

CHAPTER 9: MANAGEMENT

A. Introduction

This chapter of the Cary 2012 *Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Master Plan* update addresses management topics in the following sections.

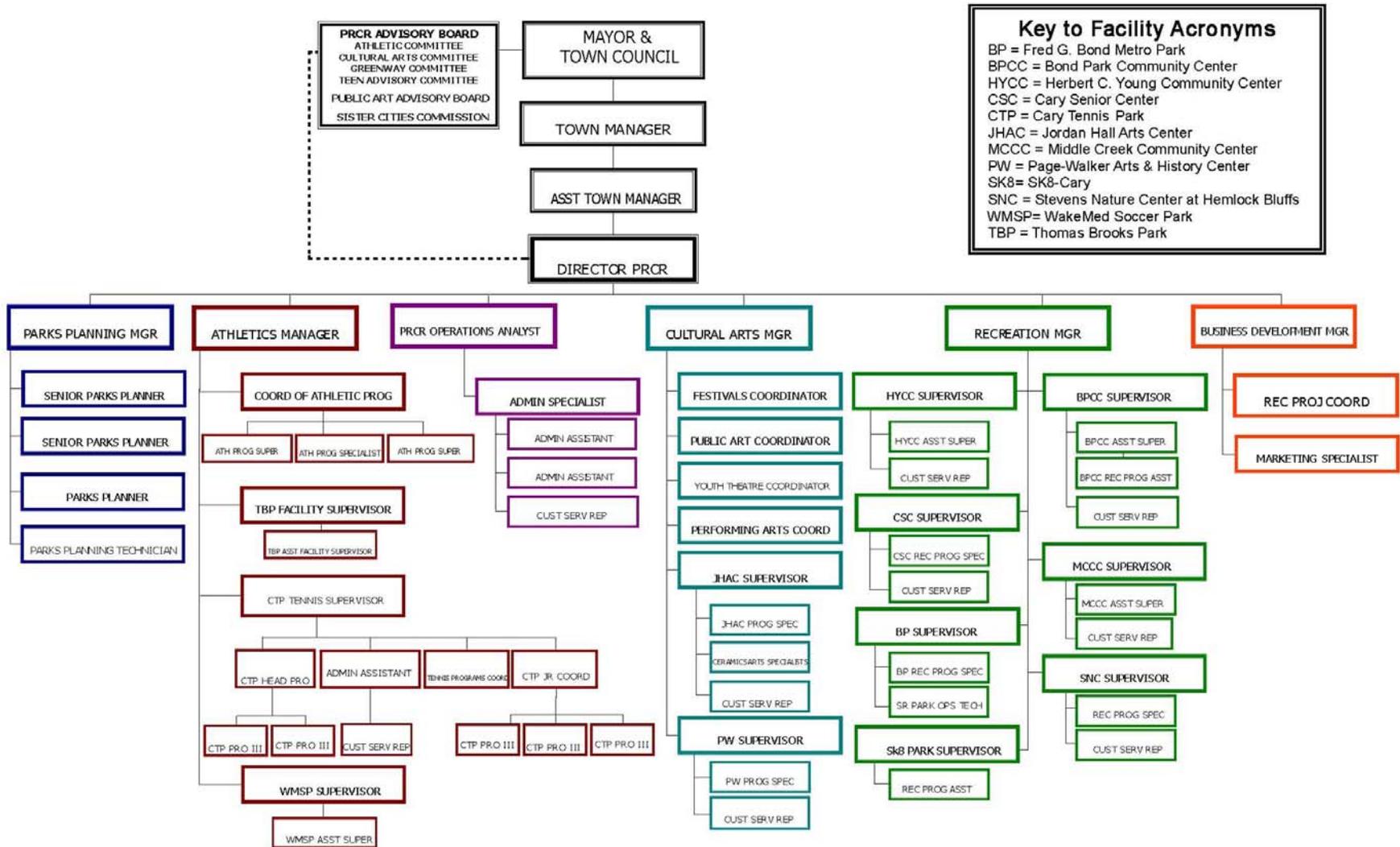
- Overview of the Cary Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resource Department
- Summary of key management findings
- **Master Plan** Recommendations for best management practices (These recommendations are also summarized in the Implementation Matrix in **Chapter 10**.)

Department Overview

The Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources (PRCR) Department is managed by five Divisions and general operations: Administration, Parks Planning, Athletics, Cultural Arts and Recreation. There is much crossover between these divisions as planning, operations and maintenance, and programming efforts are a collaborative process. Where facility planning, maintenance, and operations stop, and where programming and the leisure experience begins, is a continuum, not a hard and fast line. The customer's (taxpayer's) experience is the driving force. Therefore, any tendency to make decisions independently must be avoided to ensure the greatest success in sustainable and equitable service delivery.

Figure 10: Cary Park, Recreation and Cultural Resources Organizational Chart

CARY PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL RESOURCES ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



B. Key Findings

Following is a summary of findings that helped shaped the Management recommendations of the *Master Plan*.

