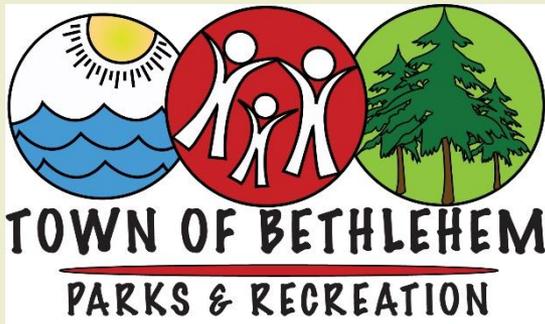


*All For One, Fun For All!*

Bethlehem's Parks & Recreation Master Plan



# Town of Bethlehem, New York Parks & Recreation Master Plan Draft Recommendations Presentation June 10, 2015



# Agenda

- ❑ **Process**
- ❑ **Focus Groups**
- ❑ **Demographics**
- ❑ **Survey Results**
- ❑ **Inventory**
- ❑ **Level of Service**
- ❑ **Key Issues Matrix**
- ❑ **Recurring Themes**
- ❑ **Draft Recommendations and Actions**
- ❑ **Q & A**



# Process

- ❑ **Start-up – November 13, 2014**
- ❑ **Community Input**
  - ❑ **Focus Groups**
  - ❑ **Stakeholder Meeting**
  - ❑ **MindMixer**
  - ❑ **Survey – Conducted by FRIENDS of Bethlehem Parks & Recreation**
- ❑ **Inventory – November - March**
- ❑ **Level of Service Analysis – November - March**
- ❑ **Operational & Marketing Analysis – March 2015**
  - ❑ **Program & Other Service Provider Analysis**
  - ❑ **Organizational Analysis**
- ❑ **Findings Presentation – March 26, 2015**
- ❑ **Visioning Workshop – March 27, 2015**
- ❑ **Draft Recommendations Presentation – June 10, 2015**
- ❑ **Draft Plan – June 26, 2015**
- ❑ **Final Plan & Presentation – July/August 2015**

# Focus Group Summary

**Meetings held January 14-15, 2015**

**145 participants in**

**11 Focus & Stakeholder Groups**

**1 Public Forum**



# Focus Group Top Priorities

- **Connectivity**
- **Update existing facilities**
- **Dog parks and dogs in parks**
- **Arts in the park / Amphitheatre**
- **Community center design**
- **Community Gardens**
- **Shade areas**
- **Trails in parks**
- **ADA compliance**
- **Alternative/non-sport programming**
- **Increase programming for seniors, families and teens**
- **Unifying the community**
- **Being creative**
- **Collaboration**
- **Energy self-sufficiency**
- **Funding opportunities**

