

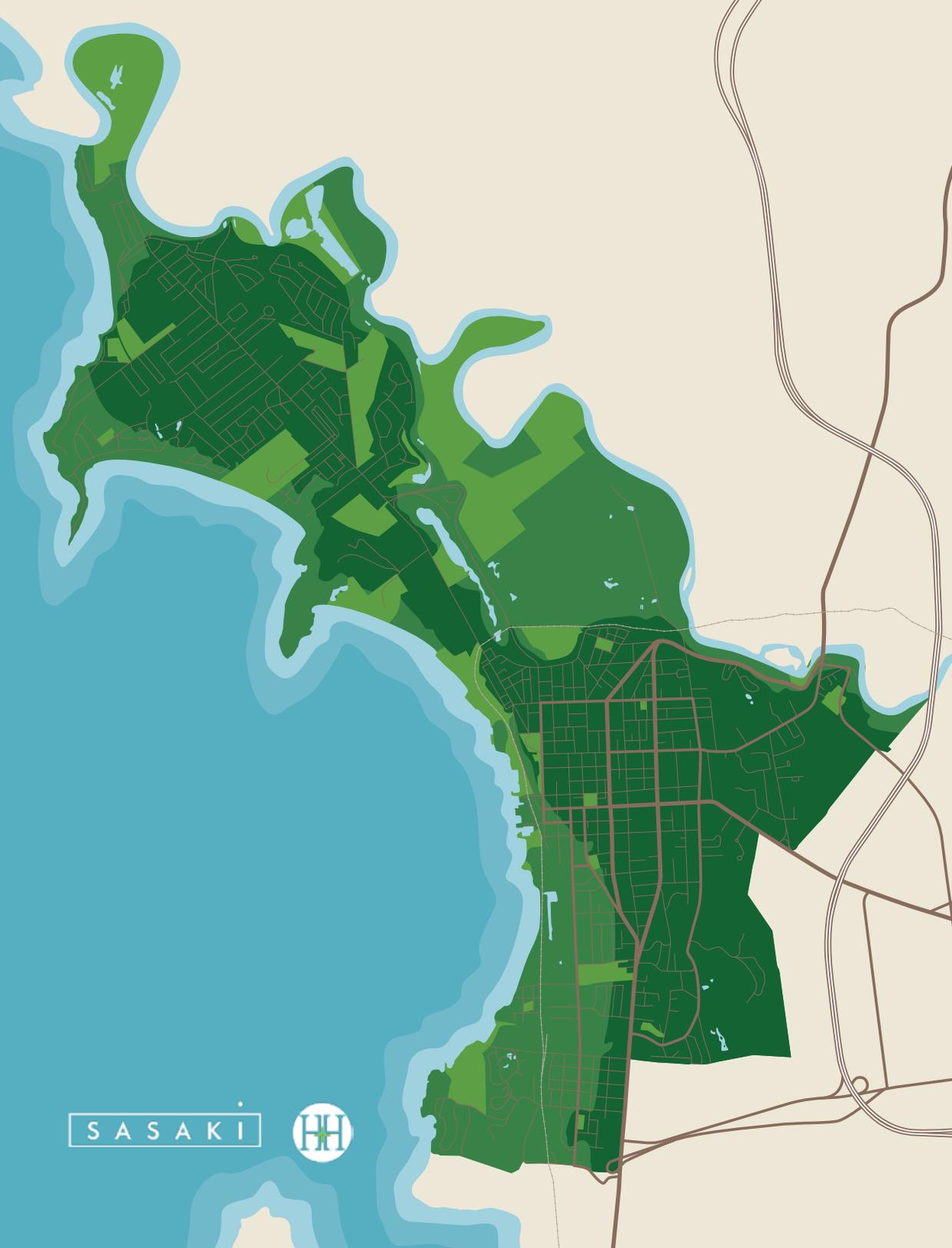
# BURLINGTON PARKS, RECREATION & WATERFRONT MASTER PLAN

OCTOBER 2015



BURLINGTON  
PARKS  
RECREATION  
WATERFRONT  
VERMONT

S A S A K I



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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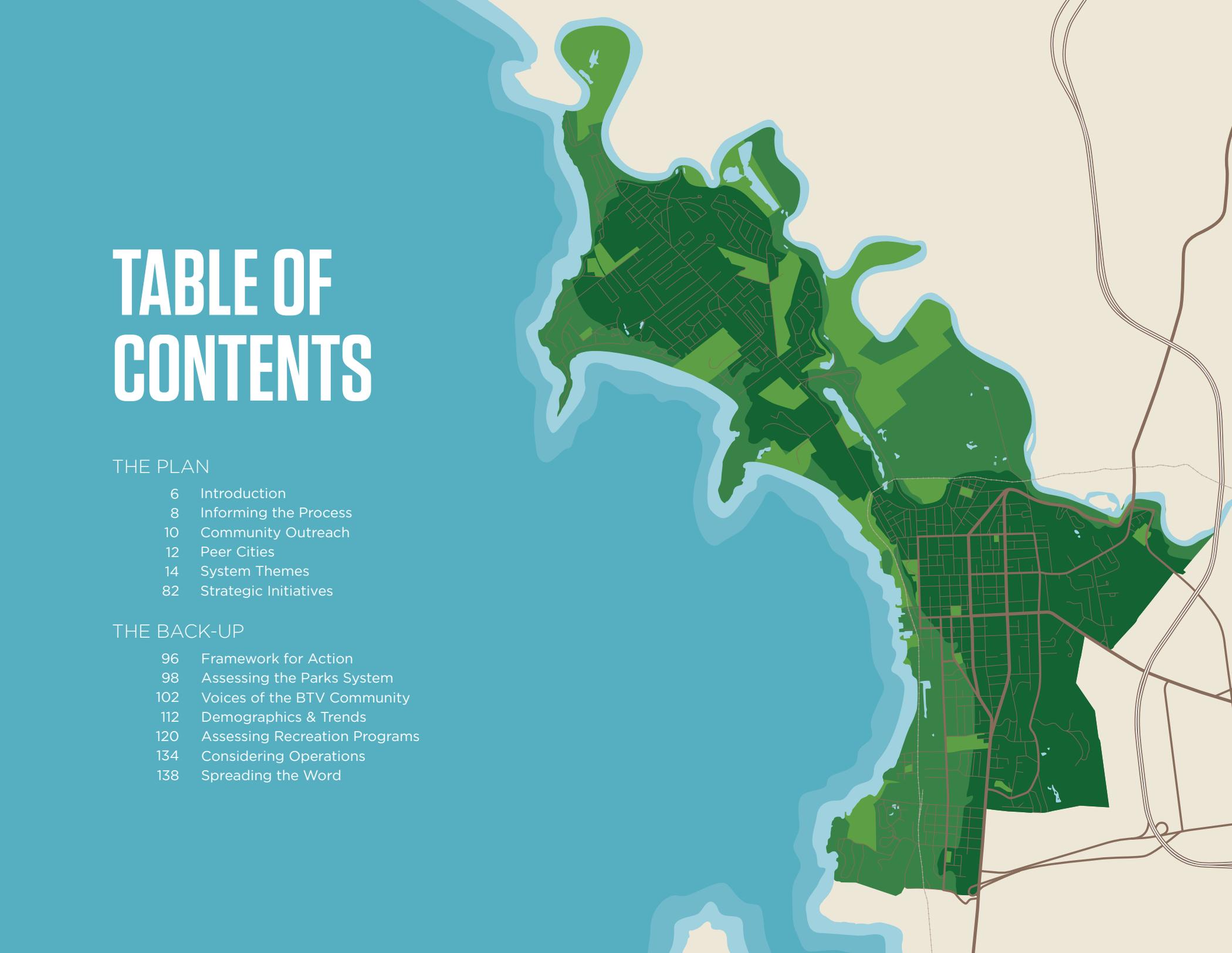
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Special thanks to former Commissioners Steve Allen, John Ewing, Dave Hartnett, and Chris Pearson and to former Recreation Superintendent Maggie Leugers.

Key leadership positions within Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront have been recently filled by fresh voices. The BPRW Master Plan takes advantage of this new perspective, aiming to create a unified voice for the multiple roles that parks fill in contemporary cities. At the same time, the plan builds on the integrity of past stewardship and integrates the exceptional work of staff in maintaining and programming our urban parks system. The expansive role of parks in Burlington's urban environment is described in the following pages.

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# THE PLAN



# INTRODUCTION

## Creating a Shared Vision

### CONTEXT FOR THE PLAN

Burlington, Vermont's diverse system of parks, trails, open spaces, and recreation opportunities serve myriad roles for the City. Today, the waterfront parks serve as a source of pride for residents, the community gardens as a gathering space for new members of the community, and the urban wilds as a reminder of the City's commitment to sustainability and environmental ethic.

The 2015 Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Master Plan, the first comprehensive parks & recreation plan for the department, seeks to honor and enhance the role of Burlington's parks spaces and recreation programming within the City and the region. A collaborative and engaging process ensured that community input influenced the ultimate vision and recommendations. **The plan focuses on a set of seven system themes further described in this report: People, Wellness, Connection, Stewardship, Community, Service, and Impact.**

The BPRW Master Plan is well positioned to create a lasting impact on the City and the department. The plan has been undertaken in a moment of new leadership, recent planning achievements, and a strong potential for action and implementation.

The department is poised at a moment of change and transformation, seeking both to build on the park

system's strong legacy and to create a fresh start that aligns with twenty first century goals and ambitions. With recent momentum around innovative city planning initiatives (planBTV: Downtown & Waterfront, Open Space Protection Plan and South End) and a collective, community appreciation for the richness of Burlington's parks, the BPRW Master Plan creates an achievable set of actions to guide the parks system into the future. The plan is intended to help the department efficiently maintain its assets, strive for sustainability, and set design aspirations to create better social spaces for Burlington's role as the urban heart of the state.



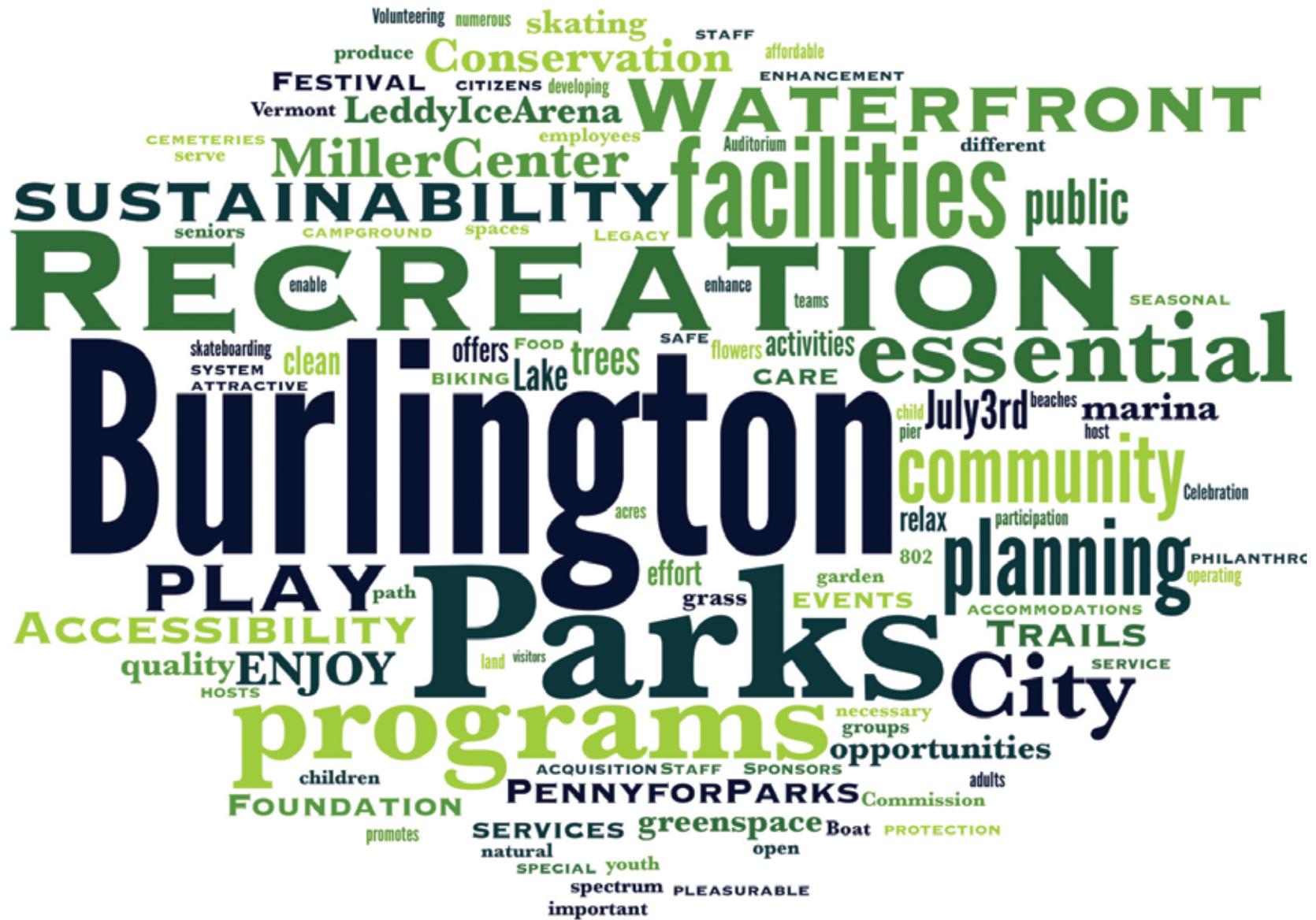
This document provides an overarching structure to further evaluate programs, facilities, overall park infrastructure, & development.

This is not a specific plan for any one area of an extremely diverse department, nor a plan for any specific park, but rather a comprehensive guide to build consistency, standards, and sustainability across the entire system.

The BPRW Master Plan serves as the hub from which future, specialized plans and initiatives will grow.

RIGHT  
Word Cloud highlighting the depth and reach of Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront.

LEFT  
Treasured community asset: sunset over Lake Champlain.



# INFORMING THE PROCESS

## Building a Community-Driven Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Master Plan

### PROJECT TIME LINE

This Parks & Recreation Master Plan is the first comprehensive plan for Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront. The planning process began in May 2013. The Plan, which creates a clear direction for the future, includes strategic plan components that are designed to be updated every three to five years.

### PROCESS

The planning process began with an in-depth analysis of the City’s park system, including a comprehensive inventory and assessment of park amenities. In concert with this physical analysis, the team studied the existing framework of planning documents in place. Next, the community was engaged by intensive public outreach, which yielded exceptionally high levels of participation. The process concluded with multiple visioning sessions resulting in the final framework for this master plan.

### OUTREACH

The most significant influence of plan development was the community outreach process. Methods included an online mapping tool, a community bike ride, a household survey, and community-wide public workshops. Additional neighborhood-specific outreach was conducted through staff presentations to Neighborhood Planning Assemblies (NPAs).

Staff engagement with the plan was also critical to the development of the master plan and involved robust participation from City staff, key leaders, and the Mayor. Burlington staff members participated in a series of focus groups early in the process, and interviews with community groups supplemented the feedback.

**The resulting input critically influenced the design of this plan, helping to inform future programming, facility opportunities, partnership growth, and the identification of future challenges that BPRW faces.**

**BPRW has literally started implementing this plan while in motion: refining standards, operational procedures, recreation programming, and capital program management - while advancing the department’s identity. Master planning remains an ongoing and ever-evolving tool. BPRW’s simultaneously aggressive action on the plan development and implementation has given a jump start to the renewal of the parks system.**





**ABOVE** The master plan team worked with BPRW staff to determine how the plan's recommendations support and improve daily operations.

**PATH TO PARKS**  
**PUBLIC RIDE** 

Join Mayor Miro Weinberger, Parks & Recreation Director Jesse Bridges and Department of Public Works Director Chapin Spencer for a two-wheeled tour of the many City of Burlington Parks connected by the Waterfront Bike Path. For additional information regarding this public ride please see the Parks and Recreation Facebook events page.

**ONLINE** [www.btvbikepath.com](http://www.btvbikepath.com)  
[www.burlingtonvt.gov/ParksMaster](http://www.burlingtonvt.gov/ParksMaster)



**DETAILS** 

**WHAT** The City of Burlington, VHB, and Parks master plan consultant team of Heller + Heller, Gaski Associates will be hosting a public bike ride to engage the community in activity and conversation on rehabilitation of the bike path in the context of the city-wide Parks master plan.

**WHEN** Saturday, October 5 from 9:30 AM - 12:30 PM

**WHERE** Burlington Bike Path – Meet at the Howard Center Overlook Parking (Pine St. & Queen City Park Road)

**WHO** YOO! All are welcome!

**MORE INFO** Please see the P&R Facebook event page: [www.facebook.com/events/779331956881285](https://www.facebook.com/events/779331956881285)

**RIGHT & TOP RIGHT**  
 In collaboration with the Mayor, BPRW, and the Burlington Bike Path Rehabilitation consultant team from VHB, the master plan team led a public “Path to Parks” ride to discuss the future design of the Bike Path and its integration and connection to major City parks.



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Gathering Input from Local Stakeholders & Residents

## FOCUS GROUPS

During the community outreach process, a series of focus groups specific to different aspects of the multi-faceted department were held. More than fifty local partners were invited to participate including non-profits, businesses, social service organizations, educational institutions, transportation agencies, regional parks & planning agencies, and friends/conservation/athletic/volunteer groups.



to help identify community priorities and guide recommendations for resource allocation and recreation programming. The survey was conducted by mail and phone and given to a random sample of 2,000 people. The survey assessed satisfaction levels, facility use and needs, program participation and needs, and use of the overall parks system. There was a high level of participation with a 28% response (compared to a national average of 25%). **Over 550 households returned the survey, well exceeding the minimum number of surveys required for meaningful analysis, yielding a 95% confidence level.**

## ONLINE MAPPING TOOL

The household survey was complemented by “My Burlington”, an online mapping tool which invited community members to share qualitative input on the park system. The data received online helped to illuminate issues within individual parks and reinforced the strength of the community’s appreciation for and love of the Burlington waterfront.

## KEY LEADER MEETINGS

Meetings with community leaders representing different aspects of Burlington were also essential to the outreach process. The master plan team conducted more than a dozen key leader meetings with the Mayor’s Administration, City Councilors, BPRW Commission, Parks, Art & Culture Committee (PACC), various City board members, staff from City departments including the Built Environment team, City Green, the Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV), Burlington Business Association (BBA), events organizers, regional partners (Colchester, South Burlington, Winooski, and the Winooski Valley Park District), the Burlington School District (BSD), and the Burlington Electric Department (BED).

## HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

A statistically valid household survey was administered

Mayor Miro Weinberger hosted multiple community conversations on the parks master planning effort over bagels and coffee during his regular gathering of “Mornings With Miro”. These conversations provided spirited, informal opportunities to learn about the process and share ideas.

**RIGHT** Key findings from the household survey, conducted between August and September of 2013, included feedback on popular facilities and program participation.

Waterfront Park was identified as the most used, which was followed by Oakledge Park.

