topsoil should be suitable for turf grasses and trees; and,
- ◆ Area should be protected from soil erosion during all phases of development.

Vegetation:

- ◆ Natural or landscaped vegetation should include grass areas and trees, with hardy, low maintenance species preferred for planted vegetation;
- ◆ Significant individual specimens or unique wildlife habitats are desirable; and,
- ◆ Irrigation systems should be provided for intensively utilized areas such as playing fields and landscaped areas.

Access and Location:

- ◆ Should be readily accessible to the service area population of pedestrians, bicyclists and vehicles;
- ◆ Should have collector street frontage;
- ◆ Access to linear parks and linkages are highly desirable;
- ◆ Should be centrally located;
- ◆ May serve as a buffer between different land uses or types of residential development; and,
- ◆ Neighborhood park/school sites are highly desirable as long as the public usage does not interfere with school activities.

Operating and Maintenance Standards

Development of parks and recreational facilities cannot be properly programmed without considering criteria for their design and maintenance. Improvements made to parkland should be standardized in order to facilitate

maintenance and repairs, maximize durability and longevity, and establish a minimum quality level. Through careful design and selection of materials, attractive park facilities can be developed that require minimum staff attention.

All park improvements should be in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), local building codes, and all applicable restrictions and requirements. Guidelines for park improvement standards may include roads and parking lots; gates and fences; park buildings (picnic pavilions, restrooms, offices, and maintenance buildings); playground equipment; playground fall surfaces; picnic tables; benches; trash receptacles; grills; bleachers; sports facilities; sidewalks; walking/jogging trails; equestrian trails; and, mountain biking trails.

Maintenance Standards

In order for parks to be perceived as an asset to the City and Parish, they must be well maintained at all times. The parks system should maintain a high level of quality. It is essential that maintenance budgets be adopted as new park facilities are developed. If sufficient funds are not available, parkland should be held in reserve in its natural state until money can be dedicated for both construction and maintenance of facilities.

Park Maintenance Standards, a publication of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), contains a Maintenance Standard Classification System that outlines six general levels of maintenance, including:

- ◆ **Mode I - State-of-the-art Maintenance:** State-of-the-art maintenance applies to a high quality diverse landscape. Usually associated with high traffic urban areas such as public squares, malls, public building grounds or high visitation parks.
- ◆ **Mode II - High Level Maintenance:** Maintenance associated with well-developed park areas with reasonably high visitation.
- ◆ **Mode III - Moderate Level Maintenance:** Maintenance associated with moderate to low levels of development, moderate to low levels of visitation or with agencies that because of budget restrictions cannot afford a higher intensity of maintenance.
- ◆ **Mode IV - Moderately Low Level Maintenance:** Maintenance usually associated with low level of

development, low visitation, undeveloped areas or remote parks.

- ◆ **Mode V - High Visitation Natural Areas:** Maintenance usually associated with large urban or regional parks. Size and user frequency may dictate resident maintenance staff. Road, pathway or trail systems are relatively well developed. Other facilities are included at strategic locations such as entries, trail heads, building complexes and parking lots.
- ◆ **Mode VI - Minimum Level Maintenance:** Maintenance associated with low visitation natural areas or large urban parks that are undeveloped.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Pedestrian and bicycle facilities serve not only as alternative modes of transportation but also as important forms of recreation. Therefore a safe and efficient network of pedestrian and bicycle facilities should be developed in coordination with the Transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan.

Skilled bicyclists usually prefer to travel along the street system and, where possible, should be accommodated through striped bike lanes or extra wide curb lanes on arterials and collectors. The majority of bicyclists, however, are less skilled and need to be separated from high speeds and high volume traffic through the use of off-street bike lanes and paths. Typical sections for different bikeway classifications are displayed in **Figure 6.5 - Typical Bikeway Sections**. Local and collector streets are suitable for use by most adult bicycle riders while minor arterial streets are suitable for limited use by bicyclists due to higher traffic volumes and higher speeds. Further information on pedestrian and bicycle facilities is provided in the Transportation element.

