



City of Helena

City of Helena Montana



PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

Adopted October, 2010

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Definitions and Acronyms

BRGC – Bill Roberts Municipal Golf Course

Boulevard: The strip of property, usually grass and treed area, that is located between the street and the sidewalk.

COP – Certificate of Participation

CCIP – Comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan

City: The City of Helena, Lewis and Clark County, state of Montana.

CTEP – Community Transportation Enhancement Program

Community parks: Use existing information, update recommendations

Curb only: When no sidewalk is present in street right-of-way.

Curbside sidewalk: A cement or brick surface that is designated for pedestrian use that is located immediately adjacent to the street.

Developed parkland: Land deeded to the City, usually during the subdivision process, which has infrastructure, such as picnic tables or playground equipment.

Director: The director of parks and recreation, who is the designated official for the city to carry out the enforcement of this chapter, or the director's authorized representative(s).

District: The Lewis and Clark County Weed Management District.

Landscape plan: A drawing that is drawn to scale showing the location of plant material and describes maintenance of the area.

Landscaping: Some combination of planted, living trees, shrubs, hedges, vines, ground cover, flowers and lawns suitable for the climate, exposure, and site condition.

Mini parks: A very small park or outdoor area for public leisure. May contain benches, picnic tables and/or playground equipment.

Neighborhood Parks: A park which provides space and recreation activities for the immediate neighborhood in which it is located. It is considered an extension of neighborhood residents' "out-of-yard" and outdoor use area.

Noxious weeds: Any weed defined and designated as a noxious weed by the Lewis and Clark County Board of County Commissioners and under title 7, chapter 22, part 21, Montana Code Annotated.

Nuisance weeds: All weeds, including noxious weeds, and other uncared for vegetation

creating a potential fire hazard, visual obstruction for pedestrians or vehicles, physical obstruction for pedestrians or vehicles, or potential for the spread of said vegetation.

Open space areas also called open lands: Any undeveloped land for which the purpose is to stay natural. Mount Helena is a vast open space as are the south hills trails areas.

POS – Point of Sale. A cashiering system designed to keep track of customer numbers, inventory, and sales.

Sidewalk: A cement or brick surface that is designated for pedestrian use.

Special use areas: A special use park is often designed as a revenue-generating enterprise created to satisfy demand for a particular sport, recreational activity, or special event. A special use park may also be a sports park combined with enterprise activities and administered as a community recreation resource.

Sports fields: A park designed for a specific athletic use or uses.

Undeveloped parkland: Land deeded to the City, usually during the subdivision process, which does not contain any infrastructure.

Variance: The process by which one may change the standard landscaping in the boulevard or right-of-way.

Weed management or control: The planning and implementation of a coordinated program for the containment, suppression and, where possible, eradication of noxious weeds. (Ord. 2558, 6-4-1990; amd. Ord. 2739, 3-20-1995)

Wetlands: The areas that are periodically or permanently inundated by surface or ground water and support vegetation adapted for life in saturated soil. Wetlands include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas.

Xeriscape landscaping: A type of landscaping that uses native plants and considers water usage in designing the landscape plan of the area.

CHAPTER 1. Introduction

A. Preface

The City of Helena is a city of activity. Helena is an urban center and the state capital. In contrast, there are over 2,297 acres of parks, undeveloped parkland and open space on the in the city. This includes Mount Helena City Park, which is 707 acres. From the Mount Helena parking area, one can see the entire city laid out just below. In the summer, music can be heard drifting up from the evening music in the park series. People enjoy hiking with their dogs, running with their friends, or simply taking in the view of the city.

Helena is a vibrant, diverse community. Its parks and recreation system needs to reflect the variety of ways that its residents choose to recreate, and to provide for multiple uses and recreation experiences. This includes providing both active and passive opportunities for recreation, monitoring trends for new services and facilities, and retiring those that are no longer in demand.

The parks and open spaces of Helena are critical elements in the sense of place. A 1995 open space bond allowed the City Commission to purchase much of the current open space, while an annual assessment, passed in 2007, provides for open space maintenance. Also in 2007, the voters approved a \$7 million General Obligation bond for upgrades to Kindrick Legion Field, Centennial Park, Memorial Pool and expansion of the existing skatepark.

This plan is an update to the 1998 plan that was adopted following an extensive process that involved data collection, research, fieldwork, community meetings, surveys and public meetings. The purpose of the updated plan is to assess the needs of the community for parks, recreation, open spaces, greenways, and trails and to identify the actions to be taken to improve, enhance and maintain these facilities, opportunities and programs.

The content of the 2010-2020 plan is similar to the previous version. Code enforcement has been added and substantial revisions to the organization of the document have occurred. In this version, the policy statements have been redefined as “goals”, followed by recommendations and an annual work plan. These changes are intended to make the revised document easier to read, implement and monitor.

In addition, the recommendations and their timing for facility improvements are not static but can be altered periodically to reflect changes in public policy and redirection of recreation programming determined by the Mayor, City Commission, City Manager and the City/County Parks Board.

City-County Parks Board Mission Statement

“The City-County Parks Board’s mission is to promote investment in the development and maintenance of parks, recreation, trails and open space.” In this way, the City of Helena will maintain a high quality of life and provide opportunity for an activity level for all residents.

City of Helena Parks and Recreation Department Mission Statement

“The City of Helena Parks and Recreation Department is committed to protecting and enhancing Helena’s natural beauty through a vibrant system of parks, trails and open spaces; providing recreational and cultural opportunities, while preserving and promoting a quality living environment.”

Integration with the City of Helena Growth Policy

City of Helena staff has revised the comprehensive plan known as the Growth Policy. Montana Code Annotated Section 76-1-601 MCA requires a growth policy to describe public facilities and services including parks and open space.

In the larger context, the Growth Policy addresses the issues that affect quality of life within the City of Helena. The goals and policies of the Growth Policy focus on the concerns of the residents to maintain quality of life, as well as maintaining open spaces, guide future growth and development, and plan for the future of the city.

The City of Helena Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan is consistent with the Growth Policy. This planning document describes the approach the City of Helena will take to meet parks and recreation needs. It assesses the need for park and recreation facilities, establishes design standards for future park acquisition and development, delineates policies for management of parks, recreation and open space, and establishes short and long-term goals for meeting the city’s park and recreation needs.

B. Purpose of the Plan

The primary purpose of this plan is to develop goals and recommendations for managing park and recreation services in the City of Helena. While the plan is intended to meet many planning objectives, the primary purposes are to:

- Determine the need for parks, open space, trail systems and other recreation facilities within the urban area of Helena.
- Determine where additional parks, open space, trail systems and other recreational facilities should be located.
- Recommend ways to manage and maintain a park and recreation program.

- Prioritize improvements and other actions needed to implement the plan and recommend a financing strategy.

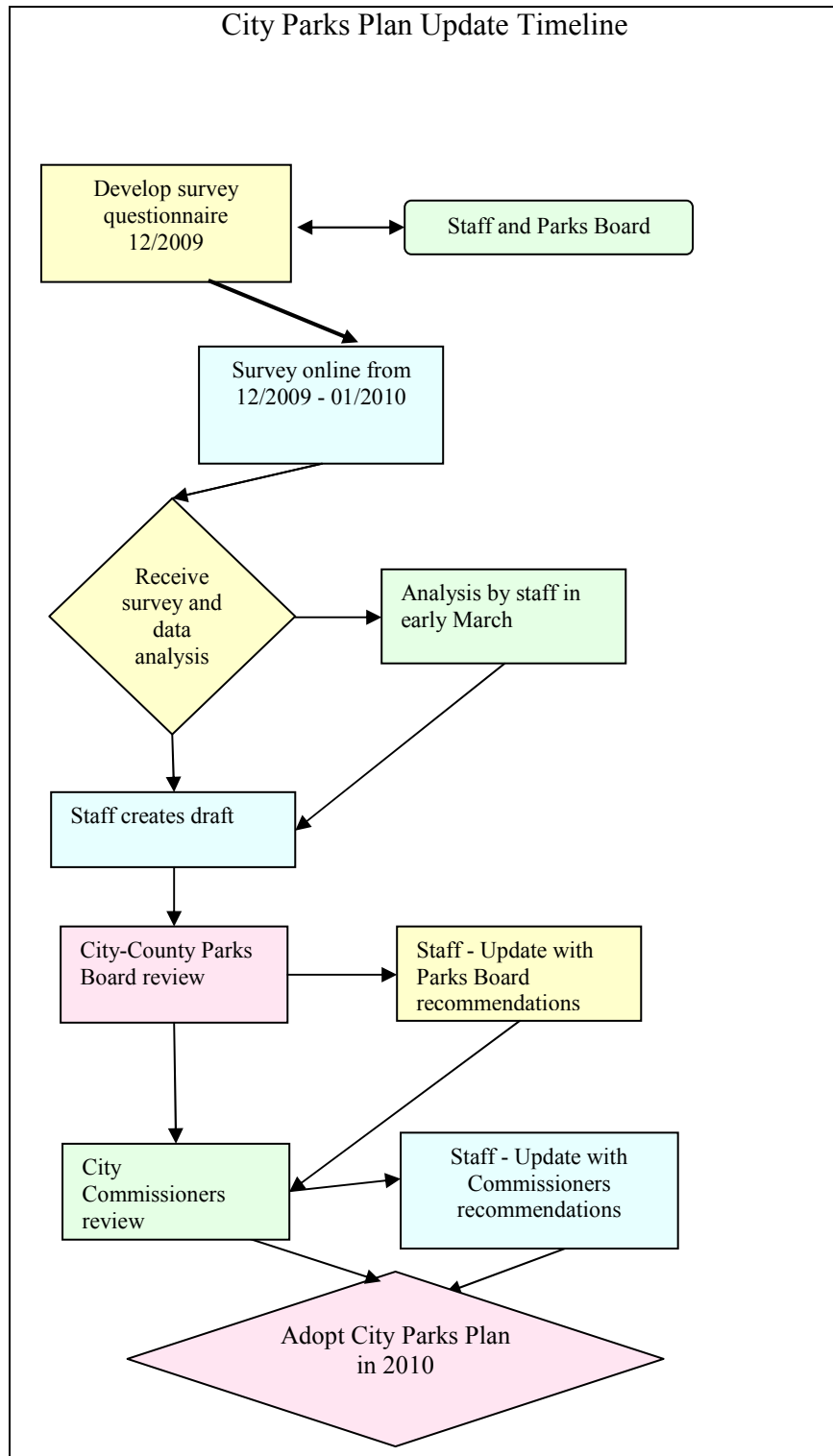
C. Planning Process

The planning process was shared among the City of Helena Parks and Recreation staff and the Consolidated Parks Board. In addition, staff from Lewis and Clark County was contracted to assist with the development of this plan.

Two online surveys were developed. The general parks, recreation and open space survey was complete in February 2009. A specific recreation survey was completed in January 2010. In addition, multiple workshops were held as well as two public meetings. Seven comment letters were received.



1. Planning Timeline



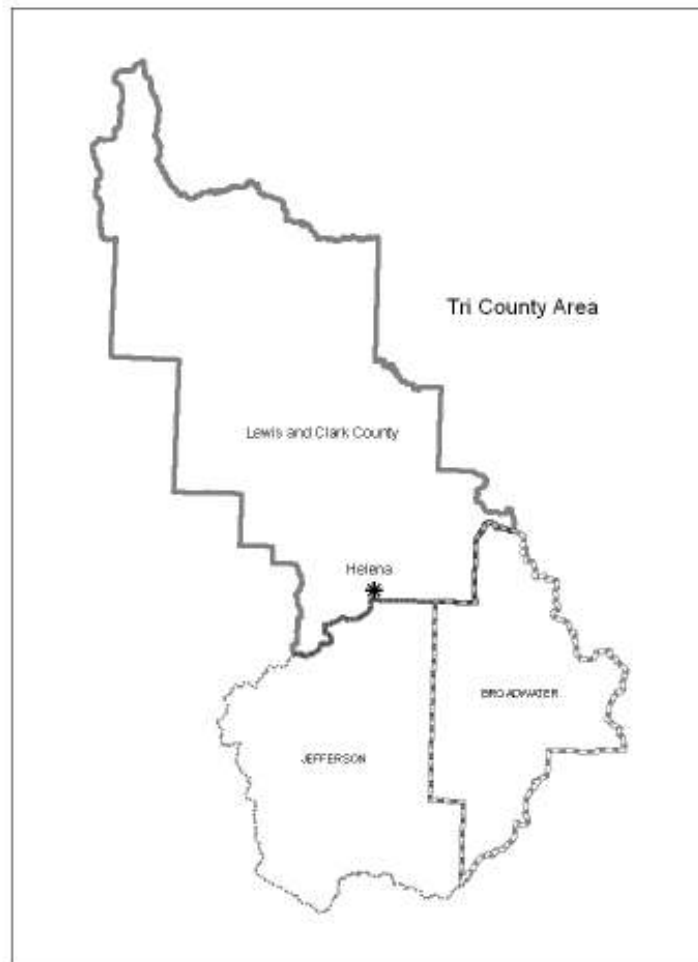
CHAPTER 2. Community Profile

A. Introduction

This section of the report is a summary of community characteristics in Helena that have had an impact on park and recreation issues.

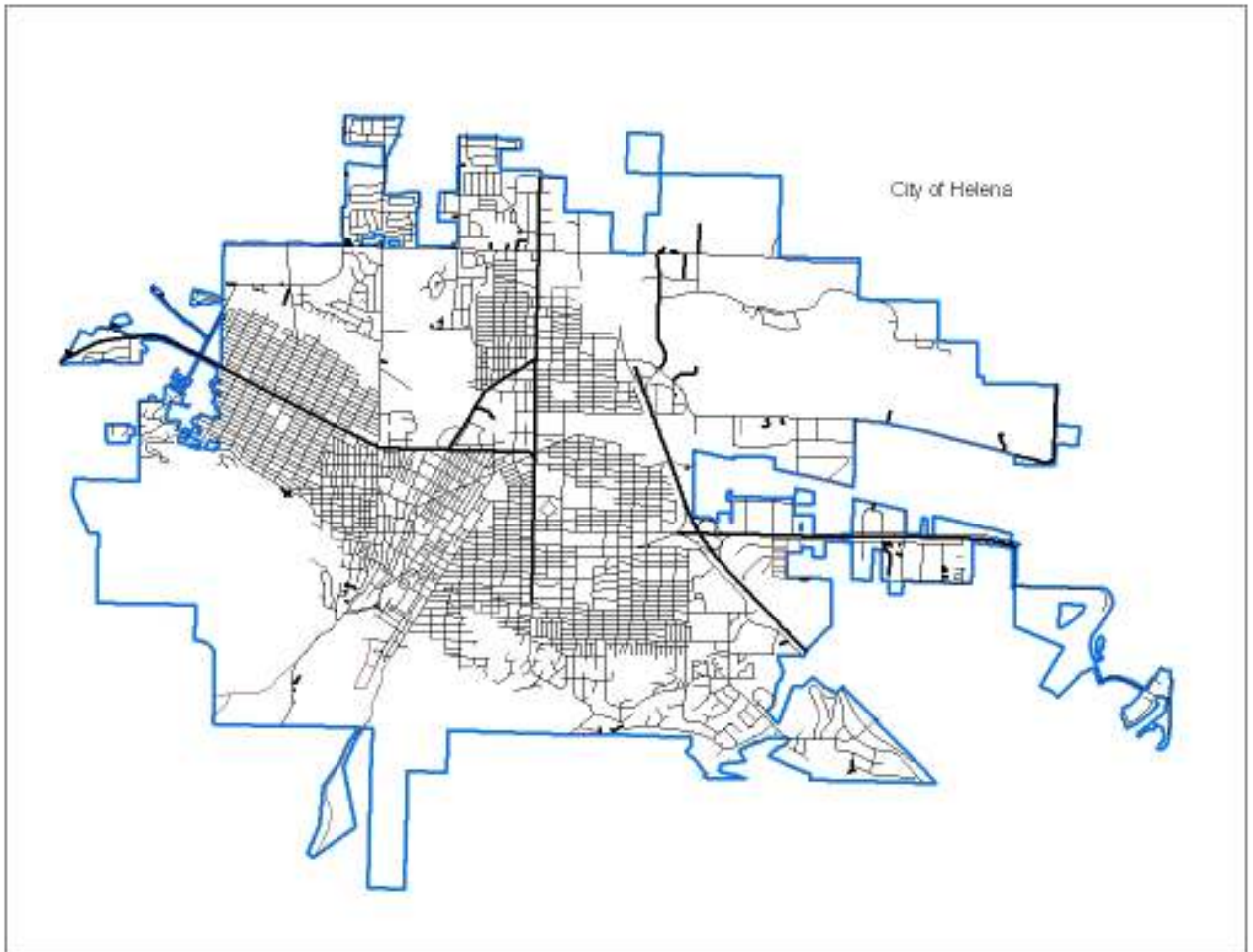
B. Regional Context

The City of Helena, which is the capitol of the state of Montana, is located in the southern section of Lewis and Clark County. Because of its proximity to Jefferson and Broadwater counties, Helena park and recreation facilities are utilized by residents from the tri-county area. This reality impacts service to funding levels, as county residents from Lewis and Clark, Jefferson and Broadwater Counties do not pay the taxes or assessments for the park system.



