



NEW BERN

PARKS & RECREATION

Family, fitness and fun come together here.

Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021

Approved – June 5, 2020

Foster Hughes, CPRE
Director of Parks and Recreation

New Bern Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan

The strategic plan is a guide to implementation of the department’s comprehensive master plan’s strategies, goals, and objectives. This strategic plan serves a four-year period from 2018 – 2021. It is reviewed annually, updated as needed, and approved by the Director of Parks and Recreation. Changes made to the comprehensive master plan are reflected in the strategic plan. Ultimately, the strategic plan should support all of the organization’s priorities and initiatives.

Strategy I: Provide safe, well maintained facilities and parks.

Goal 1: Update existing facilities and parks.

- Routine cleaning and maintenance of facilities, parks, and amenities. (Continuous)
- Addition of bike racks at each park, several at larger parks. (Completed 2017)
- Refurbished and/or new park signage. (Completed 2017)
- Renovate West New Bern Recreation Center. (Completed 2020)
- Repair docks, piers, and boardwalks damaged by storms. (Completed 2020)
- Repair/replace worn out benches, picnic tables, grills, trash cans and sports nets. (annually).

Goal 2: Expand facilities, park system, and recreational amenities offered.

- Acquire additional land to accommodate future growth.
 - Parks and Recreation Administration, 1307 Country Club Road (Completed 2017)
 - Martin Marietta Park (Completed 2018)
 - Walt Bellamy Park (Completed 2018)
 - United Way Park (Completed 2019)
 - Broad and 3rd Ave. property for proposed Recreation Center (Completed 2020).
- Develop new recreation centers/community buildings.
 - Pleasant Hill Park Community Center. (Approved FY21)
 - Stanley White Recreation Center Rebuild. (Funds allocated by FEMA 2020)
- Addition of walking trails.
 - Martin Marietta Park under construction. Once completed will have over 7 miles of natural surface trails. (In Progress).
- Expand the New Bern Riverwalk Greenway by 1,100’. (Completed 2019)
- Addition of Inclusive Playground and/or Miracle Field.
- Additional Dog Park with agility equipment.
 - Public input is being held to determine if a neighborhood park should be converted into a dog park. (In progress).

2.5 – Strategic Plan

- The Martin Marietta Park Master Plan calls for a dog park in phase 2. (In progress).

Goal 3: Ensure facilities and parks are safe.

- Maintain outside lighting at facilities, parks, and ball fields. (Continuous)
- Install security cameras in high risk areas.
 - New Cameras installed at West New Bern Recreation Center (2019)
 - Security cameras installed at Parks and Recreation Maintenance (2019).
 - Security cameras to be installed at Union Point Park, Fort Totten, Splash Pad, Donald Miller Park (Approved for FY21)
- Install signage for things that are not allowed in parks. (Continuous)
- Obtain a Certified Playground Safety Inspector on staff. (Completed 2019)

Goal 4: Improve the quality and efficiency of facilities, grounds, and park maintenance.

- Hire a qualified Parks Superintendent to maintain parks, landscaping, trees, and sports fields. (Completed 2018)
- Hire a qualified Parks and Grounds Maintenance Superintendent position to complete in house repairs and construction projects, perform carpentry, architectural design, and construction documents, (Completed 2019)
- Obtain a Certified Arborist on staff. (Completed 2019)
- Implement a five-year program to replace or acquire new grounds maintenance equipment, to meet increasing maintenance needs, decrease downtime due to breakdowns and increase operating efficiency.
 - New mowers purchased (2018)
 - Trimmers, Edgers, Blowers purchased. (2019, 2020)
 - Skid Steer purchased (2019)
 - New vehicles purchased to replace aging fleet. (2- FY18, 2-FY19, 2-FY20, 2-FY21)
 - New trailers purchased. (2018, 2019, 2020).
- Implement a five-year program to replace aging playground equipment.
 - Henderson Park Playground deck repairs made (2019)
 - Swing Seats replaced (2018, 2019, 2020)
 - Wood Fiber installed to standards (2018, 2019, 2020)
 - Kidsville 2.0 Community Build project completed. (2019).
 - New playground borders installed at Fort Totten, Henderson Park, Union Point Park (2020).
 - New swings and other play amenities added at Fort Totten (2020).
 - Fort Totten playground painted (2020).
 - Pierce park playground repaired (2020).

