

Subject: Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan

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City of Woodstock
Parks and Recreation Department

STRATEGIC PLAN

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Ward 3- Bob Mueller

Ward 4- Liz Baxter

Ward 5- Bud Leonard

Ward 6- Tessa Basford

City Manager – Jeffrey S. Moon

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Recreation Advisory Board

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Chris Conti, Mayoral Appointment

Ward 1- Tamara Trull

Ward 2- Jimmy Miller

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Ward 4- Dena Hamilton

Ward 5- Bud Spitler

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Executive Summary

Why a Strategic Plan?

Strategic planning is an important process that yields information on where we are currently at, where we would like to go, and how we are preparing to get there. The final result should be a plan of action that will direct the department in its future project/event planning and implementation processes. With that said, there must be an understanding that the final plan should be flexible in order to comply with budget constraints which may arise in each fiscal year.

In 2011 the City of Woodstock's Parks and Recreation Department decided to create a comprehensive plan governing the future of all departmental programs, services, and facilities. The plan would need to be based on a sound understanding of existing department strengths and weaknesses; would need to take into account public input; and would need to include a final action plan. With this plan in place the department can move forward with a concrete organized plan that will meet the needs and desires of the City's citizens and guests without wasting finite resources.



Executive Summary Continued

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Planning Process: Three Phases

Our first step was to establish a vision. Staff, working in coordination with the City Manager, reviewed documents, such as the Greenprints Plan and recent community surveys. We then received input from Division Coordinators, and compiled a list of concepts that are important to the City and the Department. These concepts include excellent customer service, well maintained facilities, inviting public spaces, well trained staff, and consideration of the needs of our citizens.

Our second step was to define our needs. The City has invited the public to express their opinions on the needs and wants of the community through meetings, surveys, and open access to contact Department staff and Directors. The Parks and Recreation Department conducted a community survey where the public was given the opportunity to express their opinion on the current state of the Department as well as what they wished to see in the future. Individual interviews with Division Coordinators were conducted allowing them to express their opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of their areas of responsibility.

Our third step was the creation of an action plan to serve as a practical implementation guide. The plan will serve as a tool to guide staff when making decisions concerning budget requests, when conducting or maintaining current programs, services, and/or facilities, and when planning and implementing future programs, services, and facilities.

Short-Term and Long-Term Goals

The City of Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department Strategic Plan is arranged into short-term and long-term goals. The short-term goals are projected to be completed between 2011 and 2014. Long-term goals have a timeline anticipated to be completed by 2015 or beyond, and may include projects which are still under consideration for approval by the Advisory Board and/or City Council.

Executive Summary Continued

Envisioning Our Future

Developing Our Mission and Vision

We established our mission and vision by working in coordination with the Recreation Advisory Board, City Council, and our City Manager reviewing documents and obtaining the input of Division Coordinators. Our emphasis on customer service, facilities, and staff as well as the needs of our community was a vital component in the development of our Mission and Vision.

City of Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department Mission Statement:

"The Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department is dedicated to being the leader in providing exceptional leisure opportunities through the usage of Parks, Greenways, Trails, and other Recreational facilities that will enhance our quality of life while promoting a healthy lifestyle for all participants and citizens within our community."

City of Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department Vision Statement:

"The Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department is a leader in providing quality facilities, programs, and, services to our residents. Excellent customer service is provided through well maintained facilities and highly trained and motivated staff. The programs and services offered by this department reflect the needs and wants of our residents."

Current State of Woodstock Parks and Recreation

Community Profile and Potential Peer Communities

The City of Woodstock is geographically located in Northwest Georgia and is considered part of the Atlanta Metropolitan Area. Situated in the extreme southern

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part of Cherokee County, Georgia; Woodstock is about thirty miles North of Atlanta. Woodstock is bordered on the West by Lake Allatoona. South Cherokee County and the Woodstock area are considered to be the southernmost part of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Land Use

The U.S. Census Bureau states that the City of Woodstock has a total area of 8.8 square miles (22.9 km²) and 0.04 miles (0.1 km²) of that is water. Land in Woodstock currently designated as park land totals just over 100 acres. The City has seen a drastic increase in population over the past decade, and expects further growth. As the population continues to grow there will be an increased focus on identifying and obtaining new parkland in order to provide facilities for all residents.