A conceptual plan for trail and bikeway system development is included in Figure 6.3 and 6.4. A system of off-street bike and hike trails should be developed which link major attractions and destinations such as neighborhoods, parks, schools and other popular locations. These can be facilitated along the area's network of bayous, land permitting. The proposed system of bike routes should also connect to existing trails and routes and should be designed and constructed in

compliance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Greenways and park and connector trails are also instrumental in creating a cohesive park and recreation system. The NRPA defines park trails as "multipurpose trails located within greenways, parks, and natural resource areas." Park trails are important to the trail system and can be utilized for hiking, walking, jogging, and bicycling. Trails throughout parks and greenways serve to tie parks together and allow for safe and efficient pedestrian movement throughout the park system. Opportunities for park trails in communities include abandoned railroads, waterfront areas, utility rights of way, and scenic and historic routes. Connector trails allow for pedestrian and bicycle travel to and from parks.

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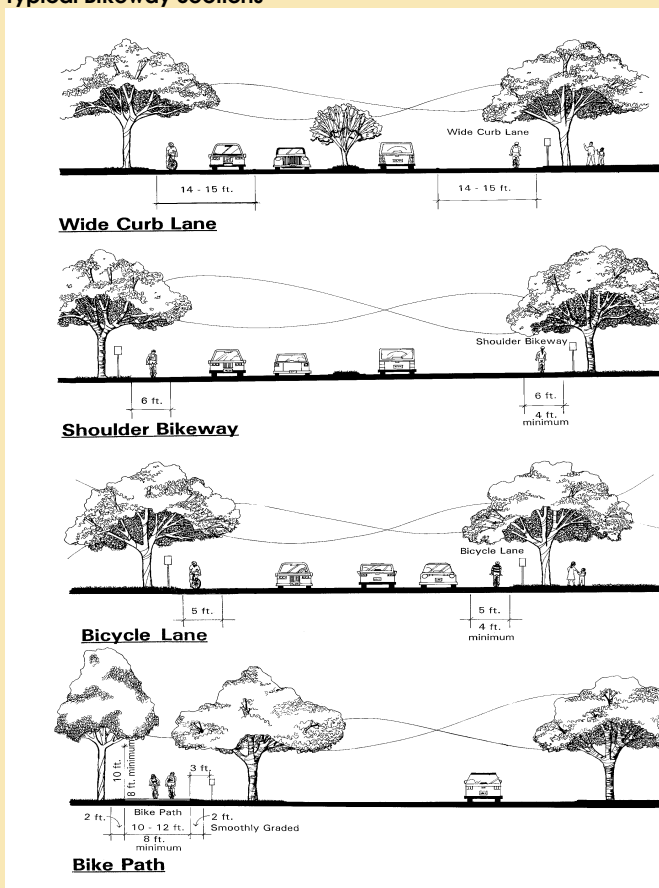
The Parks and Recreation System Plan includes a network of bike lanes, trails and sidewalks. The proposed bicycle and pedestrian network utilizes a variety of trail sections, including trails along natural courses, shoulder bikeways, and sidewalks in restricted areas. The trail system plan and the sidewalk plan in the Transportation element are coordinated to ensure continuity and connections between sidewalks and trails. Future subdivisions and development will be linked to the trail system through appropriate sidewalk connections. The plan utilizes opportunities along the Red River for greenways and trails and connects existing parks and trails, creating a cohesive recreation system.

Observations and Recommendations

As this plan was prepared there were observations pertaining to the parks and recreation system, which contributed to the goals, objectives, policies and action statements identified earlier in this chapter. Others general observations and key recommendations for development of an adequate parks, recreation and open space system in the Bossier City-Parish MPC area include:

- ◆ Areas surrounding Barksdale Air Force Base are restricted to significant development due to compliance with regulations concerning excessive noise levels emitting from the base. Many of these areas, not yet encroached by development should remain in a "natural" state. Development rights may be acquired through transfer of development rights (TDR) or conservation easements.