**LEFT** Community members participate in a parks planning workshop; drawing dreams of what the parks might be.

# SURVEY SAYS!

**#1 SPECIAL EVENTS**  
RANK HIGHEST IN THE LIST OF PARK NEEDS

**61%** OF RESPONDENTS REQUESTED MORE  
**SPECIAL EVENTS**

**6 OF THE 7 MOST VISITED PARKS**  
ARE ON THE **WATERFRONT**

**TOP 7 MOST POPULAR FACILITIES**  
BEACHES  
EVENT SITES  
SHELTERS  
PICNIC AREAS  
VIEWS  
PATHS  
PLAYGROUNDS

**41%** OF RESIDENTS THINK  
**BEACHES AND LAKE AREAS**  
SHOULD RECEIVE THE **MOST ATTENTION**



# PEER CITIES

## Looking to Other Comparable Communities

### GOOD EXAMPLE!

Until recently, the standard way of assessing community parks & recreation amenities was to be based on national standards developed by the National Parks & Recreation Association (NRPA). While those standard metrics are helpful, the realization emerged that tighter metrics - more attuned to population and density - could better serve communities. NRPA now provides access to a national database called PRORAGIS (Parks and Recreation Operating Ration and Geographic Information System). Using this tool, communities can see how they compare to one another and become better informed about areas where they are meeting the mark or lagging behind.

**Burlington’s culture, location, and park system are all unique. Community values include loyalty to local food and businesses and shared appreciation for nature and outdoor activities.** The City’s character is also shaped by the presence of many colleges and universities. Yet, there are great examples of cities nationwide who share similar traits with Burlington. For this study, Burlington’s benchmarks were developed both by looking for cities in PRORAGIS that are similar to Burlington in measurable elements (such as population), as well as looking for a set of peer cities that share more qualitative attributes. Peer cities offer precedents for creative approaches to park design, winter activities, and programming.

### EVOLVING AMENITIES

Like Burlington, many communities experience demographic changes. With these changes, a community’s needs for amenities and programs change. **An effective parks & recreation department must understand their evolving constituency and be nimble enough to accommodate changing needs.**



**UPPER LEFT**  
Multi-use paths support year-round activity in Bozeman, MT.

**LOWER LEFT**  
Creative approaches to stormwater and maintenance ecology in Ann Arbor, MI.



**RIGHT**  
Diagram illustrating some of the peer cities that informed and inspired BPRW’s Level of Service standards. LOS is influenced by community need, quantity and condition of existing facilities, and land capacity.

# WE LIKE WHAT YOU DO!

**BURLINGTON'S PEER CITIES:  
THESE COMMUNITIES (AND MORE) WERE STUDIED BECAUSE THEY  
MODEL SUCCESSFUL PARKS & RECREATION ELEMENTS AND  
ARE A COMPARABLE IN POPULATION & SCALE.**



# BPRW 7 SYSTEM THEMES

The BPRW planning process resulted in the development of seven unique system themes that represent key areas of focus - upon which recommendations for the next 10 years are based.

## WELLNESS



## CONNECTION



## PEOPLE



**LEFT TO RIGHT**  
Kids marching in the annual Cardboard Box Parade, seniors enjoying time on the water at the Burlington Community Marina, an autumnal ride along the Burlington Bike Path...



# STEWARDSHIP

# SERVICE



# COMMUNITY

# IMPACT



CONTINUED  
...Planting in a Burlington Area Community Garden, tournament play at World Refugee Day (image courtesy of the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program/VRRP), BPRW staff in action, and the Farmer's Market in City Hall Park.

# PEOPLE

## Recognizing Culture, Community, & Partnerships

### LOCAL PRIDE & REGIONAL DESTINATION

As Vermont's most populous city, Burlington serves a unique role as the urban and civic heart for both the region and the entire state. Its parks and recreation offerings reinforce this role through their exceptional physical attributes and programming opportunities. "People" includes both the residents of the City and our visitors, who recognize Burlington as an international destination for tourism. **Burlington's urban parks offer important social gathering spaces for everyone hosting waterfront concerts, boating activities, community rides and races, urban camping, farmers markets, and garden plots.** BPRW supports all of these activities and strives to provide equitable means for all of our residents and guests to access these essential cultural resources that make Burlington unique.

### DIVERSE COMMUNITY

Burlington's population grew nearly 10% between 2000-2010, and continued growth is anticipated over the next several years (between .5% - 2.9% by 2030). This growth has been coupled with increasing racial diversity, primarily from refugee resettlement, and a growing senior population. Also significant, four higher education institutions make their home in the City. In 2014, more than 14,000 students enrolled in Burlington area universities - a number that also continues to grow. The student population creates vitality and a vibrant

core of young adults, but also puts pressure on housing and quality of life in certain neighborhoods. In the coming years, our parks and recreation resources must continue to evolve ensuring that the system remains relevant to all while supporting diverse and changing family, senior, and student populations - fostering inclusive spaces where all are welcome.

### CULTURAL COMPETENCY

The idea of community need is at the heart of this master plan and at the center of the work that BPRW does. We must continue to ask challenging questions that identify community needs and offer processes for adapting to future demographic changes, while balancing the local concept of need. Achieving this vision is understood by the staff to include physical, mental and organizational challenges. Some key questions: How are services and programs going to be aligned with demographic changes? Are there people who are currently excluded or unaware of parks and recreation opportunities?

**BPRW GROWTH VISION**  
Foster a supportive & constructive environment that embraces equity through inclusive decision making and mindful daily actions.

**RIGHT Partnerships fuel community success.**

**BPRW process is highly participatory: we live in a community of 42,000 park directors.**

**Our community is constantly evolving, exemplified by the expansion of the community garden program. Our definition of gardening has changed because our definition of community has changed.**



# PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



## CITY DEPARTMENTS

PUBLIC WORKS (DPW)  
FLETCHER FREE LIBRARY  
BURLINGTON CITY ARTS (BCA)  
COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICE (CEDO)  
PLANNING & ZONING (P&Z)  
BURLINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT (BSD)  
BURLINGTON ELECTRIC (BED)  
POLICE & FIRE

## REGIONAL AGENCIES

STATE & FEDERAL PARTNERS  
LOCAL & REGIONAL BUSINESSES  
VERMONT HOUSING CONSERVATION BOARD (VHCB)  
VERMONT LAND TRUST (VLT)  
CHITTENDEN COUNTRY REGIONAL PLANNING  
COMMISSION (CCRPC)

## INSTITUTIONS

ECHO LAKE AQUARIUM & SCIENCE CENTER  
UVM MEDICAL CENTER  
UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT  
CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE  
ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE  
BURLINGTON COLLEGE



BURLINGTON  
PARKS  
RECREATION  
WATERFRONT  
VERMONT



## CITIZEN GROUPS

COMMUNITY GARDENERS  
ATHLETIC CLUBS  
BRANCH OUT BURLINGTON  
NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING ASSEMBLIES (NPA<sub>s</sub>)  
FRIENDS GROUPS  
VOLUNTEERS

## ADVOCACY GROUPS

LOCAL MOTION  
FELLOWSHIP OF THE WHEEL  
BURLINGTON WALK/BIKE COUNCIL  
COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBILITY  
PLAY & ENGAGE... (PEASE)  
LAKE CHAMPLAIN INTERNATIONAL (LCI)  
BURLINGTON BUSINESS ASSOCIATION (BBA)  
LAKE CHAMPLAIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



## SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

WINDOSKI VALLEY PARK DISTRICT (WVPD)  
ASSOCIATION FOR AFRICANS LIVING IN VERMONT (AALV)  
VERMONT REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAM (VRRP)  
INTERVALE CENTER  
KING STREET YOUTH CENTER  
BOYS & GIRLS CLUB  
SARA HOLBROOK  
COMMUNITY SAILING CENTER  
YMCA



## LEADERSHIP

MAYOR  
CITY COUNCILORS  
BOARDS, COMMITTEES & COMMISSIONS

## BPRW VALUES & GOALS

BPRW staff prides itself on our continued focus to maintain, improve, and grow resources for the Burlington community. Over the past few years - while maintaining steady awareness and support of community needs - the department also undertook extensive work on itself, looking internally to reestablish and understand the shared values that drive everything we do.

Through a series of staff functions which included dialogue, brainstorming and visioning, BPRW staff was able to align in identifying the aspects of our work that are truly important, supportive of growth and each other.

**The identification of our shared values is sustaining a tremendous growth spurt, allowing staff members to unite to identify common goals and work towards them.** Our goals include:

- 1 - Improve external & internal communication through community outreach, cultural competency training & awareness, and clear marketing tools (brand identity, web presence, wayfinding, etc.).
- 2 - Provide accountability to staff with accurate, attainable, and appropriate budget figures.
- 3- Increase accessibility of programming and park amenities through outreach, maintenance, and capital planning/investment.
- 4 - Increase conservation of land and resources providing both environmental and economic benefit to the community.

**ACCESSIBILITY**  
Emphasis on universal design & financial sensitivity in all experiences.

**INTEGRITY**  
Trust developed in doing our work in the public realm.

**DEPENDABILITY**  
Service-oriented & responsive customer service.

**HEALTH/WELLNESS**  
Focus on active, healthy & balanced lifestyles.

**TEAMWORK/PARTNERSHIP**  
Commitment to collaboration and coordination with our community & colleagues.

**INCLUSIVITY**  
Fostering cultures of all kinds.

**STEWARDSHIP**  
Of public service & a sustainable environment.

**QUALITY**  
In everything we do.

**LEFT**  
BPRW Values, redefined. Within the context of this master plan, staff took part in a uniform performance evaluation process that planned for individual & group work goals, professional development objectives, and highlighted areas needed for supervisory support.

BPRW also recently completed an in-depth cultural competency assessment that is informing changes to BPRW's internal, outreach and hiring processes.

**FAR RIGHT**  
BPRW's recreation partners extend far beyond this list; the support of these key partners make many of our camps and programs possible.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships allow BPRW to operate broader ranges of programming and to support programming that we as a department are unable to offer. It also can make physical space more accessible to both partners, expanding venue opportunities. In addition, these collaborations make programs financially viable for both sides, building on various strengths. Without partnership this doesn't happen, which in turn limits opportunity in the community.

The reinvention of Roosevelt Park, a recent partnership success with the Boys & Girls Club, involved the creation of a teen academic center that now hosts countless programs and learning services. The project was realized because of a unique collaboration between public, non-profit, private and volunteer support.

**BPRW strives to support many local and regional partners in countless recreational events and programs often acting as a behind-the-scenes catalyst, frequently and invisibly providing space, resources and support.** The department supports diverse partnerships and activities throughout the City, not always in a leading role, which can lead to unique challenges and collaborations. It is incumbent on BPRW to not only develop working partnerships, but to grow lasting community relationships with organizations and individuals. We are just beginning to scratch the surface in these essential partnership opportunities. There are opportunities, and clear needs, to expand recreation and programming options to broader communities including New Americans, seniors, and low-income families. Partnerships provide a relational vehicle for these opportunities to be realized.

**RIGHT**  
**This structure formerly served as a BPRW storage space. During a recent renovation, exterior space under the existing roof canopies was reclaimed as interior learning space. Improvements to Roosevelt Park have dramatically re-activated Burlington's Old North End hub. GE volunteers assisted BPRW crews in planting vegetation near the renovated academic center.**



BPRW KEY RECREATION PARTNERS
Boys & Girls Club (Youth Basketball)
Burlington City Arts (Art Venture Summer Camps)
Burlington Housing Authority & the Howard Center (Summer Nutrition Program)
Burlington School District (After School Program)
Burlington School District (Burlington Kids After School)
Fletcher Free Library (Story Telling & Adult Book Group)
Heineberg & Champlain Senior Centers (Senior Programming)
King Street Youth Center (Kids on the Ball Tennis Program)
Lake Champlain Maritime Museum (Lake Champlain Education Camps)
North Burlington Softball (Little League Softball)
Sara Holbrook Community Center (Barnes World Academy Daycamp, North End Teen Center)
Seahawks (Youth Lacrosse)
Visiting Nurses Association (Building Bright Futures Playgroup)

## COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

Volunteerism represents the most dynamic and complex way that people interact and engage with BPRW services. Nearly all aspects of our department, in some form, rely on volunteer support. By the numbers, over 800 volunteers play a role in our department annually. **These volunteers account for over 11,000 hours of service, and at the national estimated value of volunteer time (\$23.07) total volunteer value for BPRW is upwards of \$250,000.** Whether it is a youth coach, a Parks Commissioner, a garden site coordinator, or a community member helping with a one day event, volunteers matter in a big way for BPRW.

The people of Burlington are highly motivated and eager to get involved in beautifying the natural environment. Participation in these activities provides a sense of stewardship and ownership that only comes with hands-on experience.

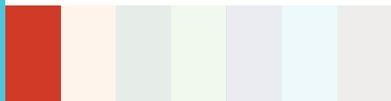
We believe that the net value of the volunteers who give their time is much greater than the tangible benefits to our programs, parks and services. **Volunteerism is a gateway to education, awareness, and ultimately appreciation.** Through engaging young people in conservation projects, not only are we building new trails or managing invasive species, we are investing in the future preservation of open space and environmentalism. When a new member to our community helps out with the July 3rd fireworks, not only will our event run more smoothly, but we will gain an advocate for future endeavors.



UPPER LEFT  
BPRW mobilizes more than 800 volunteers annually. Here, a team of dedicated volunteers offer their strength to site a garden shed in a local community garden.



LOWER LEFT  
A team of youth builders from ReSOURCE and local volunteers helped in the build-out of a garden shed for the Baird Community Garden. The shed inspired the integration of BPRW's brand colors in subtle bands over the structure's window. This design has become the standard prototype for BPRW shed construction.



**UPPER LEFT**  
 BPRW is a large seasonal employer that trains people to become stewards of park resources and the environment. “I had no idea what it takes to make a simple park run” (Guillaume Meli, Waterfront Crew pictured with team members Steven Ushakov and Erin Moreau).

Over the past few years, BPRW’s organizational structure has undergone a significant evolution. Full- and part-time positions in nearly every division have been evaluated, job descriptions clarified to ensure focus, and new positions have been created filling critical roles to expand department capacity.

**LOWER RIGHT**  
 Break down of 2014 volunteerism hours of service.



VOLUNTEER STATS	Total Unique Volunteers	Median Hours Per	Total Hours
Youth Sports	125	30	3,750
General Recreation	30	40	1,200
Special Events	100	3	300
Community Gardens	425	8	3,400
Conservation Projects	120	9	1,080
Operations & Maintenance	60	12	720
Commissions and Boards	22	35	784
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>882</b>		<b>11,234</b>

## STAFF, SEASONALS & HIRING

BPRW hires hundreds of seasonal staff members each year in addition to nearly 50 full-time staff members. **We strongly believe that our employee base, both full time and seasonal, needs to reflect the community and guests we serve.** This is only accomplished if we are engaged in our community, attentive to the needs of our users and use this to guide us in our hiring practices. In action, this means expanding our partnership networks to give greater opportunities to all populations and expanding our marketing circle while fostering and expanding existing partnerships. As we expand the diversity of our work force, this will only aid us in our other goals of increasing cultural competency both internally and externally through programming and design.

## GETTING THE WORD OUT

BPRW takes outreach responsibilities seriously - not merely presuming that people will find us. We can create great partnership, volunteerism and employment opportunities because we offer an incredibly wide diversity of positions and experiential opportunities. We are strengthened by being on the forefront of outreach and rolling out the welcome mat, which means proactively reaching out to myriad social networks, support services, non-profit agencies, and other partners to create long-lasting relationships that result in pure, positive community impact. **As a forward facing, community-focused, social organization, BPRW’s primary concerns are with the health and happiness of our people and the environment.** It is incumbent on us to not only offer multitudes of recreation opportunity but to welcome people into our community.

# WELLNESS

## Enhancing Recreation Opportunities and Programming

### RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

Burlington is an active community with a hearty interest in recreation and programming. The City's diversification and changing demographic trends, both locally and nationally, should be considered as keys to the evolution of recreation programming and services in the coming years. The household survey illustrated the importance and success of Burlington's recreation offerings. The City was rated as the number one provider for parks and recreation programs and facilities, with 68% ranking it first (well above the national average of 48%). Additionally, satisfaction is high with 68% of households expressing satisfaction with the offerings and 89% calling them high quality.

**Given the high use and user satisfaction, it is interesting to note that overall participation (23%) in BPRW recreation programs lags behind the national average (35%).** This indicates both the potential to capture greater participation in City recreation programs and an opportunity to better market the programs that BPRW supports.

The household survey also revealed that special events are a high-ranking community priority. BPRW-supported special events have experienced an increase in revenue and participation between 2011-2015. Upcoming renovations at Waterfront Park will increase the park's energy efficiency and improve operational capacity to better support both event managers and park

neighbors. Detailed recommendations for recreation programming improvements and priorities are found in THE BACK-UP.

BPRW looks to user groups, and will continue to do so, to inform changing local trends (i.e. girls softball play is declining while lacrosse is on the rise), while maintaining an awareness of national trends and finding creative spatial solutions to meet diverse needs.

**Multi-use play areas are critical to meeting the changing demands.** To increase participation and satisfaction, the right programs must be tailored to meet community needs. Future programming must be prioritized with the interests of the community.

### INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES

The existing conditions inventory and assessment painted a clear picture of BPRW's available indoor recreation space. Per the national recommendation based on NRPA PRORAGIS peer cities data, **Burlington has roughly 63% of the amount of indoor multi-purpose space it should for a community of its size, facing a 22,340+ square foot deficit.** This is particularly noteworthy in our northern climate where wind, snow and cold dominate for large portions of the year. There is also inequity when it comes to accessing indoor multi-purpose space, with the only multi-use, multi-purpose space being the Miller Community Recreation Center, located in the north end of the City.

According to the NRPA PRORAGIS data base, nationally the average amount of indoor recreation square footage is 61,340 SF for cities with populations of 25,000-75,000. Cold-weather climate increases this need and when factored raise Burlington's recommended target for indoor recreation space to 84,694 SF or an additional 46,000 SF.

**RIGHT Survey findings reveal the most frequent community programming requests. Programs cited as necessary to the community were special events (61%), outdoor winter recreation (54%), adult fitness & wellness programs (41%), environmental education (37%), boating & sailing activities (35%), and adult continuing education programs (31%).**



# RECREATION, ANYONE?

**NATURE ACTIVITIES**

**CONTINUING  
EDUCATION**

**SENIOR  
PROGRAMS**

**AFTER  
SCHOOL**

**ADULT FITNESS**

**OUTDOOR WINTER  
RECREATION!**



### GORDON H. PAQUETTE (LEDDY) ARENA

Built in 1972, the Leddy Arena has been heavily used and struggles from deferred maintenance combined with a lack of capital investment. The aging structure requires substantial investment to replace the refrigeration and mechanical systems, both original to the building. Major renovation or replacement of these systems is anticipated over the next few years. Leddy offers an olympic-sized skating rink in addition to a smaller studio rink, a Pro Shop, food concession, public and private locker rooms, meeting & program rooms, and BPRW offices. In addition, Leddy may provide future opportunities for expanded department storage options

The arena serves multiple large user groups including two local high school hockey programs, the Burlington Amateur Hockey Association, the Champlain Valley Figure Skating Club, and the Vermont Lumberjacks Junior Hockey program. The building is operational 47 weeks of the year providing skating instruction, public skating, and private ice rentals. Recent facility improvements include renovations to the Pro Shop, concession area windows that provide a view of the rink, renovation of the public restrooms, and the creation of an accessible locker room.

