



CITY OF LARAMIE
PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT
P.O. Box C
Laramie, WY 82073

Parks: (307) 721-5264
Fax (307) 721-5256
Recreation: (307) 721-5269
Fax: (307) 721-5284
TDD (307) 721-5295

CITY OF LARAMIE
PARKS, TRAILS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN AD HOC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AGENDA

MEETING DATE: April 11, 2012

TIME: 11:30 AM

LOCATION: Recreation Center large conference room – 920 Boulder Drive

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of the minutes from the March 28, 2012 meetings.

Motion by _____, seconded by _____, that the consent agenda be approved and that each specific action on the consent agenda be approved as indicated. (Items listed on the consent agenda are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion in the form listed above. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a Committee Member or citizen so requests, in which case the item will be removed from the consent agenda and will be considered on the regular agenda.)

Regular Agenda:

1. Presentation on Open Space areas and classifications and Sports Complex areas classifications
2. Future meeting schedule
April 16th through April 20th – community stakeholder group meetings
April 25th
April 28th (possible Saturday am meeting)
May 9th
May 23rd
June 13th
June 27th
3. Other business

New business:

Public Comments

Next Meeting Date: Wednesday April 25, 2012 @ 11:30am

**CITY OF LARAMIE
PARKS, TRAILS & RECREATION MASTER
PLAN AD HOC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
March 28, 2012
Minutes of Meeting**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Amber Travsky, Amy Williamson, Dan McCoy, Dave Hammond, Evan O'Toole, Joe Lord, Mike Moeller, Peggy McCrackin

MEMBERS NOT PRESENT: Bill Gribb, Scott Mullner

GUESTS: David Gertsch, County Planner

CITY OF LARAMIE STAFF PRESENT: Paul Harrison, Parks & Recreation Director; Michael Peters, Recreation Manager; Mel Owen, Administrative Assistant; Derek Teini, Senior Planner; Mike Zook, Parks Manager

The regular meeting was called to order by chair Dave Hammond at 11:30 a.m.

Consent Agenda:

- 1) **To approve the minutes from the March 14, 2012 regular meeting of the Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan Ad Hoc Advisory Committee.**

Motion by Williamson, second by Moeller, that the minutes of March 14, 2012 be amended to include David Gertsch, County Planner among the attendees. Motion carried 5-0 (McCoy and Lord not present for vote). Motion by Williamson, second by Moeller, that the amended minutes be approved. Motion carried 5-0 (McCoy and Lord not present for vote).

Regular Agenda:

- 1) **Continued presentation of Natural Resource Area standards, Greenways standards and sports complex standard for discussion, revision and approval.**

Harrison gave an update on a City Council work session concerning a pilot commuter bike path which would include a speed limit reduction along the bike path route. The Committee briefly discussed the proposal and also discussed the possibility of a speed limit reduction around recreation areas. Motion by Moeller, second by Williamson, to insert the following language into the Master Plan: to create 20 mph zones around parks and recreational areas where children are present for safety concerns. Following discussion, motion by Williamson, to amend the motion on the table to state that the speed limit around parks can be set at the discretion of the Parks, Tree and Recreation Advisory Board, second by Moeller. Motion as amended failed, 2-6.

Motion by Travsky, second by McCrackin, to create a 20 mph zone around all Parks unless decided otherwise by the Parks, Tree and Recreation Advisory Board. Motion carried 8-0. The Committee agreed that implementing the 20 mph zone around parks would help to promote safety for park users.

Harrison presented the Natural Resource Area standards and solicited input from the Committee on the standards for inclusion in the Master Plan and noted that the Committee could pursue creating standards for Open Space if they desired.

The Committee noted a commitment to addressing open space issues within the Master Plan and stated that both private and public access serves a role within any open space standard; however if there is no public access granted to a particular tract of open space then it should not be counted towards any open space designations. Staff noted that a working definition of open space could be provided to the Committee at a future meeting in order to have a starting point to discuss and refine the definition and any attendant standards. Motion by Moeller to install open space into the Master Plan, with public or private access distinctions to be determined. Motion withdrawn by Moeller.

Harrison presented the Greenways standards to the Committee for further discussion and stated that the primary effects of greenways are to tie recreation and park elements together. He noted that connectivity is the key concern for Greenways development and that there are no definite national standards on greenways. Motion by Moeller, second by Williamson, that a minimum of a fifty (50) foot trail corridor be set; however depending on the situation less than 50 feet could be allowed if necessary due to slope, terrain or other situations, in such instances there would be an available variance of a thirty (30) foot bare minimum. Motion carried 8-0.

2) Community stakeholder group meeting background letter and questions.

Harrison let the Committee know that invitations have been sent out to all stakeholder groups on the list vetted by the Committee at previous meetings. Stakeholder meetings are being scheduled for the week of April 16th. The Committee expressed a desire to have at least one member attend the meetings. Staff stated a meeting schedule would be provided to the Committee.

Other Business:

The Committee agreed that the majority of the members could attend a Saturday work session on April 28th.

New Business

None

Public Comments:

None

Motion to adjourn at 1 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Mel Owen
Administrative Assistant
Parks and Recreation
City of Laramie

Laramie Parks & Recreation

Classifications and Standards

The Ad Hoc Advisory Committee has reviewed and analyzed all of the current Laramie Parks, Trails, Recreation, and Open Space areas along with reviewing the current park classifications base upon the 2007 Laramie Comprehensive Plan and the 1982 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) published the Recreation, Park, and Open Space Standards and Guidelines to establish nationally applicable criteria for the provision of parks and recreation facilities and open space. These standards serve as a guide for parks and recreation planning, but do not replace reasonable judgment or specific local needs. The current standards method is based upon providing a set number of acres or facilities per 1,000 population. This methodology was developed in the 1970s and 80s and remains the basis for most of the Parks and Recreation Master Plans throughout the country.

The National Recreation and Park Association has recently stated that communities should be very cautious in using the national standards, noting that all communities are unique, dynamic and ever changing. They have very different climactic conditions, different geographies, different fiscal capabilities and very different people demographics. Recognizing these inherent weaknesses with applying a national standard, the NRPAs current methodology strongly suggest that each community only use the national standards as a benchmark to develop their own standards or levels of service through research based upon citizen input and community trends in parks and recreation services.

While national standards are useful, it is important to ensure they are reasonable for the community given considerations such as participation trends, user characteristics, demographics, socioeconomics, climate, natural environment, and other considerations. Leisure and recreation values are unique to each municipality; therefore, it is important that the standards represent the interests and desires of the community. With this being the case when we analyze the current comments from the Laramie community and the Ad Hoc advisory committee to the national standards the following trends have been identified for consideration:

- That neighborhood parks distributed by geographic region or park service areas are more desirable than larger community based parks. With this being the case, the standard for neighborhood parks should be 3 acres per 1,000 population.
- That the primary need for additional community parks is based upon the need for large open turf areas for areas for soccer, lacrosse and all types of youth and adult sports practices. With this being the case, additional sports complex areas should be a priority for acquisition and development.
- That the current parks are utilized in a tiered approach in that the community parks also service as recreation spaces, and as neighborhood parks for the geographical neighborhoods base upon the park service areas. They also as pocket parks for the residents in the immediate proximity of the park. With this being the case, the standard for community parks should be 2 acres per 1,000 population.

- That un-developed open space surrounding Laramie for nature walking, animal exercise and passive recreation is desirable. With this being the case, the need for additional open space and natural resource areas should be a high priority.
- That the further development of a trail system surrounding Laramie along with a commuting bike lane system to permit safe bicycle and pedestrian transportation is desirable. With this being the case, the need for additional trails and greenways should be a priority.

The classifications of parks needed to meet the diverse needs of the Laramie community are as follows:

Community Parks

Community parks are intended to function on a large scale, serving the parks and recreation needs of an entire community, not just a specific area or neighborhood. They are typically larger in size and include facilities and improvements for area-wide activities and assembly events, such as picnic areas, walking/jogging trails, athletic fields, and other larger scale activities. It is important that adequate off-street parking is provided. Community parks also provide quiet spaces for enjoyment, and may include local environmental features such as rivers, ridgelines, drainages, or other topographical features.

Community Park Role

In similar-sized cities as Laramie, a community park often serves as the principal focal point for civic gatherings and organized recreational programs, special events, and sports league play. Further, a community park can often become a major landmark and the flagship park in a community, a symbol that enhances community identity and is beloved by residents. This example of a community parks role fits how Washington Park is currently utilized within Laramie.

Community Park Standards

The size of community parks should be large enough to accommodate a variety of activities typically associated with a neighborhood park, but also adequate space for major activities. The NRPA standards a community park typically serves two or more neighborhoods and community members will travel on half of a mile to three miles in distance to reach a community park. The size of a community park is a minimum of ten acres but generally contain between twenty and fifty acres. The standard for acreage is between five and eight acres per 1,000 in population.

Recommended community park facilities and improvements include:

- Picnic shelters with barbecue pits or grills
- Sidewalks and/or a natural walking trail with exercise stations
- Off leash dog run area (fenced)
- Shade trees and native landscaping
- Security lighting
- Multi-purpose open play areas
- Multi-purpose courts
- Playground equipment and playscape (up to 50 children, ages 5 to 12 with a separate area for 3 to 5 year olds)

- ♦ Perimeter landscaping
- ♦ Trash receptacles and enclosures
- ♦ Curb cuts and crosswalks
- ♦ Restrooms
- ♦ Off-street parking

An good example of a community park in Laramie is LaBonte Park or Washington Park.

School-Parks

Combining parks with school sites can meet the needs of both the school systems and the community, particularly when located in areas that are not adequately served by a neighborhood park. The location of school-parks is solely depending upon the location of elementary, middle school, or high school locations. This classification could also be applied to facilities and grounds owned by the University of Wyoming.

School-Parks Role

The landscaping, playgrounds, and open athletic fields of the Albany County School District and the University of Wyoming function as both community parks for athletic facilities and as neighborhood parks in areas that are underserved in Laramie.

School-Parks Standards

With School-Parks being primary facilities of the School District and the University the establishment of development standards is not applicable. It should also be noted that school-parks will not be applicable to the levels of service in each park service area.

A good example of the school-park in Laramie is Indian Paintbrush Elementary School and Prexys Pasture on the UW campus.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks should provide facilities and improvements that conveniently accommodate use by surrounding neighborhoods. Ease and safe access from surrounding neighborhoods, central location, and pedestrian/bicycle linkages are key considerations when developing neighborhood parks. They should be designed to accommodate the needs of all ages and, therefore, should have a blend of passive and active facilities.

Neighborhood Park Role

Neighborhood parks are intended to provide residents with ample opportunity for both passive and semi-active recreation activity. Most neighborhood parks are the foundation of a community park system and function as the center of activities within a neighborhood or subdivision area. Neighborhood parks are intended to meet the daily recreation needs of nearby residents. The level of activity is limited within a neighborhood park by the space available and the needs of the neighborhood. The size of neighborhood parks varies according to the availability of property, method and timing of acquisition, and intended use. The NRPA standards recommend a minimum neighborhood park size of five acres assuming an adequate and even distribution. Although a 10-acre park may accommodate athletic fields and larger recreation and open space areas, two parks that are five acres in size will typically better serve the needs, while providing a broader distribution of neighborhood parks.

Neighborhood Park Standards

The ideal neighborhood park should be between five and ten acres, with the provision of one to two acres per 1,000 residents. Recommended facilities and improvements include:

- Picnic shelters with barbecue pits or grills
- Sidewalks and/or a natural walking trail
- Shade trees and native landscaping
- Security lighting
- Multi-purpose open play areas
- Multi-purpose courts
- Playground equipment and playscape (up to 25 children ages 5 to 12)
- Perimeter landscaping
- Trash receptacles and enclosures
- Curb cuts and crosswalks
- Restrooms
- Curb cuts and crosswalks
- On or off street parking

A good example of a neighborhood park in Laramie is Kiwanis Park or Undine Park.

Playlots

Playlots are intended for active recreational use of nearby residents typically within a quarter mile radius. There are no specific criteria to guide development of playlots, although they should have facilities and improvements available to meet the identified needs of population living in the immediate area. The notable features that distinguish a playlot from a neighborhood park are its considerably smaller size that typically can only accommodate active recreation and the lack of restrooms.

Playlots Role

Playlots serve the immediate need of providing a minimum play area within minutes' walking distance of residents in the very immediate area. Unfortunately, playlots in many communities are established as to mitigate the need for a nearby neighborhood park. When this circumstance arises, the playlot often sustains heavy use and requires considerable maintenance. Facilities that are less than one-half acre in area are usually considered inefficient, as they require nearly as much time for mowing and other routine maintenance tasks as a neighborhood park. For this reason, many communities discourage the acquisition and development of truly small playlots. Playlots within the City of Laramie can still be useful and beneficial to the community.

Playlot Standards

As mentioned before, there are no specific size or facility standards for playlots, but guidelines suggest that there should be one to three tenths acre per 1,000 residents. Recommended facilities and improvements might include:

- Picnic shelters with barbecue pits or grills
- Perimeter Sidewalks
- Shade trees and native landscaping
- Security lighting
- Multi-purpose open play areas
- Playground equipment and playscape (up to 15 children ages 5 to 12)

- ♦ Perimeter landscaping
- ♦ Trash receptacles and enclosures
- ♦ Curb cuts and crosswalks
- ♦ On-street parking

A good example of a playlot in Laramie is O'Dell Mini Park or the First Street Plaza.

Natural Resource Areas

These are typically lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, open space, preservation of unique topography, visual aesthetics or some other resource that has been determined of value to the community. There are not any specific national standards for size or number of acres per 1,000 population, rather the standards note that natural resource areas should be unique and variable to each community.

Natural Resource Areas Role

Natural resource areas serve an important role in preserving the natural ecosystem, preserving wetlands, water bodies, forest or woodlands, geologic features, protection or rare, threatened or endangered species or endangered natural resources. They also serve as wildlife habitat, interpretive exhibits and education opportunities, nature trails, along with preserving historic and cultural sites and resources.

Natural Resource Area Standard

As noted above, there are not any specific national standards for size or number of acres per 1,000 population; rather the standards note that natural resource areas should be unique and variable to each community with sufficient size to protect the resources.

A good example of a natural resource area in Laramie is the Baxter Tie Plant greenbelt trail loop.

Greenways

Greenways serve a number of important functions; primarily they tie park components and neighborhoods together to form a cohesive park, recreation and open space system. Greenways emphasize harmony with the natural environment, they allow for uninterrupted and safe pedestrian and bicycle pathways between parks and throughout the community. They provide a community with a resource based outdoor recreational opportunity and experience. In many communities they enhance property values.

Greenways Role

In many ways greenways and natural resource areas have much in common and are typically located together. Both preserve natural resources and mediate between larger habitat areas, open space, and corridors for wildlife. The primary distinction between the two is that greenways emphasize trails and other uses while natural resource areas typically do not.

Greenways Standard

The national standard for greenway width varies from a minimum of 25 foot width in a subdivision, to a maximum of 200 feet, with 50 feet the optimal and most desired width for a greenway trail corridor. In Laramie we have applied a minimum width of 30 feet for most greenway trails, with 25 feet as the minimum allowable under normal circumstances.

The Laramie River Greenbelt Park trail is a good example of a greenway.

Continued presentation of park classification standards on April 11, 2012

Open Space Areas

Open space is open land that remains in a relatively natural state or use, void of any man-made development, can be public or private open space and serves one or more of the following primary functions: (1) preservation of natural areas and natural resources, (2) provision of outdoor or low impact recreation, (3) maintenance of Laramie's unique identity, geology or topography and (4) preservation or enhancement of the visual quality of entrance corridors to the Laramie community.

Open Space Role

The emphasis of open space should clearly be on conservation and preservation, connecting people with their natural resources and environment through preserving our heritage, respecting our natural resources, defining our community, treasuring our future, and protecting what Laramie values. There are not any specific national standards for size or number of acres per 1,000 population for open space. The guidelines state that each community should, through a strategic planning process develop open space guidelines and policies for acquisition and preservation that which reflect the unique resources of the community as the basis for the open space system.

Public Open Space

Designation of land for public open space is generally held in City ownership and may or may not be accessible of the public. It is possible to have public open space that has very limited or no public use or restrictive public access/use depending upon the topography or other natural resources that the City determines should be protected.

Private Open Space

The City's designation of land as open space does not necessarily imply that it will be accessible to the public or in City ownership. It is possible to have open space as part of private development that also preserves natural areas or enhances the community's visual quality. These areas can remain in private ownership. Therefore, when accessibility to the public is not a prime consideration for preserving open space, the City may consider using preservation techniques besides public dedication and acquisition to preserve open space.

The Monolith Ranch and the APO area east of Laramie are good examples of public and private open space.

Sports Complex

The sports complex classification typically consolidates heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities at larger and fewer sites. These sports complex sites allow for economies of scale and higher quality facilities, along with efficient management and scheduling and better control of facility uses. Sports complexes also permit greater control of the potential negative impacts to neighborhoods such as overuse, noise, traffic congestion, parking, and domination of the use of facilities from those outside of the adjacent neighborhood.

Sports Complex Role

Sports complexes should be viewed as strategically located community wide facilities rather than serving a specific neighborhood or area. Sports complexes should be located adjacent to non-residential land use areas, as there are typically negative comments from area residents.

Sports complex sites should be accessible from major thoroughfares or arterial streets, with direct access through neighborhood developments avoided. Sports complexes are intended for specific programmed youth and adult athletic uses such as softball, baseball, soccer, football, lacrosse, tennis, volleyball. Indoor athletic uses for sports complexes also include ice skating, swimming pools, recreation centers, and basketball courts. The sports complex should include adequate off street lighted parking to accommodate evening uses as well as a connection to the greenways or pedestrian bicycle trail system.

Sports Complex Standard

The national standards for sports complexes are typically determined by projected demand, with a minimum of 25 acres per complex with 40 to up to 80 acres being the optimal size.

The Aragon Softball Complex and LaRamie Park Soccer Fields are a good example of a sports complex in Laramie.