Demographics

As of the 2010 Census, there were 23,896 people in Woodstock. This number is up from 10,050 in 2000; resulting in an effective population growth increase of 137.8%. There are currently 10,298 households within the City. The racial makeup of the city is 79.3% White, 10.2% African American, 0.2% Native American, 4.5% Asian, 2.7% other races, and 3.1% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race totaled 9.7% of the population.

The median income for a household in the city was calculated at \$61,648 in 2009, and the median family income was calculated to be \$74,758. The median per capita income for the city was \$29,190.

Current State of Woodstock Parks and Recreation

Peer Communities

The City of Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department maintains strong relationships with other agencies including: the Cherokee County Recreation and Parks Agency (CPRA), the Greenprints Alliance, and the local YMCA.



Guiding Principles and Qualities

The entire department consistently strives to provide the City with the best possible park and recreation offerings and opportunities for all residents and visitors. We listen to our users and groups when developing our programs, events, and facilities. Public input is provided by various committees, surveys, and frequent verbal communication to ensure the interests of the public are being served. Parks and Recreation Department Staff worked closely with citizen groups to compile the Greenprints Project Report; which has been the foundation for the creation of the extensive trails and greenways located throughout the City. Each Division Coordinator works closely with related committees organizing programs and events.

Parks and Recreation Department Organization

A Parks and Recreation Director, who reports directly to the City Manager, leads the City of Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department. Reporting to the Director, are three Division Coordinators and one administrative assistant. These are full time positions. Other employees are full-time, part-time, and seasonal. All seasonal and part time workers are hired by the Parks and Recreation Department in collaboration with Human Resources. The Department's organization chart is shown below.

Organization Chart

Strengths and Weaknesses

Each Division Coordinator was asked to review their particular division and to list the strengths and weaknesses they encountered.

The following are some of their perceptions:

Special Events Coordinator – Marybeth Stockdale:

Strengths:

- Strong support staff.
- Crew that can take the lead on a project.
- Great community, City Council, and City interdepartmental support.

Weaknesses:

- No extra time for creativity.
- No staff dedicated only to special events division, inability to delegate projects, dependency on other divisions for assistance.
- Extra time needed to create and maintain good record keeping system.

Senior Center Coordinator – Betty Rice:

Strengths: Large membership base, good facility, wide range of programs, dedicated staff.

Weaknesses: Additional space needed for growing education programs.

Park Maintenance Coordinator – Jeff Ryan:

Strengths:

- Good communication within the Department.
- Adequate funding for facility maintenance.
- Staff is highly motivated.

- Existing facilities are in good shape / no major repairs needed.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Weaknesses:

- There is not adequate funding for equipment needed for expected division growth.
- The Division is short staffed; there are not enough employees to maintain necessary current standards and future expansion.
- Staff needs ongoing training to keep up with standards.

Recent Accomplishments

Pedestrian Bridge

Constructed a pedestrian bridge crossing Little River at Rope Mill Park

Expansion of City Park

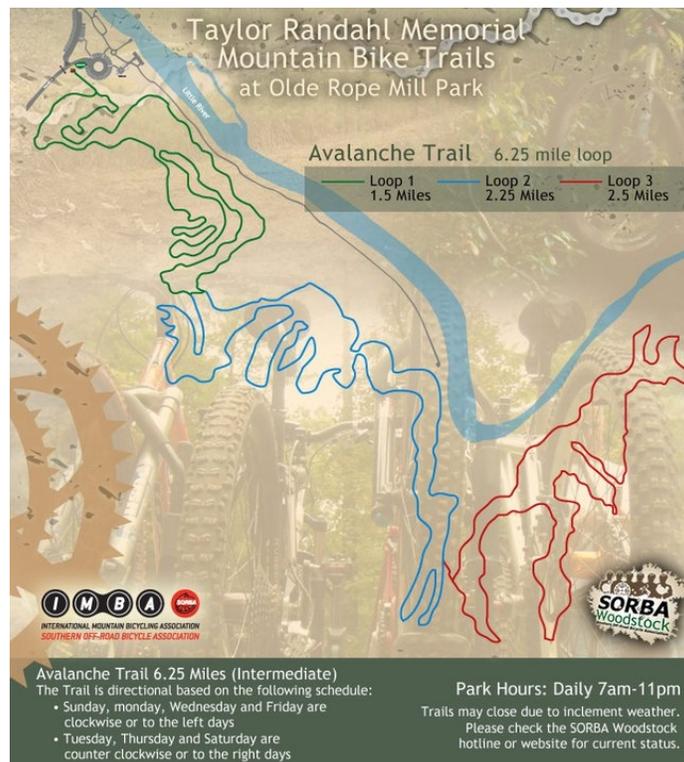
Demolition of old City Hall site
Land stabilization
Preparation for construction of the new amphitheater

Community Garden

Implementation of community garden on Dobbs Road

Taylor Randahl Memorial Trail

Constructed 5 plus miles of mountain bike trails at Rope Mill Park



Continuous Objectives

In addition to the short-term goals and long-term goals which will be discussed in detail later, the Department has several objectives which staff will constantly strive to fulfill.