BPRW's continuous goal is to program the space with quality activities and rent as much ice as possible - hard to improve upon given that ice time is solidly booked. **Our staff is dedicated to fostering relationships with outside organizations and supporting kids as they learn how to skate.** These kids eventually grow and transition into participation in other local and regional skating organizations. Nurturing these relationships is a responsibility that BPRW takes very seriously.

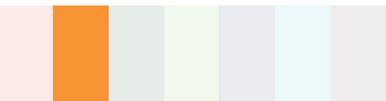


**ABOVE**  
Ice rink floor with new ice logos contributed by the Lumberjacks.



**RIGHT**  
Skaters learning the ropes at Cool Camp.

**BELOW**  
Broomball league play; figure skaters circle.



## MILLER COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER

BPRW's only recreation center, the Miller Center, was a former national guard armory that was gifted to the City of Burlington by the State. In 2008, the facility underwent a complete renovation and opened to the public. The center offers a full-size high school gymnasium with basketball hoops, pickleball and basketball lines, a fitness studio, a community room with audio-video capabilities and a state-licensed kitchen, a kids room, teen center, day care, and an art room. Supported activities include pickleball, basketball, adult fitness classes, camps, fencing, indoor soccer, gymnastics, sign language, art, music, dance, and a popular morning walking program. The facility has a dedicated, full-time, BPRW staff member to program the building and expand recreation offerings.

Many partners and user groups take advantage of all that Miller has to offer. The North End Teen Center, operated by the Sara Holbrook Community Center, provides free after school programming for middle school students as well as summer camps. In a city with a shortage of quality child care, dedicated space in the building was recently renovated specifically for a day care tenant. Frog & Toad Child Care & Learning offers state-licensed and STAR-rated child care for approximately 30 infants and children. The Miller Center is also accessible and home of the Vermont Chargers who compete in powered wheelchair soccer matches.

**From a wellness perspective, the center strives to maintain strong programming with a focus on fitness and youth sports.** Within Burlington, the Miller Center is a regional recreation facility - and many residents are still not aware that it exists. As a result, BPRW is working to expand community ownership of this facility.



**LEFT**  
The Vermont Chargers in action. The team calls the Miller Center home for both weekly practice sessions and matches.

**BELOW**  
Women's basketball, kid's gymnastics and group yoga at the Miller Center.



## HISTORY OF EXCEPTIONAL PROGRAMS

Recreation programming in Burlington has expanded greatly in the last five years. This expansion has allowed staff to experiment with different types of programming with incredible partners, but sometimes that has come at the expense of focus on community need and changing demographics. **Limited City resources and a dynamic population mean the department needs to make smarter programming choices and focus on quality instead of quantity.**

Use of quantitative data to measure program success and qualitative relationships to understand need will support programs to best serve Burlingtonians. Many new programs over the past few years have come and gone but incredible results remain from long standing programs with a focus on health and wellness. These programs should not only be continued but efforts to increase accessibility - through reducing language, financial and physical barriers - should be expanded.

**Champ Camp** A seven-week summer camp program at two sites in the North End and South End of the City. This comprehensive, state-licensed summer camp moves kids through a fitness and nutrition program, and provides field trips to museums, beaches, and parks. In addition to being a first class experience this camp serves a significant area of need with 75-90% of the participants qualifying for state subsidy.

**Recreation Nutrition Program** This program builds on the work of the Burlington School Food Project and ties recreational programming around three meal sites where lunch and snacks are served daily to over 90 youth.

**Youth Athletics** Long the hallmark of a strong recreation program, Burlington's offerings stretch from soccer and softball, to track and skiing. These activities involve hundreds of kids learning to work together on a team, test their limits, and keep fit while having fun. This area of programming stands poised to grow with new sports growing in popularity, supported by a comprehensive view of athletics which includes a focus on team & adventure sports and increased staffing.

## WHAT'S NEXT

BPRW has a healthy distribution of programs in relation to age. Burlington is seeing a rise in both school-aged youth and active seniors creating a demand for focused, relevant programming in these areas. Recent restructuring of the recreation division will allow for continued growth of youth programming and an increased presence in senior programming throughout Burlington. Athletics programming will see renewed focus with dedicated staffing as well leading to opportunities to grow emerging programs like youth lacrosse. Additionally, demand for outdoor recreation programming, a focus on community health and wellness, and a highly active population lead to renewed focus and collaboration.

## A NEW BRAND IDENTITY

In conjunction with the master plan, the department redeveloped its brand identity. The effort included refreshing our name (the City of Burlington Department of Parks & Recreation has become Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront: BPRW), a new logo, new brand standards and brand collateral. This design work in identity-building has set the stage for website design, wayfinding development, and even the physical material palette of our facilities.

**RIGHT**  
**BPRW camps in action! Soccer kids make the goal, banners waving for Champ Camp, and dancers in the park. Having fun and looking good!**



## MARKETING & OUTREACH

Despite exceptional program offerings and reasonable pricing, community participation in BPRW programs is low (23%) when compared to the national average (35%). There are three main reasons for this and specific actions available to address it.

**1 - People participate in recreation programming without knowing they are in a BPRW-supported program.** This is a result of poor branding of the Department's core and partner programs. BPRW does not always need to get the credit for everything happening related to parks and programs, but the community should be aware of the quality opportunities that exist through the hard work and dedication of the BPRW staff.

**2 - The program is quality, but people do not know that it exists.** BPRW hired its first Marketing & Outreach Manager in the summer of 2015. Up until this time this resource, critical to creating and maintaining a uniform voice for the department, literally did not exist. In the past, this has made it difficult to converse with the community about all of the programming opportunities available for them - and to get new people engaged.



**LEFT  
BPRW rebranded!**

**The goals of rebranding the department:**  
**1 - to grow awareness with in the Burlington community,**  
**2 - create a brand that is easily adaptable to all of the different needs for each division, and**  
**3 - to unify the department.**

**The new identity represents each division in one unified logo mark, created from three curved lines (green for Parks, orange for Recreation, and blue for Waterfront).**

**The logo was inspired by tree rings and water drops, conveying a sense of natural and never-ending growth, while also alluding to the City's name.**

**3 - People are not participating in the program because it's not meeting the broader interests of the community.** There is a constant need for evaluating even the most successful programs - through community surveys and direct feedback. Assessing the work we do from top to bottom using real data and metrics will support staff in determining which programs are bringing true value and benefit to the community and are worth continuing.



# CONNECTION

## Linking People to & through Parks

### WALKABILITY

The Park Needs Assessment, a comprehensive evaluation of Burlington's existing parks, demonstrated that while Burlington has adequate total park acreage not all neighborhoods are well served. **The majority of the City has access to a park within a 10-minute or 1/2 half mile walk, however the City's long, linear shape restricts connectivity between the north and south areas of the City.** The eastern side and hill section of Burlington have limited access; the congestion of downtown coupled with areas of steep topography make connections in these areas difficult. The BPRW Master Plan seeks to better connect neighborhoods to and through parks by utilizing, improving, and building upon existing trail systems and key linkage points.

### BIKE PATH & CONNECTIVITY

The Burlington Bike Path is an important local and regional amenity providing excellent north-south connectivity, tying into 48 miles of trails (34 miles of public trails). Among survey respondents trails rank highest (88%) in necessity, and the majority of respondents (86%) support the creation of new trails. The Bike Path links together several of the City's most popular parks including, North Beach, Leddy Park, the Urban Reserve, Waterfront Park, Perkins Pier and Oakledge Park. Other popular destinations, like Lakeside Park and much of downtown, are located immediately off of the path. The Bike Path



**LEFT**  
The Burlington Bike Path traverses varying environments along the City's waterfront. Users experience woodlands, unique neighborhoods, and urban corridors, like this pass through Waterfront Park.

is an essential component of the City's sustainable transportation network, providing safe and convenient bike access to and through parks. **At its core, the Bike Path is a recreation facility supporting cyclists, runners, walkers and beyond.** While the Bike Path is a tremendous asset, additional streetscape improvements, sidewalk enhancements, and complete streets need to be realized to supplement the network. A focus on improved cycling infrastructure, including east-west links that consider topography and north-south bike lanes, consistent wayfinding, and improved sidewalks will greatly improve access and safety. Secondary connections will also improve access to neighborhoods and to the regional trail network. These considerations will be addressed through the City's upcoming planBTV: Walk-Bike Master Plan.

**RIGHT**  
The adjacent dashed circles depict 1/2-mile radii, or roughly a 10-minute walk, to a City of Burlington park. The majority of City neighborhoods have 10-minute walking access to a BPRW parks facility.

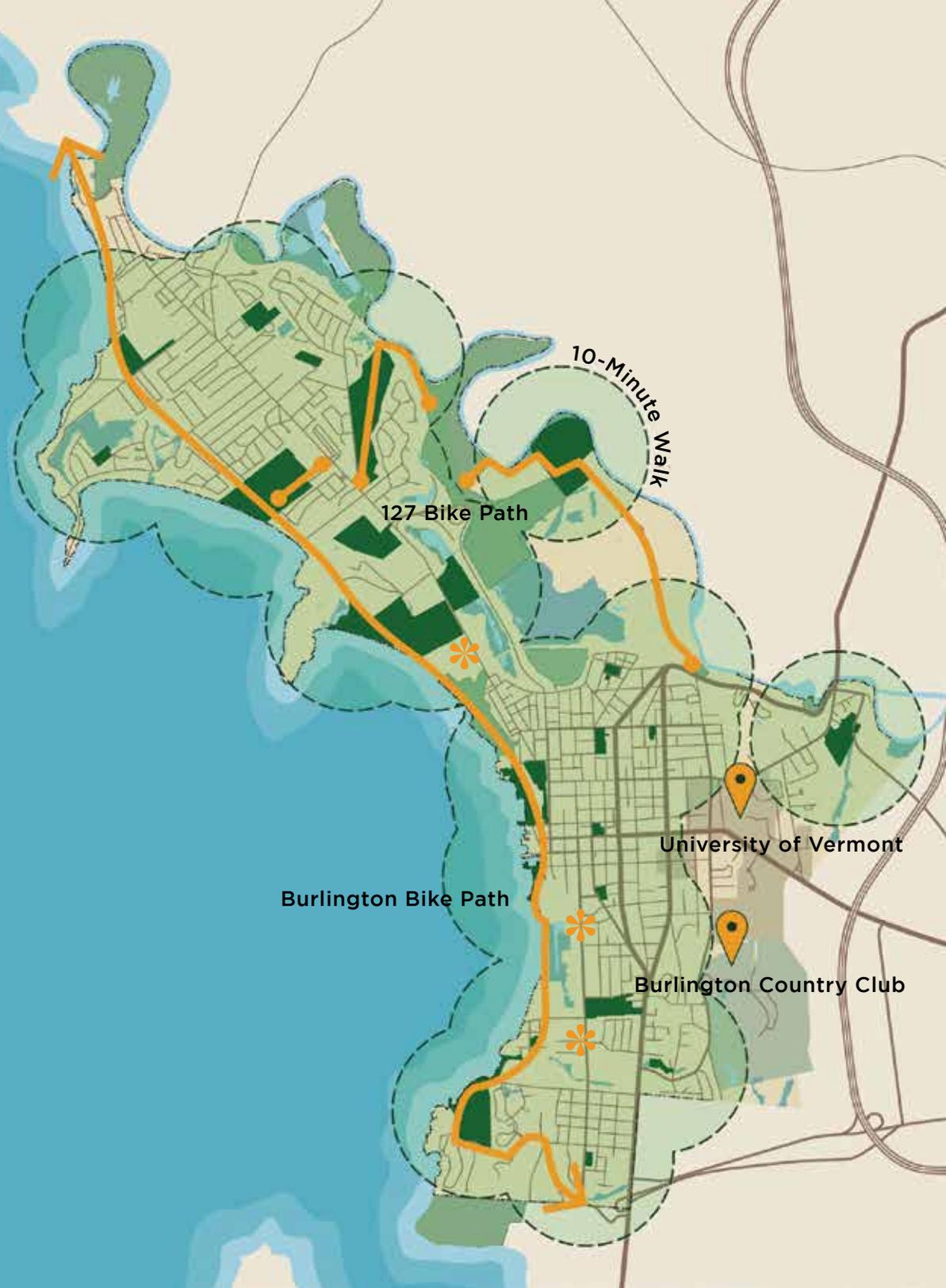
# WALKING TO PARKS & PATHS

 POTENTIAL FUTURE CONNECTIONS

## GO EAST!

Overall, park access and walkability in Burlington is good. Most parks are located along the lakefront. As a result, residents on the east side of town have fewer nearby park options. With limited opportunity to add more parks on the east side, the City should focus on strengthening east-west connections. Key future connections include the former Burlington College property and the South End Pine Street corridor.

It should be noted that the few areas of the City which are not within range of a 10-minute park walk are proximate to open spaces outside of the Burlington Park System, including the University of Vermont Campus and the Burlington Country Club.



## BURLINGTON BIKE PATH REHABILITATION

In 2012, the Burlington Bike Path Task Force completed a feasibility study making a strong recommendation for the full rehabilitation of the 8-mile Burlington Bike Path. The multi-use recreation path, which runs through downtown Burlington and along the Lake Champlain waterfront, was constructed more than 25 years ago and has developed significant signs of wear and tear. Since this conclusion of this study, and with the support of City leadership, BPRW has mobilized the project. The project limits extend throughout the entire City of Burlington, with the southern terminus at Queen City Park Road and the northern terminus at the Winooski River Bridge. The rehab will be a phased effort that will continue to be advanced in the years to come.

## GETTING PHASE 1 DONE

Preliminary design began in 2013, and the entire path was reconceptualized - considering adjustment to the existing alignment, intersection improvements and path width expansion wherever possible. Phase 1a construction, from Perkins Pier through Waterfront Park, was completed in the summer of 2015. Improvements included the realignment of the path through Waterfront Park, the formalization of an existing dirt maintenance road through drivable grass pavers, the improvement of the Maple, King and College Street intersections, and the visual designation of the path in busy locations, executed through green paint.

Phase 1b construction through the Urban Reserve is slated to begin in the spring of 2016. A new path alignment closer to the water's edge, the removal of large amounts of concrete and asphalt remnants, the introduction of pause places (including a new mini park



on the northern end of the Urban Reserve), and the renovation of the Waterfront Dog Park are all key improvements.

## IT'S ALL ABOUT CONNECTION

**The Bike Path connects many parks together, particularly along the waterfront. At each park, path users should have the option to step off the path to enjoy park amenities.**

In the future and as part of the rehab project, the introduction of strategically placed pause places - areas that feature a variety of amenities from information kiosks to benches to drinking fountains and fitness equipment - along the bike path will support these connections. The Bike Path has great potential to draw visitors off the water and into the City. In many cases, connection occurs from the path, through a park and to neighborhoods and businesses.

**LEFT**  
The Bike Path realignment through Waterfront Park where the cross section was expanded to the new standard of 2-11-2 (11' of pavement with 2' soft shoulders on either side). Centerline striping is also a new addition.

**UPPER RIGHT**  
Conceptual design for a mini park/pause place in the Urban Reserve featuring an overlook, seating and recreation area.

**LOWER RIGHT**  
Conceptual design for a gateway/pause place off College Street at the entrance to Waterfront Park.

At transition moments, it is critical to provide clear and welcoming thresholds. These can be simple signage elements or more elaborate structures. Likewise, park entrances should be formalized and better articulated.



## PUBLIC INVESTMENT

The City's 2013 public call for waterfront revitalization ideas through the Public Investment Action Plan (or PIAP) generated outstanding concepts. Proposals went through a rigorous vetting process, resulting in the advancement of 5 unique waterfront projects: a northern marina, a permanent home for the Community Sailing Center, reuse of a mothballed power plant through New Moran, ECHO's sustainability park, and upgrades to Waterfront Park.

## IMPROVING WATERFRONT PARK

BPRW's proposal for Waterfront Park improvements recommends long-overdue upgrades at the park through the renovation of specific, existing components. The scope includes the realignment of the bike path, replacement of the boardwalk, an increase in electrical capacity, the replacement of existing light fixtures with BPRW's newly adopted standard energy efficient fixture, and the expansion of potable water access. For years, the site has functioned as Burlington's premier event grounds with an under-supported infrastructure that has limited on-site potentials. **These improvements will enhance functionality, event experience, aesthetics, and improve neighborhood quality of life while supporting the site's current use as an active park & event site.**

With the Bike Path realignment and boardwalk replacement recently completed, plans to begin the design process for the remaining project components are underway, with construction slated for 2016-17.

**RIGHT**  
The recent renovation of the Waterfront Boardwalk. Pressure-treated wood was replaced with weather resistant, long-lasting, unfinished Ipe (a durable hard wood). The BPRW waterfront vision includes a diverse range of public spaces.



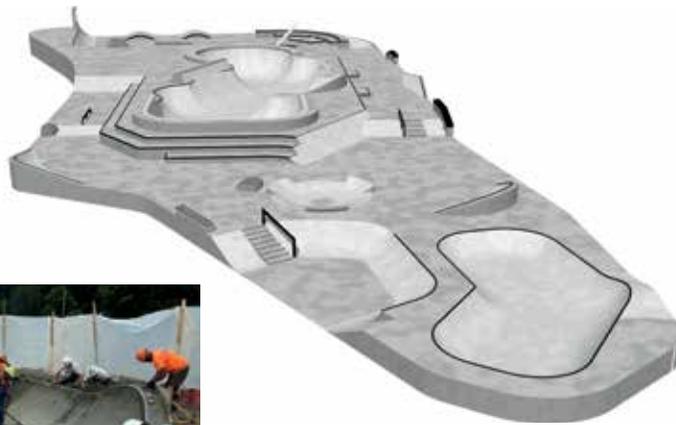
**ABOVE**  
Bird's eye view of Waterfront Park improvements rendered during a typical event set-up.

The realization of Bike Path Rehabilitation improvements and concurrent Waterfront Access North construction dramatically re-establish Burlington's bike/ped spine along the Waterfront.



**ABOVE**  
Waterfront  
Access North site  
plan: home of  
Burlington's new  
skatepark.

**RIGHT**  
Conceptual  
rendering of the  
skatepark.



**LEFT**  
Grindline bringing the new skatepark  
to life during July 2015 construction.

## BUILDING A WORLD-CLASS SKATEPARK

Just north of Waterfront Park, the City's first skatepark was constructed in 2001 and made of wooden ramps and platforms. Over the past 14 years, the community has come to identify the skatepark as a critical connective action hub for kids, youth and adults. Heavy use and Vermont winter weather have rendered these original skatepark structures unsuitable for continued use and the construction of a brand new skatepark facility is nearly complete.

