

WELCOME TO



AMHERST, *NEW HAMPSHIRE*



September 22, 2014

# Amherst Recreation 2016-19 Strategic Plan Summary

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# Mission

## To enhance the quality of life for all Amherst residents:

- Offer diverse activities; health, fitness, educational, and cultural
- Offer an array of informational services of leisure activities to residents and organizations
- Provide environmental education and leisure opportunities
- Provide professional department assistance to community groups
- Provide quality programs and services in a safe and healthy atmosphere
- Provide a well maintained park(s) and recreational facilities in an optimal, fair and equitable manner
- Provide a comprehensive master plan for growth and development

# Vision

## "Creating Community through People, Parks and Programs"

### Values

- Strengthen relationships and sense of community
- Provide accessible, safe and welcoming spaces for all
- Deliver outstanding customer service
- Enhance sustainability-environmental, social and economic programs
- Encourage health and fitness for individuals and families
- Provide creativity and learning for individuals and families
- Provide opportunities for lifelong recreation

# Historical Trends-Staffing

- Office Administrator position became full time in February 2014

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Director                                      | Full Time   |
| Park Foreman                                  | Full Time   |
| Grounds Keeper                                | Part Time (8 months at Rec.) 4 months at DPW              |
| Office Administrator Rec. /Sports Coordinator | Full Time (Position paid for out of 02 Revolving Account) |
| Program Coordinator                           | Part Time   |
| PMEC Environmental Educators                  | Part Time   |
| Baboosic Lake Aquatic/Camp Dir.               | Part Time   |
| Program Instructors                           | Part Time 80-85 per year                                  |
| Volunteers                                    | 100+ per year   |

# Strengths

- Varsity, creativity & affordability of programs
- Sense of community
- Screening of volunteers
- Recreation Commission
- Well maintained athletic fields
- Use of athletic facilities and associated fees
- PMEC and proximity of trails
- Friendly, competent & helpful staff; experienced leadership
- Program enrollment and associated fees
- Registration convenience
- Recreation Master Plan
- Baboosic Lake

# Weaknesses

- Communication/website
- Two program revolving funds
- Pressure to generate revenue
- Unwilling to adequately fund potential growth
- NIMBY attitude
- Lack of gym space & outdoor basketball courts
- Lack of Community Center
- Loss of playing fields
- Blending of passive and active recreation
- Failing infrastructures
- Lack of participant transportation

# Opportunities

- Economic instability; residents take advantage of local programs and amenities
- Nature center to serve as a recreational model for small towns
- Capitalize on sense of community; work together to create balance of programs, amenities and funding
- Partnerships with adjacent towns, local organizations
- NH aging demographics
- Recruitment & training volunteers
- Grants
- Private funding
- Conservation Commission
- Master Plan Revisions
- Health & Wellness
- Trail Network

# Threats

- Political environment may be a potential impediment to growth; unwillingness to fund projects
- Privatization of recreational services
- Failed warrant articles to fund land purchase
- Failed warrant articles to fund improvements to failing structures
- NH aging demographics
- Declining school enrollment
- Neighboring towns
- Technology
- Volunteer overuse
- Aging vehicles & equipment

# Strategic Initiative

- **Initiative 1:** Provide athletic field space to retain current and anticipated demand.
- **Initiative 2:** Provide a system of parks, trails and recreational facilities.
- **Initiative 3:** Evaluate and optimize administrative tasks and hours for recreation programs to include PMEC.
- **Initiative 4:** Develop off site programs to increase participation in targeted areas: Senior & Young Adults.
- **Initiative 5:** Enhance public outreach and use technology as a tool.
- **Initiative 6:** Establish a vehicle/equipment replacement plan.

# Strategic initiative #1

## Provide athletic field space to retain current and anticipated demand

- As shown by voting majority of Amherst, the purchase of land for athletic fields is not a priority.
- A short term plan will be to work with both the department sports and private groups to ensure everyone has equal opportunity to the fields available.
- This would be the 4<sup>th</sup> alternate to Initiative #1 of the 2013 Strategic Plan.
- Work to acquire or purchase land to build athletic fields to be put into use by \$75,000 in FY17 – FY 19 (Warrant Article: Recreation Field Acquisition and Construction Fund).