- Attract new visitors / users to the City's facilities and events.
- Better understand the reasons / barriers that may be keeping potential visitors / users away.
- Protect and preserve the City's historic and natural resources.
- Maintain stable funding in order to provide quality staff, services, and facilities.
- Maintain or improve the quality of recreation opportunities.
- Maintain or improve the variety of recreation opportunities.
- Maintain a safe environment for visitors.
- Value employees and maintain a positive / safe work environment.
- Serve the community in a manner that exemplifies judicious use of public funds.
- Attract, hire and retain high quality and dedicated employees who are committed to representing the community they serve.
- Pay attention to and include new recreational trends in the City's recreation offerings.
- Promote healthy lifestyle practices.
- Maintain updated sources of communication with the public (e.g. Department Newsletters, Website, Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare etc.)

Short-Term Goals

Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department Short-Term Goals (2012 to 2014)

- CAPRA Accreditation Self Assessment Completed 2012
- Noonday Creek Trail 2012
- Towne Lake Pass Trail 2012
- Elm Street / Downtown Spur 2012
- Dupree Road Trail Head / Dog Park 2012
- Dupree Park Renovations 2012
- City Park Amphitheater 2012
- CAPRA Accreditation Completed 2013
- Rubes Creek Connector 2013
- Rubes Creek Trail 2013
- Trestle Rock Trail Extension 2014
- Bridget Hammond Memorial Trail 2014

Short-Term Goals Continued

CAPRA Accreditation

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Obtain national accreditation from the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA).

Status: In the process of completing the self-assessment.

Budget: \$5,000

Funding: 2011/2012 Budget

Anticipated Completion:

Self-Assessment Due – May 2012

Peer review – Fall 2012

Earn Accreditation Spring 2013

Noonday Creek

0.9 mile section of the 6.63 mile multi-use trail

Status: Design Phase

Budget: \$500,000

Funding: 2008 Cherokee County Parks Bond

Anticipated Completion: Spring 2012

Towne Lake Pass

1.5 mile section of the 3.23 mile multi-use trail

Status: Design Phase

Budget: \$760,000

Funding: 2008 Cherokee County Parks Bond

Anticipated Completion: Winter 2012

Elm Street/Downtown Spur

0.75 mile section of the 2.9 mile multi-use trail

Status: Design Phase

Budget: \$450,000

Funding: 2008 Cherokee County Parks Bond

Anticipated Completion: Spring 2012

Short-Term Goals Continued

Dupree Road Trail Head and Dog Park

Fencing, grading, site amenities, landscaping, aggregate materials

Status: Design Phase

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Budget: \$250,000
Funding: 2012 SPLOST funds
Anticipated Completion: 2012

Dupree Park Renovations

Multiple renovations at Dupree Park
Status:

Budget: \$1,077,000

\$200,000	Four Additional Tennis Courts
\$125,000	Light Replacement – Existing Tennis Courts
\$ 50,000	Restrooms - Tennis Court
\$ 35,000	Resurface Existing Tennis Courts And Basketball Courts
\$250,000	Light Replacement – Softball Fields
\$100,000	Softball Field Fence and Dugout Replacement
\$ 50,000	Softball Field Grading and Sod
\$ 17,000	Scoreboards
\$100,000	Lake Walking Path
\$ 50,000	Parking Lot Lighting
\$100,000	Additional Picnic Pavilions

Funding: 2012 SPLOST funds
Anticipated Completion: 2012 / 2013

Amphitheater

Construction of an amphitheater at City Park including concessions, restrooms, and landscaping

Status: Design Phase

Budget: \$2,150,000

\$1,000,000	Amphitheater
\$750,000	Site Work / Terrace Construction
\$250,000	Concession / Restroom Building
\$150,000	Lighting / Landscape

