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MEMORANDUM

TO: City of Appleton Plan Commission

FROM: Andrew Dane

DATE: December 8, 2016

RE: Key Chapter Updates 18 Parks and Recreation Master Plan
SEH No. 135537 14.00

The purpose of this memo is to summarize the key **proposed** chapter updates made to the City's 2010-2030 Comprehensive Plan as part of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update.

New objectives and policies are **highlighted yellow**. ~~Strikethrough text~~ denotes those objectives and policies which have been removed from the updated Comprehensive Plan.

Key Changes

The objectives and policies section was reformatted to match the same style as the other Comprehensive Plan chapters by converting the recommendations to objectives and policies. Park acreages and trails information was updated, as was the service gap area map. The chapter was updated and re-organized to meet the requirements of a Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (CORP) as defined by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. A CORP allows the local municipality to apply for WDNR grant funding. Key accomplishments were also added.

Overall Goal

Appleton will provide a variety of parks and recreational programs to fulfill its mission: "Building communities and enriching lives where we live, work and play." This will be carried out through the implementation of the following goals, objectives, and policies:

Park and Open Space Acquisition

18.1 OBJECTIVE: Identify land for acquisition, or opportunities to share facilities, to provide adequate access to parks in developed parts of Appleton where there are no existing parks.

18.1.1 As noted above, there are areas within the developed part of Appleton and parts of adjoining towns that may someday come into Appleton, that are not adequately served by existing parks. The City should seek to provide desired facilities within these areas in partnership with other stakeholders. Priorities may include partnering with the Appleton Area School District to provide public access and recreational facilities for residents in the **surrounding** neighborhoods. ~~surrounding these schools.~~

~~Partner with the Appleton School District (Lincoln Elementary School) and the Appleton Christian School to provide public access and recreational facilities for residents in the neighborhoods surrounding these schools~~

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18.1.2 Acquire and develop additional park areas in neighborhoods where residential density is expected to increase through redevelopment activities. These may include remnant parcels along the railroad track north of downtown, sites along the Fox River, and publicly or privately-owned pocket parks and plazas on individual redevelopment sites.

18.2. OBJECTIVE: Continue to work with land developers and municipalities to acquire new park land through dedication or other means, as new development occurs.

18.2.1 Continue park land and trail dedication, or fee-in-lieu-of land dedication requirements for all new residential development. Additional land should be required for new development in the north, far southeast, and southwest parts of Appleton and its future growth area.

18.2.2 Where development may occur in adjacent municipalities, the City should work with the municipality to identify suitable locations, require dedication, and develop park facilities to meet the needs of current and potential future Appleton residents.

18.3 OBJECTIVE: Develop the City's park system as an interconnected network of sites linked by greenways and trails.

18.3.1 Create linkages between parks with long-term goal to have the City's parks arranged as nodes connected by recreational or environmental corridors. Stormwater drainageways, floodplains and wetland areas, utility corridors, railroad corridors, and other greenways may serve this purpose.

~~In addition to the acreage and distribution standards established for the City's park system, the opportunity to create linkages between parks should be a consideration in park land acquisition and facility development. To the extent possible, the goal will be to have the City's parks arranged as nodes connected by recreational or environmental corridors. Stormwater drainageways, floodplains and wetland areas, utility corridors, railroad corridors, and other greenways may serve this purpose. (Converted to policy above).~~

18.3.2 Implement the recommendations contained within the 2016 Appleton Trails Master Plan.

Park and Recreation Facilities Development

18.4 OBJECTIVE: Continue to make parks and recreation facilities and programs as efficient and effective as possible.

18.4.1 **Where it makes sense,** adopt practices to cluster or consolidate dedicated athletic fields in order to reduce maintenance costs and to provide greater flexibility for the use of neighborhood parks. Neighborhood parks are typically small facilities. Installation of large athletic fields intended for a single, or small number of uses, can eliminate the potential for other activities to occur. Additionally, having these dedicated athletic fields scattered throughout the city can increase maintenance and operational costs.

18.4.2 Preserve the maximum flexibility for use of neighborhood parks while simultaneously reducing costs by concentrating similar dedicated-purpose fields in a limited number of central locations.

18.4.3 Investigate and implement technologies that reduce maintenance costs or allow more intensive use of park facilities.

18.4.4 **Continue to consider** alternative approaches that may help to mitigate the impacts of park use, or reduce maintenance costs. For example, artificial turf can bear more intensive use than a conventional grass playing field with less maintenance, but has a higher installation and replacement cost, and may contribute to stormwater runoff. The use of naturalized plantings can reduce mowing requirements and have environmental benefits, but may not be an aesthetic

accepted by all members of the community. The benefits and drawbacks to practices such as these should be weighed when contemplating alternatives.

- 18.4.5 Monitor and assess the demand for new facilities related to specific emerging or growing recreational pursuits.
- 18.4.6 Complete a needs assessment and market analysis to explore how the City should provide indoor recreation and cultural services and facilities necessary to serve the growing needs of the community.
- 18.4.7 Complete a needs assessment for outdoor athletic fields as they relate to the growth of youth and adult programs and future needs.