Extensive public process identified the need for a larger and updated skate facility. Concrete, the now standard building material in skatepark construction, was selected as the material for the new facility to provide increased durability, reduced maintenance costs, the ability to provide dynamic features, and offer the continuity of a seamless park. Grindline, highly regarded for their skateparks in the US, Canada and Japan, was hired by the City to design the new facility. **Skateboarding is one of the fastest growing sports in the world, and this new facility will attract enthusiasts from near and far.** Our new skatepark will also increase BPRW programming opportunities to support beginners to experienced skateboarders.

## WATERFRONT ACCESS NORTH

The new waterfront skatepark is currently under construction as a component of the Waterfront Access North project. Other aspects of this project include the reconstruction of the end of Lake Street, realignment & standards upgrades to the Bike Path, brownfield remediation, utility undergrounding, new sidewalks, trees & plantings, and lighting improvements. All related construction is slated for completion in early 2016.

## BURLINGTON COLLEGE CONNECTION

The Burlington College site is a centrally located parcel that has long provided the community with an essential, but informal east-west connection between the waterfront and the Old North End. Historically, the property also has provided access to informal walking paths, open fields, forested zones, and community gardens. Formalizing this connection has long been a BPRW consideration and recommendation. Located west of North Avenue, the property sits immediately north of downtown Burlington and supports a critical link between the City's commercial core, the Old North End and the New North End. **The site includes approximately 1,200 linear feet of frontage along North Avenue and over 930' of beach front located just north of the Urban Reserve.** 27.65 acres of this property was recently acquired by Burlington City Community Housing LLC with plans for a mixed-income housing development.

## UNIFIED GOALS

**Understanding the desire for both affordable housing, of which the City has a well-defined need, and the preservation of open space, community dialogue has been at the forefront of the evolving conversation on development options.** Public events and outreach have included site tours, surveys, presentations, and forums. A conceptual proposal for the site's redevelopment was shared by the project partners at a public meeting in August of 2015. Partners include landowner Burlington City Community Housing, the Vermont Land Trust, City of Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront, and the Champlain Housing Trust. Together, the partners have identified the following goals to guide future development:

provide a diversity of housing options & types, and promote housing equity; provide public access to open space, especially along the lakefront; protect bluffs from development; be sensitive to and protect natural & cultural features on-site; consider neighborhood commercial uses that support the local community; enhance revitalization of the Old North End and commerce on North Avenue through property development; support alternative modes of transportation and minimize traffic impacts; incorporate sustainability components through the design process.

These goals, along with public input, have influenced the conceptual re-design of site. The current concept plan proposes 570 housing units while preserving 43% of the total acreage as open public space. The 12-acre park will enhance and formalize the vital east-west connection between North Avenue and the waterfront, while continuing access to recreation opportunities.

**This concept design provides uninterrupted waterfront parkland from the Urban Reserve all the way to North Beach.** The City plans to purchase the 12-acre open space at an estimated cost of \$2 million. Up to \$1 million may potentially come from the Conservation Legacy Program with additional funding sources to be identified.

**RIGHT**  
Proposed conceptual plan for a new City park on the former Burlington College property. Residents can look forward to a future in which east-west connection and outdoor recreation opportunities become even more accessible, continuing the land's legacy of access to play fields, swimming, biking, hiking, dog walking, bird watching, picnicking, gardening and more.



**LEFT**  
Community members gather for a public site tour held in May of 2015.

**RIGHT**  
 Bounded to the north by North Beach & Lakeview Cemetery and to the south by the Urban Reserve, this conceptual framework supports a new neighborhood park with great connections to the waterfront and extensive public access.



**WAYFINDING**

Parks wayfinding also plays a critical role in system connectivity, from recognizing formal park entrances, to providing a sense of proximity to nearby amenities, to establishing user etiquette. To better support connectivity, functionality and identity, in the spring of 2015 BPRW launched a comprehensive wayfinding design initiative for all City of Burlington parks, trails, recreation paths, and facilities.

The wayfinding design process included research, conceptual development, and schematic design. Burlington parks and their contexts were studied to let the City's unique landscape, architecture and urban fabric inspire a unique visual construct for parks signage. Precedent cities were also researched to understand a variety of signage options and systems. Program requirements and wayfinding proportions were refined and standard colors, materials, typography, and symbols were established. The BPRW brand guidelines greatly supported this effort.

**The result is the development of a BPRW sign system family that will be implemented throughout the Burlington park system over the next several years.**

Initially, fabrication and installation priority will be at our busiest locations with a focus on Waterfront Park and the Burlington Bike Path.



**RIGHT BPRW wayfinding: Launching a new sign system family featuring a variety of signage solutions for various applications.**

**This family's material palette is derived from notable aspects of Burlington's environments, particularly from the lakeshore.**

**Ecology + Geology = natural, rough, rustic. Materials: native stone and native riparian plants.**

**Industry = architectural, linear, patinaed. Materials: weathered wood, weathered metal.**

**Detailed sign specifications include cedar posts, corten steel bases, painted aluminum panels, printed vinyl, and painted ground applications.**

**Interpretation and education will be integral components of BPRW wayfinding.**



Gateway



Int. Display 2 panel

Int. Display 4 panel

Int. Kiosk 4 panel (Map)



# STEWARDSHIP

Protecting and Preserving our Environment

## BURLINGTON'S GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Burlington is a city defined by its relationship to water. Lake Champlain has long been a driver of industry and tourism. The Winooski River floodplain is a rich, productive agricultural and ecological corridor. The City occupies a high ridge line between these two hydrologic systems, directing run-off toward both.

Urban parks offer more than simply a place to play and relax. As cities evolve, the study and management of complex urban ecologies becomes critical to understanding the ways that natural systems interact with the built environment. **There are a number of ways a park can help improve the water quality & management in surrounding landscapes including infiltration, retention, purification, and by offering opportunities to intake stormwater from surrounding landscapes.** The City's 2014 Open Space Protection Plan speaks to this in further detail.

## THE GREEN MACHINE

The Green machine - a concept developed as part of planBTV: Downtown & Waterfront - is an interconnected system of civic spaces designed to collect, temporarily store and treat stormwater. Parks and plazas play a key role in this concept serving to infiltrate, and in some cases, store stormwater. This concept can be expanded to all of Burlington's parks.

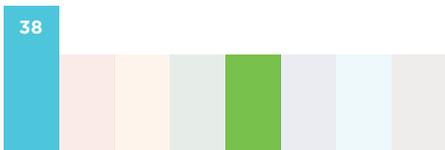
Specific Green Machine strategies include green streets, green bike paths, rain gardens, bioswales, infiltration parks, green walls, green roofs, green plazas, pervious parking lots, habitat restoration, rainwater harvesting, and stairway cascades - all supported by trees, vegetation, watersheds, and wetlands.

Additionally, Burlington's parks and greenways perform essential ecologic functions for the City. Trees reduce water and air pollution while their shade helps mitigate urban heat island effect. Along waterfronts and floodplain areas, parks capture stormwater runoff, prevent soil erosion, and reduce the impact of floods. Parks and greenways provide essential habitat and migration routes for wildlife, which strengthens species resiliency and fosters biodiversity. Interpretive information, sensitively placed, can expand and deepen park users personal connection to the natural world.

## BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE

This plan serves as a bridge between the history of our parks formation and the future of how our parks may be considered. Holistic systems-thinking that accounts for ecologic health, habitat variation, sustainable stormwater management, and human impact must be employed to improve the quality of the vital systems. **BPRW manages 75% of the open space in the City: therein lies the vast potential to enhance awareness and stewardship of our precious environment.**

**RIGHT**  
The City is flanked by two major water bodies. To the west, Lake Champlain is the scenic backdrop to the City and an important ecological corridor. It is also one of the most active recreation corridors in the state. Balancing these roles is one of BPRW's primary tasks. The Winooski River to the east, and its wide floodplain, have quite a different character. In addition to being incredibly ecologically rich, the fertile banks of the river are cultivated as farmland. Open space in this area is largely under the jurisdiction of the Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD) - a key partner with the City. Green machine components help control erosion and flooding. Parks are essential in providing opportunities for these elements to function naturally.



# LOCAL ECOLOGY, GLOBAL IMPACT

## STORMWATER MATTERS

Per planBTV: Downtown & Waterfront, “thinking about parks as part of the stormwater system is crucial”. Natural stormwater management is more desirable - from livability, financial and environmental perspectives - than installing mechanical infrastructure to serve the same purpose. We must manage our parks and open spaces in ways that support and promote percolation, runoff retention, infiltration and transpiration. The health of our stormwater systems affects the health of our streams & rivers, which affects the health of Lake Champlain, which affects the health of our rains, our mountains, our wildlife, our oceans...



Winooski River Floodplain

Winooski River

Lake Champlain Waterfront

Primary Street Tree Corridors

## THE BIG PICTURE

Stormwater management focuses on two primary metrics: controlling pollutants entering water bodies and groundwater (quality), and controlling the risk of flooding and erosion caused by rapid flow of stormwater through the watershed (quantity). Management priorities for each park depends on which water body is downstream of the park.

**Specifically, parks draining to Lake Champlain will prioritize quality, while parks upstream from the Winooski River will prioritize quality and quantity due to the risk of flooding.** This plan proposes management principles based on these critical watershed relationships. Our parks have the capacity to play a greater role in processing not just their own stormwater, but stormwater from adjacent parcels and rights-of-way. The overarching goal is to minimize human and water conflict in support of hydrologic systems.

## KEY PRINCIPLES & STRATEGIES

**Runoff reduction** addresses both water quality and quantity concerns and is important to all watersheds. It begins with minimizing impervious surfaces, then minimizing directly connected impervious surfaces (e.g. a parking lot that drains directly to a storm drain is less desirable than a parking lot that drains to a vegetated area). Infiltration (the seepage of water into the ground) also supports runoff reduction and is controlled by surface materials, surface compaction, subgrade material properties, subgrade compaction, and the water content of soils.

The use of rain gardens and storm retention areas within our open spaces helps infiltrate potential runoff. This is often a much more cost effective solution, not to mention more aesthetically pleasing, when compared to

engineering sub-surface infrastructure. Runoff reduction can also involve capture and re-use of stormwater to flush toilets, wash vehicles or, as demonstrated by some of our community gardens, for irrigation purposes.

**Water quality treatment** focuses on removing pollutants (sediment, nutrients like phosphorus, oils/grease, heavy metals) from stormwater runoff before it is discharged to the collection system or surface waters. If runoff reduction measures (rain gardens, bioretention, dryswales, vegetated buffers, pervious pavement systems, etc.) cannot be used, other filtration and absorption practices to remove pollutants may be employed (subsurface sand filters, swirl separators, subsurface filtration systems, etc.).

**Water quantity management** may be employed once opportunities for runoff reduction have been exhausted, typically achieved through some sort of storage and slow release of stormwater. Options include subsurface (tank, pore space, etc.) or surface (ponded) storage where outflow during a storm event is restricted by employing a small outlet. Typically, the target for water quantity management is improvement during the 1-year, 24-hour storm (2.1") and below, and ensuring that flow rates do not increase for the 10-year storm.

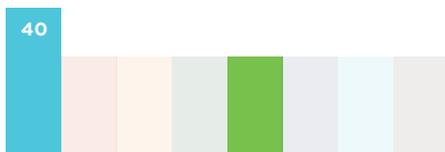
SAMPLE CURVE NUMBERS	
Surface Type	NRCS Curve Number
Impervious Paved Surface	98
Porous Paved Surface	70-98
Dirt/Crushed Stone Surface	72-89
Compacted Earth	77-94
Lawn	39-80
Meadows	30-78
Planting with Tree Cover	32-79

**LEFT** Curve Number is determined by soil group and ground cover. A high CN (pavement) indicates low retention and high runoff, while a low CN (wooded areas) indicates high retention and low runoff.

**RIGHT** Map & chart depicting BPRW park watersheds and accompanying stormwater management principles. This data provides direction in developing focused stormwater management strategies for each park, as well as indicating how any given park might accommodate water from neighboring parcels.

Water runoff, rate, quantity, and quality are controlled by surface cover material, slope, flow length, and rainfall intensity.

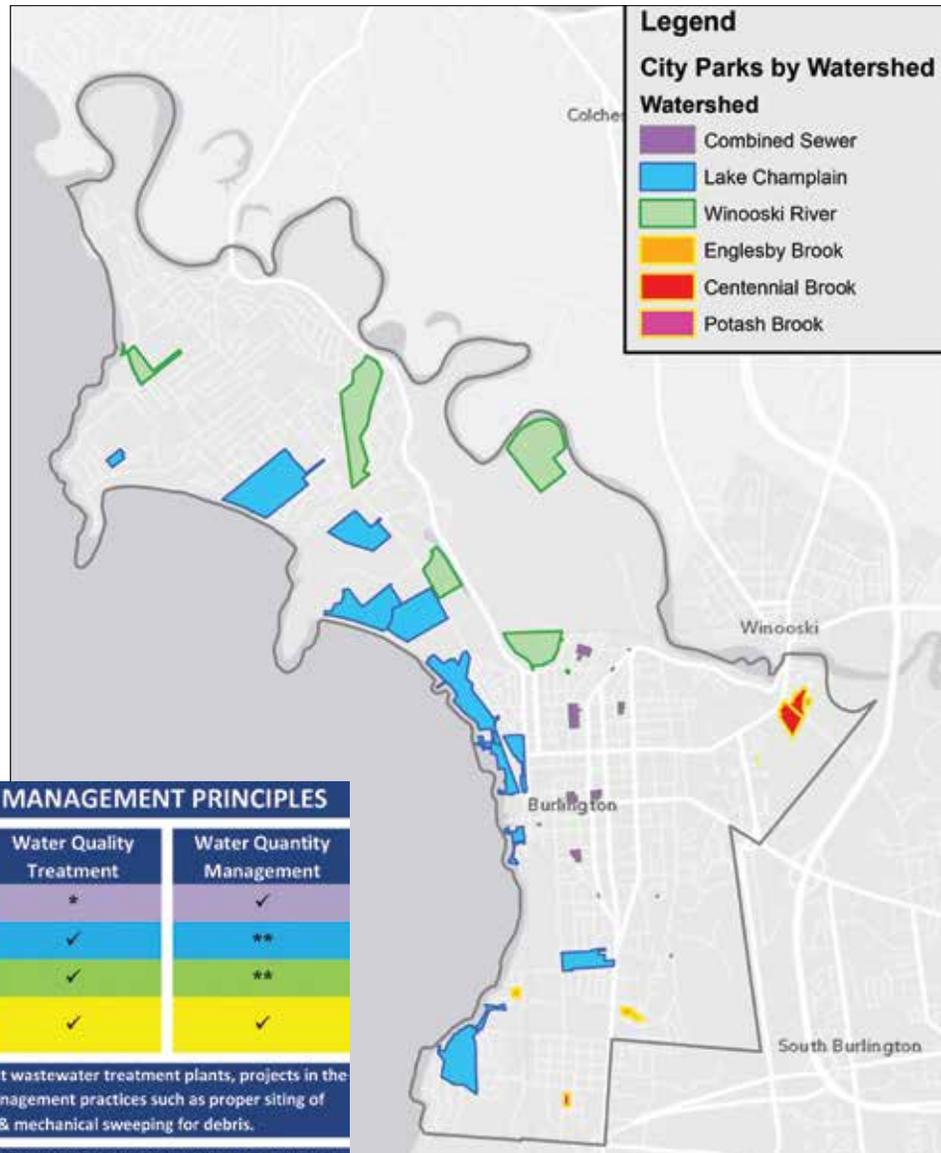
The physical composition of the ground and its stormwater flow properties affects nearly every parks capital improvement project and must be carefully understood both in relation to existing conditions and proposed improvements.



## CITY PARTNERSHIP

**Remaining open land in Burlington is limited and future opportunities are within existing open space and rights-of-way, making partnership between BPRW and the Department of Public Works (DPW) even more critical.** Aspects of coordination include Operational & Maintenance (O&M) strategies, like mowing, that reduce or capture runoff and promote slow infiltration.

The City has established other O&M protocols that are consistent with best management practices including setting cyclical tree maintenance practices, smart use of chemical and cultural methods to target serious woody ornamental pests, providing timely supplemental nutrients to turf areas in order to protect against disease and infections that would compromise the safety of athletic complexes, and limiting use of sand and salt close to waterways in order to protect and celebrate the lake resource. Strategies that BPRW and DPW are exploring include: siting & material selection for parking lots, green belt policy, management of overly compacted green spaces, use of park land adjacent to streets to store and process stormwater runoff, and testing and piloting pervious technologies.



### STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

Watershed Where Park is Located	Runoff Reduction	Water Quality Treatment	Water Quantity Management
Combined Sewer	✓	*	✓
Lake Champlain	✓	✓	**
Winooski River	✓	✓	**
<b>Stormwater Impaired Watersheds:</b> Englesby Brook - Centennial Brook - Potash Brook	✓	✓	✓

\*In order to protect downstream collection systems (pipes) and reduce operating costs at wastewater treatment plants, projects in the combined sewer should minimize the discharge of sediment and grit through best management practices such as proper siting of gravel parking lots, deep sump catch basins, regular inspections for erosion & mechanical sweeping for debris.

\*\*Water Quantity Management may be required in the Winooski and Lake Champlain Watersheds if the stormwater must first pass through City infrastructure (if there are capacity restrictions) or discharges to an outfall in poor condition.

### GETTING LOT COVERAGE RIGHT

How coverage (hard surfaces) is organized on the landscape is often more important than how much of the landscape is pervious or impervious. Lot coverage (the total at grade area - or footprint - of all structures and impervious surfaces including parking areas, walkways, etc., expressed as a percent of the total lot area) particularly in parks, requires a delicate balancing of needs. **Environmental construct, ecological health, user demand, and the ability to properly maintain and steward any given site are all considerations that must be carefully evaluated.** For example, a centrally-located urban park that has a relatively small footprint serving high numbers of residents may require access to just as many amenities as a regional park with a larger footprint. In this case, it may be appropriate for the smaller park to have a higher lot coverage percentage so that it can host the appropriate amenities to meet the needs of the user base, offer appropriate standards of accessibility, and be properly maintained. For these reasons, BPRW recently evaluated and updated City lot coverage ordinances.



**LEFT**  
Calahan faces pressure to balance activities, access, stormwater management, and pervious coverage.

**RIGHT**  
Impervious coverage in Calahan Park: a very active neighborhood park offering athletic fields, playgrounds, courts and more.



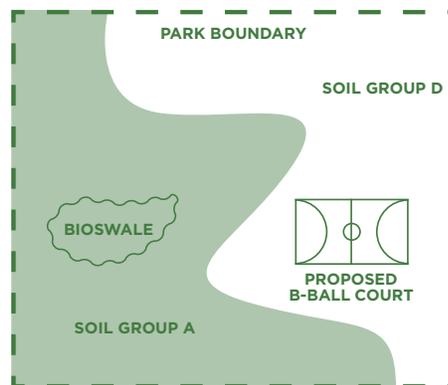
LOT COVERAGE STATS	Former L.C.	Approved Max.
Appletree Park	24%	20%
Baird Park	16%	15%
Battery Park & Extension	16%	15%
Calahan Park	13%	15%
Champlain Street Park	5%	15%
City Hall Park	24%	30%
Lakeside Park	14%	20%
Leddy Park	14%	15%
North Beach & Campground	15%	15%
Perkins Pier (Marina)	66%	70%
Pomeroy Park	38%	30%
Oakledge Park	10%	15%
Roosevelt Park	27%	30%
Schmanska Park	16%	15%
Smalley Park	8%	15%
Waterfront Park	19%	25%

**ABOVE**  
BPRW's updated lot coverage stats.

**UPPER RIGHT**  
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) map for Calahan Park. These maps support the study of soil characteristics.