Strategy II: Provide diverse and enjoyable recreation opportunities to promote active, healthy lifestyles for people of all ages and abilities.

2.5 – Strategic Plan

Goal 1: Increase the number of special events offered throughout the year.

- Develop, implement, and promote new annual special events.
 - Easter Egg Hunt (2018).
 - Twilight Easter Egg Hunt (2019).
 - Footloose on the Neuse Summer Concert Series (2018)
 - Youth Fishing Derby (2019).
 - Movies in the Park (2018).
 - Drive-In Movies (2020).
 - Witches Ride (2019).
 - Hurricane Preparedness Expo (2019).
 - New Years' Eve Block Party (2019, 2019).
- Provide quality meeting, event and picnic venues for individuals, organizations, and corporations. (Continuous)
 - Shelters painted (2020)
 - New grills installed at shelters (2019)
- Partner with other agencies and non-profits to provide events and activities. (Continuous)

Goal 2: Expand recreation services for individuals with disabilities.

- Hire a Licensed Recreation Therapist to provide expertise needed to develop specialized programs and coordinate ADA compliance. (Completed 2017)
- Promote inclusion by making all programs inclusive. (In Progress)
- Make all facilities and parks ADA compliant through renovations and additions. (In Progress)
- Maintain programs for individuals with visual impairment that have already been developed, such as "VIP Fishing Tournament". (Continuous)

Goal 3: Expand recreation services for active seniors as needed.

- Monitor program trends and needs for active seniors to provide quality programs. (Continuous)
- Continue to offer current active seniors' programs such as "Senior Fitness", "Day Trips", and "Senior Games". (Continuous)

Goal 4: Keep citizens of New Bern informed of programs, special events, facilities, parks, and improvement projects.

- Utilize bulletin boards, community events, webpage, and social media to keep citizens informed. (Continuous)
- Develop social media and web pages. (Continuous)
- Engage citizens in public meetings, surveys and focus groups.
 - Martin Marietta Park public input (2018)
 - Pleasant Hill Community Center public input (2019)
 - Program evaluations (continuous)

2.5 – Strategic Plan

- Stanley White Recreation Center engagement (2020)
- Dog Park Survey (2019, 2020)

Goal 5: Embrace technology in Parks and Recreation and implement its use.

- Rec Desk Registration Software (2017)
- Adobe Software suite (2018)
- Survey Monkey (2019)
- Website upgrades (2019, 2020)
- Social Media emphasized (2018)
- Security cameras added (2019)

Strategy III: Adequately fund parks and recreation department needs to ensure quality service delivery.

Goal 1: Recognize the importance of parks and recreation in the City's annual budget appropriations.

- Identify the importance of parks and recreation for the citizens of New Bern. (Continuous)
- Identify the importance of parks and recreation to attract new residents and businesses. (Continuous)
- Identify the importance of parks and recreation to the development of tourism in New Bern. (Continuous)

Goal 2: Secure additional funding to renovate and replace aging facilities and equipment.

- Request additional funding, during annual budget appropriations.
 - Funding received for new vehicles and playground upgrades. (FY18)
 - Funding received to improve special events and activities. (FY19)
 - Funding received to equipment for GM, vehicles, Playground replacement, and facility upgrades. (FY20)
 - Funding received to build a community center, new vehicles, and equipment. (FY21)
- Aggressively seek grants.
 - RTP Trails Grant - \$75,000 (2017)
 - CAMA Grant – \$50,000 (2017)
 - PART-F Grant - \$500,000 (2018)
 - CAMA Grant - \$130,000 (2018)
 - Main Street Grant - \$40,000 (2019)
- Establish a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan line item for parks and recreation facilities improvements, land acquisition, future facilities, and grant matching funds. The 5 year plan is ongoing, and updated during the annual budget process.
- Create a nonprofit organization to help seek funding and to help supplement the efforts of the Parks and Recreation Department.