# Demographics

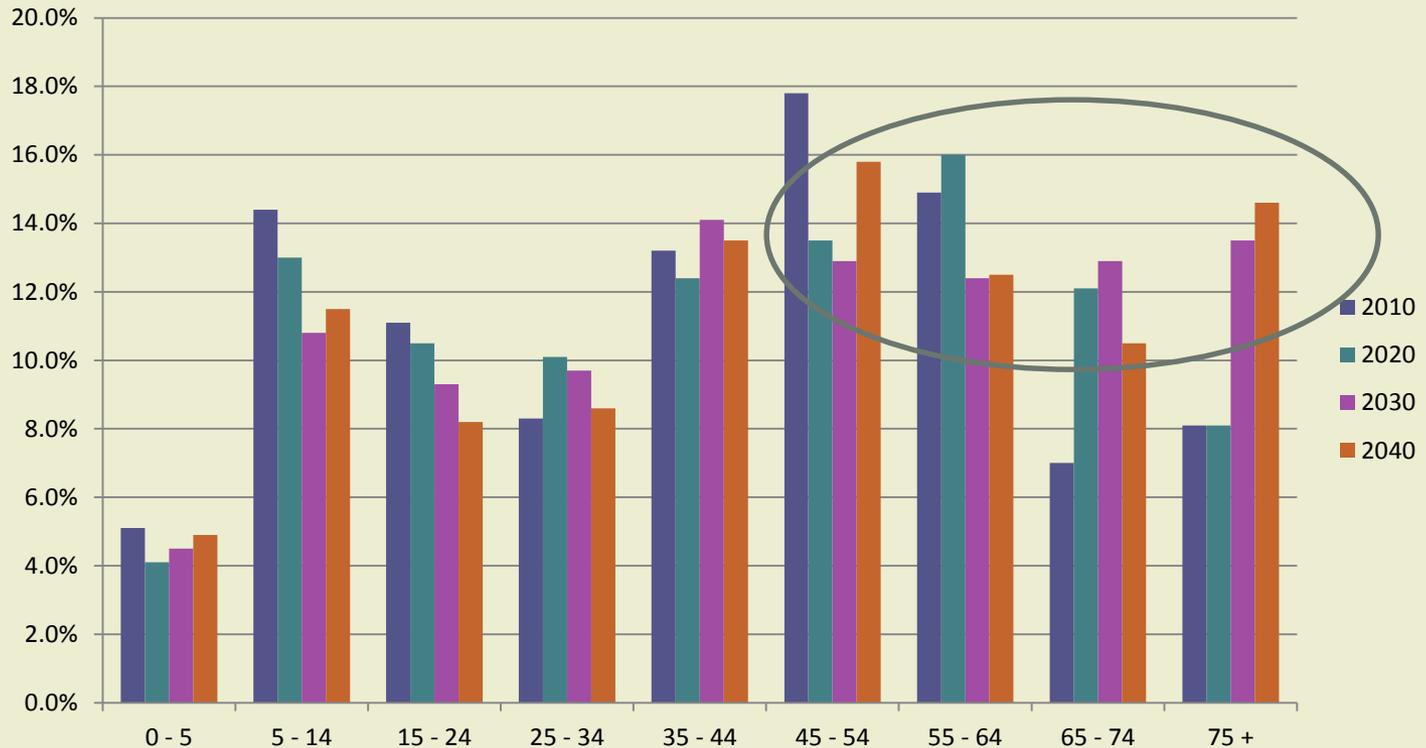
## Population projections for Bethlehem, New York

Actual, Estimated and Projected Population	
2000 Population	31,304
2010 Population	33,565
2020 Projected	34,861
2030 Projected	36,088
2040 Projected	36,735