C. Planning Area

The planning area for this study includes all of the Helena city limits, which encompasses approximately 20 square miles. The city limits range from Granite Street and Highway 12 on the west and east nearly to the city of East Helena. Annexations of the Nob Hill area and lands east of Interstate 15 have expanded the boundaries of the city.



D. Physical Features

The City of Helena and surrounding area has recreation opportunities from hills to lakes. The topography changes approximately 1,200 feet from downtown Helena to the top of Mount Helena. Trail running, mountain biking and getting out with the dog are popular activities in the south hills area of the city. During the warm months, kayakers, anglers and swimmers fill Spring Meadow Lake State Park, which is outside of the city limits on the west end of town.

E. Climate

The City of Helena has four distinct seasons. Winter temperatures average 10° with over a 40% chance of sun, while summers are warm, sunny and dry. Precipitation averages roughly

11 inches a year. Approximately half of this amount falls between the months of May and July. February is the driest month, while June is the wettest month.

The variety of climatic conditions provides an abundance of different recreational activities throughout the year.

F. Population Characteristics

Population characteristics within a community are important because they influence the level and type of recreational interests and activity. The following statistics are from the 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates on the Census.gov website for Helena.

G. Population Projections

Shown below is the population projection for the City of Helena. The projection assumes an average annual growth rate of 2% in the city, which is the average growth rate from 1990 to 2008.

Table 1
Population Estimates and Projections
City of Helena

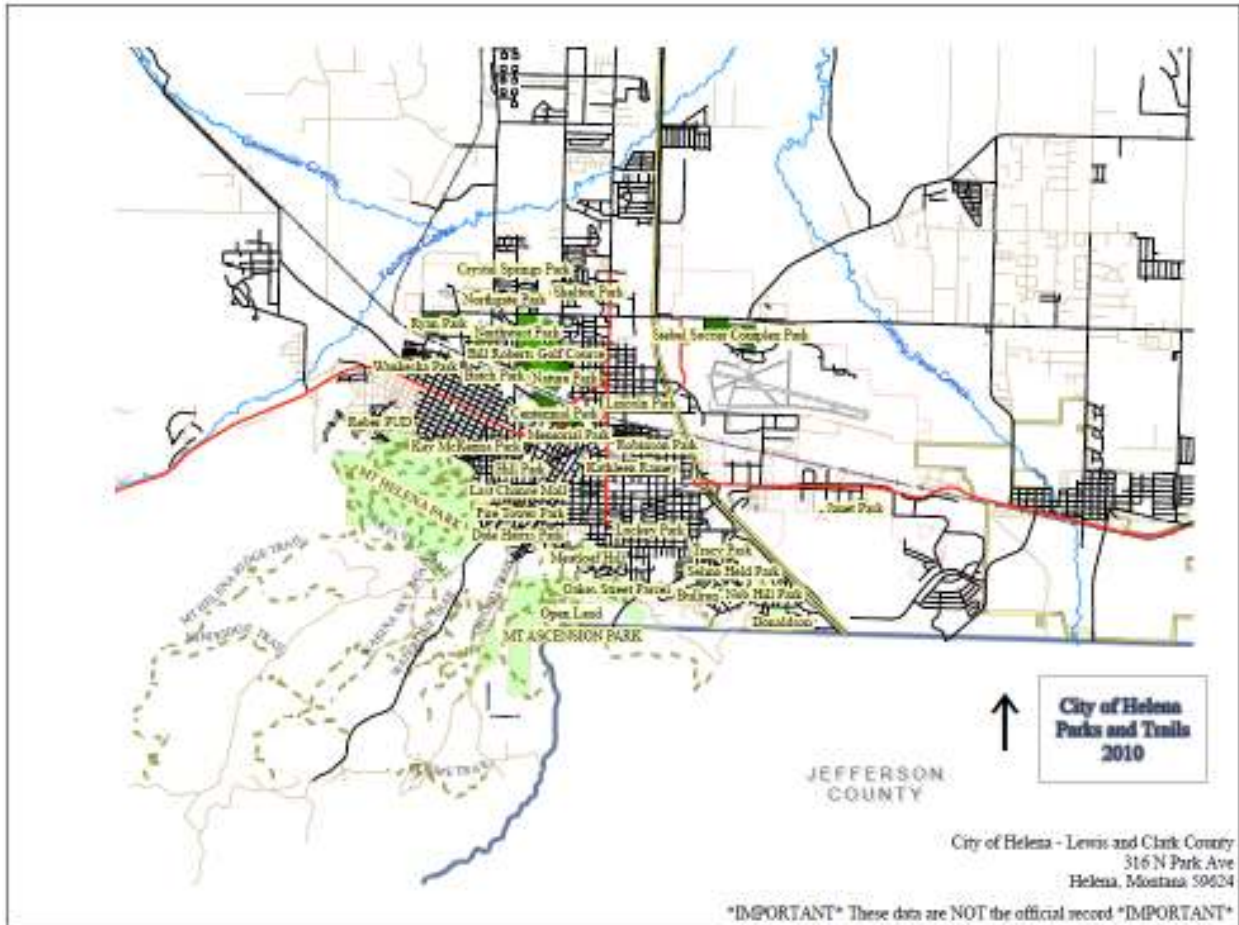
Year	Helena Population
1990	24,569
2000	25,780
2008	29,351
2020 (Projected)	32,990

The residents of the Helena Valley also utilize the City for park and recreation services, which increases the impact on the City's park facilities. Currently, the City of Helena's population is 29,351 residents and Lewis and Clark County's is 60,925 (2008 State of Montana census estimates). By 2030, the County may increase by approximately 20,000 people, inclusive of the cities of Helena and East Helena. The segment of the population that will be 55 years old and older will increase significantly to represent approximately 25% or more of the total population.

CHAPTER 3. Existing Park and Recreation Areas

A) Developed & Undeveloped Parklands

Helena has more than 2,297 acres of parks, undeveloped parkland and open lands. The City's Parks and Recreation Department operates and maintains trails, an outdoor swimming pool and waterpark, ice rinks, ball fields, tennis courts, and a variety of neighborhood parks.



Larger map at the back of this document.

Parks and Open Spaces

Park	Location
Barney	1950 Cleveland St.
Batch	2101 N. Benton Ave.
Beattie	1400 Helena Ave.
Bill Roberts Golf Course	2201 N. Benton Ave.
Bull Run	766 S. California St.
Centennial/Bausch	1250 Last Chance Gulch
Charles Van Hook Wetland	East of Fairgrounds
Cherry	900 Cherry Ave.
Civic Center	340 Neill Ave.
Clinton	350 S. Beattie St.
Constitution	301 N. Last Chance Gulch
Cruse	551 N. Last Chance Gulch
Crystal Springs	232 Willowbrook Dr.
Cunningham	1234 Floweree St.
Dale Harris	279 S. Cruse Ave.
Diehl Hill	South Hills Dr.
Donaldson	Saddle Dr.
Fire Tower	111 S. Cruse Ave.
Heritage	140 N. Park Ave.
Highway	225 W. Lyndale Ave.
Hill/Women's	561 N. Park Ave.
Janet Park	500 Janet St.
Kay McKenna	740 Getchell St
KCAP	110 E. Broadway
Kessler	501 N. Davis
Kindrick-Legion Field	1300 N. Ewing St.
Last Chance Gulch Mall	Last Chance Gulch
Lincoln	1800 N. Roberts St.
Lockey	1700 E. Broadway St.
Meatloaf Hill	East End of 2nd St.
Memorial	1203 N. Last Chance Gulch
Mount Ascension	SE Helena
Mount Helena	SW Helena
Nature	2250 Gold Ave.
Nob Hill	Nob Hill Subdivision

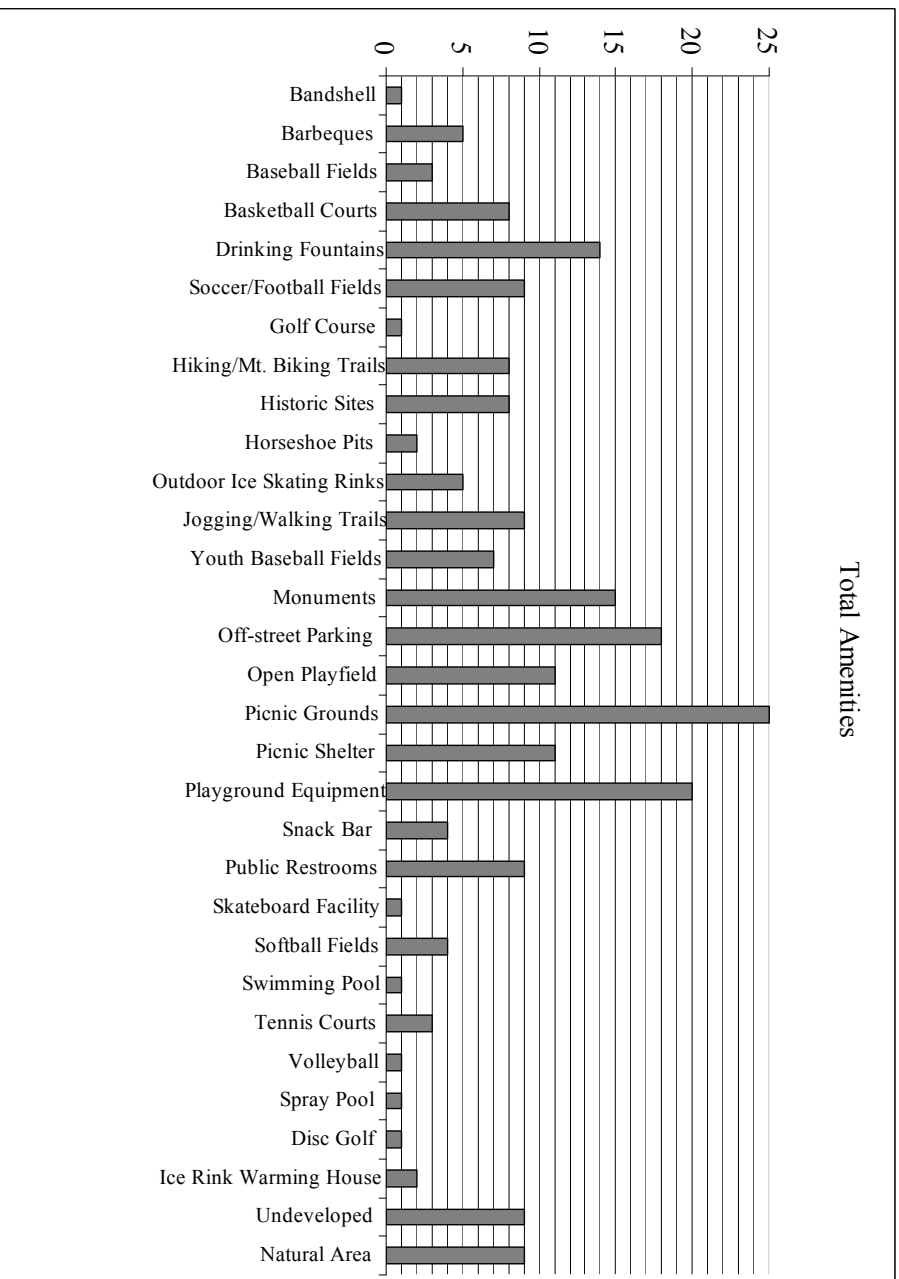
Park	Location
Northgate	3276 N. Benton Ave.
Northwest	103 Valley Drive
Oakes Street	1800 Oakes St.
Pioneer	201 S. Park Ave.
Pioneer Village	1 Colter Loop Dr.
Pocha	310 State St.
Ramey	900 N. Harris St.
Reber	2000 University St.
Reeders Alley/Pioneer Cabin	208 S. Park Ave.
Robinson	1700 Townsend Ave.
Ryan/Exchange	Henderson & Custer
Selma Held Park (Beltview)	2749 Beltview Dr.
Siebel Fields	Skyway Dr & Kelleher Ln
Sixth Ward	1235 Bozeman St.
Skelton	875 Road Runner St.
Tracy	2450 Tracy Dr.
Triangle	1401 Floweree St.
Waukesha	1600 Waukesha Ave.
Wesleyan	801 Helena Ave.
Women's Park	575 Fuller Ave.
Yund	601 N. Benton Ave.

Other City Owned Undeveloped Parcels

Type	Park Name
Open Land	Top of Crystal Dr and Winscott Ln
Open Land	DeFord Trail Davis Gulch Area
Open Land	DeFord Trail Tucker Gulch Area
Open Land	East of Dale Harris Park in original Helena Townsite
Open Land	North slope Mt Ascension
Open Land	Parcel East of Lime Kiln
Open Land	Rocky Rd Trail to Entertainment Trail Area

B) Park Facilities and Amenities

The City of Helena parks offer a variety of park and recreational choices. One can get away from it all on Mount Helena, play a game of tennis in Lockey Park, swim at the Last Chance Splash Waterpark and Pool, or have a family picnic. Charts of the available amenities and locations are on the following pages.



Helena Parks & Facilities	
Park Name	
Barney	X
Barth	
Beatrice	
Bill Roberts Golf Course	
Bull Run	
	Band shell
	Barbeques
	Baseball Fields
	Basketball Courts
	Community Gardens
	Disc Golf
	Drinking Fountains
	Golf Course
	Hiking/Mt. Biking Trails
	Historic Sites
	Horseshoe Pits
	Ice Rink Warming House
	Jogging/Walking Trails
	Monuments
	Natural Area
	Off-street Parking
	Open Playfield
	Outdoor Ice Skating Rinks
	Picnic Grounds
	Picnic Shelter
	Playground Equipment
	Public Restrooms
	Skateboard Facility
	Snack Bar
	Soccer/Football Fields
	Softball Fields
	Swimming Pool
	Tennis Courts

Helena Parks & Facilities																										
Park Name	Band shell	Barbeques	Baseball Fields	Basketball Courts	Community Gardens	Disc Golf	Drinking Fountains	Golf Course	Hiking/Mt. Biking Trails	Historic Sites	Horseshoe Pits	Ice Rink Warming House	Jogging/Walking Trails	Monuments	Natural Area	Off-street Parking	Open Playfield	Outdoor Ice Skating Rinks	Picnic Grounds	Picnic Shelter	Playground Equipment	Public Restrooms	Skateboard Facility	Snack Bar	Soccer/Football Fields	Softball Fields
Centennial/Bausch									X	X		X	X	X	X	X							X		X	
Charles Van Hook Wetland															X											
Cherry				X			X												X	X	X					
Civic Center							X		X	X				X		X			X		X	X				
Clinton				X													X		X		X					
Constitution										X				X					X							
Cruse																			X							
Crystal Springs																										
Cunningham				X			X											X	X	X	X					
Dale Harris									X						X											
Diehl Hill															X											
Donaldson						X									X		X	X	X							
Fire Tower									X	X			X	X	X				X							
Heritage										X				X					X							
Highway																	X									
Hill/Women's							X			X				X			X		X							
Kay McKenna							X							X		X			X		X	X				
KCAP														X												
Kessler																			X		X					
Kindrick-Legion Field			X				X									X						X		X		
Last Chance Gulch Walking Mall							X			X				X		X			X					X		
Lincoln		X	X								X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Lockey		X	X				X										X		X	X	X					
Meatloaf Hill									X				X		X											
Memorial/Last Chance Splash	X	X					X			X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Mount Ascension									X				X		X	X										
Mount Helena									X	X			X	X	X	X										

Helena Parks & Facilities

Park Name	Band shell	Barbeques	Baseball Fields	Basketball Courts	Community Gardens	Disc Golf	Drinking Fountains	Golf Course	Hiking/Mt. Biking Trails	Historic Sites	Horseshoe Pits	Ice Rink Warming House	Jogging/Walking Trails	Monuments	Natural Area	Off-street Parking	Open Playfield	Outdoor Ice Skating Rinks	Picnic Grounds	Picnic Shelter	Playground Equipment	Public Restrooms	Skateboard Facility	Snack Bar	Soccer/Football Fields	Softball Fields
Nature									X	X			X	X	X	X										
Nob Hill									X						X											
Northgate																	X		X							
Northwest													X			X	X		X		X				X	X
Oakes Street															X											
Pioneer							X							X			X		X		X					
Pioneer Village																			X							
Pocha																			X		X					
Ramey		X	X	X			X									X	X		X		X				X	X
Reber									X				X													
Reeders Alley/Pioneer Cabin										X				X												
Robinson																	X		X	X						
Ryan/Exchange		X	X				X						X			X	X		X	X		X		X	X	
Selma Held (Beltview)					X								X		X		X									
Siebel Fields																X	X		X						X	
Sixth Ward																X			X		X					
Skelton																	X		X							
Tracy													X		X				X		X					
Triangle																										
Waukesha					X												X		X		X				X	
Wesleyan																			X		X					
Yund																										

C. Specialized Facilities

1. Bill Roberts Golf Course

The Bill Roberts Municipal Golf Course (BRGC) is owned and operated by the City of Helena. Established in 1925, the 18-hole golf course offers practice facilities, driving range, a clubhouse and pro shop. The golf course is popular with local golfers from the Helena area, as well as regional golfers.