**LOWER RIGHT**  
Hydrological Soil Groups: Group A has a high infiltration rate (low runoff potential) when thoroughly wet. Group D has a very low infiltration rate (high runoff potential) when thoroughly wet.

**FAR RIGHT**  
Tennis court damage cause by high water tables. An understanding of soil groups and their performance can help avoid poor amenity siting, early deterioration, and costly maintenance.



## ON THE GROUND

Once stormwater management goals for a park are established, the site must be analyzed to understand how to achieve these goals. Soils and topography are the key concerns. Steep slopes accelerate runoff and erosion, while clayey, impervious soils resist infiltration. **Study of soil composition and topographic conditions will guide decision-making with respect to amenity placement and park capacity; ultimately, use should compliment the inherent natural qualities of a site.**

## NOT AT ALL BORING

Understanding of soil types is essential to realizing and maintaining the health of any park. In Burlington's past, soil structure has not always been considered a driver in siting park amenities - but that is changing. Moving forward, soil structure will be an essential consideration. Each year, BPRW will allocate resources specifically for soil investigation including soil borings (or soil samples) to better understand soil composition, use of existing soil maps, developing new soil maps, and looking at groundwater and drainage patterns. The findings of these investigations, on a park by park basis, will help determine the site appropriateness of park infrastructure, both existing and proposed. This may result in the relocation or elimination of facilities to restore ecologic function and health.



## HYDROLOGICALLY SPEAKING

Burlington’s trees and greenways, particularly those designed with adequate soil zones, perform essential roles in the hydrologic cycle. The amount of water on Earth remains essentially constant, and the hydrologic cycle is the continuous process by which water is circulated through Earth and its atmosphere (through precipitation, infiltration, runoff, evaporation, transpiration, groundwater flow, and stream flow).

**Shade trees capture rain, filter air, and provide shade. Tree pits and greenways capture and store considerable volumes of stormwater that would otherwise flow directly into storm sewers.** This reduces pressure on stormwater management infrastructure during major rain events and helps maintain healthy trees.

## URBAN TREE CANOPY

The national Urban Tree Canopy (UTC) average in major U.S. cities is roughly 27%, with a recommended goal of 40% coverage. Burlington’s UTC is comprised of approximately 2,700 acres of tree coverage (with a total land area of approximately 9,900 acres.) **BPRW is working to increase the City’s tree canopy per the Climate Action Plan with a goal of increasing the current 43% UTC coverage to 50%.** While Burlington is ahead of the curve, canopy growth will increase the City’s water retention capacity. Burlington’s UTC is further explored in Burlington’s 2011 Climate Action Plan.

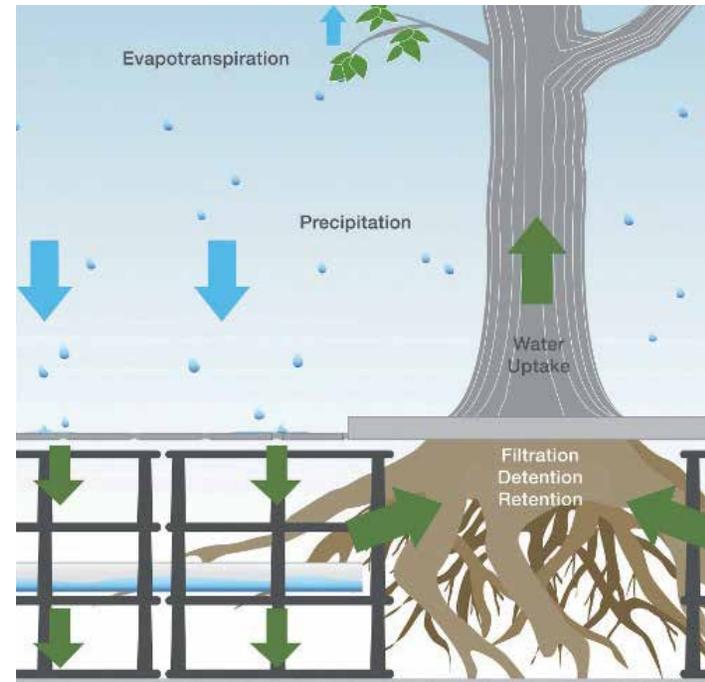
## WHAT GOES WHERE?

Several tree species support the Burlington’s UTC, some best suited to absorbing storm water while others are highly suited to providing shade on a shopping street. Diversity in planting is critical to the health and longevity of the canopy. Each year, BPRW plants roughly 170 trees

**UPPER RIGHT**  
**“The Silva Cell**  
**is a modular**  
**suspended**  
**pavement system**  
**that uses soil**  
**volumes to**  
**support large**  
**tree growth and**  
**provide powerful**  
**on-site**  
**stormwater**  
**management**  
**through**  
**absorption,**  
**evapotranspiration,**  
**and detention”**  
**(text & image**  
**courtesy of**  
**DeepRoot Green**  
**Infrastructure,**  
**LLC; www.**  
**deeproot.com).**

**LOWER RIGHT**  
**BPRW’s Trees &**  
**Greenways and**  
**Stormwater crews**  
**inspect Cherry**  
**Street Silva Cell**  
**installation.**

**FAR RIGHT**  
**Trees on Church**  
**Street support the**  
**urban tree canopy**  
**(image courtesy**  
**of Design for**  
**Walking/J. Peter**  
**Monro). While**  
**any increase in**  
**tree canopy is**  
**helpful to the**  
**water balance,**  
**trees whose**  
**canopies hang**  
**over impervious**  
**surfaces are the**  
**most helpful.**



netting approximately 80 new trees per year. Some trees may be planted for the long haul (life cycles of 50+ years), while others may be planted for interim purposes (life of 10+ years). The planting of “short-term” trees is a unique point of collaboration between BPRW and DPW Stormwater Management to maximize stormwater management.

### WHAT’S IN AN URBAN FOREST?

BPRW’s Trees & Greenway team manages the City’s urban forestry program which includes the care of 8,500 street trees (located in the street rights-of-way), 3,100 park trees, and 150 acres of forested parkland. Urban forests provide numerous benefits: increased property values, decreased heating & cooling costs, reduction of air pollution, and erosion control. **It is estimated that a tree with a 50-year life span provides nearly \$60,000 in benefit value over its lifetime.** Other benefits are less easily measured, but no less valuable: beauty that inspires us, recreation that refreshes us, and contact with nature that lifts our spirits. The aesthetic and inspirational value of an urban forest is incalculable.

### CARING FOR OUR TREES

The goal of BPRW’s Greenways team is to tend every City tree on a four year rotation which results in a visit to every tree at least once every four years to inspect, prune, cable, and perform necessary maintenance to ensure a safe and healthy tree. Younger trees require more frequent pruning and training. These visits are scheduled throughout the year on a street-by-street, ward-by-ward basis. Staff also responds to individual requests, scheduled as needed. In addition, twice a year, BPRW staff makes a inspection of all City trees to identify dead and hazardous trees. These trees are removed and plans made for replacement, if appropriate.



**ABOVE**  
Burlington’s Urban Tree Canopy: 43% and growing... (image courtesy of the University of Vermont Tree Canopy Assessment).

**RIGHT**  
Gathering for Branch Out Burlington’s annual Awesome Tree Contest. BOB is a group of volunteers dedicated to increasing the number of trees that line the City’s streets & sidewalks. New members are always welcome!



## A LEGACY IN CONSERVATION

**The Burlington Conservation Legacy Program was established to manage and coordinate the protection and enhancement of significant natural areas and other important conservation lands within the City of Burlington.** The Conservation Legacy Program is comprised of three distinct program elements.

1 - Land Stewardship to ensure the responsible long-term stewardship and management of significant natural areas and conservation lands owned by the City of Burlington.

2 - Acquisition Planning to facilitate the acquisition of significant natural areas and important conservation lands for permanent protection within the City of Burlington in partnership with area land trusts, non-profit organizations, and local, state and federal government agencies.

3 - Conservation Education to improve the public's familiarity and appreciation of Burlington's natural areas, to communicate the importance of open space protection, and to encourage public participation in the protection and planning process.

The Conservation Legacy Program is administered and managed by BPRW. The Burlington Conservation Board also provides advisory support.



**UPPER LEFT**  
Open space at  
it's best during  
a glorious  
sunset over Lake  
Champlain.

**LOWER LEFT**  
BPRW trails  
expert Cory  
Campbell teaches  
students about  
native plant  
varieties.



**LEFT**  
**Fungi, Winterberry and the rare Yellow Ladyslipper Orchid making homes in Burlington's Urban Wilds.**

**RIGHT**  
**"Natural" does not mean "unmanaged". All of our open spaces require attention and management: from controlling invasive species, to clearing trail obstructions as this volunteer has done.**

## URBAN WILDS

Burlington's Urban Wilds are defined as lands that provide habitat for rare and endangered plant and animal communities, wetlands and other riparian systems, flood plain, unique geological and hydrological features, important wildlife habitat and travel corridors, areas important for scientific research and education, scenic vistas, trails, passive recreation, sustainable forest communities, and cultural features. The City's Urban Wilds include areas at Ethan Allen Park, McKenzie Park, Mount Calvary Red Maple Swamp, Arms Park, Arthur Park and Crescent Woods. Portions of other parks within the City possessing sensitive natural features may also be considered "Urban Wilds" for management purposes. Future acquisitions of significant natural areas & open spaces for conservation or passive recreational purposes will be placed into this category. **The Urban Wilds contain and protect a host of natural communities. Protection of these natural communities remains a BPRW priority.**



# COMMUNITY

## Creating Inclusive Social Spaces

### A PLACE FOR COMMUNITY

Urban parks are often seen as places for people to step away from city life and reconnect with nature. That said, Burlingtonians have a unique relationship with their City parks which provide places to connect with both urban life and the great outdoors. **Burlington is an urban city in a rural state whose City parks provide tremendous opportunities for social engagement, which are incredibly important to sustaining a healthy & vibrant community.** Among Burlington residents surveyed for this master plan, 64% of respondents requested additional events like concerts, farmers markets, and festivals. In fact, special events lead the list of park needs among respondents. This service should be expanded through careful planning and design.

### INCLUSIVE SOCIAL SPACES

The department must continue to advance as a leader



in expanding and creating recreational opportunities for people of all ages, races, genders, and cultures.

**BPRW has a deep commitment to supporting places where diverse communities can practice wellness, especially given the City's role as a regional cultural hub.** This perspective aligns with themes outlined by city and regional plans, notably planBTV: Downtown & Waterfront and the Chittenden County ECOS Plan.

### BALANCING USE

BPRW works with many partners to provide access to inclusive social spaces, particularly in the context of the Church Street Marketplace, the University of Vermont and Champlain College. The department recognizes that to be truly inclusive, we need to strike a balance within multiple definitions of use (private events vs. public events, programmed activities vs. unreserved multi-use fields, dog parks vs. leashed areas).



**FAR LEFT**  
Passive recreation in Waterfront Park. Burlington is known for its lakefront swinging benches, recently renovated.

**LEFT**  
Crowds enjoying the annual Vermont Brewers Festival in Waterfront Park.

Finding the delicate balance between passive and active park uses can be challenging.

**RIGHT**  
The City's most active social park spaces, linked together by the Lake Champlain Waterfront.

## CULTIVATING SOCIAL SPACES

Leddy Park

North Beach

Waterfront Park

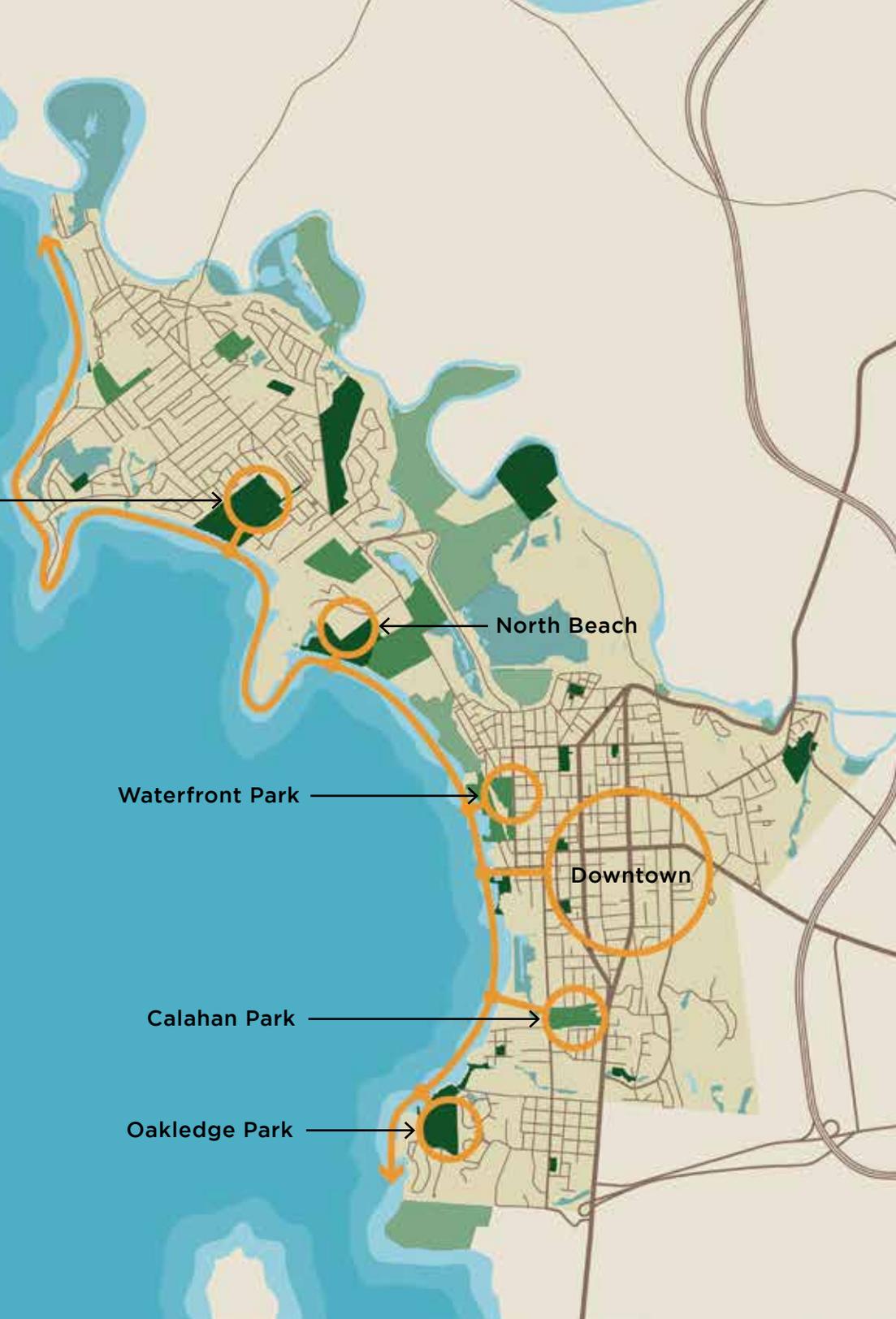
Downtown

Calahan Park

Oakledge Park

### THE ROLE OF THE WATERFRONT

Among all of Burlington's parks, the waterfront parks stand out as the primary social spaces. The waterfront supports large seasonal events, daily tourism, and year-round recreational opportunities for both residents and visitors. Among survey respondents, six of the most visited parks were along the lake. Additionally, 41% of respondents felt the beaches and lake areas should receive the most attention.



## BURLINGTON COMMUNITY GARDENS

For over 40 years Burlington area residents have come together to sow seeds, tend rows and harvest rewards. The Burlington Area Community Gardens (BACG) program is comprised of 14 garden sites across the Burlington area. These sites serve over 1,400 individuals and families. Sites range from small neighborhood plots to larger sites with multiple acres of available plots.

**The mission of BACG is to provide community garden sites and programs that are accessible, safe and healthy for people of diverse ages, experiences, backgrounds and abilities.** Being part of BACG means contributing to the gardening community. Participants are expected to maintain their plots at a standard defined within the garden maintenance policy. Gardeners participating in the program must complete four hours of community work at their site or at a BACG event during the growing season. No one is turned away because of a lack of inability to pay.

## DECADES OF GARDENING

BACG has a dynamic history that spans decades, started in 1972 with the Garden Way Company. This company privately funded the establishment of over 20 garden sites throughout Burlington between 1972-1979. During these years, garden sites quickly came and went as the community around each site dissipated. Many of the garden sites established during this time did not have basic amenities like on-site water or a place for tools to be stored. In the late seventies, Garden Way chose to forego its private funding, and they hired staff whose task was to work with the Burlington community to transition the leadership and funding.



**UPPER LEFT**  
The community gathered to celebrate the opening of the Archibald Garden in the summer 2015.



**LOWER LEFT**  
A garden plot in action, doing what it does best.

**Key BACG/BPRW partners: the University of Vermont (UVM), the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont, the Intervale Center, the Burlington School District (BSD), the Winooksi Valley Park District (WVPD), and the Burlington Housing Authority (BHA).**



By the early eighties, Garden Way successfully transitioned the garden sites to the community. At this time a grassroots nonprofit was created. The name of this non-profit was “Burlington Area Community Gardens.” During the mid-eighties, BACG faced significant issues in funding its mission. They turned to the City of Burlington to ask for support. Then Mayor, Bernie Sanders, quickly embraced BACG and made it a program of the Burlington Parks & Recreation Department, now BPRW. The BACG program has been on a steady path of growth and stability since that time.

### BACG PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are integral to BACG program operations. Only 5 of the 14 community garden sites are on City property and as a result, BPRW relies on the support of Burlington institutions to host the remaining sites. In addition to access to land, these partnerships support vital educational initiatives in the garden. The Vermont Community Garden Network (VCGN), leaders in the state’s community garden movement, runs Community Teaching Gardens at both the Tommy Thompson and WVPD Gardens. VCGN also provides technical assistance to gardeners and garden leaders, outreach support, and coproduction of garden special events. We could not do it without our partners!

COMMUNITY GARDEN SITES
Archibald Garden
Baird Community Garden
Calahan Garden
Champlain Garden
Discovery Garden
Lakeview Garden
Medical Center Garden
Myrtle Street Avant Garden
Riverside Garden
Rock Point Garden
Starr Farm Garden
Tommy Thomspon Garden
Wheelock Garden
WVPD Garden



**UPPER LEFT**  
A newly refurbished sign marks the entry of Archibald Garden.

**LOWER LEFT**  
BACG garden sites; BPRW looks forward to the expansion of this list.

**ABOVE**  
Kids learning how to grow their own food cultivates a lifetime of healthy nutrition habits and respect for nature.

### HOW WILL YOUR GARDEN GROW?

Today, BACG’s vibrant sites span the Burlington area. The demand for garden plots continues to grow, with renewed interest from across the City. Burlington’s New American community has also invigorated the program, bringing generations to the community garden table. The future is bright for Burlington’s community garden program!