Figure 6.5
Typical Bikeway Sections



Source: Wilbur Smith Associates

- ◆ Many of the current parks make optimal use of limited resources. For instance, playlots are often located adjacent to elementary schools and several of the parks are adjacent or include community centers, libraries and other public use facilities. These joint use arrangements are a sound approach to systems planning and should be duplicated and improved upon in the future.
- ◆ The site of the proposed Bossier Parish Community College offers opportunities for joint use of parks and open space adjacent to the college facilities and grounds. While it is still early in the development process, it is advisable to coordinate with the community college to acquire a park or public open space on or adjacent to this site.
- ◆ While the park's site and facilities are important features, access is paramount. Parks such as Hooter and Mike Woods are difficult to find and access. Mike Woods in particular, generates a significant amount of traffic through a residential area. Future park sites should not only be selected based upon service area, needs and availability of land, but also access, to get residents to the parks, without leading to negative neighborhood impacts.
- ◆ Areas of the Parish that are relatively undisturbed and offer opportunities for conservation and preservation need be identified and considered in the context of future development.
- ◆ There are an undetermined but significant amount of privately owned parks and recreation facilities throughout the planning area. These facilities are generally owned and maintained by homeowners' associations or other private developers or nonprofit agencies. These facilities complement the public system and help to relieve the overall demand for areas and facilities.
- ◆ Within the planning area is a significant network of low profile levees for flood protection along the Red River. While the public safety component of maintaining dam safety is primary, adjacent easements and rights-of-way may be utilized as connectors or linkages with pedestrian and bicycle trails.
- ◆ Lands need to be acquired or reserved in the identified future growth areas well in advance of ensuing development to ensure availability, protection, and reasonable acquisition costs.

- ◆ Acquisition of conservation easements or fee simple purchase of land adjacent to the Red River is important to preserve public open space and environmentally sensitive lands.
- ◆ An "adopt-a-park" program to solicit the involvement of neighborhoods and local organizations will greatly aid in the maintenance and policing of public parks and recreation areas.

Funding Sources

Most capital investments involve the outlay of substantial funds; therefore local governments often must pay for new facilities through appropriations in the annual operating and capital budgets. There are numerous techniques available to pay for capital improvements over a longer period of time. Some of the available techniques include:

Local Financing Options

- ◆ **Current Revenue** - This technique is known as "pay-as-you-go" financing and is the financing of improvements from current revenues such as general taxation, fees, service charges, special established funds, or special assessments.
- ◆ **Reserve Funds** - The use of reserve funds is made possible by accumulating funds in advance for capital acquisition or development. The accumulation may result from surplus or earmarked operational revenues, funds in depreciation reserves, or the sale of capital assets.
- ◆ **Enterprise and Revenue Funds** - Many cities and parishes establish accounts that are earmarked for park and recreation programs. These accounts are used to fund programs and to acquire, operate, and maintain facilities.
- ◆ **General Obligation Bonds** - The use of this method involves the taxing power of a jurisdiction as it is pledged to pay the interest and principal to retire the debt. General obligation bonds can be sold to finance permanent types of improvements such as park and recreational areas and facilities. Voter approval may be required.

- ◆ **Lease-Purchase** - Local governments utilizing this innovative financing approach prepare standards and specifications for the development of a park by a private company. The facility is then leased to a jurisdiction for a specified period of time. Title to the park and facilities can be conveyed to the local government at the end of the lease period without future payments. The rental over the years will have paid the total original cost plus interest.
- ◆ **Eminent Domain** - The power of eminent domain allows a local government to acquire private property for public use. Although this is not a common practice for the acquisition and development of park and recreational areas, it is a tool that can be used to purchase property within certain areas of the City and Parish, particularly within established neighborhoods. The property would be acquired through condemnation with "just compensation" paid to the property owner.
- ◆ **Authorities and Special Districts** - Special authorities or districts such as a recreation district, which is allowed in Louisiana, may be created to provide public facilities such as parks and recreational areas. These authorities are commonly created to avoid the restrictive debt limitations of local governments. They may be financed through revenue bonds retired by user charges or fees, or in some instances, the authority may have the power to tax.