The BRGC is managed as an “enterprise program” within the City of Helena’s Parks and Recreation Department. Staff works in partnership with the Golf Advisory Board (GAB), a seven-member volunteer citizen advisory board appointed by the Helena City Mayor. The GAB evaluates user input and provides meaningful input to city administration regarding operation of the golf course. City staff and the GAB meet monthly to discuss management and future direction of the BRGC.

2. Last Chance Splash Waterpark and Pool

Last Chance Splash Waterpark and Pool, which was originally named Memorial Park Pool, maintains operations through the Parks and Recreation Department. The pool is funded through the Parks and Recreation budgeting process and revenue is generated through patrons and programs.

Originally construction of the Olympic sized-pool was completed in 1953. The facility was built by Carson Construction and took five years to complete. The finished product was a 177’ by 66’, 3’ deep at the shallow end and 12’ at the deep end, with a high dive and springboard with capacity for 300 swimmers.

In 2007, a general obligation park improvement bond was approved that included \$2.8 million toward the renovation of the existing pool and bathhouse. In addition, the waterpark was added with a swim channel, slides, zero-depth pool, splash deck and a new concessions building was installed. Renovation of the existing pool and bathhouse and construction of the new features began in September 2008. A contest was held to name the new facility. Last Chance Splash Waterpark and Pool opened in June 2009.

Summer staff is composed primarily of teenagers and college-aged employees under the direction of the Aquatics and Recreation Program Manager. State standard dictate the number of employees that must be on site. All staff certifications must be current.

3. Kindrick Legion Field

Kindrick Legion Field serves as the home field of the Helena Brewers minor league baseball team and the two American Legion teams, the Senators and Reps. It was built in 1939 and holds 2,010 people.

As a result of the 2007 general obligation bond, improvements were made to the ball park including the dugouts, infield, outfield, scoreboard and press box. New lights were installed, as well.

4. Other

a. Ice skating

The city maintains three ice rinks during the winter months, generally December to mid-February. The rink in Memorial Park has a warming house and concessions. The other two rinks are at Cunningham Park and Lincoln Park. These rinks do not have an attendant.

b. Tennis

There are three sets of tennis courts in the city park system. They are located at the Civic Center, Lockey Park, and Barney Park. The courts are free for public use and may be reserved through the Park and Recreation Department. In addition, the Parks and Recreation Department offers tennis lessons through its recreational program.

Since 2002, the Parks and Recreation Department in partnership with the Last Chance Tennis Association, a local USTA Member Organization, has offered “Rock & Rally”, a free opportunity people of all ages and abilities interested in tennis. It is a chance to meet for organized tennis fun at the Civic Center Courts on Wednesday nights in June and July. Racquets and balls have been provided if needed.

CHAPTER 4. Surveys

Two surveys have been conducted as part of this plan update. The first, in January 2009, was directed to all county residents and addressed residents use and needs for parks and recreation. A second recreational program needs survey was created to assess recreational needs. The purpose of these surveys was to assure that recommendations and priorities would be data driven with input from residents. Full copies of each of the surveys are available at the City-County building.

A. Summary of Use and Needs survey (800 respondents):**1. Which park sites do you use most often?**Top three answers

- Trails
- City of Helena parks
- Forest Service lands

2. Tobacco free parks were very important to the respondents.**3. What amenities are most important to you that are not currently available in your area?**Top three responses

- Restrooms
- Trails
- Picnic facilities

4. Which type of park would you most like to visit?Top three responses

- Undeveloped natural open space (52%)
- Developed small neighborhood parks located near where you live
- Larger parks offering more facilities and activities.

5. What are the most needed recreation facilities?Top five responses

- Recreation center
- Natural open space
- Linked non-motorized trails
- Exercise circuit trails
- Dog park

B. Summary of Recreation Survey Results (1,605 respondents)

1. Should the City of Helena Parks and Recreation Department offer additional programs?

- YES 81.3% (1,003)
- NO 18.7% (231)

2. Do you and/or your family participate in Helena’s Parks and Recreation program?

Top Eight

- Recreational Swim at Last Chance Splash
- Recreational Golf at Bill Roberts Golf Course
- Ice Skating at Memorial Park
- Swimming Lessons at Last Chance Splash
- Lap Swim at Last Chance Splash
- Kay’s Kids
- Tennis Lessons
- First Tee at Bill Roberts Golf Course

3. What sports activities do you and/or your family participate in now or in the past?

Top Eight

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| ▪ Hiking | ▪ Boating |
| ▪ Skiing | ▪ Bowling |
| ▪ Swimming | ▪ Cycling |
| ▪ Fishing | ▪ Ice skating |

Other (top three written in responses): FOLF, dog walking, motocross

4. Who should offer these programs?

Top Eight of What Should Be Offered by the Parks and Recreation Department

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| ▪ Swimming | ▪ Golf |
| ▪ Ice Skating | ▪ Baseball |
| ▪ Tennis | ▪ Soccer |
| ▪ Basketball | ▪ Softball |

5. What activities do you and/or your family participate in now or in the past?

Top Eight

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| ▪ Reading | ▪ Ceramics |
| ▪ Cooking/Baking | ▪ Scrapbooking |
| ▪ Music – singing/playing an instrument | ▪ Knitting/Crochet |
| ▪ Learning another language | ▪ Gaming |

Other (top three written responses): gardening, photography, jewelry making

6. Who should offer these courses?

Top Eight of What Should Be Offered by the Parks and Recreation Department

- Ceramics
- Painting
- Learning another language
- Music –singing/playing an instrument
- Cooking/Baking
- Fly Tying
- Reading
- Knitting/Crochet

Other (top two written responses): photography, stain glass

7. If the city expands recreation programs, what age group should be served?

Top Responses

All ages (over 720)
6 – 18 (400)

8. Who should partner with the City of Helena to offer recreation programs?

Top Responses

- County
- YMCA
- Helena School District
- State
- Private organizations
- Athletic Groups
- Colleges
- Fitness Clubs

9. Have you heard of Kay’s Kids Summer Recreation Program?

- YES 50.3%
- NO 33.6%
- YES, but unsure of what it was 15.2%
- Unsure .8%

10. Would you take your child to a park participating in the Kay’s Kids program?

- N/A 43.1%
- Yes, some days 20.0%
- No, I don’t need the program 19.1%
- No, I would not feel comfortable leaving my child 6.0%

11. Which parks would you be able to bring your child to so that he/she participate in the Kay’s Kids program?

- Memorial Park
- Lockey Park
- Barney
- Lincoln
- Kennedy

Other: Sierra Park at Rossiter School.

12. What activities should be offered at Kay’s Kids? (242 responses)

- Sports (competitive and non-competitive), games, arts (including music) and crafts
- Gardening, fishing, hiking

- Activities that build leadership and cooperation skills
13. What would motivate 11 – 13 year olds to attend? (330 responses)
- Food
 - Other 11 – 13 year olds, activities specific to that age group (not mixed with younger kids)
 - Transportation, prizes, and better advertising
14. How should the public be contacted to learn about future recreation programs?
- Newspaper
 - Website
 - Radio
 - TV
 - Flier in the newspaper
 - E-mail
15. Would you participate in activities if they were offered by the Parks and Recreation department?
- - Depends on class/time 55.4%
 - Yes 45.9%
 - Unsure 7.9%
 - No 4.5%
16. What is the Parks and Recreation's role in Helena? (Top three responses out of 496)
- Provide recreational activities for all age levels
 - Not to provide any recreation at all
 - Keep safe, clean parks
17. Additional Comments: (263 responses)
- Dog park needed
 - Want an indoor facility for winter activities
 - Taxes should not be increased for the recreation
 - Splash park should not have been closed, along with the wading pools

CHAPTER 5. Service Levels

A. Introduction

The Department of Parks and Recreation has been offering recreational programs since the 1960s. Back then, classes included baton twirling and crafts. Today, the department offers tennis, swimming, and other programs, primarily in the summer months.

B. Existing Park Services and Recreation Programs

The Last Chance Splash Waterpark and Pool is the venue for summer swimming lessons, water aerobics and open swimming. At the waterpark, kids can ride the slides while adults float around the Sleeping Giant Lazy River. The Memorial Park pool underwent an extensive renovation in 2008/2009 to upgrade the pool, add the waterpark and a concessions venue. The name was changed when it re-opened after a community contest to name the new complex. In September 2009, a full time recreation and aquatics program manager was hired.

The Bill Roberts Golf Course offers an 18-hole course, along with lessons and leagues. It is 6,782 yards from the longest tee. The course offers challenge to the experienced golfer, while still providing for new golfers.

Additional summer programs include tennis lessons, Kay’s Kids youth summer recreation program activities, picnic tables and shelters, as well as a variety of sports fields and playground equipment. In the winter, there is an ice rink in Memorial Park and two other small rinks on the fields of Lincoln Park and Cunningham Park.

C. Level of Service (LOS)

1. Acres per resident: One technique to calculate LOS is based on acres per residents. The service levels are calculated with the parkland and open space land in 2007. From the chart below it can be inferred that the Level of Service for the City of Helena is high.

Actual Level of Service Comparison (2007)*			
Jurisdiction	2007 Population ¹	Total Acres ²	Current LOS (Acres per 1,000 residents)
City of Missoula	67,141	3,700	55.10
City of Helena	28,713	1,905	66.35
City of Bozeman	38,037	400	10.52
City of Belgrade	8,036	42.3	5.26
City of Polson	5,089	25	4.9

¹ From US Census.gov

² From park and recreation departments.

*From the City County Impact Fee Feasibility Report

2. Acres per dwelling unit: The Level of Service may also be calculated using acres per dwelling unit.

Jurisdiction	2007 Population	Total Acres	Total dwelling units	Acres per dwelling unit
City of Helena	28,713	1,905	13,357	0.14

D. Types of parks

Helena residents have the opportunity to enjoy many types of parks. Park types and definitions are as follows:

- Mini park - At least .12 acre per 1,000 population. A very small park or outdoor area for public leisure within one quarter mile of a neighborhood. May contain benches, picnic tables and/or playground equipment. Mini parks are generally less than two acres in size.

Park Area	Acres
Beattie Park	.81
Cherry Hill Park	0.91
Clinton Park	0.39
Cunningham Park	0.93
Leo Pocha Park	0.12
Pioneer Village Park	.51
Sixth Ward	0.55
TOTAL	4.22

- Neighborhood park – 1.75 acres per 1,000 population. A park which provides space and recreation activities for the neighborhood within a one-mile radius in which it is located. It is considered an extension of neighborhood residents' "out-of-yard" and outdoor use area. Neighborhood parks are generally two to seven acres in size. These parks may be developed in conjunction with the school district. Neighborhood parks may contain sports fields, tennis courts or other amenities.

Park Area	Acres
Barney Park	5.07
Kay McKenna Park	1.57
Heritage/Pioneer Park	0.95
Janet Park	4.02
Lincoln Park	5.04
Northgate Park	1.69
Ramey Park	4.85
Reber Park	1.35
Robinson Park	2.94
Selma Held Park (formerly Beltview)	5.38
Skelton Park	3.18
Waukesha Park	2.46
TOTAL	38.50

- Community/Regional park – 1.39 acres per 1,000 population. Community/Regional parks can range in size and provides space and recreation activities for a broader service area. The service area can include the city, region and/or specific user groups.

Park Area	Acres
Centennial Park	58.0
Memorial Park	12.6
Lions Lockey Park	3.82
Northwest Park	19.26
TOTAL	93.68

- Special Use area – 8.95 per 1,000 population. A special use park may be created to satisfy demand for a particular sport, recreational activity, special event or historic feature. A special use park may also be a sports park combined with enterprise activities and administered as a community recreation resource.

Park Area	Acres	Special Use
Bill Robert Golf Course	148.0	Golf
Constitution Park	0.20	Interpretive
Fire Tower Park	3.01	Historic
Hill Park	3.43	Monument
Kindrick Legion Field	4.01	Ball field
Last Chance Mall	3.95	Historic
Last Chance Splash Water Park (at Memorial Park)	12.6	Swimming
Reeder’s Pioneer Cabin	0.27	Historic
TOTAL	182.62	

- Open lands – 37 acres per 1,000 population. Any undeveloped land for which the purpose is to remain in a natural state. Mount Helena is a vast open space as are the south hills trails areas.

Parcel Name	Number of Acres	Date Acquired
American Building	4.32	2000
Beattie Street Parcel	10	1981
BLM	117	Pending
Bompart Acquisitions	42.35	2000
Bull Run Subdivision	21	1977
Charles Van Hook Wetland	8.5	
Crestview Parkland	0.37	2002
Deford MS 386	5.119	2002
Diehl Acquisition	1.91	1999
Diehl Acquisition	9.36	1999
Diehl Acquisition	40	1999
Donaldson Acquisition	40	1999
Drennon/Stewart	110.83	1998
Fagan Property Acquisition	0.8	2001
Malben Heights Subdivision	1.28	1994
McKelvey	32.4	1999

Parcel Name	Number of Acres	Date Acquired
Medley (Jefferson County)	20.73	2000
Medley Acquisition	5	2003
Mount Ascension BLM Parcel	23.25	1981
Mount Helena Park	731.132	1902 - 1976
O'Reilly	14.16	1999
Oakes Street Parcel	6	Old Mining claim
Porter et al. donation	132	2010
Reber PUD	12.05	1980
Reeders Village Aquisition	23.75	1995
Shaw Addition Lots	1.0	2010
Swaney Acquisition	13.83	2003
Timberline Acquisition	141.91	2001
Water Department Land	180.84	Early 1900's
Weggeman	2.87	2000
Weydemeyer/Meatloaf Hill	3.06	2000
Total	1,756.82	

- Trails – .29 miles per 1,000 population. May include paved and non-paved park trails, easements, unpaved open land recreation trails, and non-motorized commuter routes.

Trails	
Type	Miles
Asphalt	7.88
Decomposed granite	6.46
Wood chip	.88
Open lands trails	43.59
Total	58.81

- Undeveloped parkland – This is land that has been dedicated for park use, generally during the subdivision process.

Undeveloped Parkland	
Name	Acres
Bull Run	16.24
Comstock	8.00
Crystal Springs	3.35
Oakes Street	6.5
Reber	13.6
Red Letter	3.32
Total	51.01

- Sports fields/complex – Sporting areas or facilities, usually for team sports, that call for specific field requirements. The city relies on partnerships with user groups for development and maintenance of sports fields. The service area can include the city, region and/or specific user groups.