## A WATERFRONT FOR THE PEOPLE

From Burlington's history as a former industrial waterfront has come great abundance. Through the leadership of then-Mayor Bernie Sanders, the City used the Public Trust Doctrine in court as a means to reclaim the filled lands of the waterfront for public use in the late 1980s. In an historic Supreme Court ruling, these lands were deemed to be "impressed by the Public Trust Doctrine", ruling that petroleum storage and rail spurs were no longer uses beneficial to the general public. **The State legislature defined Public Trust Lands as those reserved for "indoor or outdoor parks and recreation uses and facilities including parks and open space, marinas open to the public on a non-discriminatory basis, water dependent uses, boating and related services"**. The filled lands of the waterfront were transformed forever, with a focus on public access. This set the stage for the evolution of the waterfront that Burlingtonians have come to cherish.

## BUILDING A COMMUNITY BOATHOUSE

In 1988, the City constructed the Burlington Community Boathouse, designed by Marcel Beaudin and modeled after the 1887 Lake Champlain Yacht Club (which was located in the same place). At the time, it was the only true waterside public access on the northern waterfront and it provided seasonal dockage, boat rentals, sailing & scuba lessons, and bike rentals. **This was the first time in the City's history that there was an accessible, public floating facility and it provided a means for people to experience being on the water.** Construction of Waterfront Park and the Promenade followed in 1991, resulting in a new shoreline and raised boardwalk - not to mention a new public waterfront.



## COMMUNITY TREASURE

**At its core, the Community Boathouse Marina is an incredibly unique asset that continues to grow social capital for the City: a public community-driven marina with open access to public docks, sunset views, dining and more.** This is an extremely social space. Every night in the summer, docks swell with activity comprised of locals and visitors, boaters and sunset viewers. Over time, BPRW has expanded dockage, dining options, and boater services. Throughout the evolution of the waterfront, this core piece has remained stable and grown stronger - a truly special, inclusive public space.

## SAILING CENTER PARTNERSHIP

Established 20 years ago, the Community Sailing Center (CSC) offers boat rentals and programs, providing the community with vital connections to Lake Champlain. Over the years, the CSC's offerings have significantly expanded services beyond the original offerings of the Boathouse. This has eased the demands of rentals on the Boathouse, allowing BPRW to concentrate on providing exceptional public marina facilities.

## IT JUST GETS BETTER

Our Community Boathouse, a floating structure that is essentially a building on a barge foundation, is the very real heart of our waterfront culture. Several significant improvements have been made to the Boathouse and surrounds in the past few years: the renovation of the upper deck floor (which replaced the entire leaking floor system with a properly sloped, non-skid rubber tile system), the introduction of a permanent covered tent structure on the southern end of the upper deck, the renovation of the transient boater

restrooms, the renovation of the customer service area, and the replacement of the Waterfront Boardwalk. Funding support for this work has come through a variety of creative funding resources, including Boating Infrastructure Grant support from Vermont Fish & Wildlife, the Penny for Parks program and Tax Increment Financing (TIF).



**FAR LEFT (clockwise) Our Burlington Community Boathouse; the Boathouse under construction in the late 1980s; the Boathouse crew ready to serve; launching a sailboat at the Community Sailing Center.**

**LEFT In action: the 2013 replacement of the Boathouse upper floor deck.**

**BELOW Before & after views of the newly remodeled interior of the Boathouse Customer Service area.**



## NORTH BEACH CAMPGROUND

**It is extremely rare to find a rural campground in a city with access to 45 acres of woods and a prime beach that is also publicly owned.** This is North Beach: a truly unique, urban camping destination. Visitors can enjoy all the benefits of the great outdoors, yet hop on a bus and be downtown within 10 minutes.

North Beach is a public campground that creates an intentional family dynamic specifically for waterfront recreation. In recent years this atmosphere has been strengthened by user fee adjustments, site orientation planning, and the expansion of on-site services.

Over 130 camp sites are available including a mixture of tent sites, water/electric sites, and full hook up sites. The campground accommodates everything from a one-person tent to a 40-foot RV. As camping trends have changed, site options have expanded over the years (from historically offering all-tent campgrounds). BPRW looks forward to expanding these resources even further, with dreams of year-round service, an on-site store for basic provisions, and even cabins.

## PRIME LOCATION

The campground is situated right above Burlington's largest and only life-guarded beach. North Beach has something to offer everyone - grass and shady spots under trees, picnic areas with grills, large sunny all-sand expanses, an ADA beach mat that provides direct access to the water (along with accessible floating Mobi chairs), playgrounds and beach volleyball courts. This is Burlington's only beach with a snack bar and shower facilities. Over the past five years BPRW successfully partnered with local small businesses to



**LEFT**  
**North Beach**  
**Campground**  
**then and now. So**  
**many incredible**  
**natural and built**  
**resources come**  
**together at North**  
**Beach. BPRW is**  
**working to grow**  
**services and**  
**opportunities that**  
**maximize these**  
**potentials.**



**UPPER RIGHT**  
**North Beach is**  
**always popular.**  
**BPRW strives**  
**to keep North**  
**Beach affordable,**  
**accessible & fun!**



**FAR RIGHT**  
**This tunnel**  
**needs some love.**  
**Future Bike Path**  
**Rehabilitation**  
**design and**  
**construction**  
**will dramatically**  
**improve bike,**  
**pedestrian and**  
**vehicle access to**  
**and through the**  
**campground - as**  
**well as east-west**  
**connectivity.**



**BELOW RIGHT**  
**Ben Wood-Lewis**  
**inspired the**  
**installation of**  
**our first ADA**  
**accessible beach**  
**mat and floating**  
**water chair.**



expand services (food, recreation equipment, etc.).

## LOCAL DESTINATION FOR GENERATIONS

Since it's inception in the 1918, North Beach has been very popular with locals and today the park remains an important resource to Old North End residents. If you live in the downtown area, this is your beach. More resident parking passes are sold here than any other location in the Burlington parks system. That said, out-of-towners make this a repeated vacation spot year after year. **For \$45, a family of four can camp overnight and enjoy everything this destination park has to offer.**

## LINKING POTENTIAL

Geographically, North Beach sits at a critical east-west connection point in need of improvement to better support community connectivity. The Burlington Bike Path serves as feeder to the park, running directly between the campground and the beach. Redesign of the dilapidated Bike Path "bridge", new wayfinding, and the expansion of east-west travel routes through the park are improvements on the horizon.



### IMAGINE CITY HALL PARK

At the cultural and geographic center of downtown Burlington, City Hall Park has long served as an important civic landscape. This outdoor community square sits directly west of City Hall and is boundaried by commercial and mixed-use buildings. With years of heavy use, the park now faces several challenges including criminal incidents, aging amenities, failing water lines & electrical infrastructure, overly compacted ground that impedes stormwater flow, restrictive site lines, and limited operational resources. Burlington’s singular downtown greenspace needs some love.

In 2012, Burlington City Arts (BCA), in partnership with BPRW and other local agencies, launched a re-imagining of the park to create a conceptual master plan. **The resulting proposed improvements are intended to enhance the functionality and aesthetics of City Hall Park, while increasing opportunities as a community gathering space.** Community input was gathered over a vibrant 4-month public engagement period that included photography, drawing, interactive sessions, concerts, movie screenings, and temporary exhibitions. Common themes from the engagement sessions include a love of downtown green space, a need for balance between passive and active park uses, an appreciate of a water feature but frustration with the existing fountain, love of the Farmer’s Market but concerns about resulting impacts on the park grounds, and concerns with behavior and safety issues. This input was translated into a conceptual site plan by local landscape architect H. Keith Wagner Partnership, yielding ideas that will guide decision-making, enhance accessibility, and better support diverse, year-round programming. Plans for advancing the project are currently in development.



**UPPER LEFT**  
Conceptual  
redesign of City  
Hall Park derived  
from 2012's  
Imagine City Hall  
campaign.

**LOWER LEFT**  
Conceptual  
rendering of  
the proposed  
improvements  
to City Hall Park,  
the civic heart  
of Burlington's  
downtown.

In order  
to support  
additional  
programming  
and activity,  
the current and  
future uses of  
each park must  
be understood  
and options  
vetted with the  
community.

**FAR RIGHT**  
You don't have  
to be a big  
dog to play! A  
happy camper at  
the Starr Farm  
Dog Park. Best  
maintenance  
practices indicate  
that alternately  
allowing portions  
of the dog run  
to "rest" will  
give the grass a  
chance to  
reestablish and  
prevent barren  
patches.

## DOGS ARE WHERE IT'S AT

Make no mistake - Burlingtonians love their dogs! BPRW currently supports 2 off-leash dog parks at Starr Farm Park and in the Urban Reserve and there is a demand for more. In 2011, the Off-Leash Task Force studied options for expanding and improving off-leash opportunities in Burlington. Balancing the uses of park space, neighborhood characteristics, and dog owner needs were carefully considered. As a result, BPRW is acting on a number of key recommendations including the design and formalization of the Starr Farm Dog Park, the design and rehabilitation of the interim Urban Reserve Dog Park, and the formalization of BPRW's off-leash policy.

The Starr Farm Dog Park is supported by a group of exceptional volunteers who help keep eyes on the park and manage the 8am to 8pm, year-round hours of operation. The upcoming redesign will include fencing, signage and wayfinding improvements that will support users and neighbors alike. The Urban Reserve Dog Park is an interim facility that was created as part of a 1998 off-leash pilot program. In conjunction with the Burlington Bike Path Rehabilitation, this area will undergo a redesign slated for 2016. Reconstruction will include new fencing, improved wayfinding and access to the water. Since these are both unsupervised facilities, it incumbent upon users to abide rules and etiquette. **It is extremely important that park visitors pick up dog waste. This simple action has a very real and direct impact on our water quality.**

In terms of future opportunities, the community has provided valuable input: at present, there are not enough off-leash options available, mixed opportunities are appealing (communal & private), accessibility

is important as is the equitable distribution of opportunities throughout the City, and users are more likely to follow fewer rules than many - especially if the rules seem fair.

**BPRW supports a policy that allows for off-leash use both in fenced and non-fenced areas in a variety of settings where access to water, open fields and trails are available.** Potential program expansion includes seasonal & year-round opportunities at Oakledge and Leddy Parks, as well as additional winter seasonal opportunities at Calahan, Schmanska, Waterfront, and Roosevelt Parks.

Additionally, BPRW advocates that surrounding communities create their own dog parks. Burlington is a regional destination and while our parks are not restricted to resident-only use, we must balance the needs of tax paying residents with the desire for visitors to enjoy our amenities.



## NOT YOUR ORDINARY RIDE

BPRW has been at the forefront of developing and supporting fun public bike rides for all seasons. **These rides have become a part of local tradition that bring the best out of our community spirit and celebrate the highlights of the seasons.**

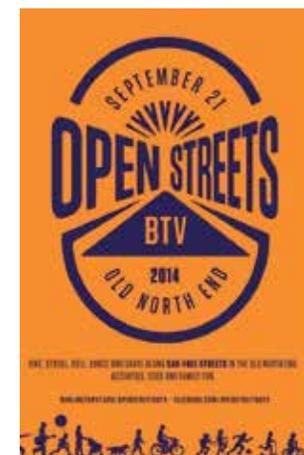
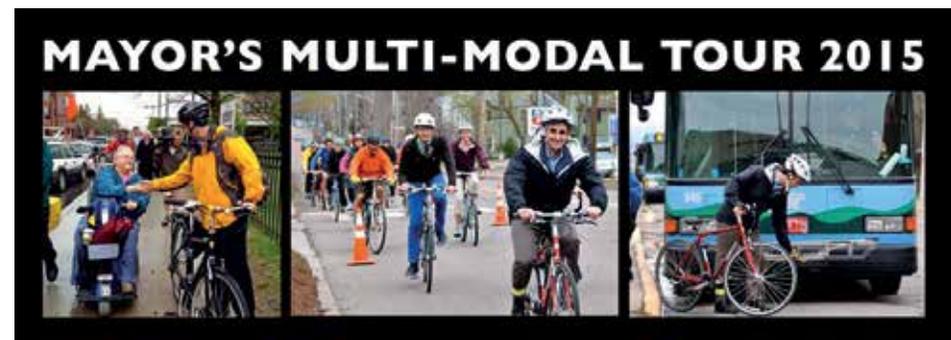
**Halloween Ride** Every year on the last Sunday before Halloween, hundreds of costumed cyclists, including Mayor Weinberger and BPRW Director Jesse Bridges, gather at City Hall Park to begin the growing tradition that is the Burlington Halloween Bike Ride. Winding their way through the City for 2-3 miles, the ride culminates at various locations for food, fun and legendary bike portraits by local photographers.

**Ride 365** The air temperature at the beginning of the 2015 Ride 365? A few degrees on the positive side of 0. Ride 365 began life as a welcome ride for Budnitz Bicycles when they moved to town in 2013. Now aligned with the International Winter Bike to Work Day, hearty bicyclists, including the Mayor, endure unpredictable and challenging conditions to tour the beautiful winter city that is Burlington.

**Open Streets BTV** The Open Streets/Ciclovía phenomenon that is sweeping the world came to Burlington in September of 2014. The idea is simple: streets occupy a significant proportion of the public land in a city, yet are accessible primarily to motor vehicles. Close the streets to vehicles, and let the people stroll and roll without worrying about safety for a few hours on a Sunday, the lowest traffic day of the week. Now in its second year, thousands of people wholeheartedly embrace the Open Streets concept on two miles of closed streets in the City's Old North End.

**Mayor's Multi-Modal Tour** What began 4 years ago as a challenge to Mayoral candidates to show their street savvy by touring the Queen City by bus, bike and foot has matured into an annual spring field study of the good, the bad and the ugly of getting around the City without a single occupancy car. From Burlington's first temporary protected bike lane to a wheelchair led ascent of the hill between the Waterfront and downtown, the tour tells Burlington's mobility story through direct experience.

**LEFT** Posters for public bike rides have become well-known icons that appear seasonally in the Burlington landscape: the Mayor's Multi-Modal Tour, Open Streets BTV, Ride 365, and the Halloween Ride.



**RIGHT**  
**Halloween Ride**  
 enthusiasts go  
 all out sporting  
 their best creative  
 costumes to  
 roll through  
 Burlington.  
 (Image courtesy  
 of Doug  
 Goodman.)



**LOWER RIGHT**  
 Artist Abby  
 Manock and  
 BPRW's Deryk  
 Proulx executed  
 BPRW's first  
 street mural in  
 preparation of  
 Open Streets 2014.  
 A neighborhood  
 traffic calming  
 resulted in the  
 permanent  
 closure of Spring  
 Street, setting  
 the stage for the  
 Dewey Parklet:  
 road reclaimed as  
 park recreation  
 space. Abby's  
 design is called  
*Interlace* and it  
 "illustrates the  
 hub of activity  
 and multi-use  
 that defines  
 Dewey Park. The  
 composition  
 corresponds  
 with existing  
 foot traffic and  
 points of entry...  
 while the twine  
 weaves a platform  
 for community  
 integration."



**WEE-FREES!**

BPRW is proud to participate in the world wide phenomenon that is Little Free Library. Founded in Wisconsin 2009, there are now over 15,000 miniature free book exchanges (usually mounted on a post or a building) worldwide adorned with the slogan, "Take a Book. Leave a Book."

The first BPRW book boxes were officially 'Wee Free Libraries,' designed and built in 2013 by local Girl Scout troop 30262. The libraries were installed at Calahan Park and the Champlain Elementary Community Gardens. The latest addition to our Little Free Library network is at the Robert Miller Community Recreation Center and plans are in the works for another wee-free at Starr Farm Park.



**UPPER LEFT**  
**Troop 30262**  
 standing proudly  
 beside their  
 Little Free Library  
 handiwork at  
 Calahan Park.  
 Here, everyone  
 is welcome to  
 borrow a book.  
 Thanks girls!



**LOWER LEFT**  
 Alex Wheeler of  
 the Parks crew  
 finishes installing  
 the latest member  
 of the BPRW  
 Wee Free Library  
 family at the  
 Miller Center in  
 summer 2015.

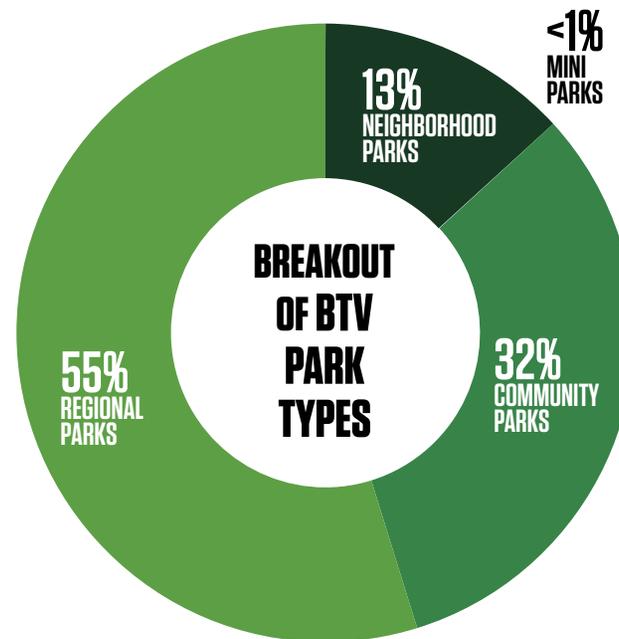
# SERVICE

## Streamlining Operations

### BURLINGTON'S PARK RESOURCES

Burlington is home to approximately 520 acres of City owned and operated parks. This translates to 12.2 acres per thousand residents, which is just above the national standard of cities with a similar population (12 acres per thousand residents). The City has a significant amount of park land adjacent to water and running north and south, with smaller amounts of park land distributed inland. **This unique, geographically linear orientation limits the distribution of services in terms of facility location and presents access challenges for residents and staff alike.** This is further complicated by real and perceived divides between park amenities available in the north and south ends of the City. The increased and varied use of parks creates opportunities and challenges for operations and users.

Additionally, the area is served by a variety of additional parks not managed directly by BPRW but through the Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD), which the City supports through its regional programs budget. The 6 parks and 465 acres managed by the district provide significant additional open space park resources. **When WVPD public parks are factored, acreage per resident increases to 23.5 acres per thousand residents - almost double the national standard for cities with similar populations.** The community should be extremely proud of its nearly 1,000 total acres of publicly accessible park land.



The WVPD system of natural areas offers over 13 miles of shoreline and 25 miles of trails throughout the Winooski River Valley. In Burlington, this includes Derway Island, Donahue Sea Caves, Ethan Allen Homestead, Heineberg Wetlands, Mayes Landing, and Salmon Hole & Riverwalk Park. Overall 51% of this inventory is in the floodplain (Special Hazard Area), and 35% are wetlands. All of Ethan Allen Homestead and most riparian areas have high archeological sensitivity.

**LEFT**  
When looking at a breakout of park types, Burlington falls a bit short on neighborhood parks. This is a tough category to expand, as Burlington is limited by its very real physical boundaries. This makes east-west connections through the City even more important.