*Source: Capital District Regional Planning Commission*

# Demographics

## Bethlehem Age Distribution projections 2010 - 2040



*Source: Capital District Regional Planning Commission*

# Survey

## Methodology

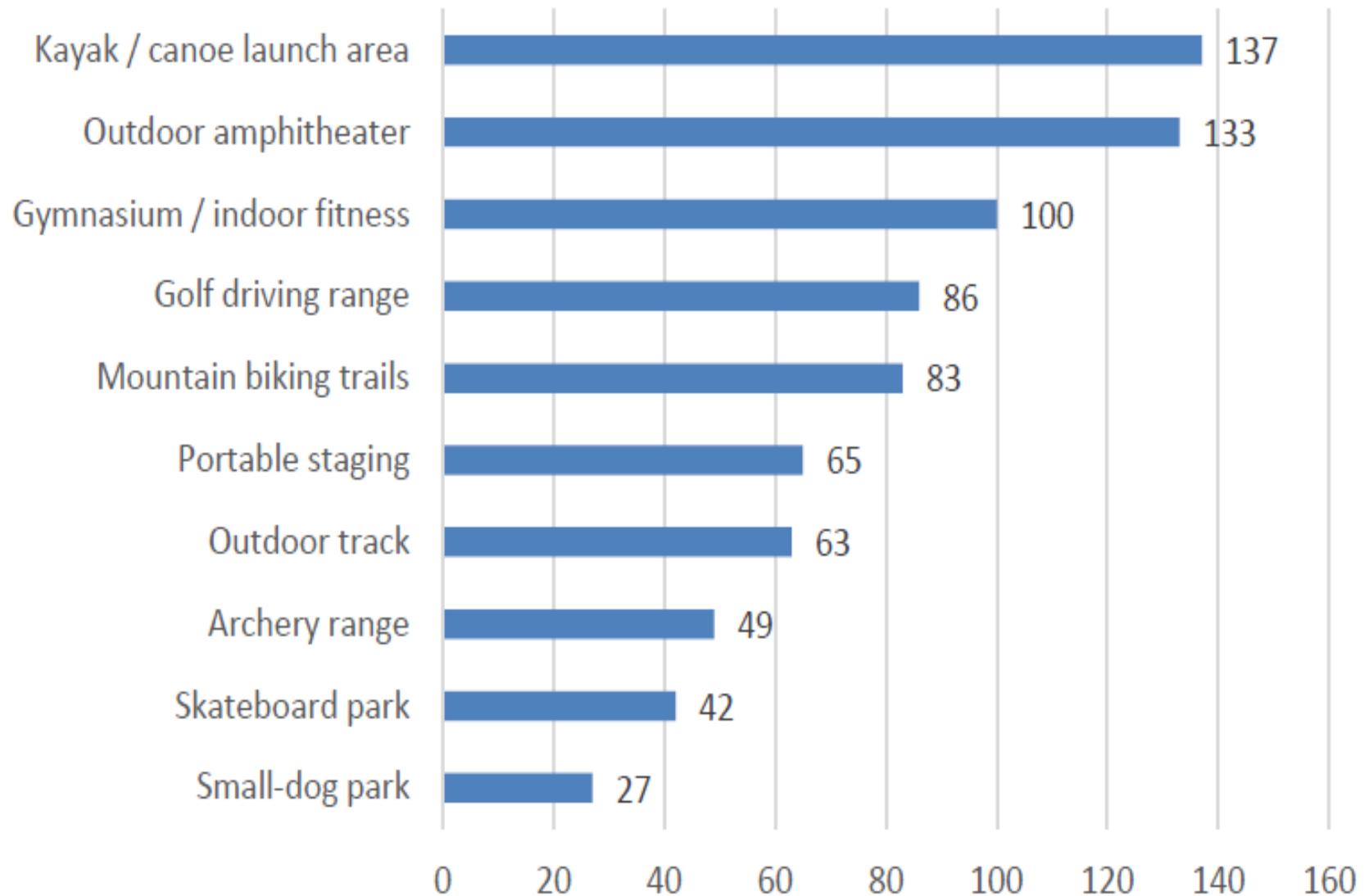
### Survey Methods

- 1) Developed by the FRIENDS of Bethlehem Parks and Recreation
- 2) Distributed through the FRIENDS website using SurveyMonkey
- 3) Summary report written by the FRIENDS