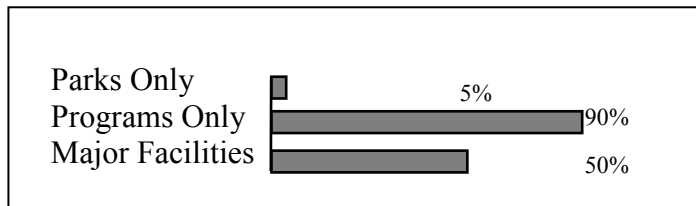
Park Area	Acres	Use
Batch Park	15.22	Softball
Civic Center Grounds	1.85	Tennis
Northwest Park	19.26	Softball and soccer fields
Ramey Park	2.35	Softball fields
Ryan Park Exchange	61.33	Baseball, Small Fry football
Siebel Fields	23.78	Soccer
TOTAL	123.79	

E. Financial Impacts and Impact Fees

1. Service Levels

The upgrades to the Last Chance Splash Waterpark and Pool were funded through a General Obligation bond that was passed by the voters in 2007. The major factors that determine the efficiency of a park and recreation program are 1) the ability to generate revenue from services rendered and 2) the cost to maintain facilities. While good design can help reduce operating costs of parks and facilities, the greatest impact usually comes from the revenue produced by the type of facilities offered.

The graph below illustrates the potential revenue from three basic types of leisure services programs:



Financial Return Ratio for Services Rendered

The graph indicates that from a financial point of view, a park agency receives the greatest financial impact from providing recreation programs only and the least benefit from providing parks only. Currently, the City of Helena Parks Department provides a higher level of park resources than recreation.

2. Impact Fees

In 2008, the City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County jointly formed an Impact Fees Advisory Board. The board worked with a consultant to examine the necessity of impact fees for parks, transportation and fire suppression infrastructure in both the city and the county. At this writing, a draft impact fee report is in process. The advisory board expects the final draft report to be submitted to both the County and City Commissions in 2010.

F. Subdivision Parkland Dedication

The Montana Code Annotated (MCA) has provisions for parkland dedication through the subdivision review process. Section 76-3-621 is utilized by planners and governmental bodies for accepting parkland or cash-in-lieu of parkland for qualifying residential subdivisions that is reviewed by the jurisdiction. In this way, parkland is assured in areas of new growth. Up to 50% of cash-in-lieu of parkland may be used for maintenance. MCA also allows for the creation of Special Districts for a variety of maintenance purposes, including parks.

There are conditions when parkland is not required in a new subdivision. These include subdivisions where the parcels are larger than five (5) acres, the subdivision is only for nonresidential lots, a subdivision in which parcels are not created, except when that subdivision provides permanent multiple spaces for recreational camping vehicles, mobile homes, or condominiums; a subdivision in which only one additional parcel is created; or a first minor subdivision from a tract of record.

There are circumstances when the Consolidated City-County Parks Board recommends, and City Commission may accept, land that is other than parkland. State statutes describe “the preliminary plat provides long-term protection of critical wildlife habitat; cultural, historical, or natural resources; agricultural interests; or aesthetic values.” In addition, a subdivider may also dedicate land to a school district with approval from the Commission and a school district trustee. Proposals for all dedications for parkland or alternatives are examined with the Evaluation Checklist to see if the proposal meets the objectives of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space plan. The parks board is the recommending body to the City Commission, although the Consolidated City-County Planning Board will also review the application.

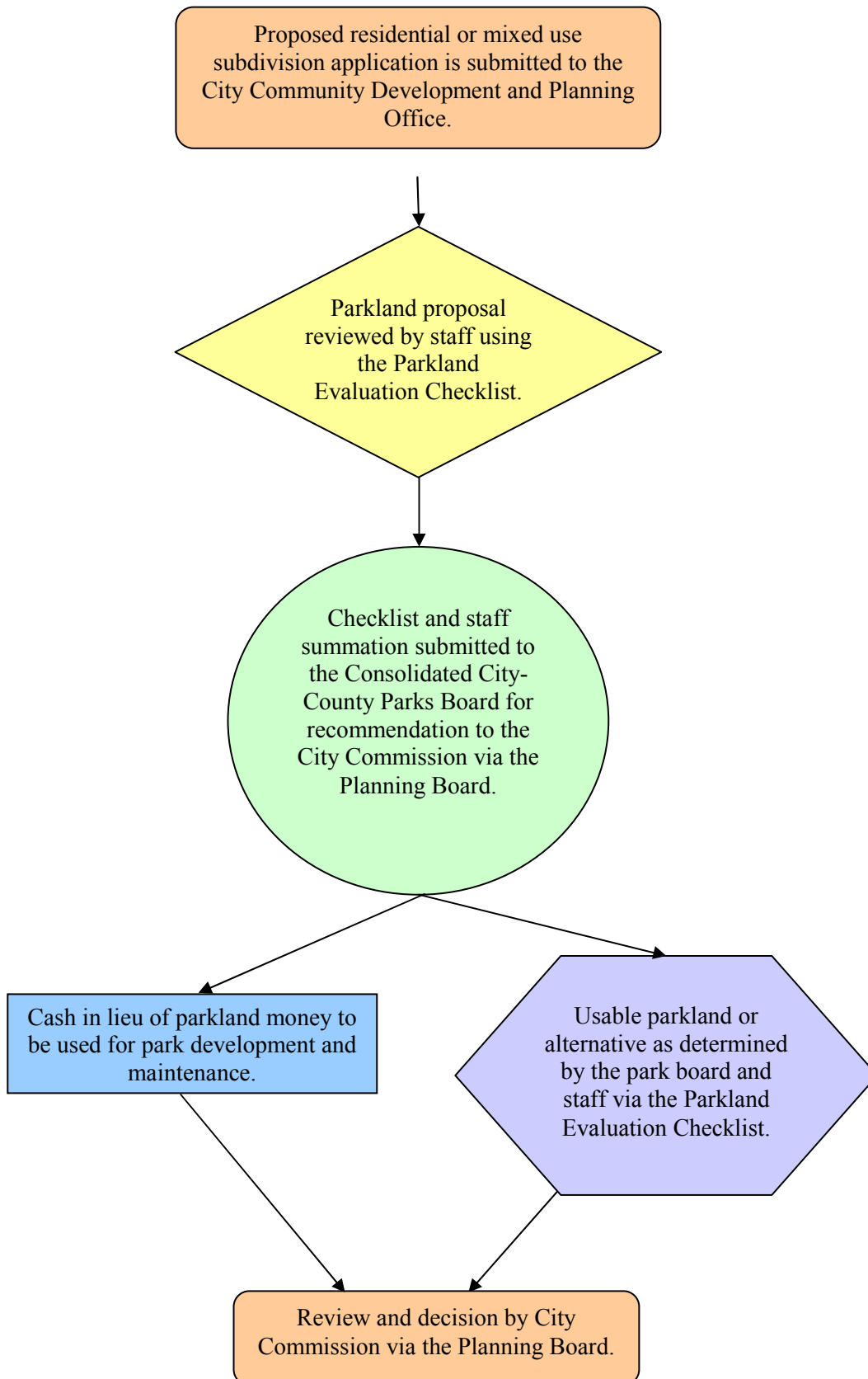


Montana state statute also allows for the Consolidated City-County Parks Board and City Commission to accept parkland based on density when there is zoning in place or other regulations. Because the City of Helena has density zoning, this is another option for parkland acceptance. As depicted in Section C.2. above, the density based park and open space Level of Service in Helena is .14 acres per dwelling unit, which exceeds the state statute of .03 acres per dwelling unit.

There are zoning districts that may be utilized for residential and commercial, while parkland may only be required for residential. However, the parks board does recognize the need for mixed use development. Therefore, the board recommends that parkland or the equivalent of cash in lieu be required on mixed use developments that contain residential uses.

If a proposed parkland or alternative is not deemed acceptable as determined by the parks board after reviewing the Parkland Evaluation report, then cash in lieu is allowed. The decision would be based on maintenance, park development needs and/or other opportunities. The cash must be spent within “a reasonably close proximity to the proposed subdivision”. Cash in lieu of parkland shall be utilized within the following distances: ¼ mile for a mini-park, one mile for a neighborhood park, or the nearest regional park, or the nearest sports complex.

Below is a chart of the decision making process.



CHAPTER 6. Goals and Recommendations

The purpose of the goals and recommendations is to set an achievable vision. Many of the goals outlined in the 1998 Parks, Recreation and Open Space, have been achieved. These include:

- Consolidated City-County Parks Board established.
 - Assisted with implementation of the Prickly Pear Land Trust.
 - Established Helena Open Lands Management Advisory Committee (HOLMAC).
 - Acquired approximately 1,000 acres of open lands in the south hills.
 - Developed Northwest Park.
 - Built soccer complex at Siebel Fields.
 - Created and expanded skateboard facility at Centennial Park.
 - Built new trails along Henderson, Custer, Nature Park, LeGrande Cannon Boulevard and Benton Avenue.
 - Created subdivision parkland dedication evaluation worksheet.
 - Passed 2007 Parks improvement bond referendum for Centennial Park, Memorial Park and Kindrick Legion Field.
- A. Management and Administration: The overall goal of the Helena Park's and Recreation Department is to provide quality park and recreation opportunities for current and future residents and non-residents. The Parks and Recreation Director sets the direction for the department by working inclusively with the Commission, City/County Parks Board and staff to establish department goals and the organizational mission, vision and strategic plan and implementation of the annual work plan.
- 1. Park Administration Goal:** Provide an effective administrative structure through the application of sound management practices and policies in order to enhance the entire Parks and Recreation program.
- a) Recommendation: Monitor, assess and adjust the existing policies, agreements, and priorities for effectiveness and adopt new strategies, structures, procedures and technologies to deal with the changing needs of the community and the business environment.
 - b) Recommendation: Review and monitor existing use agreements to ensure terms, conditions of use and fees are at acceptable levels to meet maintenance service levels and demands.

- c) Recommendation: Utilize a park/facility scheduling software program to streamline the process and reduce scheduling conflicts. Post schedules on the department webpage.
 - d) Recommendation: Increase public awareness of Helena parks, facilities and recreation programs by increasing marketing efforts and products.
 - (1) Continue to improve and manage the department webpage.
 - (2) Develop a mission statement or “brand” for the City of Helena’s Parks and Recreation Department.
 - (3) Invest in developing professional marketing materials.
 - e) Recommendation: Continue to pursue partnerships, collaborations and regional approaches to provide recreation services and parks management.
 - (1) Identify local groups and organizations willing to volunteer labor and resources.
 - (2) Encourage community organizations and residents to “adopt-a-park” and help with basic maintenance and cleanup.
 - f) Recommendation: Capitalize on existing resources and maximize use by improving knowledge of parks and recreation facilities, and identifying and eliminating barriers to their use.
 - (1) Incorporate universal accessibility standards into park improvements and designs.
 - g) Recommendation: Pursue additional land and development funds for neighborhood and community parks.
 - h) Recommendation: Encourage citizen participation in the park development process.
 - i) Recommendation: Continue education and training of staff to ensure the best management practices are being implemented throughout all divisions of the department.
 - j) Recommendation: Develop park policy addressing uses and hours.
2. **Subdivision Parklands Dedication Goal**: In order to provide a diverse and balanced parks and recreation program, the city assesses the need for park and recreation facilities, and establishes design standards for future park acquisition, development and management.

- a) Recommendation: Ensure that park size is adequate for the population it will serve.
 - b) Recommendation: Require parkland dedication for minor subdivision and mixed-use subdivisions.
 - c) Recommendation: Determine future parks needs based on levels of service, established park proximities and/or density.
 - d) Recommendation: Incorporate development standards that preserve environmental features, including but not limited to rock outcroppings, tree stands, wetlands or riparian areas.
 - e) Recommendation: Continue to utilize Parkland Evaluation criteria in the determination of parkland dedication. (See Appendix B.)
- 3. Budget and Funding Goal:** The Parks and Recreation Department operates efficiently, effectively and within available resources. The city makes judicious use of its parks and recreation budget by leveraging it with fees/revenue, grants, donations and encouraging joint partnerships with volunteers and other private organizations and sports groups.
- Locally generated sources of revenue are evaluated for availability and appropriateness: impact fees, subdivision dedication or cash-in-lieu, special fees, and use of general tax revenues.
 - State and Federal financial resources: Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Community Transportation Enhancement Program (CTEP), and Recreation Trails Grants, miscellaneous grant programs.
 - Private Sources: Funding, donated resources and volunteer services.
- a) Recommendation: Maintenance and operations are considered as part of the overall budgeting for park facilities and services. Fees should be evaluated to better reflect the actual cost to the city for maintenance and management of parks, facilities and recreation services.
 - (1) Increase reservation “damage” deposits.
 - (2) Establish rental and park use fees.
 - b) Recommendation: Expand the department’s capacity in revenue generation and alternative funding for recreation fee-supported and self-sustaining programs.
 - c) Recommendation: Projects that have the potential to be funded through alternative funding resources should be given a high priority in the Comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CCIP).

- d) Recommendation: Address the funding for the development of future parks and the maintenance and upkeep costs associated with the parks and recreation system.
 - (1) Explore selling, trading or converting use of nonconforming lands.
 - (2) Explore feasibility of special districts.
 - e) Recommendation: Actively pursue financial assistance through sponsorships, naming opportunities, federal, state and local grant and loan programs.
 - f) Recommendation: Utilize impact fees to pay for park improvements due to new development and growth.
- 4. Community Gardens Goal:** Provide gardening and greening opportunities for the physical and social benefit of the people and neighborhoods of Helena.
- a) Recommendation: Establish management oversight for all community gardens on city-owned properties (parks and city right of ways).
 - b) Recommendation: Administer the program in partnership with the Growing Community Project following standards, roles and actions identified in a management plan.
 - c) Recommendation: Leverage city funding with donated resources to assist in the construction and maintenance of garden sites.
 - d) Recommendation: Work with the Growing Community Project and other community organizations to identify future garden site locations.
- 5. Trails and Greenways Goal:** Provide the community with a linear park trails system that enhances overall community connections and access by supporting non-motorized connections, eliminating access barriers and beautifying or visually enhancing the existing trail system.
- a) Recommendation: Utilize the Greater Helena Transportation Plan to promote continued development of connections to key community resources and to the broader regional trail network.
 - b) Recommendation: Continue to work with the public works department and community partners to promote continued development of non-motorized connections to key community resources and to a broader regional trail network.
 - c) Recommendation: Identify projects that relate to trails and greenways planning and development as a high priority. Projects may include those that are identified for pedestrian and/or bicycle use that act as connectors, linking parks, services, schools, employment centers and/or natural, cultural or historical feature areas.

- d) Recommendation: Enhance the trail system in the city by installing a clear way-finding/interpretive system to improve perceptions of the interconnections among the various parks and destinations along the way.
- e) Recommendation: Request a representative from the Consolidate City-County Parks Board to serve on Non-motorized Transportation Advisory Committee (NMTAC) and/or similar groups.
- f) Recommendation: Create a comprehensive trails system that connects users to recreational amenities, parks, and regional trails.

B. Park Maintenance and Development

1. Park Maintenance Goal: Maintain and improve existing parks and recreation facilities to ensure safe, useable facilities that meet the needs of the community. There are numerous opportunities to undertake over the coming years.

- a) Recommendation: Maximize potential of existing facilities with system or facility upgrades, improvements to increase usability or by improving awareness of and access to existing facilities.
- b) Recommendation: Utilize Special Districts for park development and maintenance as allowed by the Montana Code Annotated (MCA).
- c) Recommendation: Develop a way-finding and park signage plan and include sign design standards for all park signs.
- d) Recommendation: Develop an operations and maintenance plan for each new park and recreation facility that is built.
- e) Recommendation: Transfer county parks within city limits to city ownership and management.
- f) Recommendation: Develop a parks database.
- g) Recommendation: Develop and implement a comprehensive cost-effective maintenance and improvement plan to ensure that all parks remain safe and compliant with current standards and needs.
- h) Recommendation: Update parks to ADA and safety standards.
- i) Recommendation: Apply invasive species control.
- j) Recommendation: Continue to track and update Comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CCIP) improvements to existing trails, parks, recreational facilities and equipment.

- 2. Parks Development Goal:** Provide a quality park system that offers a diverse range of experiences, preserves local resources, and provides a safe, pleasant, and enjoyable environment.
- a) Recommendation: Provide safe, accessible and enjoyable parks.
 - b) Recommendation: Pursue additional land and development funds for neighborhood and community parks.
 - c) Recommendation: As new lands are added to the park system, sufficient additional funds need to be budgeted for maintenance and operations.
 - d) Recommendation: Develop a process to utilize Special Districts for park development and maintenance as allowed by the Montana Code Annotated (MCA).
 - e) Recommendation: Equitably distribute parks, recreation facilities and trails throughout the urban area.
 - f) Recommendation: Ensure that parks, recreation facilities and trails are accessible to the greatest extent possible.
 - g) Recommendation: Continue focus on green practices and sustainability strategies.
 - h) Recommendation: Encourage ongoing community involvement and public participation as a basis for decision making about parks.
 - i) Recommendation Working with a dog park citizens group, implement a dog park in Centennial Park and continue to pursue long-term options for other locations/types of dog parks.