Funding: 2012 SPLOST funds
Anticipated Completion: 2012

Short-Term Goals Continued

Rubes Creek Connector

0.7 mile multi-use trail

Status: Design Phase

Budget: \$386,000

Funding: 2008 Cherokee County Parks Bond

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Anticipated Completion: Spring 2013

Rubes Creek Trail

1.1 mile section of the 1.34 mile multi-use trail
Status: Design Phase
Budget: \$675,000
Funding: Transportation Enhancement Grant
Anticipated Completion: Spring 2013

Trestle Rock Extension

1.1 mile section of the 2.77 mile multi-use trail
Status: Design Phase
Budget: \$825,000
Funding: 2008 Cherokee County Parks Bond
Anticipated Completion: Winter 2014

Bridget Hammond Memorial Trail

1.45 mile section of the 6.78 mile multi-use trail
Status: Design Phase
Budget: \$735,000
Funding: 2008 Cherokee County Parks Bond
Anticipated Completion: Fall 2014

Long-Term Goals

Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department Short-Term Goals (2015 and beyond)

- Skate Park, Location TBA
- Additional Community Garden, Location TBA
- Completion of Greenprints Trails (60 miles total)

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Remaining sections of:
Noonday Creek Trail, Towne Lake Pass, Elm Street/Downtown Spur,
Rubes Creek Trail, Trestle Rock Extension, and the Bridget Hammond
Memorial Trail

As well as:

Old Rope Mill Trail (2.52 miles)

River Run Trail (2.17 miles)

Education Connector Trail (2.83 miles)

Dupree Park Connector Trail (4.17 miles)

Little River Trail (1.8 miles)

Towne Lake Extension Trail (4.61 miles)

Posey Branch Trail (2.76 miles)

Noonday Creek Regional Connector Trail (2.31 miles)

Dobbs Trail (.77 miles)

The Woodlands Trail (8.19 miles)

Mill Creek Connector Trail (4.28 miles)

- Address suggestions from community survey
- Identify new parkland to accommodate growing population
- Re-Accreditation from the NRPA / CAPRA

Community Survey Results

Overview of the Methodology:

The City of Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department conducted a Parks and Recreation Survey in the Spring of 2011. The purpose of the survey was to provide the Department with feedback from the community in order to determine current facility usage and how satisfied users were with the existing facilities, event attendance and satisfaction, citizen wants and needs with regard to future facilities, events, and services, and the overall character of existing and future park development. The survey was designed to obtain statistically significant results from households throughout the City of Woodstock. The survey was administered

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by a combination of newspaper ads in the Cherokee Ledger and handouts presented to users at facility sites.

Community Survey Results

Question: How would you rate the overall level of customer service at Woodstock Parks and Recreation facilities?

- 31.6% of respondents indicated that the level of customer service at Woodstock Parks and Recreation facilities is excellent.
- 47.4% indicated that customer service is good.
- 10.5% indicated that customer service is adequate.
- 5.3% indicated that customer service needs improvement.
- 5.3% indicated that no one in their household had been to a Woodstock Parks and Recreation facility.

Community Survey Results

Question: How would you rate the overall level of maintenance at Woodstock Parks and Recreation facilities?

- 17.9% of respondents indicated that the level of maintenance at Woodstock Parks and Recreation facilities is excellent.
- 59% indicated that the level of maintenance is good.
- 12.8% indicated that the level of maintenance is adequate.
- 5.1% indicated that the level of maintenance needs improvement.
- 5.1% indicated that no one in their household had been to a Woodstock Parks and Recreation facility.

Community Survey Results

Question: How would you rate the overall quality of Woodstock Parks and Recreation Program Services?

- 23.7% of respondents indicated that the overall quality of Woodstock Parks and Recreation Program Services is excellent.
- 50% indicated that the overall quality of Program Services is good.
- 18.4% indicated that the overall quality of Program Services is adequate.
- 2.6% indicated that the overall quality of Program Services needs improvement.
- 5.3% indicated that no one in their household had been to a Woodstock Parks and Recreation facility.