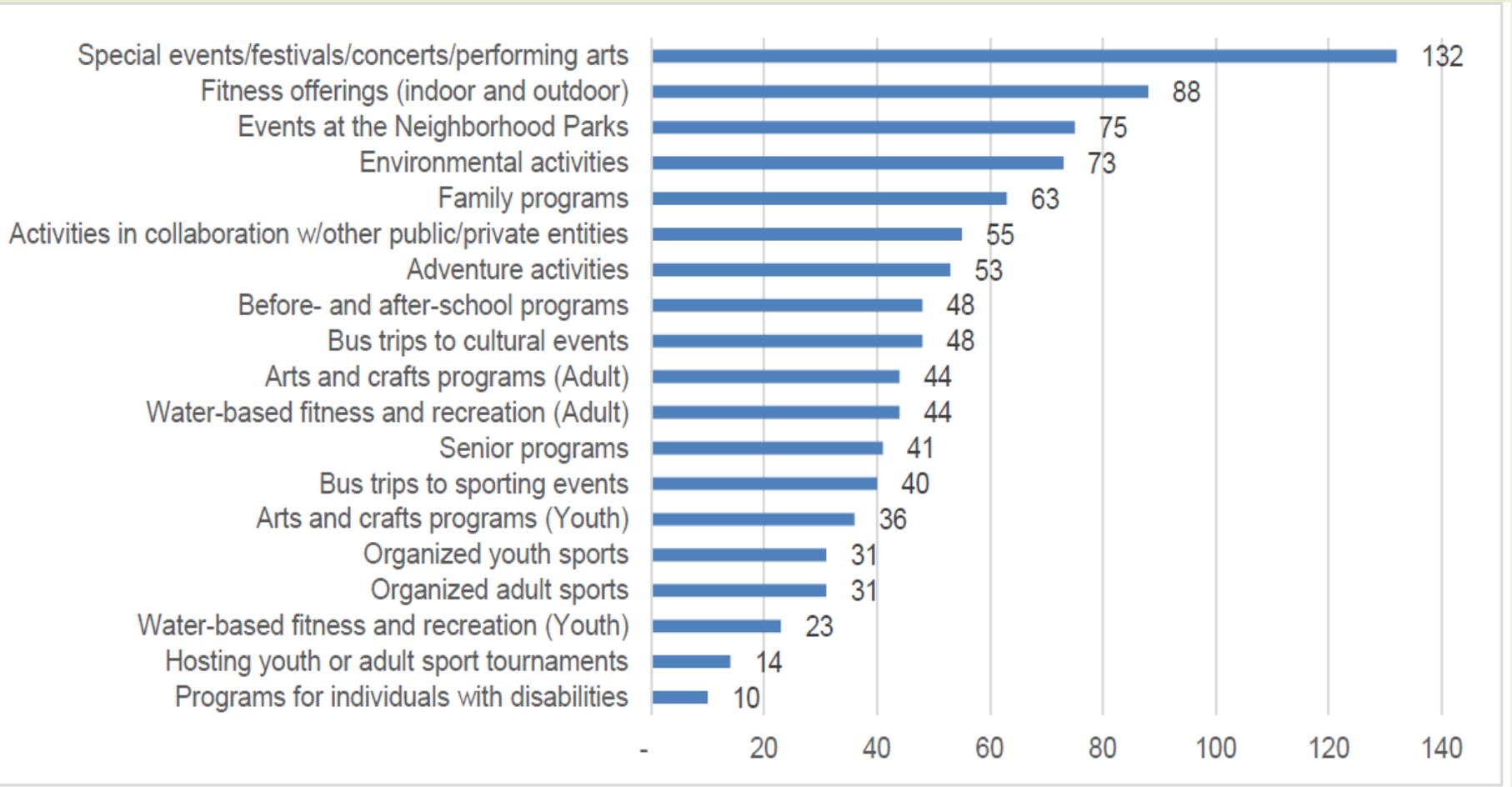
- Conducted over a 3 month period: May – July 2014
- Final sample size was 345, exceeding the goal of 300
- Survey results represent the opinions of those who chose to participate.



