

City of Billings 2017 Parks and Rec Master Plan



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Purpose and Goals

The 2017 City of Billings Parks, Recreation, and Public Lands plan aims to provide a roadmap for developing parks, recreational facilities, and programs in Billings. Using input from the local community, city staff, and boards, the plan provides guidelines and recommendations on opportunities to ensure parks are accessible and meet the needs of the community. This plan is set to help Billings maintain, improve, and expand its green spaces and recreational facilities based on the community's current and future needs.

Summary of Findings

The Billings Parks and Recreation plan highlights several key findings that reflect the community's evolving needs as the city grows. Key findings from the plan include:

- There is a growing demand for more recreational spaces due to population growth.
- Facilities and programs catering to all age groups are needed, with a focus on the older population.
- Parks are important in enhancing Billings' desirability as a place to live.
- There is strong interest in the development of more walking and biking trails.
- The community has an increased demand for fitness programs.
- Community members desire more spaces for family-oriented activities.

Methodology and Strategies

The Billings Parks and Recreation plan was developed using a comprehensive methodology that included surveys, interviews, public meetings, and assessments of current facilities. Strategies of the plan include preserving and maintaining existing parks, improving and expanding recreational spaces and programs, developing new parks and trails based on community needs, and securing funding through grants, user fees, and partnerships.

How the Topic Impacts Community Health

The plan is expected to boost community health by encouraging community members to engage in activities to reduce health issues, such as walking, fitness, and social interactions. Parks and trails help people stay active, reduce stress, and build stronger community connections, making Billings a more enjoyable place to live.

Community Engagement

The City of Billings created its Parks and Recreation Master Plan by working closely with the community. They talked to people through interviews, focus groups, public meetings, and a survey to understand what the community wanted. Feedback from the community was used to help create the plan's goals, strategies, and project recommendations. This feedback helped shape the plan to ensure it aligns with current and future community needs.

Implementation Timeline Summary

The plan includes immediate actions (1-5 years) and long-term projects (5-10 years). Short-term projects focus on maintaining current facilities and addressing urgent needs, while long-term projects aim at building new facilities and expanding the park system to meet future demands. Now that the 1–5-year period has passed, some goals were met, but others were delayed due to challenges surrounding securing funding to maintain parks and staff capacity. Even with these difficulties, some short-term goals, like creating outdoor fitness and educational tours, were achieved by working with community partners. These results show the importance of securing more funding and finding creative ways to meet future goals.

Results and Next Steps

Outcomes from the plan will be tracked through community feedback and usage statistics. The next steps will include fixing and upgrading existing facilities. Long-term steps will explore building new parks, creating trails, and ensuring there is funding to support these projects over time. Billings Parks and Recreation has requested a new master plan in the budget to address new issues and gaps within their programs and facilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Proposed Projects

To improve current and future parks and trails, the following key ideas have been proposed:

- **Ensure Equitable Parks, Facilities, and Programs:**
 - Design parks and open spaces that cater to all ages, promoting physical activity and social interaction.
 - Add amenities such as picnic areas, playgrounds, fitness trails, and improved lighting to enhance accessibility and enjoyment for all residents.
- **Improved Marketing:**
 - Develop projects aimed at better informing the public about the parks and programs available, increasing awareness and engagement.
- **Parks and Recreation Enhancements:**
 - Create and enhance parks with special amenities such as community gardens, dog parks, and viewing areas to improve community livability and inclusivity.

For more detailed information about proposed plan projects, please visit ([full document here](#))



Picture from the original document, pg 169

This factsheet is a joint initiative of Healthy By Design and the Billings-Yellowstone County Planning Division. It aims to enhance awareness of local long-term documents, plans, and policies within the community