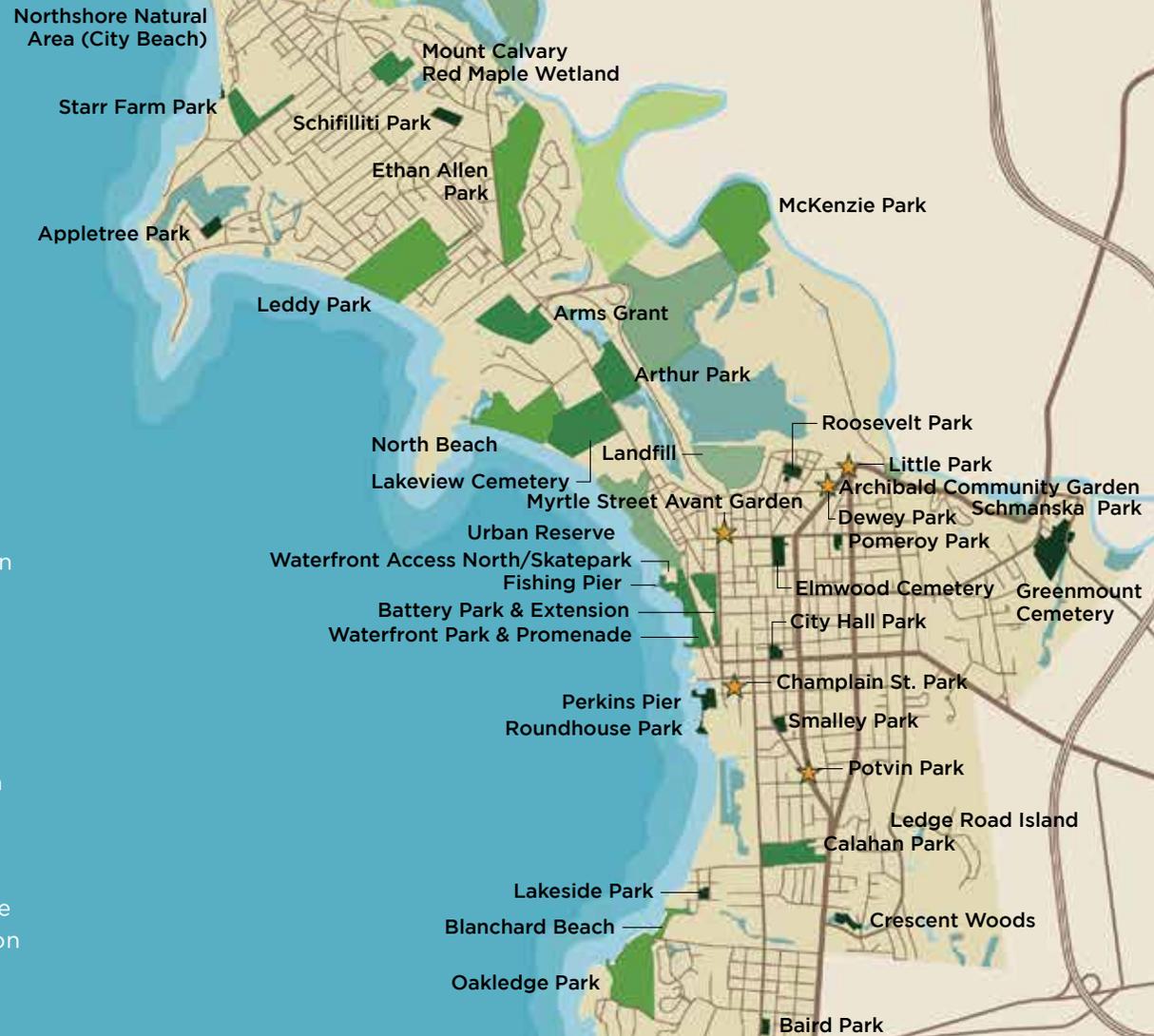
**RIGHT**  
The Burlington parks system includes 39 parks and counting. In terms of the amount of park space per resident, the City is in good shape in comparison to other cities of comparable sizes. Overall, Burlington has a healthy, diverse parks system.

# WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE TYPE?

- ★ MINI PARKS + SPECIAL USE PARKS
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS
- COMMUNITY PARKS
- REGIONAL PARKS
- WVPD PARKS
- OTHER OPEN SPACE (NON-BPRW)

## BURLINGTON PARK TYPES

Park types are generally based on a size classification (mini, neighborhood, community, and regional) with some consideration of use. Most of the City's parkland (55%) is found in large regional-drawing parks like Oakledge and Leddy. The remaining acreage is in community parks (32%), neighborhood parks (13%), and mini parks or small pocket parks (<1%). Ideally, neighborhood parks would represent a larger percentage of the overall parkland (29%), but regional parks like Ethan Allen Park serve double-duty as neighborhood parks by offering amenities like playgrounds and picnic areas. Greenways, like the Burlington Bike Path are areas that serve as recreation corridors connecting parks with various land uses.



BURLINGTON PARKS BY TYPE				
Mini/Special Use Parks (<1 acre)	Neighborhood Parks (1-10 acres)	Community Parks (10-50 acres)	Regional Parks (>50 acres)	Other Spaces
Champlain Park	Appletree Park	Arms Park (Urban Wilds)	Ethan Allen Park (Urban Wilds)	Burlington Bike Path
Dewey Park	Archibald Community Garden	Arthur Park (Urban Wilds)	Ledy Park	Landfill
Fishing Pier	Baird Park	Battery Park & Extension	McKenzie Park (Urban Wilds)	Route 127 Multi-use Path
Ledge Road Island	City Hall Park	Calahan Park (South Park)	North Beach Campground	Traffic Islands
Little Park	Crescent Woods (Urban Wilds)	Lakeview Cemetery	Oakledge Park & Blanchard Beach	Urban Reserve
Myrtle Street Avant Garden	Elmwood Cemetery	Mt. Calvary Red Maple Wetland (Urban Wilds)		
Potvin Park	Greenmount Cemetery	North Beach		
	Lakeside Park	Starr Farm Park		
	Northshore Natural Area (City beach)	Waterfront Access North (Under construction)		
	Perkins Pier	Waterfront Park & Promenade		
	Pomeroy Park			
	Roosevelt Park			
	Roundhouse Park			
	Schifilliti Park			
	Schmanska Park			
	Smalley Park			
	Urban Reserve Dog Park (Pilot)			

**ABOVE**  
A comprehensive snap shot of Burlington's parks by type.

While park types are generally determined by size, certain parks may function as a park outside of their "size" type.

**Oakledge Park is a good example of this: although Oakledge is under 50 acres in size, it is considered as a regional park because of its wide offering of amenities and popularity.**

### LEVEL OF SERVICE METHODOLOGY

Park amenities are the built elements within a park that support various forms of recreation. For many users, these are the primary reason they visit parks. It is critical that parks supply the right number and types of amenities to meet the needs of their users. Additionally, as the demographics of a city change over time, park amenities need to be assessed for their relevance to changing user groups. Level of Service (LOS) standards provide metrics for this assessment.

### WHAT ARE WE MADE OF?

The primary gaps in BPRW's Level of Service are in field sports (specifically adult baseball, adult softball, and regulation size soccer/football/lacrosse) and in indoor recreation (such as fitness space and indoor swimming). At the same time, national trends show a generational shift away from team sports to an individual focus on well-being. Providing additional amenities will require careful planning and design and should anticipate future demographic changes.

### WHAT DOES SURPLUS MEAN?

Several Burlington amenity types are in surplus as compared to cities of a similar size. The significance of these surpluses varies by amenity. Higher numbers of community gardens reflect the culture of local food

WVPD PARKS
Winooski Valley Park District (Other Non-City Resources)
Derway Island Natural Preserve
Donahue Seas Caves
Ethan Allen Homestead
Heineburg Wetlands
Mayes Landing
Salmon Hole & Riverwalk Park

**LEFT**  
List of WVPD-supported park resources in Burlington. When these acres are combined with the City's park acreage, it dramatically boosts our BPRW stat of 12.2 acres per 1,000 residents to 23.5 acres per 1,000 residents. That's an impressive statistic for an urban park system!

The WVPD's member municipalities are Burlington, Colchester, Essex, Jericho, South Burlington, Williston, and Winooski.

production that is central to Vermonters, resulting in both need and capacity for additional community gardens in the City. This trend also reflects the increase of New American populations in Burlington that are increasingly looking not just for garden space but for places to partake in subsistence farming. Partnerships with private landowners and non-profit organizations help the BPRW garden program to expand its reach, and these partnerships will continue to be important as increased demand for community agriculture grows.

On the other hand, the surplus of outdoor tennis and basketball courts indicates an inefficient use of maintenance resources - particularly when some of the existing courts were originally sited in poor site conditions (including high water table areas and wetlands). **Poorly sited amenities result in increased maintenance costs over the long haul and need to be considered in relation to the health & longevity of the entire parks system.** While amenities may remain popular for seasonal use, the overall health and maintenance of the system must be considered.

BPRW'S LEVEL OF SERVICE			
Amenity	National Recommend Quantity	Burlington's Current Quantity	Difference
60 ft. Baseball Field	5.67	10.0	4.3
90 ft. Baseball	1.98	1.0	-1.0
Adult Softball	3.40	2.0	-1.4
Community Garden	1.55	14.0	12.5
Dog Park	1.15	2.0	0.9
Fitness Center	0.93	0.0	-0.9
Gymnasium	1.52	2.0	0.5
Open Play Field	2.43	14.0	11.6
Outdoor Basketball Courts	5.67	12.5	6.8
Outdoor Tennis Courts	8.50	18.0	9.5
Playground	14.17	17.0	2.8
Recreation Center	1.33	1.0	-0.3
Regulation Size Soccer/Football/Lacrosse	5.00	4.0	-1.0
Skating Rink, Indoor	1.44	1.5	0.1
Skating Rink, Outdoor	2.18	5.0	2.8
Swimming, Indoor Comp.	0.92	0.0	-0.9
Swimming, Indoor Non-Comp.	0.89	0.0	-0.9
Swimming, Outdoor Comp.	1.10	0.0	-1.1
Swimming, Outdoor Non-Comp.	1.21	4.0	2.8
Youth Size Soccer	3.70	12.0	8.3

**LEFT**  
Burlington's LOS standards were generated by benchmarking Burlington against 112 peer cities (populations between 25,000 - 75,000). The benchmarks were then adjusted to reflect Burlington's unique culture & population.

LOS is measured in acres per 1,000 people.

The LOS chart depicts quantities of the specific amenities found in the Burlington parks system, providing a sense of appropriate targets.

However, every city is unique, so each city's own unique character and cultural values must be considered and balanced with national comparisons and benchmarking.

BPRW remains committed to balancing LOS as recreation opportunities and as ecological infrastructure.

### CONSIDERING SCHOOLS IN THE MIX

The BPRW Level of Service standards does not factor in the public space and amenities available through Burlington schools. **An additional seven playgrounds exist on school property and are generally available outside of school hours for public use. School athletic fields are also open play spaces that have the potential to be utilized by the public.** Unfortunately, outside of the high school athletic complex, these fields are poorly maintained and do not meet safety standards. The high school complex, while highly maintained, is very rarely available for use by the general public. Park space is used regularly for school athletic practice and competition and the maintenance capital for these facilities is provided exclusively by BPRW. **Our service standard gaps, specifically adult baseball, adult softball, and regulation size soccer/football/lacrosse and indoor swimming & fitness recreation, could potentially be addressed through improved maintenance and collaboration with the school district.** This could lead to improved public access and amenities across the entire City.

### WHO'S BEHIND THE LAWN MOWER?

Nearly 50 full-time staff, along with hundreds of seasonal employees, keeps Burlington parks ticking. The Parks Division is made up of five programs.

1 - Tree & Greenways Program: four full time employees and three seasonal employees maintain all street/park trees as well as the seasonal flower beds.

2 - Grounds Maintenance Program: four full time and ten seasonal employees maintain all turf areas, playgrounds, athletic fields, and trails/paths.

3 - Buildings Maintenance Program: fifteen full time and three seasonal employees care for 40 buildings (including all City-owned facilities), event support, and waterfront support operations.

4 - Conservation Program: one full time and one seasonal employee operate the City's community gardens and conservation properties.

5 - Cemetery Division: two and a half full time and three seasonal positions operate all facets of our three municipal cemeteries; Lakeview Cemetery is still active.

### MAKING MAINTENANCE WORK

**In the summer of 2015, the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce reported that the Burlington area hosted 20,000 visitors weekly between Memorial and Labor Day. This has a tremendous effect on how and when we deliver services.** School athletics, youth athletics, special events, park reservations and

**LEFT**  
There's a lot to mow out there! BPRW's grounds crew takes care of our parks and beyond.

**BELOW**  
Grounds Foreman Marty Hornick at work fabricating a hose storage stand for a community garden.



bookings for small events dictate the maintenance and operations schedule for a good part of the growing season. Other factors such as athletic field maintenance, vegetative overgrowth, repairs and maintenance to park amenities, vandalism, invasive species management, and capital project support characterize other work that is prioritized.

In context, there are two pinch points in an annual schedule that require a high level of cooperation and coordination amongst all BPRW employees. Those two pinch points are April-May and September-October. The commonalities of these two periods of time are: high level of environmental needs (spring debris clean-up & fall leaf clean-up), a high level of external requests (public requests for service, short construction windows, large amount of special events and park reservations), and low levels of resources with decreased capacity (the majority of seasonal employee availability is from June-August). In addition to working together efficiently, there is also a need to mobilize volunteers in a number of different ways. Volunteerism is an integral part of managing seasonal operations in Vermont, especially if weather or other factors further delay recreation activities in the spring.

### CAPITAL PROJECT SUPPORT

In addition to regularly scheduled maintenance and seasonal adjustments to the park system, the Parks Division also supports the implementation of capital projects, which may be managed through the department or other City entities. Our diverse skills both in landscape and traditional trades, resource base of equipment and personnel, and the capacity to mobilize and adjust quickly enable us to provide a number of services efficiently within the City.



**UPPER & LOWER RIGHT Embracing the “b”! The Trees & Greenways crew cleverly incorporates the new BPRW logo into everyday - from expressive planting design at the Leddy Arena to safety cone identification.**

## COMMUNITY ICE RINKS

In a long-standing tradition, the Parks Division has maintained outdoor community ice rinks during winter months for residents and visitors to Burlington. **Four community rinks located at Battery Park, Starr Farm Park, Waterfront Park, and Roosevelt Park are staff maintained, while two others located at Calahan Park and Lakeside Park are cooperatively managed by neighbors/volunteers and supported by City staff.** This type of partnership increases the amount of winter outdoor rink space available to our users. All rinks have a goal of opening before the school break in December, however, weather in Vermont is consistently inconsistent and both opening and closing dates of this amenity are determined by Mother Nature. The number of skating days typically ranges from 50-80 days and rinks with lighting (Calahan, Starr Farm & Lakeside) are able to have extended hours. BPRW is currently looking at options to provide outdoor skating at Waterfront Park proximate to the development of the new waterfront skatepark.

## TAKING CARE OF CITY BUILDINGS

**One of the functions of the BPRW's Building Program, housed within the Parks Division, is maintenance and operational support for forty-four (44) public buildings.** Many of these structures are seasonal, meaning that they are only open and operated from May to October. One dozen of these buildings, however, operate year-round and full-time including City Hall, Burlington City Arts (Fire House), the Police Department Building, Fletcher Free Library, Memorial Auditorium, and the Miller Community Center. These facilities have extended hours and specific needs related to programming throughout the year. BPRW



**ABOVE**  
Cooperative management between dedicated community volunteers and BPRW staff makes the Lakeside Rink possible.

**BELOW**  
BPRW staff keep City Hall, the BCA Fire House, the Fletcher Free Library, and several other City facilities going (City Hall image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons; [www.commonswikimedia.org](http://www.commonswikimedia.org)).



supports operations including the provision of trade services (electrical/plumbing/minor carpentry), custodial services, office relocation & build-outs, and capital project support. BPRW staff also provides preventative maintenance and repair services for HVAC and mechanical units, outdoor lighting, security systems, and exterior renovations & repairs (windows/siding/roofing). Work is scheduled based on facility manager requests received digitally via software management program “Facility Dude”, then tasks are prioritized and assigned. The age and condition of the facilities is such that there is a consistent need to schedule preventative maintenance activities whenever possible, however, those schedules are greatly impacted during the parks peak seasons.

## SITING IMPACTS SERVICE

In 2015, BPRW launched a siting study for Oakledge Park to inform the siting of park amenities (both existing & future), to understand the park’s inherent ecological and stormwater systems, and to determine park capacity in terms of function. **This is the first individual park study advanced as a result of strategies developed in this master plan; it serves as a model for how other parks will be considered in the future.**

At Oakledge, soil borings were taken and analyzed to understand composition, infiltration and historical functionality. A community-driven list of existing and potential future amenities was then overlaid with the physical findings, resulting in the creation of conceptual master plan options for the future of the park. The study seeks to reconcile the ecological constraints of what is one of Burlington’s most popular and heavily used regional parks, with intense demands for passive



**ABOVE**  
Initial findings  
and conceptual  
plan overlay  
from the 2015  
Oakledge Park  
Siting Study.

**BPRW has started  
planning for  
individual parks  
utilizing the  
vision & principles  
outlined in the  
BPRW Master  
Plan.**

and active recreation. While still in progress, the siting study has revealed the existence of two remnant State of Vermont Class 2 wetlands, which are currently actively programmed and maintained for recreational purposes. The BPRW vision focuses significantly on the role our parks can play in the management of stormwater runoff and thus the overall ecological health of Lake Champlain. The Oakledge siting study serves as a template, guiding us to a better balance between ecologic health and recreation infrastructure, particularly in this crucial interface of lake and land.

## DEVELOPING STANDARDS

**Over the past few years, BPRW has been hard at work expanding our emphasis on design quality and formalizing department material standards.**

## SHEDDING LIGHT

In 2014, BPRW adopted a brand new lighting standard to replace the existing teal fixtures that currently line our waterfront. The new fixtures are LED, energy efficient, and Dark Sky compliant which will better support the environment and lower our utility costs while bringing a fresh look to the waterfront.

## TALKING TRASH

In the summer of 2015, a state-wide mandate to locate recycling receptacles at every trash receptacle location went into effect. The goal of Act 148: Universal Recycling & Composting Law is to keep as much as possible out of our landfills. Starting with recycling, landfill bans will be phased through 2020 when food scraps from all businesses and residents will be banned from the landfill.



**ABOVE**  
BPRW's first installation of our new standard light fixture in Roosevelt Park.

**BELOW**  
Waterfront trash collection before (black barrel) and after (Big Bellies). "Big Belly" trash receptacles have become the standard in our busiest locations. The units provide both recycling collection bins and solar-powered trash compaction bins.



## Universal Recycling

**ABOVE**  
Symbols to get familiar with!

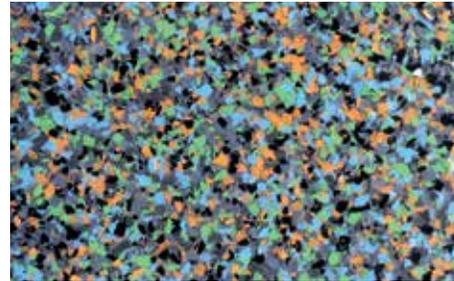
**RIGHT**  
New recycling and trash receptacles ready for deployment in compliance with the State's mandate on Universal Recycling.