Maintaining a High Level of Service – Maintenance levels and quality of the Cary parks, recreation, and cultural resources system are extremely high when compared to other communities. Cary residents value and expect this high level of quality. It is important to consider these high community expectations and the economic impact when the PRCR Department plans and develops parks, facilities, and services to ensure adequate operations and maintenance funding to maintain quality service.

Understanding and communicating the value/cost to operate and maintain the Department’s assets and services is also key, so if in the future, the availability of funding necessary to continue this high standard diminishes, transparent choices can be discussed or alternative sought. These choices might include decreasing the Level of Service (LOS) standard, exploring and securing alternative funding sources, or increasing fees and charges.

Maintenance and tracking of costs are performed by the Public Works Department. Continued coordination and communication between the PRCR and Public Works Departments is crucial to ensure continuation of the expected LOS. When analyzing and considering changes in the provision of services to either outsourcing or in-house delivery methods, the PRCR Department and Public Works Department will need to continue to collaboratively focus on the performance metrics, LOS standards, and desired outcomes, including fiscal stewardship, in the decision making process.

Communications and Marketing – While the Town of Cary offers a multitude of parks, recreation, and cultural resources services, Cary residents are not always aware of these opportunities. According to the 2011 *Master Plan Survey*, 43 percent of respondents were not aware of programs and facilities offered by the Town of Cary. Creative marketing to increase awareness targeted to residents as well as a broader market for Town regional sports and cultural venues will continue to be important in the future.

Partnerships – The Town of Cary has a tradition of collaborating and working closely with other groups on a local and regional level. The desire for stronger partnerships with Wake County School District surfaced as a theme in the master planning public process. In particular there was interest in joint-use of the schools gyms and multipurpose fields.

Sustainability and “Clean and Green” Approaches – The Cary community prides itself on being progressive and forward thinking. Being a proactive, healthy, and “clean and green” community all arose as important elements of the future vision of parks and recreation in Cary based on public meeting input. The PRCR Department is well-positioned to provide strong leadership to help realize the Town of Cary’s sustainability goals.

Financial Planning and Alternative Funding – During the master plan project, staff was introduced to the Pyramid Methodology for Resource Allocation and Cost Recovery (*Appendix K*, provided as part of a separate document) and is encouraged to use this industry best practice to expand and develop their current resource allocation and cost recovery philosophy through objective methods and with public involvement. The use of this methodology can identify services which have potential for expanded alternative funding sources.

C. Recommendations – Best Management Practices

GOAL 9: Incorporate best management and planning practices to ensure quality services and efficient use of resources.

Objectives:

9.1. Ensure that the Department’s *Business Plan*, the *Long Range Program Plan*, and all other facility Business Plans align with the broader goals and vision of the 2012 *PRCR Master Plan* update.

Actions:

- a. Review all departmental planning documents on an annual or bi-annual basis.
- b. Update the PRCR Master Plan in five years (2017).
- c. Align other PRCR plans with the updated Master Plan (e.g., needs assessment, demographics, trends, etc.).
- d. Create a Business Plan for the Cary Arts Center (opened in summer 2011).
- e. Consider developing a Business Plan for the Koka Booth Amphitheatre.
- f. Keep the Facility Business Plans updated.

9.2. Develop a Strategic Communication and Marketing Plan to promote parks, recreation, and cultural resource facilities and services.

Actions:

- a. Develop a comprehensive marketing plan specifically aimed at the Town’s entertainment and sports venues. In addition, analyze need to either better utilize or increase the advertising budget for the venues.
- b. Continue to improve marketing to promote the distinctive and quality parks and recreation system, including the regional venues.
- c. Create a steering committee of interested citizens to assist in reviewing all aspects of the Department’s web page to make it more accessible.
- d. Increase use of social media and tie with overall marketing plan (i.e., website, social media, texting, etc.).
- e. Consider developing a communications strategy to change the identity of and stigma associated with “Senior” Centers.
- f. Increase citizen knowledge of PRCR programs and activities by 10 percent by the next Needs Assessment Survey.
- g. Create and implement marketing tactics to promote PRCR Program Brochure, Teen Scene, and Creating Active Retirement Years (hard and soft copy) as the primary sources for program information.

9.3. Improve customer service and the delivery of services through the continued use of new technology.

Actions:

- a. Utilize page turning software to facilitate the public's access to the Department's online program brochures and planning documents.
- b. Research potential software packages that would improve the on-line registration process.
- c. Utilize/purchase an on-line roster services for adult and youth sports leagues.
- d. Research issues and costs related to the development of phone "apps" and/or mobile websites for online registration and reservations, as well as provide highlights on greenways, parks, public art, etc.
- e. Install digital screens in PRCR's community facilities to better provide information on facility programs and upcoming events.
- f. Install barcode scanners at all facilities that have concessions and/or product sales as part of their operations.
- g. Research technologies that can be utilized to improve the in person registration process, for example electronic signature devices, touch screen check-out monitors, or other emerging technologies.
- h. Install "use" counters at all facilities to obtain more accurate counts of facility visitation by the general public.
- i. Increase or boost WIFI within existing facilities to provide access to the web.
- j. Install fiber optic system to all facilities that need computer access to the Town's network for either customer service and/or staff work.
- k. Purchase a web based weather notification service to improve the Town's processes in making decisions regarding whether or not to postpone or cancel outdoor activities/programs and warning patrons of impending inclement weather.
- l. Relative to weather monitoring, provide access to smart phones and/or electronic tablets for staff in the field to better monitor outdoor events.
- m. Purchase inventory software to better track supplies.
- n. Develop ability to offer virtual tours on the web for facilities (to provide additional rental incentive) and parks and greenways (to give previews to the public and encourage in-person visits).
- o. Install technology to increase opportunities for virtual meetings.