~~Work with the Friends of Appleton Skate Park to identify an appropriate site for a skate park~~

~~This is a need that was recognized through the park survey. The City is in the process of searching for the most appropriate location for a skate park.~~

18.5 OBJECTIVE: Expand and develop additional park and recreational facilities along the Fox River.

- 18.5.1 Plan, design, and construct additional facilities to facilitate greater access and enjoyment of the river including but not limited to boat launch and parking, canoe/kayak launch, additional trail facilities, trail heads, trail parking, and wayfinding signage.

~~Design and construct a water trail for non-motorized boats on the Fox River. The Fox River has been recognized as one of the region's most significant natural resources. There is a concerted effort by many stakeholders to improve the environmental quality of the river and provide greater access to it. One component of this effort is a desire to facilitate use by non-motorized watercraft such as canoes and kayaks. The major components of providing a water trail will consist of boat landings, portages around the locks, signage, and marketing efforts to promote the trail.~~

- 18.5.2 Plan, design, and construct Jones Park improvements in conjunction with the Exhibition Center in order to create stronger linkages between downtown and the river, while maximizing the visitor experience and creating a stronger downtown neighborhood.
- 18.5.3 Explore and foster partnerships with other agencies and programs with compatible missions, including but not limited to the Fox River Navigation System Authority, Outagamie County, and the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region.

18.6 OBJECTIVE: Plan, design, and develop additional parks and recreational facilities that meet current and emerging needs of the community.

- 18.6.1 Plan, design, and construct additional facilities to meet the needs of the community, including but not limited to a recreation center to address the growing demand on programs and rented space, which the Department currently contracts for.
- 18.6.2 Plan, design and construct new facilities to better serve those areas of the community where service coverage gaps exist as discussed earlier in this chapter.
- 18.6.3 Evaluate potential policies, park improvements, or new facilities to accommodate the needs of dog owners, including but not limited to downtown area neighborhoods.

~~Collaborate with neighboring communities to site and develop a dog park.~~

~~Dogs are not allowed in City of Appleton parks, although they are allowed on the trail systems. Neighboring communities have similar regulations. The need for a dog park is a regional one and should be addressed in collaboration with other communities and county government.~~

18.7 OBJECTIVE: Continue to implement the Capital Improvement Plan for development of specific parks and facilities.

Recreational Programs

18.8 OBJECTIVE: Engage, leverage and develop community and corporate partners to optimize and broaden programs and services.

18.8.1 Plan with the numerous recreation service providers throughout our community. It is important we stay on top of trends and strengthen partnerships to become more responsive to community needs. Community partnerships play a vital role in our future success and ability to broaden our program offerings.

~~Develop partnerships with other communities and organizations to provide both existing and new recreational programming.~~

~~Several private and non-profit organizations, such as the Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA, offer programming and facilities that are complimentary to those offered by the Park and Recreation Department. In these instances, it may be beneficial to both organizations to collaborate to create operational and cost efficiencies, rather than offer competing programs and facilities. The same possibilities may exist with other area communities.~~

18.9 OBJECTIVE: Expand public outreach and participation in community groups, organizations and events to advocate our programs, facilities, and services.

18.10 OBJECTIVE: Enhance health and wellness within our community and provide opportunities for learning and socialization to promote personal growth and well-being for adults in our community.

18.10.1 With the surge of baby boomers coming into the older adult population, it will be critical for us to continually evaluate our program offerings and services to this demographic.

~~Continue to promote programs in areas of community health, non-competitive recreation, lifetime leisure pursuits, social programs, and special events. The Parks and Recreation Department has focused for several years on offering a greater variety and number of programs that go beyond competitive sports. As the population ages, this will become even more important to the community. (Converted to objective see below)~~

18.11 OBJECTIVE: Working together with community partners, increase programming directed to minority and cultural interests, and for persons who are physically or cognitively challenged.

18.11.1 Appleton will continue to program activities of cultural interest, as well as provide facilities and activities that are universally accessible.

~~Increase programming directed to minority and cultural interests, and for persons who are physically or mentally challenged.~~

~~Appleton will continue to program activities of cultural interest, as well as provide facilities and activities that are universally accessible.~~

18.12 OBJECTIVE Develop and deliver meaningful outdoor adventure and educational experiences for members of our community to help connect them to the outdoors. Work to promote the trail system and increase use of our outdoor amenities.

Management and Operations

18.13 OBJECTIVE: Continue to enhance Departmental management and operations to better serve the community.

18.13.1 Conduct a periodic review of Appleton's park land dedication ordinance as well as impact fees for development of park facilities.

18.13.2 Evaluate impact fees as a means of funding park capital costs.

18.13.3 Continue the Park and Recreation Department's practice of evaluating the carrying capacity of park facilities and establishing standards or use limits that protect them from damage caused by over-use. This policy mitigates damage to facilities that would incur costs to repair and deprive residents of the use of the facility while repairs were made.

18.13.4 Continue the Park and Recreation Departments commitment to, and implementation of "best practices" for sustainable park development and operations including but not limited to:

- acquisition of land for parks as well as the preservation of natural features;
- development of paths and trails that facilitate non-motorized transportation modes;
- specification of local, recycled content, or other products that minimize processing impacts to the environment;
- improvements in energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy sources;
- adoption of design elements that enhance the environment and reduce maintenance costs; and
- utilization of low-maintenance and native planting materials
- ~~reduction or elimination of chemical and fertilizer use in park facilities.~~

18.13.5 Identify and evaluate barriers to providing in-person customer service at current facilities.

18.13.6 Continue self-operation of Reid Golf Course to ensure the needs of the community are met.