# Type of facility you would like to see added?



# Recreational activities for which you would like to see more offerings



# If you had an additional \$100 TO INVEST in the parks and recreation system, where would you allocate those funds?



# Facilities and Amenity Improvement Themes

## 1. Connecting People to Parks

*(connectivity to and within)*

## 2. Connecting People to People

*(cultural/historical/meeting spaces)*

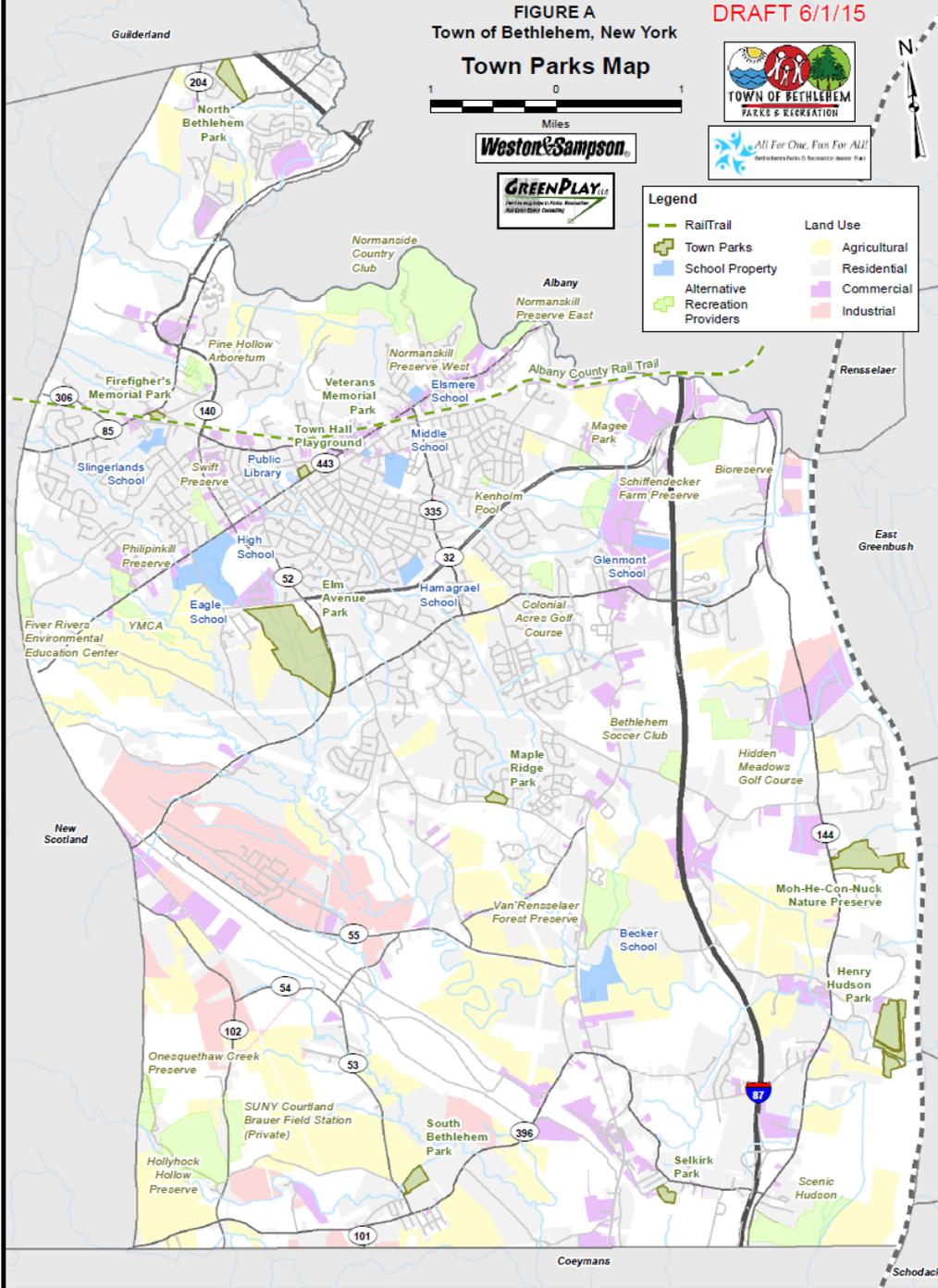
## 3. Connecting People to the Environment

*(river/ adventure sports/ nature)*



FIGURE A  
Town of Bethlehem, New York  
Town Parks Map

DRAFT 6/1/15



# Inventory



# Inventory

Consultants and Staff completed the inventory of all indoor and outdoor facilities: Nov - March

- Elm Avenue Park
  - Athletic Fields/Line Drive
  - Playground
  - Maintenance Facility
  - Office Building
  - Pool Complex
- Firefighters Memorial Park
- Henry Hudson Park
- Dog Park
- Town Hall Playground and Ballfield
- Maple Ridge Park
- Moh-He-Con-Nuck Nature Preserve
- North Bethlehem Park
- Selkirk Park
- South Bethlehem Park
- Veterans Memorial Park

# Inventory Summary

- ❑ **Most Parks are in excellent condition, maintenance** is generally great but a few locations have aged significantly
- ❑ Noted **high quality turf in** all parks
- ❑ **Good variety** of neighborhood and regional parks **throughout Town**, and number of alternative service providers
- ❑ Non-sports turf areas deserve some attention to help with **drainage and erosion**
- ❑ **Several parks** need site furnishings to be replaced/repared (benches, bike racks, picnic tables)
- ❑ **ADA accessibility** is limited in some parks (overall audit)