C. Bill Roberts Municipal Golf Course (BRGC)

The BRGC is a special use area within the parks department. There is a separate Golf Advisory Board to oversee the golf course which is not under purview of the Consolidated City-County Parks Board.

Mission Statement

The Bill Roberts Municipal Golf Course is committed to providing a high quality, friendly, and affordable public golfing experience for all ages and abilities within the greater Helena community.

The adopted mission statement guides the enterprise process. Goals and management strategies were developed to support the overall mission of the Bill Roberts Municipal Golf Course.

1. **Financial Goal:** Identify and generate additional financial resources.
 - a). Recommendation: Develop annual operating and maintenance budgets that provide for stable ongoing operations while adjusting to changing circumstances.
 - b). Recommendation: Develop a financial strategy to establish and maintain a cash/capital reserve program.
 - c). Recommendation: Establish cash reserves which address:
 - 1) annual cash flow needs,
 - 2) Comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CCIP) funding,
 - 3) seasonal fluctuations (bad weather years).
 - d). Recommendation: A Comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CCIP) shall be established which provides realistic refurbishment and/or replacement schedules for:
 - 1) operation and maintenance equipment;
 - 2) buildings and structures; and,
 - 3) infrastructure (driveways, pathways, parking, irrigation, etc.).
 - e). Recommendation: Comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CCIP) funding may be provided by a combination of pay-as-you-go cash reserves and planning for future debt issuances.
 - f). Recommendation: Facility improvement concepts shall be developed to assure the continued and improved quality of the facility. Such concept development shall include cost/benefit analyses, timing and funding projections, and integration into the CCIP.
2. **Pro shop Management Goal:** Provide the customers of BRGC with a reputable, friendly pro shop and golf experience.
 - a). Recommendation: Produce innovative merchandising practices.
 - b). Recommendation: Focus on building relationships with customers to promote loyalty.
 - c). Recommendation: Deliver friendly, professional, and knowledgeable service through training, policies and the procedures manual.
 - d). Recommendation: Create “Player Development Programs” for all ability levels.

- e). Recommendation: Maintain a reputable pro shop which increases sales and profits by a percentage to be determined at the beginning of each golf season.
 - f). Recommendation: Provide a quality and affordable pro shop inventory that focuses on the current trends and the wants and needs of customers.
 - g). Recommendation: Purchase products using brand loyalty to capitalize on discounts through volume, demo programs, and Point of Sale displays.
 - h). Recommendation: Focus on product knowledge so that the BRGC is viewed as the leader of golf knowledge in the community.
3. **Course Management Goal**: Work to promote steady and consistent increases in annual sales in order to achieve self-sustaining and capital improvement goals.
- a). Recommendation: Increase gross sales by optimizing customer service, merchandise sales, marketing, and player development programs.
 - b). Recommendation: Practice sound accounting procedures that focus on maximizing revenues while controlling expenses.
 - c). Recommendation: Increase the return on investment percentage in goods and services.
 - d). Recommendation: Maintain a web-based marketing and management program by maintaining an updated and professional website, promoting an e-mail campaign targeted at interested parties through database capturing and utilizing a broad range of media markets.
4. **Concessions Goal**: Provide the customers of BRGC with a friendly concessions environment that enriches the golfing experience and generates net revenues.
- a). Recommendation: Manage inventory to monitor shrinkage, pilferage, and portion size. Use a Point of Sale (POS) computer to track sales and inventory.
 - b). Recommendation: Increase gross sales by optimizing customer service, offering an expanded menu, and capitalizing on other revenue generating strategies.
 - c). Recommendation: To best serve the customers, continually evaluate menu options, determine vendor selection by quality of the product, price, and level of customer service and satisfaction.
 - d). Recommendation: Operate beverage carts during peak hours and accommodate phone orders from golf course on the “turn” between the front and back nine holes.
 - e). Recommendation: Promote clubhouse services using web-based promotions.

- f). Recommendation: Promote use of the clubhouse meeting room year round.
5. **Golf Course Maintenance Goal**: Provide a quality/desirable public golf course through sound maintenance programs and practices. These programs and practices strive to fulfill the golf course mission statement while staying within the budgetary limitations.
- a). Recommendation: Practice sound agronomic management principles and programs to ensure healthy sustainable turf and plant material.
 - b). Recommendation: Cultivate and care for other structural and elemental components that are integral parts of the golf course. i.e.: bunkers, paths, practice areas, signs, landscape, etc.
 - c). Recommendation: Improve water management ability, to include efficient irrigation system upgrades, ensure sustainable water sources and pond ecology management.
 - d). Recommendation: Continue education and training of staff to ensure the best management practices are being implemented with financial capabilities.
 - e). Recommendation: Develop a building maintenance program to maintain, refurbish, and restore the existing building structures to include improvements to promote energy efficiency.
 - f). Recommendation: Maintain and sustain an adequate and dependable golf course equipment fleet through maintenance and the Comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CCIP).
 - g). Recommendation: Plan improvements using the CCIP.
 - h). Recommendation: Provide for public and employee health and safety.
 - i). Recommendation: Provide golf course set up for daily and tournament play.

D. Aquatic Services

Last Chance Splash Waterpark and Pool strives to offer affordable recreation programs and to operate a premier water facility for the patrons.

1. **General goals**:

- a) Ensure patrons have an excellent experience at the Last Chance Splash Waterpark and Pool.
 - (1) Recommendation: Review and evaluate patron discipline policy.

- (2) Recommendation: Focus on building relationships with customers to promote loyalty.
 - (3) Recommendation: Deliver friendly, professional, and knowledgeable customer service through training, policies and the procedures manual.
 - (4) Recommendation: Focus on product knowledge so that the Last Chance Splash pool and waterpark is viewed as the leader of aquatics in the community.
- b) Ensure that new and innovative programming is constantly being developed and implemented through assessment of activities and input from the public.
- (1) Recommendation: Evaluate times, ability levels and courses offered; making adjustments each season as needed.
- c) Create and maintain partnerships with other user groups.
- (1) Recommendation: Revise and adapt current use agreement regarding swim meet.
 - (2) Recommendation: Review current practice schedule use agreement; make modifications in collaboration with swim team.
 - (3) Recommendation: Review use agreement yearly.
- d) Create a variety of marketing procedures to increase awareness of the programs and services offered: website, e-mail campaign, newsletters, water bill inserts, newspaper ads/inserts, radio ads, school newspapers/websites, and/or other media.
- (1) Recommendation: Evaluate marketing techniques for attracting and increasing waterpark rental.
- e) Maintain reasonable prices for the use of all aquatic facilities and services.
- (1) Recommendation: Review policy for fees; ensure that policy and fees are adequate for Helena community.
 - (2) Recommendation: Develop annual operating and maintenance budgets that provide for stable ongoing operations while adjusting to changing circumstances.
2. **Facility Management Goals:**
- a) Operate a safe and enjoyable facility for patrons and staff.
 - (1) Recommendation: Evaluate lightning policy.

- (2) Recommendation: Evaluate cleaning procedures to ensure most efficient way of cleaning.
- (3) Recommendation: Ensure proper training for maintenance person.
- (4) Recommendation: Conduct annual evaluation of waterpark staff to determine employees capable of performing water tests and maintaining daily log.
- (5) Recommendation: Update and evaluate aquatics operating policies on an annual basis.
- (6) Recommendation: Review and evaluate procedure for use registration.
- (7) Recommendation: Review waterpark rules and regulations; ensure rules and regulations correspond with state codes.

3. Employee Management Goals:

- a) The City of Helena hires and retains a high quality pool staff.
 - (1) Recommendation: Ensure money is available in the budget for staff uniforms and additional items that may be needed.
 - (2) Recommendation: Review process for shift scheduling and determine if any modifications are needed.
 - (3) Recommendation: Review process for training and determine if any modifications are needed.
 - (4) Recommendation: Assess equipment needed for training and daily use (i.e. rescue tubes) and make plan for purchasing.
 - (5) Recommendation: Evaluate staff at the end of the season. Put reference in personnel file.
 - (6) Recommendation: Continue education and training of staff to ensure the best management practices are being implemented with financial capabilities.

4. Concessions Goals:

- a) Working in partnership with vendors, the concessions staff provides quality service and prices to pool customers.
 - (1) Recommendation: Review process to keep inventory.
 - (2) Recommendation: Assess sales process and business accountability.
 - (3) Recommendation: Evaluate food items and ensure vendors are the most beneficial.

- (4) Recommendation: Manage inventory to monitor shrinkage, pilferage, and portion size. Use a Point of Sale (POS) computer to track sales and inventory.
- (5) Recommendation: To best serve the customers, continually evaluate menu options, determine vendor selection by quality of the product, price, and level of customer service and satisfaction.

E. Urban Tree Program

Urban tree programs are popular throughout the United States for many reasons. Trees provide habitat for birds and animals, reduce airborne pollutants and give shade. Trees also support soil to assist with storm water runoff absorption.

1. **Goal**: Provide a well maintained and healthy urban forest for the city parks, boulevards and open spaces.
 - a) Recommendation: Continue to seek Tree City USA designation.
 - b) Recommendation: Continue to encourage tree planting within all public rights-of-way.
 - c) Recommendation: Continue public outreach efforts.
 - d) Recommendation: Continue to enforce City Urban Forestry Ordinance and incorporate water conservation measures where appropriate.
 - e) Recommendation: Periodically evaluate staffing to meet tree care needs.
 - f) Recommendation: Develop an Urban Forest Inventory and Plan.
 - g) Recommendation: Provide efficient and high quality maintenance of the urban forest.
 - h) Recommendation: Continue to work with community partners such as the Growing Friends of Helena and others.

F. Open Lands

The Helena Open Lands (HOL) system is comprised of approximately 35 parcels of land which have been acquired over the past 100 years. The area consists of 1,718 acres adjacent to the southern boundary of the Helena city limits. These open lands make up two major recreational systems, one dominated by Mount Helena and the other by Mount Ascension. The HOL is overseen by the Helena Open Lands Management Advisory Committee (HOLMAC).

The City of Helena is nestled along the margin between the Helena valley and mountains to the south. The gradual north-south slope of the town becomes steeper nearer the hills that make up the HOL. Starting from the southern edge of the city, the topography continues to

rise up, progressively steeper, culminating on the ridges and mountains beyond. Elevations of the park system range from 4,127 feet at the Donaldson Acquisition to 5,365 feet at the top of Mount Ascension and 5,460 feet on the summit of Mount Helena (the highest point within HOL). In general, the ridges and hills of the HOL screen views of the miles of forested mountains that stretch to the south. From lower parts of the Helena valley, the open lands form a picturesque backdrop, creating a sense of enclosure and serving as a visual frame of reference. From the west side of town, the dramatic cliffs of Mount Helena are a primary focal point and the most striking feature of the HOL.

The varied landscape of the HOL provides habitat for a diverse population of flora that is distributed throughout the area in distinct plant communities. These plant communities consist primarily of ponderosa pine woodlands, Douglas-fir forests, grasslands and shrub lands and tall shrub draws; the vegetation is broken in places by barren rock outcrops.



Figure 1-1 Overlooking the city from Mount Helena.

Because the HOL are at the northern end of a long ridge that connects to the many wilder areas of the Continental Divide, they serve as an important movement corridor for wildlife. The area provides sanctuary to coyote, fox, black bear, mountain lion, bobcat, deer and elk. Various rodents, over fifty species of birds, and a few reptiles and amphibians also make their home in the HOL.

1. **Recreation Use and Trail Management Goal:** The goal of the HOL trails program is to provide Helena with sustainable recreation opportunities that are accessible and can be maintained using the resources available.
 - a). Recommendation: The City of Helena will work with the Helena National Forest and other user groups and organizations to create, fund, and sustain a routine maintenance program that dedicates resources specifically to trail management, maintenance and construction.
 - b). Recommendation: Ensure that wildlife habitat and other natural resources are protected and enhanced through sustainable trail projects, education and enforcement of rules and regulations.
 - c). Recommendation: Reclaim or reroute trails that are in poor condition, are unsustainable and/or redundant.
 - d). Recommendation: Create new sustainable trails in appropriate areas that provide access to key destinations and other popular trails.
 - e). Recommendation: Develop sections of universally accessible trails for wheelchair users, elderly, young children, and others with disabilities.

- f). Recommendation: Engage private property owners to ensure continued trail access across their property. Agencies and user groups should accept responsibility for education, maintenance and posting signs.
 - g). Recommendation: Create trailheads that give the trail system a unique identity and that can be used for all Helena trailheads. These trailheads should provide information regarding safety, natural resource and trail etiquette. They should also provide maps and trail information. Some trailheads will provide parking and other amenities.
 - h). Recommendation: Create a durable and attractive sign system that clearly marks trail directions and features without being obtrusive.
 - i). Recommendation: Develop a funding strategy that maximizes and leverages local funds. Work with Prickly Pear Land Trust and other organizations to prepare grant applications and solicit contributions for trail projects.
 - j). Recommendation: Continue to develop a volunteer assistance program for trail and trailhead maintenance and construction. Work with local user groups, businesses and service organizations to expand and improve the program.
 - k). Recommendation: Expansion of the Reeder's Village Drive parking area to the south and east. Resurfacing and widening of Reeder's Village Drive. Installation of restroom adjacent to the Reeder's Village Drive parking area.
 - l). Recommendation: Construct a parking area at the Dump Gulch Trailhead. Relocate existing Dump Gulch kiosk and install a mutt-mitt station.
2. **Noxious Weed Management Goal:** The goal of the HOL Noxious Weed Management program is to regain control of the exotic plant problem present within the open lands system before it becomes so widespread that the only feasible alternatives are large scale herbicide applications or living with degraded ecological and recreational resources.
- a) Recommendation: The City of Helena will use cultural, biological or chemical methods to treat at least 15% of open lands weed infestation annually. Weed treatments will be recorded with the City GIS coordinator to develop maps that will aid planners in monitoring the effectiveness of area treatments. Priority treatments are to protect species of concern and all excellent condition rangelands. Trail and transportation corridor weed infestations are the second priority.
 - b) Recommendation: The City of Helena will implement a reclamation plan for any projects which cause disturbance to soils on HOL.
 - c) Recommendation: The City of Helena will make every effort to monitor all types and intensities of weed treatments on the HOL through the use of GIS mapping and record keeping. In order to plan for follow up treatments, the City will assess treatments for effectiveness.

- d) Recommendation: The City of Helena will implement biocontrol methods including goats and insects or pathogens.
 - e) Recommendation: The City of Helena shall purchase spraying equipment for herbicide application on open lands properties.
3. **Forest Management Goal:** The priority goals of the HOL forestry program include the following: return disturbance regimes and vegetation closer to pre settlement conditions; reduce the chance of noxious weed introduction or proliferation; collect enough forest inventory data to make informed management decisions with predictable results; implement forest thinning treatments that meet the specific objectives of the HOL Management Plan; coordinate any government action and reduce omissions and overlap; improve forest health for resiliency to stressful conditions; reduce forest pest impact and outbreak potential.
- a) Recommendation: Use hand or mechanical thinning methodology within the forested portion of HOL ownership to lessen rangeland encroachment and reduce unnatural tree density
 - b) Recommendation: Immediately seed with a native species mix all silvicultural treatment areas that are completed within the HOL system to reduce the risk of noxious weed proliferation. Spot treat weeds and monitor in forest treatment areas for three years after activities.
 - c) Recommendation: Inventory HOL forests and used compiled data to design silvicultural treatment prescriptions.
 - d) Recommendation: Invite review of thinning activities by foresters and biologists to ensure treatments are conservation based. Ask for help from the Society of American Foresters, Native Plant Society, and USFS.
 - e) Recommendation: Develop Memorandums of Understanding with all governmental agencies involved in HOL forest management efforts. Include Helena area agency representatives involved in forest management decision making on HOLMAC subcommittees and in monthly HOLMAC meetings.
 - f) Recommendation: Work with extension service or USFS entomologists or professional foresters to aid in the design of silvicultural prescriptions that will create forest conditions which are more resilient to insect infestations and changing climatic regimes.
4. **Interpretive Opportunity Goal:** Interpretive opportunities provide enhancement of open lands user experiences. These include either signage or handouts on human or natural history and other topics of interest. The goals of the HOL interpretive program include implementing management actions that will avoid vandalism of interpretive sites, designing signs so as to not detract from the natural beauty of a given area, blending sign placement with HOL aesthetics, adding interpretive

locations to HOL maps, designing interpretive signage with public education and user responsibility information, increasing knowledge of local resources to promote interest and public support for maintenance and enhancement of HOL, reducing the risk of trail user confusion, and encouraging dispersed trail usage throughout the HOL.