2.5 – Strategic Plan

- Seek civic and business sponsors for specific facility improvement initiatives. Initiate public/private ventures.
 - Kidsville 2.0 project (2019)
 - Footloose on the Neuse Summer Concert Series (2018, 2019, 2020 – *cancelled*)

Strategy IV: Promote natural resource preservation, conservation, and sustainability practices.

Goal 1: Providing opportunities for healthy activities in nature.

- Addition of walking and biking trails.
 - New Bern Riverwalk Greenway Extension (2019)
 - Development of walking trails at Martin Marietta Park. (*In Progress*)
 - Reconstruction of the boardwalk at Lawson Creek. (*In Progress*)
 - Reconstruction of the pedestrian bridge at Union Point Park. (2020)
- Nature based program development.
 - Kids N Canoes
 - Youth Fishing Derby (*Continuous*)
 - Trash to Treasure (2019)
 - Arbor Day Celebration (*Continuous*)
 - Community Garden (2020)

Goal 2: Protecting and managing wildlife and wildlife habitats.

- Consulting with North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality to protect, conserve, and manage coastal waters. (*Continuous*)
- Conducting fish species and habitat identification with North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission. (2020)
- Development of Neuse River Riparian Buffer Restoration Plan with North Carolina Division of Water Quality. (2018)
- Erosion prevention at Donald Miller Park using riprap and large native fill rock. (2017)
- Conservation of the Jack Smith Creek wetlands through stormwater management development. (Completed 2017)
- Research data collection for the North Carolina King Tides Project to document extreme high tide events and their impact on local resources and community investments. (*In Progress*)

Goal 3: Natural land management in city parks, property, and street right of ways.

- Planting trees, shrubs and plants that are native species to eastern North Carolina using an approved list of recommended trees and shrubs for the City. (*Continuous*)
- Urban Forestry planning and management to maintain and develop the City's tree canopy. (*Continuous*)
 - Planting 30 – 40 trees per year.
 - Regular tree trimming.

2.5 – Strategic Plan

- Regular evaluation of tree health.
- Tree City USA recipient.
- City Appearance Commission.
- Invasive plant management with less toxic means. (Continuous)
 - Remove weeds manually when applicable.
 - Wash mowers to prevent spread of invasive species to other sites.
 - Delay mowing of areas with invasive species during heavy seeding times.
 - Selecting herbicides with lower toxicity properties.
 - Disposal of clippings to reduce spread of invasive species.
 - Selecting aggressive dense host turf that chokes out invasive species.
 - Aerate turf to maximize healthy growth.
- Sustainable turf management practices. (Continuous)
 - Blanket pre-emergent applications to control germination of weeds in late winter/early spring and early fall.
 - Amend soil deficiencies to maximize turf growth.
 - Maintain healthy turf through a well-balanced fertility program.
 - Aerate turf accordingly to relieve compaction, incorporate new growth, and allow for proper gas exchange.
 - Post emergent applications made using selective herbicides when applicable.
 - Maintain proper mowing heights.
 - Scout turf on regular schedule for disease, insect, and weed management.
 - Irrigate sites where applicable.
- Following integrated pest management practices. (Continuous)
 - Target pest when damage is unacceptable.
 - Use pesticides that do not damage our eco system and destroy beneficial insects.
 - Monitor water management to prevent diseases caused by improper irrigation.
 - Apply mulch for weed management.
 - Use planting to invite beneficial insects/animals or deter non-beneficial insects/animals.
 - Apply pesticides in a manner that are not harmful to humans, non-target organisms, and environment.

Goal 4: Landfill waste reduction.

- Use of recycling bins at Administration and facilities. (Continuous)
- Natural waste shredding and composting. (Continuous)
- Use of recycled building materials such as composite. (Continuous)
- Use of hand dryers in public restrooms. (Continuous)

Goal 5: Following environmentally friendly building practices.

- Using water efficient plumbing fixtures, i.e. dual flush toilets, low flow lavatories and urinals. (Continuous)

2.5 – Strategic Plan

- Using composite decking made from recycled plastic and wood waste. (Continuous)
- Using energy star equipment when available. (Continuous)
- Using low emissivity windows and doors when renovating and/or constructing new facilities. (Continuous)