

Kent County, Michigan

Multi-Jurisdictional Parks Study



**Citizens Committee Meetings
February 15 & 16, 2012**

Recommendation Options Discussion

Purpose of this meeting

- Review a summary of the findings presented in previous meetings
- Present a range of options that offer potential to advance parks and recreation in Kent County
- Gain local perspective on what options offer the greatest benefit and are most practical for Kent County
- Gain feedback that will shape the final recommendations and sequencing of implementation (should there be a decision to proceed)

Findings Summary

Good, Not Great

- There are strong examples of P&R collaboration in Kent County
- Most collaboration is in recreation and more often than not includes schools
- Access to parks and recreation programming in Kent County is within national averages (parks somewhat above, recreation somewhat below)

Findings Summary

- Continued economic challenges and associated declines in P&R spending threaten the quality of parks and access to recreation opportunities
- Parks and Recreation budgets have been reduced over the preceding years
- There is relatively little redundancy in programming
- Recreation offers substantial opportunities for shared programming
- Most options require additional resources and a governance structure

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Efficiencies (existing resources)

- Few opportunities for operational efficiency improvements were identified in the course of the study.

Source	Current Situation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staffing was difficult to measure as much is integrated elsewhere in responding jurisdictions• Staffing already cut
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capital equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not a significant amount of specialized equipment• Outsourcing occurring• Limited opportunities (geographic limit)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Redundancies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No significant redundancies identified

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Options matrix

Shared Services	Shared Programing	Shared Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equipment sharing• Common technology• Reciprocal registration• Joint purchasing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joint planning• Facility coordination• League management• Contractual programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inter-local agreement• Parks Commission• Authority• Multi-jurisdiction millage

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Good to Great

THE SEVEN FACTORS OF EXCELLENCE:

1. A clear expression of purpose
2. An ongoing planning and community involvement process
3. Sufficient assets in land, staffing, and equipment to meet the system's goals
4. Equitable access
5. User satisfaction
6. Safety from crime and physical hazards
7. Benefits for the community beyond the boundaries of the parks

*Trust for Public Land (2003)

Good to Great, continued

- The four agencies on the following slides are known throughout the park and recreation industry for excellence. In addition to having the attributes on the previous slide, they also:
 - Excellent leadership at the director level
 - Well functioning and supportive board or elected officials
 - Sophisticated management approaches (cost of service, cost recovery goals, measuring performance)
 - Great advocacy from the public
 - Dedicated marketing support
 - Strong brand and image
 - Exceed other agencies in capturing data to determine customer needs
 - Ongoing commitment to planning processes
 - Online registration systems

Great Models

- Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board
 - 16.8 acre of parkland per 1,000 residents
 - P&R spending per resident: \$200
 - 51 recreation centers
 - Driver of economic growth
 - Elected board
 - Dedicated millage



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Great Models

- Kettering, Ohio Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department
 - Population 58,000
 - P&R spending per resident \$216 per resident
 - Two recreation centers, nature center, arts center, 40 parks
 - 67% tax support, 33% non tax revenue
 - City department

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Great Models

- Bend, OR Park and Recreation District

- Population of 76,639
- 30 acres per thousand population
- Operating budget \$13.6 million
- Spending per resident \$177
- Two recreation centers, indoor and outdoor aquatics, 90 parks
- Separate district with elected board



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Great Models

- Charleston County SC Park and Recreation Commission



- Population 350,000
- 27 acres of parkland per 1,000 population
- Three water parks, beach parks, campgrounds and cottages, equestrian center
- 55% of revenues come from non-tax revenue
- Elected commission members

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Agency Comparisons

Examples of Best Practice Agencies	Minneapolis, MN	Kettering, OH	Bend, OR	Charleston County, SC
<u>Criteria</u>				
Type of agency	Special District	City Department	Special District	Special District
Population served	382,578	58,000	76,369	350,000
Budget	\$72 million	\$12.5 million	\$13.6 million	\$24.4 million
Operating expenses/capita	\$200	\$216	\$177	\$70
% of revenue from non tax sources	30%	38%	40%	55%
Park acreage	6,400	450	2,291	9,526
Acreage per 1,000 population	16.8	7.8	30.0	27.0
Governance	elected board	city council	5 member elected board	7 commissioners appointed by governor
# of full-time staff	500	32		179
Population served per FT staff	765	1,813		1,955