## 4th alternate to Initiative #1–Compromise

### **Initiative: Provide athletic field space to retain current and anticipated demand**

- Continue to share available reduced space among recreation and private recreation clubs for practices and games
- Limit growth-keep enrollment at 2014 level
- Teams may need to practice at times that are not convenient (Fridays)
- Seek alternatives to traditional “Saturday or Sunday” game schedules
- Upgrade/improve fields to accommodate additional uses (events)
- Private teams may have to seek additional play time outside of town.
- Do the best we can with the resources available

# Strategic Initiative #1

- Acquire or purchase property or properties to be used for athletic fields to be put online by FY19.
- Allocate \$75,000 for FY17 – FY19 for construction of athletic fields. (Warrant Article: Recreation Field Acquisition & Construction Fund).

# Strategic initiatives #2

## **Initiative: Provide a system of parks, trails and recreational facilities**

- Develop Middle Street Park Parcel for a mixed use community park FY15-16 (Estimated Cost \$50,000 Private funding)
- Develop a system with Conservation Commission to improve and enhance trails
- Establish a community group to complete a feasibility study for a Recreation Center
- Complete a detailed assessment of the Baboosic Lake complex and define a program of improvements to make it more functional and attractive FY 16 (estimated cost \$50,000). Approximately \$15,000 would be private funding.
- Develop and execute a plan to refurbish the Davis Lane and Amherst Middle School tennis courts-FY 16 & FY 18 (estimated cost \$125,000-\$130,000)
- Develop and execute a marketing plan to promote PMEC FY 16 - FY 19 (estimated \$1000-3000)
- Work with DPW in Repairing deteriorating infrastructure-Spalding Field FY16 (estimated cost \$12,000)

# Strategic Initiatives #3

**Initiative: Evaluate and optimize administrative tasks and hours for recreation programs to include PMEC**

- Part-time administrative Assistant has been made full time and also taken on the role as Sports Coordinator/Administrative Assistant

# Strategic Initiative #4

**Initiative: Develop off site programs to increase participation in targeted areas: Senior & Young Adults.**

**A Survey was taken by 240 individuals with a question pertaining to offsite trips.**

| Answer Options   | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| Professional sports events   | 50.0%            | 107            |
| Museum trips   | 61.7%            | 132            |
| Boston trips   | 64.0%            | 137            |
| Shopping trips   | 13.1%            | 28             |
| Broadway in Boston shows   | 48.1%            | 103            |
| Trips to the Boston Pops   | 36.4%            | 78             |
| Teen Trips   | 33.6%            | 72             |
| Adventure trips (zip lining, white water rafting, mountain biking)           | 64.5%            | 138            |
| Hiking trips (to the White Mountains)  | 51.4%            | 110            |
| Camping/backpacking trips  | 28.5%            | 61             |
| Ski trips  | 36.4%            | 78             |
| Diner Tour trips   | 21.0%            | 45             |
| Trade shows (New England Flower Show)  | 17.3%            | 37             |
| Overnight Trips  | 10.7%            | 23             |
| Amusement park trips   | 49.1%            | 105            |
| Adult Adventures (ski trips, sky diving, white water rafting, wine tastings) | 35.5%            | 76             |
| Trips to the beach   | 40.7%            | 87             |
| Other (please specify)   |                  | 9              |
| <b>answered question</b>   |                  | <b>214</b>     |
| <b>skipped question</b>  |                  | <b>26</b>      |

# Strategic Initiative #4

**Develop off site programs to increase participation in targeted areas: Senior & Young Adults.**

- Purchase a mini bus style vehicle to transport participants to areas outside of Amherst. \$30,000
- This purchase and necessary maintenance would come from the 02 Revolving Account and not have a tax impact.
- It is anticipated this bus will last the department at least 10 years.