Many parishes throughout the state have utilized this tool. The legislation enables the Police Jury to create a single or multiple recreation districts to own and operate recreation facilities and develop recreation activities. Since incorporated areas may also be included, Bossier City could participate through the dissolution of its present parks and recreation function, rededicating its assets to the newly established MPC Planning Area recreation district. Administration of the district's affairs would be similar to that which exists under the City's hand, with the appointment of a recreation board. The resulting five-member board of commissioners would consist of at least one appointee from each included municipality.

The district is further enabled to issue bonds to acquire land, buildings and equipment, with voter approval as a prerequisite. An ad valorem tax may also be imposed with voter approval not to exceed 15 mills for a period not to exceed ten years for operations and maintenance.

- ◆ **Sales Tax** - Through a public referendum, a sales tax may be established of any size, typically one-half to one cent, to generate general revenue for the acquisition and development of parks and recreation areas. The sales tax may have a limited duration or may be permanent.
- ◆ **User Fees** - User fees may be an effective cost recovery technique to recover a reasonable portion of the costs to administer, operate, and maintain public parks and open space. Examples of user fees include registration or entry fees for recreational programs and equipment and facility rental charges.
- ◆ **In-kind Services and Volunteer Participation** - In-kind services may be coordinated with other departments and governmental entities to perform the labor on specific construction projects. Individuals, sports associations, private businesses, civic groups are just a few examples of entities and organizations that may furnish volunteer participation.

State and Federal Assistance

State and federal grants-in-aid are available to finance a large number of programs. The cost of funding parks may be borne completely by grant funds, or a typical requirement is a local share. Programs such as federal revenue sharing and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) have given local governments more freedom on how they spend their grant money. Some of the programs currently available include:

- ◆ **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** - The use of CDBG funds may be used on projects, which benefit persons with low and moderate incomes. Funding is available on an 80/20 cost share basis.
- ◆ **Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund** - This fund is co-administered by the National Park Service and the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. Funds are available to provide planning, land acquisition and development assistance for "outdoor recreation." This is a 50-50 matching grant program administered through the state.
- ◆ **Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR)** - This program was established to provide matching grants and technical assistance to economically distressed urban communities providing direct Federal

assistance for rehabilitation of critically needed recreation facilities. It is designed to encourage systematic local planning and commitment to continuing operation and maintenance of recreation programs, sites, and facilities. Per the National Park Service website, three types of grants have been available through the UPARR program - Rehabilitation, Innovation, and Planning. Rehabilitation grants provide capital funding to renovate or redesign existing close-to-home recreation facilities. Innovation grants usually involve more modest amounts of funding aimed at supporting specific activities that either increase recreation programs or improve the efficiency of the local government to operate existing programs. Planning grants provided funds for the development of a Recovery Action Program plan.

- ◆ **Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA)** - This program is available for planning assistance and technical assistance on projects emphasizing environmental protection, open space accessibility and construction. This program is available to qualified private organizations and local governments. Public involvement is a requirement of this program.
- ◆ **Transportation Equity Act for the Twenty-first Century (TEA-21)** - This program provides funding for transportation-related bicycle and pedestrian facilities. There is a Surface Transportation Program (STP) category, which allows cities and parishes the option of using bridge and road funds for providing bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Enhancements can include bicycle and pedestrian facilities, rail corridor preservation, scenic and environmental transportation opportunities and improvements to historical transportation sites. Funds from this program could be used to establish corridor linkages between neighborhoods and park and recreational areas.
- ◆ **Federal Lands Highway Funds** - This program provides funds for bicycle and pedestrian transportation facilities in conjunction with trails, roads, highways and parkways. The primary intent of this program is to assist in the construction of transportation facilities. This is a 100 percent federal share program. The use of this fund would primarily be for the acquisition of right-of-way and development of trail linkages connecting residential neighborhoods with the public parks system.