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Special Districts

- There are over 400 park and recreation agencies in the US with independent governance boards
 - 50 of these are multi-jurisdictional
 - Most created in the 1950's – 1970's (*Metropolitan* era)
 - Example: Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority
 - Established by State act in 1959
 - Three counties and three cities – Arlington County, Fairfax County, Loudoun County, the City of Alexandria, the City of Falls Church and the City of Fairfax
 - 12-member board – the city council or county board of each jurisdiction appoints 2 members to the NVRPA Board
 - Almost 11,000 acres parkland, 24 regional parks featuring golf courses, swimming pools, hiking trails
 - All (?) created where none existed (did not merge agencies)
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Program Offerings

NRPA 2009 Operating Ratios (670 agencies)

	Average National Agency	Kent County (10)*
Before and After School	57%	20%
Preschool	43%	30%
Fitness programs	84%	40%
Aquatics programs	76%	40%
Team sports	87%	80%
Community Events	92%	80%
Special Recreation	62%	20%
Seniors	84%	70%

*those agencies that have recreation programs

Shared Services Options

- Develop a standard data collection and reporting format, to improve the ability to analyze the potential for cross-jurisdictional collaboration, cost savings and service enhancements in the future
 - Standard revenue and expenditure classifications
 - Staffing of parks and rec (hours, FTE, etc.)
 - Assets & liabilities
 - Maintenance labor costs
- Participate in NRPA PRORAGIS as a common reporting system and to refine standards for parkland and amenities

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Shared Services Options

- Implement joint P&R planning
 - May be focused on specific need or opportunity
 - Conduct a joint community survey of P&R satisfaction and priorities
 - Establish benchmarks and track progress toward meeting goals
 - Parks acreage
 - Access to specific recreation facilities and services
 - Funding targets (tax, fees, contributions etc.)
 - Develop a countywide P&R master plan
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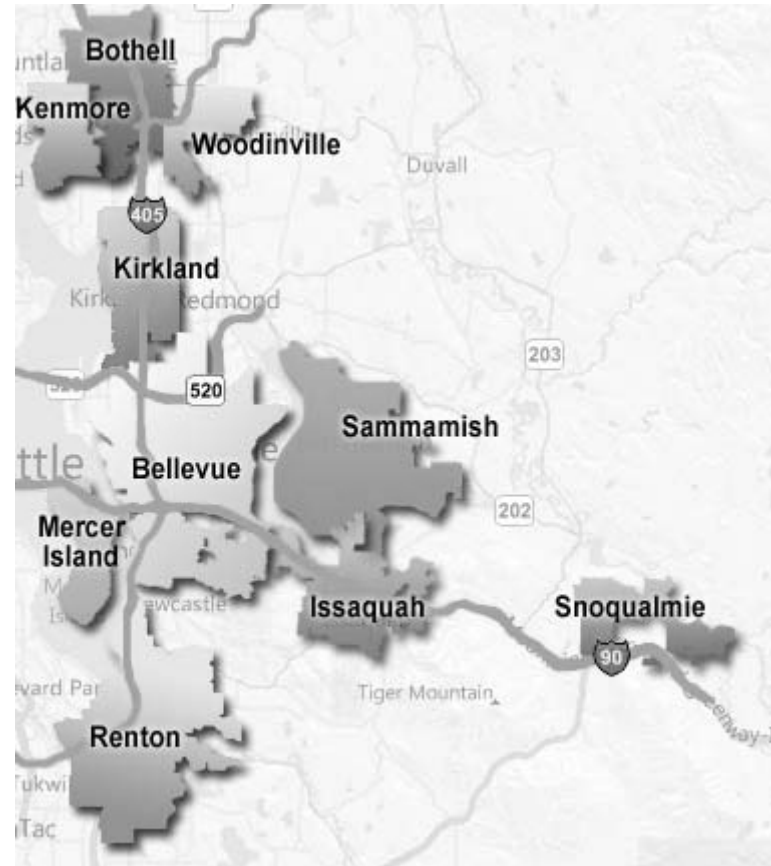
Shared Services Options

- Implement a common P&R web platform
 - Multi-jurisdictional on-line recreation catalogues and registration
 - Park and amenity directories
 - On-line facility reservations
 - CRM/Customer feedback
 - Work orders
 - Social media

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Common Web Platform

- **MyParksAndRecreation.com**
 - 10 Puget Sound Communities
 - Find and register for programs from single web portal
 - Parks and trail directory
 - Uses Active's Class software application (client/server not web-based)



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Shared Services Options

- Implement a common hiring process (database of rec teachers, common clearance, third party employer) (Substitute teacher model)
- Develop a joint approach to increasing alternative revenue (grant writing, sponsorships, corporate outreach, donations, etc.)