# Inventory Summary

- ❑ Existing dog park **is heavily used and** exhibits wear and tear
- ❑ More can be done to **take advantage of the Hudson River and repair shoreline at Henry Hudson Park**
- ❑ Elm Avenue Park pools, playground, courts, Fit Trail and maintenance structures need **major repairs**, upgrades or replacements.
- ❑ North Bethlehem Park establishment of trails
- ❑ Maple Ridge Park repair trails



# Key Issues Matrix

2014 Data Source	Qualitative Data				Quantitative Data			Consultant's Analysis and Professional Expertise		
 <p><b>Key Issue - Rating Scale</b></p> <p>a - priority b - opportunity to improve c - minor or future issue blank means the issue didn't come up or wasn't addressed</p>	Consultant Team	Staff Input	Public Input	Existing Documents	FRIENDS Survey	Town Data	Facility Assessment/LOS	 <p>The Leading Edge in Parks, Recreation And Open Space Consulting</p>	 <p>All For One, Fun For All! Bethlehem's Parks &amp; Recreation Master Plan</p>	
Preliminary Recommendations										
<b>Organizational</b>										
Need better marketing and communication of activities and facilities	a	b	a			a			Develop Marketing Plan to improve awareness and communication	
Increase staffing for maintenance	a	a	a				a		Hire and train staff for current and future parks maintenance demand	
Increase staffing for programming and future facilities operations	a	a	a						Hire and train staff for current and future programming and facility usage demand	
Review current field allocation policy and update	a	a		a		a			Review existing field allocation policy and industry best practices to update current policy	
<b>Programs and Service Delivery</b>										
Need more programming for families, teens, seniors	a	b	a				b		Expand program opportunities for teens, families, seniors	
Increase programs in wellness/fitness, cultural, special needs	a	a	a				b		Expand programs in wellness/fitness, cultural, special needs	
Increase number of Music and Arts events in parks	a	b	b			a			Expand neighborhood & community special event opportunities	
Increase aquatic opportunities (pool, river front)	a	a	a			a			Review current schedule to maximize usage and meet demand	
Develop outdoor/nature-based/environmental program offerings	a	b	a			a			Look for opportunities to offer additional non-sports programming	
Explore opportunities to develop non-traditional sports programs	a	b	a			a			Based on demand and trends consider developing pickle ball, disc golf and archery	
<b>Facilities and Amenities</b>										
Maintain and improve existing facilities	a	a	a			a	a	a	Continue to implement existing plans & Master Plan	
Renovate and update Elm Avenue Park Pool Complex	a	a	a			a	a	a	Make renovations and update to accommodate families with individuals with Special Needs and the general public	
Work with the Bike and Ped Committee to identify connections using the current priority network	a	a	a			a	a	a	Continue to develop greenways and expand to connect neighborhoods to parks with the Bike and Ped Plan	
Meet future population demands through additional recreation facilities	a	a	a			a	a	b	Future facility expansion should include multipurpose use facility	
Explore outdoor amphitheater / special event venue	a	b	a			a	a	b	Future facility expansion should consider additional entertainment venues	
Explore opportunity to develop Mountain Biking Trails	a	b	a			b		a	Working with the community look for opportunities on current public lands	
Explore opportunities for on leash dogs in select town parks	a	b	a			a	b		Working with the community and Animal Control to develop guidelines	
Make needed repairs and updates to the Henry Hudson Park	a	a	a	a		a	a	a	Find funding options to make repairs identified in the Shoreline Stabilitation Study and explore construction of a kayak launch	
Update ADA Transition Plan	a							a	Using the Town's current Transition Plan and develop a P&R specific plan	
Explore the establishment of network of Community Gardens	b	b						b	Working with community develop community gardens	
Explore adding a separate area for small dogs	b	b				b		b	Based on demand look for opportunities to provide separate spaces for large and small dogs	
Explore the addition of another picnic shelter to meet demand	a	a	a					a	New park development and renovations should include additional picnic shelters	
Make repairs to the Fit Trail and replace outdated fitness equipment	a	a	a			a		a	Explore options to make repairs to the Fit Trail and to replace the current fitness equipment with fitness stations at points along the trail	
Explore adding a Trail System at Elm Avenue Park	b	b	b			a		b	As Elm Avenue Parks is redesigned and renovated, explore options to add a circular trail around the perimeter of the park	
Replace the playground at Elm Avenue Park	a	a	a	a		a	a	a	Replace the wooden playground at Elm Avenue Park with an industry standard playground. Engage the community in it's design and installation.	
As opportunities arise look at adding additional park land	b	b	b	b		b		b		
Explore Shade options	a	b	a			a		a	Explore options to add shade to parks and facilities either through tree plantings or shade structures	
<b>Level of Service</b>										
Identify gaps that are in need of service based LOS	a		a					a	Consider geographic barriers when looking at future facilities and services	
Verify other Service Providers are not filling gaps	a	b						a	Continue to map HOA and other service provider amenities that fill service gaps	
Develop LOS criteria for catchment areas and acreage by population	a							a	Using the NRPA 2015 Field Report as a benchmark, adopt LOS criteria for the Town	
<b>Finance</b>										
Utilize equitable user fees	b	b	a	b		a			Develop Cost Recovery Policy	
Pursue grant opportunities	a	a	a	a		a			Explore alternative funding opportunities	
Explore funding options that provide dedication revenue for parks and recreation	a	a	a						Impact fees, tax levy, in lieu funds.....	