- a) Recommendation: Use sign construction materials which are more resistant to vandalism. Locate signs in less vandalism prone areas (away from trailheads).
 - b) Recommendation: Retain natural character by limiting signage and displays. Be cognizant of locating signs in tactful places. Use natural material in sign construction and use colors which match natural tones of vegetation, soils, and rocks.
 - c) Recommendation: Keep interpretive structures to scales that blend with that of main features in the surrounding environment. Locate signage on the periphery of landscape features where appropriate.
 - d) Recommendation: Keep maps simple by not getting bogged down by precision. Design maps for the mind's eye to show only main trail directions and intersections.
 - e) Recommendation: Design signs that engage the public rather than laying out strict rules and regulations. Educate to explain management activities to help build public support for HOL management activities.
 - f) Recommendation: Inventory best site location for interpretive signage and develop a keyed brochure to sites where signs are located.
 - g) Recommendation: Coordinate with Helena National Forest (HNF) to develop signage that uses similar symbols and contains similar design themes and images for both the HOL and HNF.
 - h) Recommendation: Develop interpretive trails, such as those that highlight cultural, geological or biological aspects of an area, outside of the Mount Helena area to help disperse usage.
5. **Wildfire Mitigation Goal:** Wildfire mitigation is a time-sensitive issue because of its potential to protect human life and property. The major goal of the HOL wildfire mitigation program is forest fuels reduction in forested areas that have been deemed at high to severe risk from wildfire.
- a) Recommendation: Involve public in the wildfire mitigation process through distribution of educational materials and installation of forest fuel treatment project interpretive signs
 - b) Recommendation: Restrict trail use during high fire danger periods.

- c) Recommendation: Implement aggressive forest fuel reduction programs. Map HOL access routes. Maintain and continually update the Coordinated Disaster Response Plan.
 - d) Recommendation: Prevent forests and grasslands from taking on too much of an artificial appearance by maintaining natural treatment unit boundaries, avoiding even spacing when thinning, and disposing of cut waste slash material through chipping and burning.
6. **Wildlife Protection Goal:** Wildlife protection is affected by human activities and habitat conditions. Wildlife goals include the protection and proliferation of sensitive wildlife habitat and maintenance of biodiversity.
- a) Recommendation: Establish a citizen's wildlife subcommittee to review, create, and/or implement plans.
 - b) Recommendation: Identify habitat or species particularly susceptible to irritation by domestic pets.
 - c) Recommendation: Create seasonal user restrictions to minimize recreationalist/wildlife conflicts in critical elk calving grounds, avian nesting grounds, and wildlife winter ranges.
 - d) Recommendation: Aggressively pursue weed control programs.
 - e) Recommendation: Reduce negative interactions between wildlife and people through the display and distribution of educational materials.
7. **Boundary Identification and Mapping Goal:** Boundary identification and mapping protects adjacent private landowners and helps open space users be good neighbors. Top goals of the HOL boundary identification and mapping program are the provision of trail maps and identification of private property boundaries at key points.
- a) Recommendation: Locate property boundary signs at key points along trails. Include boundary identification in trail maps.
 - b) Recommendation: Survey HOL boundaries and install boundary corner monuments.
 - c) Recommendation: Provide clear identification of allowable access points to HOL. Educate public with circumstances associated with the unlawful use of private lands.
 - d) Recommendation: Work toward acquiring easements or agreements for trail access over appropriate private lands.

G. Code Enforcement:

The Code Enforcement program was established in the summer of 2008. This position oversees the enforcement of codes for both the parks and recreation and public works departments. This position existed prior to 2008 as two separate jobs, based on the time of year. Ultimately the two departments pooled resources and created a year-round position to process complaints and enforce city codes that relate to both departments. Discussed in this parks plan is code enforcement as it relates to Parks and Recreation, which enforces the boulevard and weed ordinances and park encroachments.

Boulevard Enforcement and Maintenance

In the late 1980's, the boulevard ordinance was passed due to concerns of property owners removing grass from the boulevard areas only to install non-vegetative materials (bark, rocks, etc). The original ordinance has been modified to include a variance process to the current ordinance.

1. **Boulevard Enforcement and Maintenance Goal:** Provide a management program to ensure that Helena city residents maintain and care for boulevard landscaping as outlined in city ordinance.
 - a) Recommendation: Review existing ordinances for clear and concise direction.
 - b) Recommendation: Provide on-going city enforcement and education efforts.
 - c) Recommendation: Review and evaluate landscape plans to ensure compliance with city ordinance.
 - d) Recommendation: Process all complaints resulting in compliance with ordinance.
 - e) Recommendation: Provide options for landscape variances to allow for water conservation initiatives and alternative vegetation preferences.
 - f) Recommendation: Update the existing ordinance to allow for xeriscape landscaping practices.
 - g) Recommendation: Collaborate with community organizations and interest groups (i.e. Growing Friends of Helena and local nurseries) for technical assistance and community involvement.
 - h) Recommendation: Coordinate with the city's Community Development Department, Helena Citizen's Council and City Attorney's Office in revising ordinance as needed.

Weed Enforcement

In 1975, the City of Helena adopted the weed ordinance. Since then the ordinance has been updated incorporating state law and costs for control and addressing native plant

communities and noxious weeds. As more knowledge is gained regarding noxious weeds and the importance of control, more changes may be necessary. The ordinance is enforced from April 30 through October 31 of each year.

1. **Management Goal:** Provide for a weed management program to ensure that Helena city residents, businesses and organizations control and eliminate nuisance and noxious weeds.
 - a) Recommendation: Review existing ordinances for clear and concise direction.
 - b) Recommendation: Provide on-going city enforcement and education efforts.
 - c) Recommendation: Review and evaluate the city weed management plan to ensure consistency with city, state and federal weed legislation.
 - d) Recommendation: Continue to use integrated pest management practices for weed management.
 - e) Recommendation: Review budget annually and continue to leverage city funds with available weed grants.
 - f) Recommendation: Establish a plan that details the responsibilities of controlling weeds on city owned properties.
 - g) Recommendation: Monitor weed treatments using GIS mapping and record keeping.
 - h) Recommendation: Prioritize areas of treatment based on severity of noxious weed infestations.
 - i) Recommendation: Utilize volunteers as a tool for public education and as management resources.
2. **Compliance Goal:** Respond to all complaints in a timely manner while educating the public on its responsibility to maintain weeds.
 - a) Recommendation: Investigate complaint and send violation letter within 48 hours after receiving complaint as outlined in Chapter VIII of this plan.
3. **Interagency Goal:** Promote agency cooperation with county, state and federal agencies to ensure that best weed management practices are utilized.
 - a) Recommendation: Review and adopt noxious weed management “Cooperative Weed Management Agreement” between the city and Lewis and Clark County.
 - b) Recommendation: Review and adapt ordinance as necessary.

- c) Recommendation: As the city's liaison to the Lewis and Clark County Weed District the City's Code Enforcement Officer will attend monthly weed district meetings and prepare necessary correspondence and staff reports.
 - d) Recommendation: Gather input from county weed district and other entities.
 - e) Recommendation: Abide by state and federal weed legislation.
 - f) Recommendation: Maintain existing cooperative efforts in maintenance of noxious weeds on state right-of-ways.
 - g) Recommendation: Continue to leverage city funds and resources with available weed grants, technical assistance and training opportunities.
 - h) Recommendation: Share insect release site information with Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management.
4. **Outreach Goal**: Educate the citizens of Helena and the public about the negative effects of noxious weeds on the environment.
- a) Recommendation: Utilize a variety of education and marketing products including the city webpage.
 - b) Recommendation: Develop and manage volunteer projects (Adopt-A-Trail, weed pulls).

Park Encroachments

Park encroachments entail any disturbance made by adjacent property owners on city parkland or open space that has not been approved. Disturbances can include trimming trees, earthwork, building fences, permanent structures, or temporary structures. These types of encroachments are more likely to happen in areas where there are no visible markers distinguishing property lines. Through the enforcement of encroachments on park and open lands, adjacent owners will pay attention to their property line.

1. **Encroachment Goal**: Provide management to ensure the misuse of city owned park property by adjacent property owners is reduced or eliminated.
- a) Recommendation: Create and follow policy listed in Chapter 8.
 - b) Recommendation: Delineate parkland during nearby construction with fencing, signage or other acceptable method. Parkland is not meant to be used for equipment staging or storage at any time.
 - c) Recommendation: Create and establish a restoration agreement for any disturbance or earthwork to city property.

- d) Recommendation: Notify appropriate agencies about disturbance if necessary.
Example: Contacting Army Corps of Engineers for any disturbances to wetlands.
- e) Recommendation: Increase outreach and education efforts relating to parkland encroachments.

H. Recreation

As of 2010, the Parks and Recreation Department offers limited recreation programs. In September 2009, a recreation and aquatics program manager was added to the Parks and Recreation Department staff to increase the types of recreation services offered and to monitor current use agreements.

Ice skating is offered at Memorial, Lincoln, and Cunningham parks. Memorial has an ice rink attendant at certain times during the season. While the ice rink attendant is present, the warming house is open and a fee is charged. Skates are available for use to the public for no charge. Other times of the season, along with the other rinks, the rink is open to the public with no supervision or available skates.

The city offers tennis programs from beginner to advanced level. The classes take place at the Civic Center courts during the summer months.

The Kay McKenna Youth Foundation and the Helena Housing Authority, in cooperation with the cities of Helena and East Helena, provides a free recreation program for children. Children six to thirteen are welcome to attend. A variety of activities and speakers are offered throughout the summer.

2. **Recreation Goal**: Provide a comprehensive recreation program adequate to meet the leisure time needs of the City of Helena's population.
 - a) Recommendation: Review and evaluate warming houses at Lincoln and Memorial Parks.
 - b) Recommendation: Evaluate management plans for the ice rinks and review and evaluate current ice rink locations.
 - c) Recommendation: Evaluate the Kay's Kids program location and program services to respond to the changing demographics of Helena.
 - d) Recommendation: Review levels and sessions offered for tennis and recommend changes if needed.
 - e) Recommendation: Create a variety of marketing procedures to increase awareness of the programs and services offered.
3. **Program Goal**: Ensure that new and innovative programming is constantly being developed and implemented through assessment of activities and input from the public.

- a) Recommendation: Maintain a full-time staff position to manage and “grow” the recreation program.
 - b) Recommendation: Conduct on-going evaluation regarding programs that should be offered.
4. **Fiscal Goal**: Maintain reasonable prices for the use of all city recreational facilities and services while developing a revenue stream that promotes “cost-recovery” of management expenses.
- a) Recommendation: Consider and evaluate multiple uses for the Memorial warming house and ice rink.
 - b) Recommendation: Evaluate cost for maintenance of ice rinks.
 - c) Recommendation: Conduct a fee assessment of existing and fee services, programs and potential fee programs.
 - d) Recommendation: Seek alternative funding resources to leverage with city funds.
 - e) Recommendation: Generate funds for operations. May include sales or fees for use.
 - f) Recommendation: Develop a policy concerning court use by those teaching lessons for profit.
5. **Recreation Program Goal**: Create and maintain strategic partnerships to ensure a strong and diverse recreation program is offered.
- a) Recommendation: Maintain strong relationships with existing partners and user groups.
 - b) Recommendation: Monitor use and maintenance agreements.
 - c) Recommendation: Leverage resources and increase funding through grants, partnerships, and funding initiatives.

CHAPTER 7. Implementation Strategy

Implementation strategies are the goals and recommendations are action steps. Outlined below are funding options and funding strategies that support the goals and recommendation of the previous chapter. In addition, Appendix B contains an Annual Work Plan (AWP) which is prepared annually to outline intended budgets, strategies, and project priorities as identified in this Park, Recreation and Open Space plan. It sets out department intentions organized around outcomes, outputs and/or implementing projects.

A. Funding Sources

1. Use or service fees: Fees associated with visiting a parks facility.
2. Utility Fee: This is a tax on electric, water, telephone, gas and cable TV service. Cities often will apply the revenue from this tax to a specific type of project.
3. Park Impact Fees: Park impact fees are fees charged to a developer for the impacts the project will have on the park system. The money can be used only for acquisition and development of park sites and cannot be used for maintenance.

In 2008, the City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County jointly formed an Impact Fees Advisory Board. The board is working with a consultant to examine the necessity of impact fees for parks, transportation and fire suppression infrastructure in both the city and the county.

At this writing, a draft impact fees report is in process. The Advisory Board expects the final draft report to be submitted to both the County and City Commissions in 2010.

4. Mill Levy: MCA 15-10-425: Mill levy election. (1) A county, consolidated government, incorporated city, incorporated town, school district, or other taxing entity may impose a new mill levy, increase a mill levy that is required to be submitted to the electors, or exceed the mill levy limit provided for in 15-10-420 by conducting an election as provided in this section.
5. Special Districts: Special Districts may be created to fund park development and maintenance as allowed by the Montana Code Annotated (MCA). A petition to institute the creation of a special district must be signed by 40% of registered voters or 40% of owners of real property within the boundary of the proposed special district and submitted to the clerk of the governing body.
6. Joint Public/Private Partnership: This concept is relatively new to park and recreation agencies. The basic approach is for a public agency to enter into a working agreement with a private company to help fund, build and/or operate a public facility. Generally, the three primary incentives that a public agency can offer are free land to place a facility (usually a park or other piece of public land), certain tax advantages and access to the facility. While the public agency may have to give up certain responsibilities or control, it is one way of obtaining public facilities at a lower cost.

7. **Certificates of Participation:** This is a lease-purchase approach in which the city sells Certificates of Participation (COPs) to a lending institution. The city then pays the loan off from revenue produced by the facility or from its general operating budget. The lending institution holds title to the property until the COPs are repaid. This procedure does not require a vote of the public.
8. **Revenue Bonds:** This concept is somewhat similar to Certificates of Participation except it requires voter approval and as a result, the interest costs are less. Revenue from the operation of the facility is used to pay for capital cost and debt service.
9. **Land and Water Conservation Fund:** This is a federal grant program for the acquisition and development of parks and open space. At one time this was a significant funding source, but over the years the federal government has found ways to divert the money to other programs. It requires a 50% local match.
10. **Special Legislative Appropriations:** These are special appropriations created during the state budgeting process. They are based on the ability of local legislators to influence spending for projects in their community.
11. **Private Grants and Foundations:** Private grants and foundations can provide money for a wide range of projects. Usually the competition is keen. Often a city will develop its own foundation that creates a place for private donations.
12. **Urban Forestry Grants:** There are two funding grant programs in the area of urban forestry. One is funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration and provides grants to purchase and plant trees. The other is the USDA Community Forest grant. Urban street tree planting programs are sometimes funded by this method.
13. **Community Transportation Enhancement Project (CTEP):** The city has been actively pursuing this program for developing the Centennial Trail. Some of the eligible projects include trail systems for pedestrians and bicycles, acquisition of scenic easements, landscaping and other scenic beautification and mitigation of water pollution due to highway runoff. This program is administered by the Montana Department of Transportation.
14. **City Facility Improvement Fund:** This is a fund set up by the city to budget major capital expenditures. The fund is usually a six year program and is reviewed annually.
15. **Annual Operating Budget:** Minor amounts of money for special studies or small improvement projects are often funded out of the department's annual budget.
16. **Donations from Service Clubs:** Many of the parks in Helena were developed with the assistance of local service clubs. These parks now need their help by assisting in upgrading them.
17. **Park Trust Fund:** Sometimes communities will establish a park trust fund. Money generated from the interest of the trust is used to pay for park and facility

improvements. The only problem with this source is that a very large amount of money needs to be first placed in the trust. In the past, money in this fund has come from the sale of parkland and cash in lieu of park dedication for subdivision requirements.