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Shared Programming Options

- Develop a multi-jurisdictional approach to services for special needs population
 - Work with schools and community groups to identify the market of potential users
 - Complete a survey to identify needs
 - Create mission and goal statements for the program
 - Identify resource needs and opportunities
 - Include accessibility standards/features in master plans
- Coordinate non-resident fees and promote more cooperative programming agreements

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Shared Programming Options

- Implement a regional recreation program development and management group
 - Develop formal pricing policies that provides consistency, such as non-resident fee increases
 - Build a cost of service model and cost recovery policy
 - Perform lifecycle analysis of programs
 - Determine core program areas
 - Develop recreation program standards
 - Develop service system standards and measure performance of programs
 - Develop an ongoing process to measure customer satisfaction and identify customer need

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Shared Governance Options

- Place a countywide, multi-purpose millage request before the voters
 - Land acquisition
 - Park and trail development
 - Multi-jurisdictional efforts
 - Operational subsidies
- Place millage request before voters for county recreation facility(s) capital and operation
 - Separate authority or operated by a single jurisdiction
 - Meet specific unmet recreation needs
- Note: .25 mill \approx \$5 million

Shared Governance Options

- Create additional school district/municipal recreation authorities (Cedar Springs model*)
 - Expand programing to meet identified community needs
 - ISD potentially provide technical support
 - Standardize inter-local agreements
 - Local millages

*PA 6, 1967 (Urban Cooperation Act)

PA 321: Recreational Authorities Act

- Provides for the establishment of recreational authorities; to provide powers and duties of an authority; to authorize the assessment of a fee, the levy of a property tax, and the issuance of bonds and notes by an authority; and to provide for the powers and duties of certain government officials
- The purposes for which the authority is established, which shall be the acquisition, construction, operation, maintenance, or improvement of 1 or more of the following:
 - (i) A public swimming pool
 - (ii) A public recreation center
 - (iii) A public auditorium
 - (iv) A public conference center
 - (v) A public park
 - (vi) A public museum
 - (vii) A public historic farm

PA 321: Recreational Authorities Act

- Flexible purpose
- 13 authorities created since passage in 2000
- 3 millages have passed
- Varied purposes: Future parks and recreation facilities, trail development, community centers
- Allows for multiple revenue sources; grants, fees, revenue from the State
- Millages limited to 1 mill for 20 years

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PA 321: Recreational Authorities Act

- Headwater Recreation Authority: Hillsdale and Fayette townships, City of Hillsdale and Village of Jonesville – trail development
- Tahquamenon Recreation Authority: Luce County, McMillian and Pentland Townships, Village of Newberry – community center
- Newaygo Community Recreation Authority: Brooks, Garfield and Croton Townships, City of Newaygo – joint planning, soccer park, trails development, facility improvement. Leveraged community foundation grant.

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Shared Governance Options

- Create a Kent Communities Parks and Recreation Authority (PA 321)
 - Manage millage
 - Countywide multi-jurisdictional planning
 - Support multi-jurisdictional efforts (technical and financial)
 - Support multi-jurisdictional infrastructure (technology, capital planning)
 - Leverage private support
 - Appointed or elected representational board
 - Opt in/out (similar to Kent District Library model)

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PA 261: County and Regional Parks Act

- County Parks and Recreation Commission (an agency of the County)
- May be two or more contiguous counties
- Vehicle for vertical integration of local entities (no Michigan examples)
- St. Clair County Parks and Recreation Commission
 - .5 mill levy
 - 25% distributed to back to 33 local jurisdictions

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Shared Governance Options

- Merge one or more township or city parks and recreation department into a countywide parks and recreation commission
- Example: City of Topeka consolidated into Shawnee County Parks and Recreation
 - Discussion begun in 2004
 - Implemented January, 2012
 - All city P&R employees offered jobs with county (85% accepted)
 - Provide maintenance and programming
 - Did not deed transfer assets as originally planned

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