9.4. Enhance financial management tools to effectively track and manage costs to deliver services.

Actions:

- a. Consider enhancing the Department's cost recovery model to include five levels (like the Pyramid Methodology).
- b. Continue to work with Public Works to develop a more complete picture of the cost to operate and maintain parklands, facilities, and venues for the purpose of reducing maintenance costs.
- c. Identify target cost recovery goals of all services, programs, and facilities. Build on Business Plans.
- d. Communicate the value/cost to provide services and facilities so if in the future, the availability of funding necessary to continue the current high standard diminishes, transparent choices can be discussed or alternatives sought. These choices might include decreasing the LOS standard, exploring and securing alternative funding sources, or increasing fees and charges.
- e. Track lifecycle replacement costs separately instead of including them with the ongoing operating and predictive/preventative/routine maintenance costs.

9.5. Expand the use of alternative funding through sponsorships, volunteers, grants, and donations.

Actions:

- a. *Expand volunteer opportunities for park and greenway projects.*
- b. *Expand tracking of volunteer hours and the value of volunteers used in lieu of necessary staff and attribute this as cost recovery.*
- c. *Expand sponsorship opportunities with a focus on Town regional venues.*
- d. *Consider seeking a corporate endowment to fund select services such as a Town-wide scholarship program for residents of all ages that meet need criterion.*
- e. *Implement actions identified in the Cary Historic Preservation Master Plan.*
Specific action items include:
 - *Secure funding for scholarly research on historic topics.*
 - *Continue to seek state, federal, and private grant opportunities to acquire historic landscapes and/or easements that protect historic landscapes and views.*

9.6. Continue to seek Wake County Hotel Occupancy Tax funding to support high quality, competitive venues to contribute to the regional economy.

Actions:

- a. *Maintain active communication and involvement in the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau.*
- b. *Continue to track regional economic impact of venues.*
- c. *Identify opportunities for funding support for Koka Booth Amphitheatre improvements as needed.*

9.7. Expand revenue generation opportunities as appropriate at parks, recreation, and cultural arts facilities (e.g., rentals, concessions, etc.).

Actions:

- a. *Enhance concession facilities and activities at the new Cary Arts Center.*
- b. *Accommodate rentals at existing and new facilities (e.g., historic sites, etc.).*
- c. *Consider locating cell towers on park land where appropriate.*

9.8. Expand partnerships to encourage joint development of facilities.

Actions:

- a. *Expand joint-use partnership agreements with the Wake County School District and private schools.*
- b. *Continue to seek intergovernmental partnerships with Wake and adjacent counties and neighboring municipalities.*
- c. *Establish public/private partnerships with nonprofit organizations, local corporations, and citizens to encourage park, recreation, and cultural arts facilities development.*

Partnership Guidelines:

Partners are defined as those key individuals, agencies, and organizations whose values, vision, and mission align with strategic community issues, initiatives, and services of the department. It is important to analyze the cost to provide the identified partnership service and the Return-on-Investment (ROI). Partnership agreements should be in writing, have exit strategies, and be reviewed and renewed annually.

9.9. Provide park facilities and services that promote the Town’s sustainability goals by developing and implementing environmentally sensitive design principles and practices.

Actions:

- a. *Adopt and implement Low Impact Development site design and maintenance standards and practices for parks. Consider selecting a new park development project to implement the Sustainable Sites Initiative voluntary guidelines and performance benchmarks for sustainable land design, construction, and maintenance practices (<http://www.sustainableites.org/>).*
- b. *Base the development of future facilities on green building principles.*

9.10. Continue to incorporate the new 2010 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and guidelines in parks and recreation facilities.

Actions:

- a. *Complete update of ADA audit of facilities.*
- b. *Continue to implement “Transition Plan” to meet the new standards.*
- c. *Complete mobility plan for trails.*
- d. *Require all contractors/vendors to provide products and services in compliance with the new standards for any facility or service.*

9.11. Maintain updated records of Town owned and managed land, park and facility inventory, historical collections, demographic data, and planning documents to facilitate the ongoing management of Town resources.

Actions:

- a. *Complete the update of Town’s GIS layer for Town-owned and managed land so that all currently owned and managed land is included.*
- b. *Identify resources to clean-up current GIS information to ensure accuracy.*
- c. *Update inventory and GIS data annually.*
- d. *Update the Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Master Plan every five years.*
- e. *Implement actions identified in the Cary Historic Preservation Master Plan.*

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