18. Subdivision Law: The current subdivision law requires developers of residential land to donate a percentage of the subdivision land for park and open space purposes. There is also an option to pay cash in lieu of the parkland requirement. This money must be used on park development and park maintenance in the vicinity of the subdivision.
19. Land Trades: If the city owns land that is not suitable for park development but could be used for some other purpose, land trades can be made for more suitable park sites.
20. General Obligation Bond: These are voter approved bonds with the assessment placed on real property. This property tax is levied for a specified period of time, usually 20-30 years. Passage requires a majority approval by the voters. Examples:
 - a) 1995: A \$5 million bond to acquire and develop land for parks, open space, sports facilities and trail systems.
 - b) 2007: An assessment that provides for maintenance.
 - c) 2007: A \$7 million General Obligation bond for upgrades to Kindrick Legion Field, Centennial Park, Memorial Pool and expansion of the existing skatepark.

B. Project Priorities

Project priorities will be the result of the Annual Work Plan. Please see Appendix B.

C. Budget Considerations:

1. Comprehensive Capital Improvements Plan: A CCIP aims to identify and resolve deficiencies in existing public facilities and to anticipate and meet future demand for capital facilities based on current and expected population increases and citizen use of public services. A CCIP is a multi-year schedule that programs a series of municipal projects and their associated costs. The plan shows how the city will maintain, expand and renovate facilities and services as needed to meet the growing demands of existing and new residents. See Appendix A.
2. Funding Maintenance Operations: It is anticipated that as parks, open space and other recreational facilities are acquired and developed, the demand for more maintenance money will occur. To meet this demand, the following recommendations are made:
 - a) Neighborhood Park Maintenance: When a neighborhood wishes a higher level of maintenance, then an enhanced park maintenance district may be formed for the area.
 - b) Street Tree Maintenance: It is recommended that the street tree maintenance assessment be raised when necessary.

CHAPTER 8. Policies

These policies guide how the City of Helena Parks Department conducts its business.

Section 1. General Policies (GP)

- 1.1 The City of Helena discourages the development of small parks such as mini-parks and instead places the emphasis on open space and neighborhood parks.
- 1.2 Existing parks are completed to a finished level rather than developing a series of partially completed parks.
- 1.3 Joint partnerships to develop recreation areas and facilities are encouraged between the city, the county, community groups and schools.
- 1.4 The city places its priority in purchasing natural open land that is contingent with other public lands. Land that is difficult to develop because of steep slopes, wetlands, or other constraints will have a lower priority.
- 1.5 To acquire more open space land, the city may request land donations, property trades, or other non cash methods of acquiring this type of property.

Section 2. Management and Administration Policies

- 2.1 A strong coordination effort is made between the City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County because of common issues of land use, recreation needs and non-resident use of city facilities.

Park Reservation Policies

- 2.2 The park's administration office processes park and park building reservations. Reservations can be confirmed with a payment of a refundable damage/cleanup deposit. The checks are returned if the park is left without damage or excessive clean-up needs.
- 2.3 Adult and youth field and court reservations are managed through use agreements with specific organizations. The organization is invoiced at the end of the season and the use fee is based on the number of hours that the fields and or courts are requested.
- 2.4 Based on lease agreements, the Helena Brewers, American Legion Baseball, Helena School District, Helena Softball Association as well as other organizations are invoiced at the end of their playing seasons, once all expenses have been received. Invoices are due within 30 days.
- 2.5 Community Gardens: Garden rental fees are payable from March into June. Participating gardeners receive a letter at the end of February with an option to renew their plots. If gardeners do not renew, people on a waiting list are contacted until all plots are rented.

- 2.6 Recreation Equipment: The parks department rents bleachers and tables and other misc. equipment with a payment of a rental fee and damage deposit. Deposits are returned if the equipment is returned without damage.

Park Naming Policy

- 2.7 Existing parks which have already been named by an act of the City Commission and whose names have become well known are not to be renamed.
- 2.8 Future parks or existing parks which have never been named through an act of the City Commission are to be named according to the following criteria:
- 2.8a). Location – Names will be acceptable if the parkland is to be designated by present location whether it is a street or landmark.
 - 2.8b). Donation as Gift – If parkland is donated as a gift to the city by an individual or group, naming the park after said individual or group is permissible except for donation by virtue of subdivision laws.
 - 2.8c). Direct Purchase – If the city should purchase land for park purposes, the name of the park can be that of the seller if the commission should choose to do so.
 - 2.8d). Direct Involvement – If an individual or group is directly involved in the labor and/or the purchase of equipment for park development, the name of the development can be that of the group and/or person directly involved, or the group can recommend a name for the development.
 - 2.8e). Extraordinary Service - An individual or group that has demonstrated extraordinary service to the community may be recognized by naming a new park for that individual or group.
- 2.9 Names of new parks to be submitted to the Consolidated City-County Parks Board with final action by the City Commission.

Section 3. Subdivision Parklands

- 3.1 Parkland dedication is reviewed with the Parkland Evaluation worksheet for acceptability. (See Appendix B)
- 3.2 Service levels are based on acres per 1,000 residents or .03 acres per dwelling unit. Please see Chapter V for the level of service for park types.
- 3.3 City staff evaluates the parkland using the criteria sheet (Appendix B) and forwards a recommendation to the Consolidate City-County Parks Board.
- 3.4 The City of Helena discourages acceptance of trails for subdivision parkland or as linear parks, unless the proposed trail provides a useable non-motorized connecting route. (Greater Helena Transportation plan.)

- 3.5 The City of Helena discourages acceptance of mini parks due to economy of scale of the costs of maintaining such parks.
- 3.6 Neighborhood parks are acceptable as parkland as determined by the Parkland Evaluation worksheet.
- 3.7 Parkland is usable and must have adequate area and shape for development of amenities.
- 3.8 Parkland with slopes over 25%, or other non-developable attribute, may be acceptable as parkland when there is sufficient usable area and as determined by the Parkland Evaluation sheet.
- 3.9 Alternative parkland, such as critical wildlife habitat, cultural, historical, or natural resources, agricultural interests, may be accepted where the significance can be documented and the approval provides long-term protection.
- 3.10 In a phased subdivision development, a combined dedication of parkland is preferable to smaller isolated dedications in each phase.
- 3.11 Open space is acceptable as determined by the Parkland Evaluation sheet.
- 3.12 Mixed used residential developments shall be subject to parkland dedication.
- 3.13 Cash in lieu of parkland dedication is acceptable as determined by the Parkland Evaluation sheet.
- 3.14 Cash in lieu of parkland shall be utilized within the following distances: ¼ mile for a mini-park, one mile for a neighborhood park, or the nearest regional park, or the nearest sports complex.

Section 4. Park Maintenance and Development

- 4.1 Parks shall be maintained to the level that the budget allows.
- 4.2 Up to 50% of the subdivision cash in lieu of parkland may be used for maintenance.
- 4.3 Maintenance agreements with user groups shall be developed and maintained.
- 4.4 Prior to the acquisition and/or development of any area, the city prepares a cost assessment and maintenance impact statement for each proposed site being considered.
- 4.5 Environmental features shall be incorporated into park design where appropriate. Features may include boulders, tree stands, wetlands, riparian area or other attribute.

Section 5. Bill Roberts Golf Course

- 5.1 Budget, reserves and the capital improvement plan shall be reviewed annually.
- 5.2 Helena School District athletes may play at BRGC if students have a pass at one of three courses in town. Practice times will continue to be scheduled with the pro shop. Other golfers must pay a fee for practice golf.
- 5.3 Use agreements will be required for all tournament play. Standard tournament contracts will be required for all company or group outings and use of the course.
- 5.4 The decision on when to close/open the course will be based on weather conditions as determined by the golf course superintendent. When the greens are closed “for the winter” the rest of the course will remain open at no charge.
- 5.5 No outside food or beverages are allowed at the golf course.
- 5.6 Service dogs are allowed.
- 5.7 While the course is open for play, non-service dogs will not be allowed. When the course is not open, dogs will be allowed, but the public must adhere to city leash laws.
- 5.8 Cross-country skiing is allowed at BRGC under appropriate skiing conditions.
- 5.9 Use agreements will be required for cross-country running events. A use agreement will be developed between the school district and City of Helena for event scheduling, terms and fees.
- 5.10 For safety purposes non-golfing walkers and runners will not be allowed on the course during the golf season business hours. This use will be allowed during the closed season.
- 5.11 There will be no refunds for lost or stolen punch passes or season passes.
- 5.12 Punch cards are transferrable.
- 5.13 Medical refunds will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. For refund consideration, a pass holder must provide documentation of their condition from their physician. If a refund is granted, the refund will be pro-rated minus the number of documented played rounds based on the current green fee value. No refunds will be considered after August.
- 5.14 Passes and punch cards will not be extended to the next season.
- 5.15 Rain checks will be issued for dangerous situations and medical emergencies. Rain check refunds will not be issued after 5 holes of completed golf for 9 holes of play and 13 holes of completed golf for 18 holes of play.

- 5.16 No-one under the age of 6 is allowed on the golf course.
- 5.17 Shirt and shoes are required. Metal spikes are not allowed.
- 5.18 BRGC patrons use the facilities at their own risk. The City of Helena is not responsible for any injury or death that may occur while using the facility.
- 5.19 The City of Helena is not responsible for any lost, broken, and/or stolen articles.
- 5.20 Based on professional courtesy and industry standards, complimentary golf will be granted. Complimentary golf must be arranged through the golf pro, assistant golf pro, golf superintendent or assistant superintendent.
- 5.21 Staff of BRGC may receive a free golf pass (carts, driving range use) for the season for which they are employed. Course marshals are volunteers who receive free golf privileges for their volunteer services. If a marshal no longer chooses to volunteer their services, their privileges are revoked and they must pay regular fees. Marshals are required to marshal 8 hours per week from April to the end of September.
- 5.22 The BRGC golf professional may donate up to 35 rounds of “2 for 1” free golf for charitable purposes per golf season.
- 5.23 The BRGC golf professional may donate up to \$1,000 dollars of pro shop merchandise for charitable purposes per golf season.

Section 6. Aquatics Services

- 6.1 Water activity passes are offered. Price differential between adults and seniors (65 and older) and residents and non-residents.
- 6.2 Passes are good for one season and are non-refundable.
- 6.3 Passes may be used for water activities only: lap swim, water aerobics, water polo, and water walking.
- 6.4 Once passes are purchased, responsibility rests with the patron. If passes are lost and/or stolen, no refund or voucher will be issued.
- 6.5 Punch cards are transferrable.
- 6.6 Passes and punch cards will not be extended to the next season.
- 6.7 Open swim passes may be used for open swim only.
- 6.8 Lightning Days: Make-up swim lessons are offered after three lightning days. Make-up swim lesson occurs on Saturday.
- 6.9 Registration Policy: Lessons are first come, first served. Participants must sign up

- and payment is due at the time of registration. Lesson fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.
- 6.10 Private Parties: Waterpark may be rented through use agreements and fees.
 - 6.11 Lifeguards are required to have Waterpark Lifeguarding certification.
 - 6.12 Swim instructors are required to have Instructor of Water Safety certification from the American Red Cross.
 - 6.13 Slide attendants are required to have First Aid and CPR training.
 - 6.14 At the first sight/sound of lightning/thunder, water and deck will be cleared. Water and deck will stay cleared for 60 minutes after each strike. No vouchers or refunds will be offered.
 - 6.15 Last Chance Splash Waterpark and Pool patrons use the waterpark and bathhouse at their own risk. The City of Helena is not responsible for any injury or death that may occur while using the facility.
 - 6.16 The City of Helena is not responsible for any lost, broken, and/or stolen articles.
 - 6.17 Last Chance Splash Waterpark and Pool reserves the right to refuse service to anyone for lewd actions and behaviors. Patrons may be asked to leave for any such behaviors and if patrons are not compliant, police officers will be called.
 - 6.18 Staff gives three warnings to patrons. Warning one: Patron is barred for the rest of the day. Warning two: Patron is barred for three days and guardian is called. Warning three: Patron is barred for a three day period. Police and parents will be called and trespass letter will be issued.

Section 7. Urban Trees and Boulevards

- 7.1 Boulevard tree maintenance is done by the city with funding from a tree maintenance district and is assessed on property.
- 7.2 The city allows memorial trees at public parks.
- 7.3 Urban trees are recognized as living infrastructure within the City of Helena. They appreciate in value and affect the quality of life.
- 7.4 Projects should be planned so that planting sites are conserved and maximize the opportunity to plant trees.
- 7.5 Trees should be encouraged in new developments. Trees that are appropriate to the climate shall be prioritized.
- 7.6 Urban trees shall be maintained to ensure health and longevity.

- 7.7 New planting shall be a type that is on the City's approved tree species and plant list.

Section 8. Open Lands

- 8.1 Preserve and protect natural areas within the City of Helena to provide habitat essential to the conservation of plants, animals, and their associated ecosystems and to enrich the lives of citizens by providing opportunities for education, scientific research, nature interpretation, art, fishing, wildlife observation, hiking and other activities.
- 8.2 Maintain forest health by culling trees that have died from beetle kill or other natural epidemics.
- 8.3 Prepare open spaces for wildfire defense.
- 8.4 Work with community entities to raise awareness about open lands issues, i.e., weeds, wildfire, and tree disease or pests.

Section 9. Code Enforcement

Boulevards and sidewalks

- 9.1 Policy: Process all complaints resulting in compliance with the ordinance in the following manner:
- 9.1a). Receive complaint and investigate within 48 hours.
- 9.1b). If violation is found, send notice giving 30 days to either fix area or submit a landscape plan. Verify landowners by GIS and through clerk and recorder's office.
- 9.1c). If no compliance or contact after 30 days, send second notice through certified mail giving 14 days to submit plan or contact code enforcement office.
- 9.1d). If no contact after 14 days, submit documentation to the city attorney's office for legal action.

Weed enforcement

- 9.2 Respond to all complaints in a timely manner while educating the public on its responsibility to maintain weeds.
- 9.2a). Receive complaints from April 1 through October 31.
- 9.2b). Enter complaints into a spreadsheet that lists property, description of violation, property owner information, phone number, who initiated complaint, date violation letter sent, action taken, notes, and whether they complied.

- 9.2c). Investigate complaint within 48 hours after receiving complaint.
- 9.2d). If violation found, send first certified notification letter giving 10 days to comply. Verify property owners through GIS and clerk and recorder's office.
- 9.2e). Re-inspect property on 11th day for compliance.
- 9.2f). If no compliance then conduct penalty process.

Parkland Encroachments

- 9.3 Respond to all complaints with the ultimate goal of restoring the disturbed area.
 - 9.3a). Receive complaint.
 - 9.3b). Enter complaints into a spreadsheet that lists property description of violation, property owner information, phone number, who initiated complaint, date violation letter sent, action taken, notes, and whether they complied.
 - 9.3c). Inspect complaint within 48 hours of receiving.
 - 9.3d). If violation found, take pictures of offending structures, earth work, other disturbances and materials.
 - 9.3e). Send first notification letter giving 10 days to comply and include photos. Verify property owners through GIS and clerk and recorder's office.
 - 9.3f). Re-inspect property on 11th day for compliance.
 - 9.3g). If not in compliance after second re-inspection, turn matter over to city attorney's office to send a citation.

Section 10. Recreation

Ice Skating

- 10.1 The public may use the ice as long as the ice is deemed to be safe and usable. Patrons will not receive a refund or voucher in the event of inclement weather.
- 10.2 Warming house and ice rink patrons use the rink and surrounding area at their own risk. The City of Helena is not responsible for any injury or death that may occur while using the rink and surrounding area.
- 10.3 The City of Helena is not responsible for any broken, lost, and/or stolen articles.
- 10.4 The Memorial Park warming house and ice rink reserves the right to refuse service to anyone for lewd actions and behaviors. Patrons may be asked to leave for any such behaviors and if patrons are not compliant, police officers will be called.

- 10.5 Group and Private Parties Policy: Deposit is due at the time that the registration is booked.
- 10.5a). Deposit is refunded after party occurs, if the party is cancelled within ten business days by registrant, the weather is below zero and/or blizzard or the ice is not usable.
- 10.6 Fees will be charged for usage and are due at the time of the party.

Tennis

- 10.7 Tennis lessons may be cancelled if the recreation supervisor deems it to be necessary. Make up lessons will be conducted only if there are more than three cancelled lessons per session.
- 10.8 Tennis patrons use the courts and surrounding areas at their own risk. The City of Helena is not responsible for any injury or death that may occur while using the courts and surrounding areas.
- 10.9 The City of Helena is not responsible for any broken, lost, and/or stolen articles while at tennis courts.
- 10.10 Fees are due at the time of registration. Patrons are served on a first come, first served basis.
- 10.11 Fees may be prorated to determine the amount due for the total weeks that the participant uses prior to participant's start of the classes.
- 10.12 Fee is non-refundable, but transferable.