Community Survey Results

In order to assess facility usage respondents were asked to indicate whether they or anyone in their household has participated in any of the following activities in the past 12 months at a City of Woodstock park or facility:

The results were as follows:

	Never	Seldom	Occasionally	Frequently
Walked on a City	27.00%	18.90%	37.80%	16.20%
Jogged on a City	71.40%	8.60%	11.40%	8.60%
Biked on a City	82.90%	2.90%	11.40%	2.90%
Played Tennis at Dupree Park	85.30%	11.80%	2.90%	0.00%
Played Softball at Dupree Park	88.20%	5.90%	0.00%	5.90%
Relaxed (e.g. picnic, read a book)	27.80%	11.10%	47.20%	13.90%
Used a group shelter or picnic	44.40%	13.90%	36.10%	5.60%
Played at Dupree Park Playground	62.90%	2.90%	17.10%	17.10%
Visited Woodstock Senior Center	33.30%	2.60%	7.70%	56.40%
Used ball fields or basketball	75.80%	9.10%	9.10%	6.10%

In order to further assess facility usage respondents were asked to indicate their household's usage of the following Woodstock Parks and Recreation Facilities:

The results were as follows:

	Never	Seldom	Occasion	Frequentl
Magnolia Hall (formerly Community Center)	48.70%	10.30%	35.90%	5.10%
Senior Center	35.00%	5.00%	5.00%	55.00%
The Park at City Center (formerly Downtown	15.80%	18.40%	50.00%	15.80%
Dupree Park	53.80%	17.90%	23.10%	5.10%
Dupree Tennis	89.50%	2.60%	7.90%	0.00%
Dupree Ball Fields	87.20%	5.10%	5.10%	2.60%
Rope mill Park	53.80%	12.80%	25.60%	7.70%
Woodlands Park*	84.60%	7.70%	7.70%	0.00%
Taylor Randahl Trail	86.80%	7.90%	2.60%	2.60%

*The Woodlands Park has since been leased to the Woodlands Home Owners Association

Community Survey Results

In order to assess Special Event attendance during the last year respondents were asked to indicate their household's participation in the following Woodstock Parks and Recreation Special Events within the last 12 months:

The results were as follows:

	No	Yes
Summer Concert Series	42.50%	57.50%
4th of July Parade and Festival	50.00%	50.00%
Kids Fest (Halloween)	86.50%	13.50%
Christmas Parade and Jubilee	56.80%	43.20%
Brown Bag Lunch Concerts	67.60%	32.40%
Greenstock/Earth Day	69.40%	30.60%
Patriotic Event (e.g. Veteran's Day)	55.00%	45.00%

Community Survey Results

The Community Survey has given the Department a good level of feedback from the citizens with regard to their current facility usage and event attendance. The results have also provided us with the citizen's wishes for the future of the Parks and Recreation Department's development. Respondents were asked to offer any comments on what types of facilities, programs, or services they would like to see Woodstock offer or if they had any additional comments or suggestions. Listed below are some of the responses gathered from the surveys.

Question: Are there any other non existing Woodstock parks, facilities, programs, or services you would like to see offered?

- Walking/bike paths for children to walk to school
- More walking trails in addition to Rope Mill Rd.
- Park closer to 92 and Ragsdale
- Trails/playgrounds for family and children
- Finish the bicycle and hiking trails
- Public pool, better playgrounds, additional facilities
- More parks with streams and trees
- Meals at the Senior Center/more services for seniors
- 9' regulation pool table for senior Olympics and Mayor's Tournament
- Better pool tables at the Senior Center
- Need senior tennis teams
- Table tennis (2-3 tables)

Question: Do you have any other comments or suggestions on how the Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department can serve you or your family better?

- Love Greenprints project
- Love City Park
- Love summer concerts in the park
- Keep as many trees and greenspace as possible
- Stop expansion during times of high unemployment = perception that government spends too much
- Waste of tax money to impose dog use of public facilities
- Too much spending, parks and recreation could be suspended for 5 years
- Need to know who you are, put your face out there
- Organization fails to communicate activities, too much in-house type communication

Conclusion

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The City of Woodstock Parks and Recreation Department aims to provide the best leisure opportunities for its citizens as well as visitors. The purpose of this strategic plan is to maintain a working action plan with which to move forward in the Department's objectives in order to accomplish its mission. Vigilant oversight of project development/completion and funds dispersal can be achieved using this plan.

The Department is also dedicated to taking into consideration all feedback from the community survey and will strive to continue offering the survey every three to five years to ensure adequate response to users' needs/desires. The Department's Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually and any required alterations will be made as necessary. Every five to eight years a new strategic plan will be formed to ensure that there is continuous detailed oversight of the Department's goals and accomplishments.