# Strategic initiative#5

**Initiative: Enhance public outreach and use technology as a tool**

FY15-18

- Participate in community events such as business expos, PTA, and civic group events-(estimated cost \$900 over 3 years)
- Increase exposure with mobile apps, social media
- Offer incentives for referrals; word-of-mouth/friend to friend(estimated cost \$1,500 over 3 years)
- Grow repeat customers/program registrants
- Enhance online registration for search, access and ease of registration- FY 15 (estimated cost \$1,000)

# Strategic initiatives #6

## Initiative: Establish a vehicle/equipment replacement plan

- Replace Park Foreman's 2001 two wheel drive truck & John Deer Gator Turf Cart.
  - FY16 & FY 17
  - (estimated cost of \$16,000 per year)
- Develop a plan to routinely replace field maintenance equipment to reduce operating and maintenance costs; mowers, trimmers, aerators, slice seeder
  - FY15-18 - Ongoing
  - (estimated cost of \$5,000 per year)





| Initiatives/Budget impact years   | FY15     | FY16    | FY17    | FY 18   | FY19    |  |
|---|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--|
| <b>Initiative 1: Provide athletic field space to retain current and anticipate demand</b>                             |          |         |         |         |         |  |
| Purchase/upgrade land (8-10 acres) to provide for current and projected needs   |          |         | 75,000  | 75,000  | 75,000  | Warrant Articles                               |
| <b>Initiative 2: Provide a system of parks, trails, &amp; recreational facilities</b>                                 |          |         |         |         |         |  |
| Develop Middle Street Park  | 50,000*  | 50,000  |         |         |         | Private Funding<br>15K from Private<br>Funding |
| Complete a detailed assessment of Baboosic Lake complex   |          |         |         |         |         |  |
| Develop a plan and execute to refurbish Davis Lane and AMS tennis courts  |          | 125,000 |         | 125,000 |         | Warrant Articles                               |
| Develop and execute a marketing plan to enhance use of P MEC  |          | 3,000   | 1,000   | 1,000   | 1,000   |  |
| Repair Spalding retention wall  |          | 12,000  |         |         |         |  |
| <b>Initiative 3: Evaluate and optimize administrative tasks and hours for recreation programs to include P MEC</b>    |          |         |         |         |         |  |
| Restore FTE   | 53,500*  | 55,105* | 56,758* | 58,510* | 60,265* |  |
| Investigate ability to combine revolving funds  |          |         |         |         |         |  |
| <b>Initiative 4: Develop off site programs to increase participation in targeted areas: Senior &amp; Young Adults</b> |          |         |         |         |         |  |
| Purchase Mini Bus   | 30,000*  |         |         |         |         | Purchase out of<br>Revolving Fund              |
| <b>Initiative 5: Enhance public outreach and use of technology</b>  |          |         |         |         |         |  |
| Participate in community events, business expos, PTA, civic groups  | 300      | 300     | 300     |         |         |  |
| Offer incentives-word-of-mouth/friend-to-friend   | 500      | 500     | 500     |         |         |  |
| Enhance online registration for search, access and ease of registration   |          | 1,000   |         |         |         |  |
| <b>Initiative 6: Establish a vehicle/equipment replacement plan</b>   |          |         |         |         |         |  |
| Replace Maintenance 2001 Vehicle & John Deer Gator  |          | 16,000  | 16,000  |         |         |  |
| Routinely replace maintenance equipment   | 5000     | 5000    | 5000    | 5000    |         |  |
| <b>Total (Budget Impact Initiative)</b>   | 81,500   | 72,800  | 18,800  | 6,000   | 1,000   |  |
| <b>Total (Non Budget Impact)*</b>   | 133,500* | 70,105* | 56,578* | 58,510* | 60,265  |  |
|   |          |         |         |         |         |  |
|   |          |         |         |         |         |  |
|   |          |         |         |         |         |  |

# Conclusion

- The six goals outlined in this strategic plan provide a guideline for the Recreation Department over the next four fiscal years. Hopefully it is a balance between what citizens need and desire and the investment they are willing to make.

# Discussion