# Recurring Themes

- Maintain what we have
- Improve Elm Avenue Park Pool Complex
- Trails & connectivity
- Henry Hudson Park headwall repair
- River access at Henry Hudson Park
- Develop mountain bike trails

# Recurring Themes

- Explore design and construction of a new community center at Elm Avenue Park
- Upgrade outdated amenities that do not function well
- Improved access to athletic and the need for additional athletic fields
- Teen, youth, family programming
- Wellness/fitness, art, cultural, special needs programming

# Recommendations

- ❑ Goals
- ❑ Objectives
- ❑ Actions
- ❑ Budget Impacts
- ❑ Priorities
- ❑ Drawn from data collected:
  - ❑ Community Input
  - ❑ Inventory
  - ❑ LOS Analysis
  - ❑ Key Issues Matrix
  - ❑ Findings Feedback

# Recommendations

- Primary Focus on:
  - Maintaining
  - Sustaining
  - Improving
  
- Priority Timeframe
  - Short-term (up to 3 years)
  - Mid-term (4-6 years)
  - Long-term (7-10 years)



# Goals

- **Continue to Improve Organizational Efficiencies**
- **Increase Financial Opportunities**
- **Continue to Improve Programs and Service Delivery**
- **Improve Facilities and Amenities**

# Organizational Efficiencies

- **Maintain existing level of service quality to citizens**
- **Enhance and improve internal and external communication regarding department activities and services**
- **Provide improved signage town-wide to make it easier for patrons to find and use parks, facilities, and trails**

# Organizational Efficiencies

- **Develop a plan to maintain existing facilities and amenities**
- **Improve access to athletic fields through an updated field allocation policy.**
- **Increase appropriate partnerships within the community**
- **Increase staff to meet current demand and maintain established levels of service**

# Financial Opportunities

- **Consider implementing a cost recovery and pricing policy**
- **Pursue grant and philanthropic opportunities**
- **Pursue opportunities for a dedicated revenue source for parks and recreation**

# Improve Service Delivery

- **Explore opportunities to increase recreational activities based on demand and trends**
- **Explore opportunities to increase the number of events based on demand and trends**
- **Explore offering more non-athletic and non-traditional programs**
- **Explore increasing aquatic opportunities**

# Improve Infrastructure

- **Maintain and improve existing facilities and amenities**
- **Expand greenways and trails connectivity**
- **Meet current and future population demands through new land acquisition and redesign of current facilities**
- **Develop additional aquatic opportunities**

# Improve Infrastructure

- **Develop new amenities at existing parks based on level of service analysis**
- **Develop individual Park Master Plans**
- **Continue to improve ADA accessibility at all facilities**

# Thank You For Your Time and Interest!



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