Kay's Kids Summer Recreation Program

- 10.13 The Kay's Kids summer playground program may be cancelled if the weather is bad and there is not sufficient shelter. Parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up their children.
- 10.14 Kay's Kids participants use the parks and equipment at their own risk. The City of Helena is not responsible for any injury or death that may occur while using the parks or equipment.
- 10.15 The City of Helena is not responsible for any broken, lost, and/or stolen articles while participating at Kay's Kids programs.
- 10.16 Kay's Kids reserve the right to refuse service to anyone for lewd actions and behaviors. Participants may be asked to leave for any such behaviors and if participants are not compliant, police officers will be called.

Skatepark

- 10.17 Skatepark hours are from dawn to dusk.
- 10.18 The skatepark facility is closed during periods of inclement weather.
- 10.19 Proper use of protective gear (helmets, wrist guards, elbow and knee pads) is strongly recommended.
- 10.20 The Skatepark is limited to skateboards and inline skates only. Bicycles, scooters or motor vehicles are not allowed.
- 10.21 Pets are to be leashed and outside of the skatepark area.

General

- 10.22 Use agreements with user groups will be reviewed annually to ensure that all parties are following the terms and conditions listed in the agreements.
- 10.23 Billing will occur at the scheduled time in accordance with the use agreement. All payments are due within 30 days of the invoice.
- 10.24 The City shall manage a recreation program with the intent of expanding it as demand and support for services occurs.
- 10.25 Fees shall be charged for most recreation programs and services.
- 10.26 Fees shall be charged to commercial ventures utilizing city parks.
- 10.27 The City of Helena Parks and Recreation Department shall provide sport fields, but management of leagues and maintenance of fields shall be coordinated with private groups and/or with use agreements.



APPENDIX A

The ***Comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan*** is a planning tool which analyzes the interactive considerations over a ten year time frame for:

- CIP costs,
- Operations & Maintenance costs,
- Debt Service Costs, and
- Potential Funding.

CCIP Methodology**1. Inventory**

The inventory is constantly being updated and refined as better component information becomes available. This identifies what we have and what it will cost to replace.

2. Assessment of Condition

Using both in-house expertise and outside consultants, the Department established and periodically updates detailed assessments of the condition of our parks and recreation infrastructure.

3. Capital Improvement Projects (CIP)

Infrastructure inventories and assessments of condition allow the Department to develop prioritized lists of Capital Improvement Projects (CIP). A CIP identifies what capital projects are needed, and when they are needed to continue to provide quality services to our community.

4. Comprehensive Capital Improvement Plans (CCIP)

After inventory, assessment of condition, and prioritization of capital projects, the Comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CCIP) is then completed by doing a thorough analysis of CIP funding feasibility and options. This is typically a ten-year projection of the CIP, operation and maintenance costs, and debt service costs compared to practical funding.

5. Annual Update and Review

The Department has a tremendous investment in infrastructure. The Inventory, Assessment of Condition, CIP, and CCIP Funding are all updated and reviewed on an annual basis so that the City Commission can always make informed decisions. In their public forum, the City Commission reviews the CCIPs and ratifies or modifies the priorities and policies for the implementation and funding of current and long-term capital projects.

By this reference the Comprehensive Capital Improve Program is incorporated into and made a part of this plan.

Appendix B CITY PARKLAND EVALUATION

The following is an evaluation of this proposal using the Park Board’s criteria:

General Criteria

1. List the parks policies to which the proposed park project is applicable.
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____
2. What is the proposed acreage and shape?

3. Are there noxious weeds on the property? ____ Yes. ____ No. If so, how will they be eradicated?

4. Are there any slopes over 25%? ____ Yes. ____ No.
5. Are there environmental or physical hazards on the property? ____ Yes. ____ No.
6. Describe the potential user groups for this park. _____
7. Are other facilities incorporated on any part of the proposed parkland, such as storm water ponds, pump houses and/or wells? ____ Yes. ____ No.
 - a) Is mitigation required? ____ Yes. ____ No.
 - b) How will it be mitigated? _____
 - c) What percentage, if any, is acceptable as parkland? _____
8. Is there any physical barrier(s), such as highway, cliff or railroad between the residential area and the proposed park? ____ Yes. ____ No. Explain. _____

9. Montana Code and Zoning

Zoning Formula per MCA 76-3-621	
R3, R4, RO and all other proposed residential lots	R1 and R2
.03 acres/dwelling unit	(a) 11% of the area of the land proposed to be subdivided into parcels of one-half acre or smaller; (b) 7.5% of the area of the land proposed to be subdivided into parcels larger than one-half acre and not larger than 1 acre; (c) 5% of the area of the land proposed to be subdivided into parcels larger than 1 acre and not larger than 3 acres; and (d) 2.5% of the area of the land proposed to be subdivided into parcels larger than 3 acres and not larger than 5 acres.

Parkland calculation:

Density Formula			Total
Total acreage of residential lots	x	.03 acre/ dwelling unit =	
R1 and R2 Zone Formula			
Total acres of lots that are 1/2 acre or smaller.	x	11% =	
Total acres of lots that are larger than 1/2 acre and less than 1 acre.	x	7.5% =	
Total acres of lots that are larger than 1 acre and less than 3 acres.	x	5% =	
Total acres of lots that are larger than 3 acres and less than 5 acres.	x	2.5% =	

10. How will the parkland be developed? _____

11. How will the parkland be maintained?

12. How far is the proposed parkland to the closest city owned park? _____

13. What is the zoning on the property? _____

14. What is the dwelling unit density? (units/acre) _____

15. Which formula will be used to determine parkland dedication? Why? Use table above.

16. Does the size of proposed parkland match or exceed the requirement? ____ Yes. ____ No.

17. Will cash –in –lieu be acceptable – why? _____ Yes. _____ No.

18. Is the subdivision a Planned Unit Development or other development with land permanently set aside for park and recreational uses? _____ Yes. _____ No.

19. If yes on Q17, then is the land permanently set sufficient to meet the needs of the persons who will ultimately reside in the development; and the area of the land and any improvements set aside for park and recreational purposes equals or exceeds the area of the dedication required? If yes, then no parkland dedication to the City is required.

_____ Yes. _____ No.

20. Does the proposed parkland contain one of the following: critical wildlife habitat, cultural, historical, or natural resources or agricultural interests? _____ Yes. _____ No.

21. If yes on Q19, then has quantifiable documentation been submitted to substantiate the application? _____ Yes. _____ No.

22. If yes on Q19, then does the area of the land proposed to provide long-term protection an amount equal to or exceeding the area of the dedication required? _____ Yes. _____ No.

23. Is land outside of the subdivision to be set aside for park and recreational uses? (If no, go to Q25.) _____ Yes. _____ No.

24. If yes on Q22, then is it sufficient to meet the needs of the persons who will ultimately reside in the subdivision? _____ Yes. _____ No.

25. If yes on Q22, then does the area of the land and any improvements set aside for park and recreational uses equals or exceeds the area of dedication required? _____ Yes. _____ No.

26. Is the subdivider proposing dedicating land to a school district? _____ Yes. _____ No.

27. If yes on Q25, then is the land adequate to be used for school facilities or buildings that equals or exceeds the area of dedication required? *School land dedication is subject to the approval of the local governing body and acceptance by the school district trustees.*

_____ Yes. _____ No.

28. What is the proposed name of the park? _____

Names of new parks are submitted to the Consolidated City-County Parks Board with final action by the City Commission.

Specific Criteria

A. Public Park Areas: This includes parkland categories as defined in the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan or other city adopted plan. These areas can serve a wide variety of uses including playgrounds, community gardens, facilities for non-sports recreation, picnic shelters, walking/jogging or trails. Check all that apply.

- Introduces a park into an area that currently lacks one.

- Will have maintenance costs that are reasonable for the number of people being assessed.
- Offers recreation opportunities for people of varying physical abilities and age groups.
- Enhances the ability of the public to access other trails or creates non-motorized travel opportunities as identified in the *Greater Helena Area Transportation Plan*.

B. Open Space Lands: These are defined by the city and county as specific parcels of land designated to be left undeveloped, in an otherwise developing urban context, and to be dedicated to the public for continued access by non-motorized means. These areas define and enhance the natural, aesthetic and scenic qualities of the area. It is evaluated based on the one or more of the following criteria:

- Connects park, open space, and other public properties.
- Is large enough in size, by itself or in conjunction with adjacent public properties, to maintain its open space qualities.
- Has a publicly accessible viewpoint that provides a panoramic view of the surrounding landscape.
- Is safely and conveniently accessible by non-motorized modes of travel.
- Has a feature of historic or cultural importance.
- Has a feature of educational or scientific value.
- Is appropriately vegetated with native species and/or mature trees.
- Has a scarcity of noxious weeds.
- Has a feature of special importance to wildlife and birds.
- Has an interesting geologic or topographic feature.
- Has surface water such as a stream, pond, spring, or wetland.
- Provides an undeveloped visual backdrop for important buildings or urban features, such as the “Capital Backdrop”.
- Have trails or existing use by the public for recreational activities.

C. Trail Corridors: These provide a location for non-motorized recreation and travel. They often provide connections between public properties. These are evaluated based on one or more of the following criteria:

- Has been identified in the *Greater Helena Area Transportation Plan*.
- Follows a linear natural feature, such as a stream or ridge.
- Follows an established or demonstrably desirable corridor of non-motorized use.
- Connects previously unconnected public properties and/or neighborhoods.
- Provides access to public properties.

- Helps to complete a network of trails that connect public properties in and around Helena.
- Is separated from motorized traffic.
- Uses an existing corridor such as a railroad or utility right of way or easement.
- Follows a route of historical significance.

D. Sports Fields and Facilities: This provides enhanced or additional spaces for sports fields, informal games, and other recreational activities. This land is evaluated upon one or more of the following criteria:

- Is large enough to accommodate a playing field or sports facility.
- Have extensive level areas.
- Will offer opportunities for organized sports.
- Will be landscaped and provide facilities for spectators.
- Is accessible by a variety of modes of transportation.

E. Staff Recommendation to the City-County Parks Board.

Appendix C.

Rules and regulations pertaining to parks and park operations

Chapters 5 and 7 of the Helena City Code address issues that affect City Parks and Recreation. Examples of code topics include dog ordinances, fireworks and encroachments. All city ordinances are available online at the City of Helena website under the “Home” tab.

7-12-1: DEFINITIONS:

Whenever used in this chapter, the following words shall have the meanings herein set forth:

NATURAL PARK: A specific designation of a city park to ensure its natural character in perpetuity. Mount Helena City Park has been designated, by resolution, as a natural park.

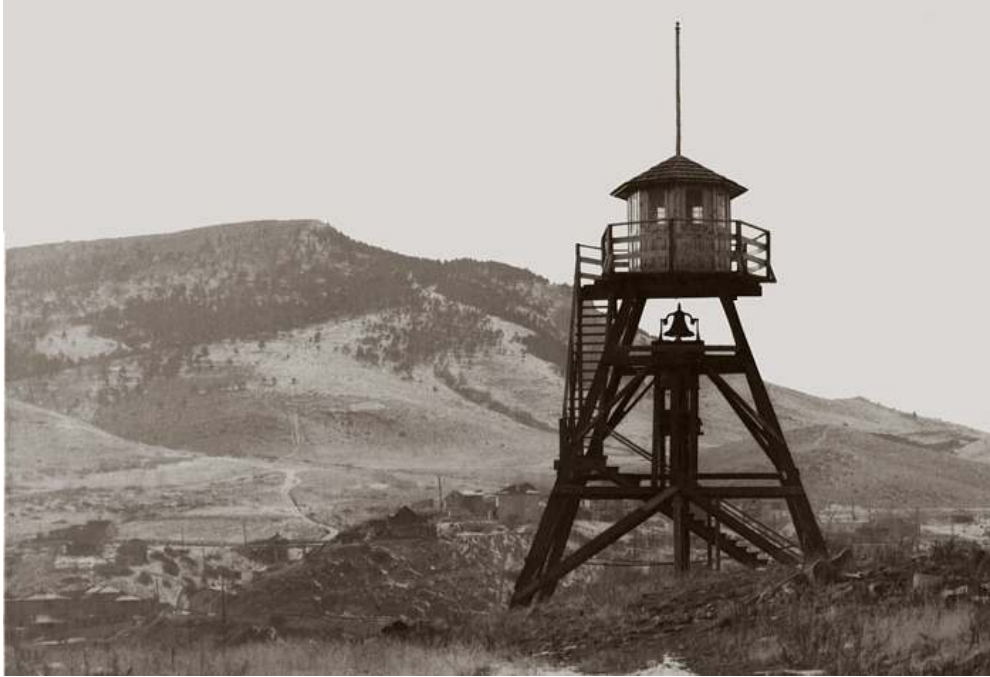
PARK: Includes play lots, neighborhood playgrounds, neighborhood parks, community playfields, special use sites, conservancy areas, and green spaces as the same are defined on the park inventory classifications definitions list which is available for review in the city's parks and recreation office. (Ord. 2762, 1-8-1996)

7-12-2: RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR PARKS:

The following rules and regulations shall apply to all public "parks" as defined above:

- A. It is unlawful to camp or sleep overnight in any public park, park walkway, boulevard, greenway, open space area, or beneath any public bridge within or adjacent to any of the areas identified herein without the written permission of the director of parks and recreation or his designated representative.
- B. It is unlawful for any person or persons to cause to be started or to maintain any open fire of any nature in any public park, park walkway, boulevard, greenway, open space area, or beneath any public bridge within or adjacent to any of the areas identified herein. Hot coal fires for barbecuing are permitted only in barbecue pits provided for that purpose.
- C. It is unlawful to hunt, trap, gather firewood or use motor vehicles in any public park except as specifically authorized.
- D. No person shall swim or wade in any public pool in any park except during regular hours open to the public.
- E. No person shall hit golf balls, engage in archery, throw metal spears, or otherwise cause the flight of dangerous projectiles in a public park.
- F. No person shall use the tennis courts in any public park for purposes other than the sport of tennis. No person shall hang on tennis nets, use street shoes, operate motor vehicles on, or otherwise abuse the tennis courts in any public park.

G. No person shall enter a public park or remain within a public park while his or her privilege to use the public parks is suspended or rescinded. (Ord. 2758, 11-27-1995)



COURTESY OF CAPT. SEAN LOGAN AND THE HELENA FIRE DEPT. ARCHIVE

Appendix D. Annual Work Plan template.

Introduction:

The City of Helena Parks and Recreation Department staff will utilize a management process that incorporates an annual work plan. The annual work plans will serve as a supplemental appendix to the current park plan. The work plan will outline by specific park plan goals, recommendations or action items (beyond normal operating procedures), that will be a priority action item for that particular fiscal year. The current fiscal year work plan will be reviewed quarterly by Department staff to ensure activities are progressing as planned. The work plan process will provide a mechanism for reporting accomplishments, activity status and staff responsibilities. This process also ensures that program activities are tied to overall park planning goals.

A new work plan will be created annually for the upcoming fiscal year before the city budget planning process begins. Under the facilitation of the Parks Director, department staff will review goals, recommendations and action items listed in the parks plan, as well as identify new items, needs or opportunities that may have presented themselves. The work plan will represent Department program priorities that will guide budget requests.

A. Template - Below is an example from the FY 2011 plan.

Goals	Activity per recommendations	Timeframe				Responsible Party	Status
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Goal:	Example Only						
	Utilize software for park scheduling	x				Recreation manager and administrative staff.	
	Improve/manage webpage	Ongoing				Administrative staff.	
	Develop "brand"			x	x	Parks board and department	



City of Helena

Update of the City's Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan

Purpose of the Plan

The primary purpose of the updated plan is to guide management through the development of goals and recommendations for park and recreation services in Helena. The updated plan will help determine the need, location, priority, and funding strategies for parks, open space, trail systems and other recreation facilities within the urban area of Helena.

Visit the Parks Department website at
www.ci.helena.mt.us/departments/parks-recreation
to review a copy of the draft plan.

We Need to Hear From YOU!

Please submit written comments by July 26, 2010. Comments can be sent electronically to cityparks@ci.helena.mt.us or by mail to
Parks Administration:
316 North Park Avenue, Room 405, Helena, MT 59623

For More Information

Contact cityparks@ci.helena.mt.us
or call 447-8463

THANK-YOU!

CITY OF HELENA
Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan

