

MEETING NOTES

Date of Meeting: 10/16/2018
Project: Recreation and Parks System Comprehensive Plan
Subject: Advisory Board Meeting
Meeting Location: Sandy Springs City Hall
Barge Project No.: 3807300

PARTICIPANTS: Advisory Board Members: Scott Busch, Cheryl Barlow, Molly Welsh, Dennis Marcht (not present: George Northrop, Mark Durbin). City Staff: Mike Perry, Steve Ciacchio, Kristen Wescott, Caitlin Shankle, Alexandra Horst, Ginger Sottile. Media: Evelyn Andrews. Planning Team: Steve Provost (Barge Design Solutions), Mike Svetz (PROS Consulting).

Copy to: Mike Perry

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

Meeting opened with an overview of purpose of the meeting; reviewing the city-wide public survey, level of service and discuss potential general recommendations.

Survey response data and analysis was reviewed. Summary of the data included:

- **Below Average Utilization** of the system
- **Above Average Condition** Ratings of the System
- **Lack of Awareness** of the system is the main contributor to people not using the system. Even so, in Sandy Springs it is BELOW that of the national benchmark
- **Word of Mouth** is how people **currently learn** about programs and services
- **Would prefer to learn** about offerings via **technology** – (email, website)
- **Below average participation** in programs
- **Above Average rating of quality** of programs
- **Lack of awareness** is key contributor to below average participation
- **Improvements to Existing System**
 - Take care of what already have

- Improve existing trail system
 - Add loop trails to existing parks
- **Expansion of System**
 - Develop new trails
 - Develop new parks
 - Preserve Open Space
- **Most Willing to Fund**
 - Trails, trails, trails
 - Open Space preservation

There was discussion of how people get information about the parks facilities and programs, and how that information could be made easier to obtain. It was noted that city park programs are provided by multiple providers and send information out about them in different ways. It was suggested that the city could create a way to provide a single clearinghouse resource for the information by multiple program providers.

It was noted that program services provided by organizations in surrounding cities are duplicating efforts in some cases.

Community needs were reviewed based on responses from the survey. An analysis of programs and facilities prioritized High, Medium and Low was presented for the city-wide survey and for the urban core survey. Based on these priorities, the team presented an assessment of community values relative to recreation, parks, trails and greenspaces.

Level of Service (LOS) recommendations for the overall city and for the urban nodes and discussed with the advisory group. There was much discussion, and the advisory group agreed with the LOS recommendations.

Park map graphics were presented relative to the recommended LOS compared to current existing developed park with the addition of the acreage of current existing undeveloped parks. The Next Ten Comprehensive Plan trails plan was also presented relative to potential recommendations for new trail segments to connect the park system. It was noted that several city neighborhoods are isolated from others by bike or foot due to arterial roads that disconnect the neighborhoods.

There was discussion about access to and use of National Park Service lands and facilities. It was noted that some don't feel safe on the isolated trails in the NPS lands. An idea was raised to "activate" portions of the NPS lands that might help populate small areas with visitors thus making them safer feeling.


There was discussion of joint use of county school recreation facilities with the city. It was noted that the city has intergovernmental agreements in place or being negotiated with the schools.

The team presented the concept of a multi-tiered recommendations approach for the plan as well as potential recommendations that may be in the plan. The advisory group provided feedback. Some of the feedback for potential recommendations included:

- Connectivity to other park systems and trails outside of Sandy Springs
- Create a Community Arts Program
- Funding mechanisms for acquiring new park acreage
- Include dog parks
- Consider acquisition of Fulton County facilities in the city
- Create an easy to use integrated website and/or phone app with park system information

The next steps for the plan process were discussed including plan recommendations, next advisory group meeting.

These notes represent my understanding of items discussed and conclusions reached. Participants are requested to review these items and advise of necessary corrections or revisions.

Signed:  Date: 10/16/2018
Steve Provost