- ◆ **The Landscape Cost Sharing Program** - This program is administered by the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation. Through this program, there is 50 percent cost sharing available for both highway and pedestrian landscape projects on routes within the designated permanent state highway system.
- ◆ **America the Beautiful Tree Planting Program** - This program is administered by the Department of Forestry. This is an outgrowth of former President Bush's proposal to plant one billion trees in the United States by the end of the century to mitigate the greenhouse effect. Funding is available for public and private projects on a 50 percent cost share basis.
- ◆ **Cooperative Forestry Assistance Funds** - This program is administered by the Department of Forestry. Matching grants are available on a 50 percent cost share basis for projects including trails and greenways, beautification efforts, and public education and training. Grants range in size from \$5,000.00 to \$10,000.00 and may be matched with in-kind services or private financing.
- ◆ **American Greenways DuPont Awards Program** - This program is administered by The Conservation Fund, which provides grants of \$500 to \$2,500 to local greenway projects. Grants can be used for almost any activity that serves as a catalyst for local greenways planning, design, or development. Most of the grant programs are reviewed and selected on a competitive basis, therefore applications for funding will be evaluated based on the assessment of local need, the existence of an adopted Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan, and the availability of local matching funds. Although grants provide an alternative means of financing local park and recreational area improvements, they should not serve as the sole basis for funding of a local park and recreation system.

Private Financing Alternatives

In addition to capital improvement financing and state and federal assistance, there are a variety of innovative approaches to financing public park and recreation areas. The use of incentives to encourage private

financing, public-private partnerships, land dedication or donation can be an effective strategy to develop an area wide park and recreation system without relying on the City and Parish to fully fund the program. In addition, the use of impact fees may help to offset the impacts of private development on the demand and use of public facilities and services. The following private funding approaches may be available.

- ◆ **Land Donation** - Property owners may be willing to donate land to the City or Parish for use as a public park. The City and Parish should encourage donation subject to established guidelines for the development of park and recreational areas. Considerations should include the suitability of the land for park development; conformance with the objectives of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan; and proximity to neighborhoods, natural features, and adjacent land uses.
- ◆ **Trust Fund** - The City and Parish could establish a trust fund for citizens to will a portion or all of their estate to public parks and recreational use. Legal provisions would need to be established for the conveyance of property. In addition, the City and Parish should establish and use guidelines for the acceptance of suitable parkland property. The Trust Fund would be incorporated as a 501(C) 3 non-profit corporation. This would allow possible income tax benefits for the donors.
- ◆ **Private Financing** - Community organizations or local service clubs could assist in acquiring and developing park and recreational areas by providing the local match for state or federal grants-in-aid. Another option is 100 percent financing by a private entity with dedication to the City or Parish.
- ◆ **Dedication** - As part of the subdivision process, the City and Parish may require an equitable and reasonable amount of land to be dedicated for park and recreational use. In order to abide by legal validity tests and to avoid a "taking" of private property, however, the amount of property to be dedicated must be roughly proportional to the demand for park and recreational services placed on the City and Parish by a private development.
- ◆ **Fee-In-Lieu of Dedication or Improvement** - The use of impact fees may be used to collect revenue for the acquisition and development of park and recreational areas. Similar to the dedication approach, the required

fees must also be roughly proportional to the burden for the provision of park and recreational services resulting from private development. An example of a "fee-in-lieu of improvement" is a park excise tax that would require a developer to pay a fee (on a per square foot or per dwelling unit cost basis) upon issuance of a building permit.

- ◆ **Tax Deferral** - This method may be used to encourage property owners to defer the development of their land while the City or Parish use it for public open space or a semi-developed park. During the deferral period, the property would be assessed as an undeveloped parcel, with the collection of taxes to be deferred until the property is developed. The City or Parish would secure an agreement with the property owner with established conditions of use and provisions for liability and ongoing maintenance. In addition, the City or Parish would obtain a recreation easement for "temporary" use of the property.
- ◆ **Tax Reductions** - Donation of private land for public use may reduce an individual's federal income tax burden. Also, the market value of a recreation easement may reduce the tax burden either federally or locally, if approved by the local government.