## RESTROOM STANDARDS

The design of the restroom renovation at the Oakledge Park Upper Pavilion provided a means for BPRW to investigate and define restroom standards for the parks system. In addition to renovating the facility (which included an increase in stall quantity and accessibility compliance), the project helped to define BPRW standards for bathroom partitions (partially made from recycled plastic), efficient low-flow plumbing fixtures, the introduction of skylights to bring in more natural light and reduce electric consumption, LED lighting, durable wall-mounted fixtures, polyaspartic flooring with a wrapped cove to improve maintenance, and last but not least, introduction of the big “b”.



## THE LIST GOES ON

In addition, BPRW has identified standards for stationary benches, swinging benches, grills, fire rings, picnic tables, Bike Path intersection crossing treatments, court repairs, and more. And while each of our playgrounds are unique, in the future some recognizable colors will become more abundant.



**ABOVE**  
BPRW staff tests out the new playground equipment at Starr Farm park. This playground was replaced and significantly expanded in the summer of 2015. Highlights include the City's first tensile climbing structure and the new brown-green-orange-blue BPRW color scheme.

**MIDDLE**  
BPRW's standard black steel benches line the waterfront; our new standard polyaspartic flooring is a durable, long-lasting poured floor that integrates BPRW's signature colors.

**BELOW**  
Renovation of the Oakledge Upper Pavilion Restrooms completed in 2015. This project supported the creation of restroom standards for the entire park system.

## HOW PROJECTS GET DONE

BPRW's Planning Division oversees parks-related capital improvement projects, parks planning initiatives and BPRW marketing & outreach. The division supports the implementation and completion of parks improvements projects in two unique ways: through the planning & prioritization of all parks capital improvement projects and through the management and oversight of these projects during design and construction.

Parks projects have a variety of potential funding mechanisms: the Penny for Parks program (PFP), Park Impact Fees (PIF), the Bike Path Improvement & Maintenance Fund (BPIMF), Conservation Legacy Program Fund (CLPF), the Perpetual Care Fund (PCF), Trees & Greenways (T&G), the City's General Fund (GF), the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), state & federal resources, and private gifts. Most of

these funding sources have limitations on the types of projects they may support and careful consideration is required to ensure that amenities in need of support are aligned with appropriate and available resources.

## PENNY FOR PARKS

Approved by voters in 2008, Penny for Parks is BPRW's primary capital resource for park improvements and is supported by a dedicated tax. PFP funds are reserved exclusively for parks capital improvement needs. Eligible projects include the repair, renovation, replacement, or expansion of existing park facilities as well as the construction of new facilities in existing parks. **Derived from the Grand List, the average annual PFP allocation is ~\$350,000. Targeted improvements include playgrounds, courts, athletic fields, park facilities, standard equipment replacement, park repairs, emergent/urgent projects, and staffing support.**

Since the Penny for Parks launch in 2010, more than 100 projects have been completed with expenditures upwards of \$2 million, leveraged by nearly \$1 million in additional funding sources.

Per the household survey, 52% of residents support raising taxes for the parks & recreation facilities they value the most.

PARKS PROJECT SCREENING CRITERIA	
Health, Safety & Accessibility	Project improves the facility with regards to public health, welfare and safety.
Serviceability & Lifespan	Project currently exceeds its service life.
BPRW Master Plan Alignment	Project advances the implementation of BPRW park system master planning.
City Capital Plan Alignment	Project advances the implementation of the City-wide 10-year Capital Improvement Plan.
Federal/State/Local Mandate	Project is required by Federal or State regulation, or by City Council ordinance.
Alternative Funding Sources	Project leverages Federal, State, local, grant, or private funding.
Design & Aesthetics	Project visually, culturally and/or historically improves the image and quality of the parks system.
Best Management Practices	Project supports and/or improves best management & maintenance practices.
Operations & Efficiencies	Project improves efficiencies in staffing, maintenance, or utilities or reduces future capital burden.
Environmental Impacts	Project lessens impact on the natural environment and/or supports resource conservation.
Programming Opportunities	Project improves the operational aspects of recreational programming.
User Base	Project has a significant user base.
Revenue Opportunities	Project directly or indirectly increases BPRW revenue generation.

**LEFT**  
Parks project screening criteria.

**BELOW**  
This sign is placed at completed PFP project sites all around town. PFP represents best efforts to allocate resources towards parks projects that provide the most benefit to BTV residents.





# IMPACT

## Motivating Economy

### URBAN LIVABILITY

A framework for a park system with a strong identity and enduring amenities provides a firm foundation for Burlington to catalyze new investments and foster long-term growth. **Economists in the United States and abroad are recognizing the dollar value of urban open spaces and recreational amenities in terms of adjacent land values, tax revenues, preventative health care, and recreation benefit.**

As the City reinvests in its open spaces and urban livability, from the Waterfront Bike Path to City Hall Park, it is reinforcing its competitiveness and ability to continue attracting and retaining a skilled workforce. It is clear that Burlingtonians want more investment in creating connected parks & neighborhoods, inclusive social spaces for the City and the region, and good maintenance and healthy ecosystems.

### PARKS AS ECONOMIC GENERATOR

Across the country, parks are becoming more understood as real economic generators within the urban areas they touch. Burlington is internationally known for its Bike Path, Waterfront annual events, Community Boathouse Marina, and the tourism industry, all which generate millions of dollars for the City annually. The BPRW system must be properly funded to support these activities, otherwise recreation

opportunities will be compromised resulting in a major impact on our local economy.

### MARINA & CAMPGROUND PAY THE BILLS

**Two particular operations, the marina and campground respectively, are vital to BPRW's budget. Together, these operations (inclusive of waterfront parking) generate over \$1.7 million in revenue, comprising 45% of the total revenues collected for the entire department.** The combined effect of these two revenue generating operations allows BPRW to offer phenomenal programming at very reasonable costs to our community, as well as reinvest in our facilities, grounds and staff.

In addition to the revenue generated for our department, these two operations undeniably add to the overall economic impact in the City of Burlington and location plays a role. The campground is located on the border of the City's Old North End and New North End, bringing tourists and guests beyond the traditional Downtown tourist locations. The central location of the marina at the foot of College Street brings additional business to our downtown and waterfront core. Visiting boaters are frequent shoppers of downtown stores, boutiques, wine shops, and restaurants. In addition, they utilize services offered, such as bike rentals, catering services, and maintenance technicians.

**RIGHT Diagram mapping the circle of the BPRW's resource impact, which provides substantial contributions to our local economy and quality of life.**



# RESOURCE IMPACT

**HIRING**  
BPRW HIRES  
INDIVIDUALS & GROUPS  
TO PROVIDE A VARIETY  
OF SERVICES

**SERVICES**  
SERVICES IN THE  
FORM OF EVENTS  
& PROGRAMS, ARE  
PROVIDED TO THE  
COMMUNITY

**REVENUE**  
PROVIDED SERVICES  
GENERATE REVENUE

**LOCAL IMPACT**  
GENERATED REVENUES  
SUPPORT BPRW, LOCAL  
BUSINESSES, AND THE  
HEALTH OF OUR LOCAL  
ECONOMY

**REINVESTMENT**  
LOCAL DOLLARS ARE  
DIRECTLY REINVESTED  
INTO OUR COMMUNITY



## BIKE PATH ECONOMICS

UVM Transportation Research Center’s 2010 Estimating Tourism Expenditures for the Burlington Waterfront Path and the Island Line Trail report stated that “Tourism in Vermont has an important impact on the state’s economy. As a major source of state income, tourism helps to generate revenue from retail sales, accommodations, restaurants and supports jobs in tourism-related businesses. Tourists from out-of-state and even out-of-country come to Vermont to enjoy its nature settings, recreation amenities, and other attractions. In addition to ski resorts and hiking paths, shared use paths in Vermont, especially the Waterfront Trail (Bike Path) along Lake Champlain in Burlington, Vermont, attract tourists.”

Per the Vermont Agency of Transportation’s 2012 Economic Impact of Bicycling and Walking in Vermont report, Chittenden County provided over 25% of the state’s economic activity, which is quite relevant at the local level. Combining totals from bike/ped event tourism and bike/ped-oriented businesses resulted in a total 2009 economic contribution of \$82.7 million in output, and over 1,400 jobs with \$40.9 million in labor earnings. The state budget fiscal impact from bike/ped activities in 2009 amounted to a net positive of \$1.6 million of tax and fee revenues for the State of Vermont.

The Outdoor Industry Foundation 2012 report on economic activity reported that 29% of Vermonters (141,315 people) are regular cyclists. The report cites Vermont as having 35,000 jobs directly related to outdoor recreation, a generation of \$187 million in annual state tax revenue, and \$2.5 billion annually in retail sales and services. The outdoor recreation economy in Vermont accounts for 12% of the Vermont gross state product. In 2012 alone, there was a -\$10.8 million impact on the local economy from the

Burlington Bike Path and associated events: \$4.5M from path users from outside Chittenden County (direct spending); \$3.8M from Vermont City Marathon impact (direct spending); and \$2.5M from the Triathlon (direct spending).

## EVENT EARNINGS

BPRW hosts events of all scales and sizes across the City. From hockey tournaments at Leddy Arena to major concerts and festivals at Waterfront Park, these events provide direct economic impact benefiting the entire Burlington community. **At the largest scale, Waterfront Park events generate between \$1 million - \$4 million in economic activity per event.** Regular events, like the Burlington Farmers Market at City Hall Park provide opportunities for local businesses to increase their exposure and profitability. At the smaller scale, basketball tournaments to hockey tournaments regularly generate positive economic impacts on restaurants, hotels, gas stations, grocery stores, equipment and merchandise vendors and more. In addition to events-related dollars flowing directly to local businesses, increased gross receipts taxes help to support and maintain community and City services like parks, roads, sidewalks, and the library.

**BELOW  
BPRW hosts  
and supports  
well-known  
events that bring  
scores to the City  
each year.**

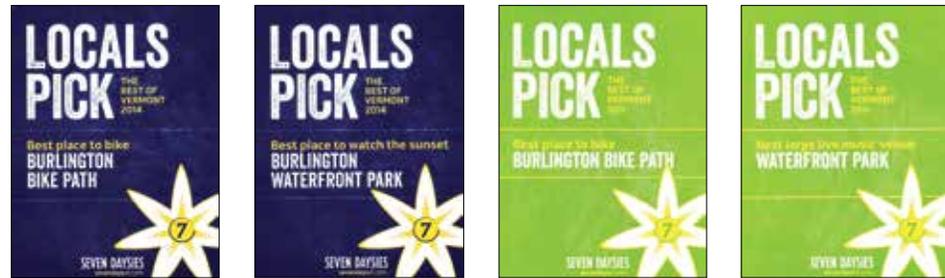
BPRW Regular Events & Festivals	
Penguin Plunge**	Battery Park Free Concert Series**
Kids Day*	Vermont Brewers Festival**
Vermont City Marathon**	Lake Champlain Dragon Boat Festival**
Burlington Discover Jazz Festival**	Lake Champlain Maritime Festival**
Burlington Wine & Food Festival**	Grand Point North**
July 3rd Independence Day Fireworks*	Oktoberfest Vermont**
*BPRW Hosted	**BPRW Supported

## CITY AS EMPLOYER

As the City's largest seasonal employer, BPRW has direct economic impact on contractors, consultants, and seasonal & full time staff. Enacted in 2001, the City abides by the "Livable Wage" ordinance which provides a minimum level of compensation for City employees and employees of entities that enter into service contracts or receive financial assistance from the City of Burlington. The annual livable wage is recalculated in May of each year. BPRW has also raised the bar on our seasonal staff incentivizing. Over the years, we have developed strong relationships resulting in returning seasonal staff and high-functioning seasonal employees - all with little reliance on the general fund.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Burlington has a tremendously diverse park system that requires financial support. While Burlington is clearly a tourism destination, since BPRW's revenue-generating amenities (like the marina and campground) are required to fund the department, they require more support in their reinvestment and upkeep. Not many urban park systems can boast managing a marina, campground, and indoor ice rink, not to mention our incredible network of bike paths and trails. **BPRW funds 70% of the department's annual budget from annual internal revenues - an outstanding feat when compared to the national average of 28%.** Parks and programs should be available and accessible to everyone. Unfortunately, our steep revenue demands can result in inadvertently pricing people out. This is not acceptable in a community where 26% of the Burlington population falls below the poverty level. BPRW works hard to make sure everyone who wants to participate in a recreation program can do so, and we have recently increased our scholarship opportunities.



**ABOVE**  
BPRW Seven Daysies winners: the Burlington Bike Path (2015 best place to bike, also awarded in 2014), and Waterfront Park (2015 best large live music venue and 2014 best place to watch the sunset). In this annual best-of-Vermont award tradition hosted by Seven Days, locals vote on their favorite Vermont offerings.

**BELOW**  
Kids & grown-ups alike have fun at the weekly Farmer's Market, which generates local economic impact year-round; crowds gather for BPRW's famous July 3rd Independence Day Celebration & Fireworks: our biggest & brightest event of the year!



## ROOM TO GROW

In response to high demand from our boating community (which pulls from all regions of New England, Canada and beyond) expansion of dockage and services is necessary to satisfy ever-increasing demand. **BPRW has maximized every square inch of space in our current location and we are constantly at capacity. Each season, we regularly turn away more than 1,000 boats seeking dockage.** Expansion is important for the marina and for greater Burlington. We have literally thousands of tourists who want to visit our community that we are currently unable to accommodate. Marina options in the area are limited, and when the current marina facility is at capacity, tourists are forced to go elsewhere. Boaters that Burlington turns away frequently end up going to New York to secure dock space on Lake Champlain.

## EXPANDING PERKINS

Perkins Pier sits at the base of Maple Street and serves as BPRW's small craft all-seasonal marina (no transient dockage). The ongoing demand for both seasonal & transient dockage merits further investigation of BPRW resources to identify options to accommodate this increased demand. BPRW aspires to expand our public marina & service offerings at Perkins - to meet the needs of the future and further define our role as a public marina. **Our goal: continue to strengthen the community-driven marina and the community's relationship and access to Lake Champlain.** By providing thoughtful, expanded recreation access for boaters and non-boaters while understanding our history, we may continue as the stewards of these resources for generations to come.



**LEFT**  
A conceptual plan for the expansion of a southern marina at Perkins Pier. The highlighted area shows the placement of the floating wave attenuator. The addition of thousands of boaters per year (transient and seasonal), without adding any more car traffic to our downtown, is a unique asset that we need to expand - for the health and vitality of the parks system and the City economy. The additional harbor protection will also benefit our existing waterfront partners like Lake Champlain Transportation, ECHO, and the Lake Champlain Sailing Center.

**RIGHT**  
Conceptual renderings of potential landside service opportunities at Perkins Pier, including increased public access to the waterfront.

## NATIONAL GRANT AWARD

In May of 2014, the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department and City of Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront won a competitive U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Boating Infrastructure Grant for \$1.5 million to improve boating opportunities at the Perkins Pier Marina - beginning the expansion of our southern marina. The award was one of 16 competitive grants given out annually through the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Boating Infrastructure Grant program to enhance boating opportunities throughout the country. **Per VT Fish & Wildlife, this single grant award equals the total of all awards over the past 15 years from this program to the state of Vermont.**

The project will improve Burlington's harbor protection, significantly increase public access to the water and boost the number of transient boat slips available on the waterfront. The City of Burlington will cover \$1 million of the total \$2.5 million price tag for the job. The City's local match will be covered by a variety of potential sources including future slip revenues, private support and the City's capital budgets. **Grant funds are administered by Vermont Fish & Wildlife and passed directly to the City, where they will benefit Burlington's boating & business communities and beyond.** This project is currently in pre-design with a focus on completing the preliminary documentation to launch the project. The grant will be used to design and construct a southern wave attenuator (or break water) to protect future dockage at the site. While the attenuator will create safe spaces for boaters, it will also serve non-boaters as public access point from which to get out on the water. This floating wave attenuator will provide both harbor protection and a public park on the water.



## TRAIL EXPANSION

**Given Burlington's active population, the popularity of the waterfront and investments in improving it, maximizing year-round trail use is a key, currently underutilized opportunity.** The recreation needs assessment illustrated the existing deficit in indoor recreation space, which makes year-round trail activity in cold climates even more important. Similar to the City's approach to seasonal ice rinks in several of its parks, additional maintenance and amenities would be required to support this effort.

## BUILDING A PARKS FOUNDATION

The Parks Foundation of Burlington is an independent, nonprofit organization formed in 2013 whose purpose is to seek opportunities to enhance park assets & recreation programs in Burlington through specific initiatives. Inspiration for the establishment of a dedicated parks foundation comes from other municipalities across the country that have successfully accomplished the mission of increasing awareness of the importance of parks & recreational programming, while at the same time increasing philanthropic support. **The Parks Foundation of Burlington inspires the spirit of stewardship and philanthropy for our community's treasured parks & recreation assets for our residents and visitors.** The Foundation seeks opportunities for self-sustaining support that will not impose a burden on the City of Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront's annual operating budget.

### 501(c)3

The Parks Foundation is a separate entity, independent from Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront, formed as a tax-exempt, 501(c)3 non-profit charity governed by its Board of Directors. The Foundation provides a variety of support:

- 1 - Applies for grants for which government agencies are not eligible.
- 2 - Solicits & accepts planned gifts that provide support for future improvements to our City's recreational resources.
- 3 - Acts as the umbrella fundraising organization for all Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront philanthropy.



**ABOVE**  
The Parks Foundation logo.

**UPPER RIGHT**  
Construction of the Burlington Parks Foundation signature project: the Burlington Bike Path Rehabilitation; construction through the Waterfront Park Linden tree allee.



**LOWER RIGHT**  
Spearheaded by the Friends of Lakeview Cemetery, new statuary was installed in 2014 matching the spirit of an earlier historic fountain that had long ago been damaged beyond repair.



This allows the great work of current friends and volunteer groups to continue to raise funds in support of their particular projects.

4 - Prides itself on being the fiscal agent for the proper stewardship of those funds while maintaining the relationship with the City to assure the money raised is spent on appropriate projects.

5 - Focuses on partnerships throughout the community to advance its mission.

### SIGNATURE PROJECT

The signature project of the Parks Foundation is the Burlington Bike Path Rehabilitation. Other major initiatives include the development of a universally designed, accessible playground at Oakledge Park, the construction of the new waterfront skatepark, the redesign & reconstruction of City Hall Park, scholarship endowment, and other community initiatives.

### BPRW SCHOLARSHIPS

All BPRW youth and senior programs are eligible for scholarship funding! Scholarships are awarded to Burlington residents only: youth ages 0-18 and senior adults 65+. Scholarships are awarded at 50% of the program cost with no per person or family limit. Additional funding is available at the discretion of BPRW's recreation staff. Applications must be completed annually and awards are valid for one fiscal year (July-June). No participant will be turned away due to inability to pay.



**RIGHT**  
**Kids win with recreation opportunities**  
**and scholarship support!**

## PARKS + RECREATION + WATERFRONT

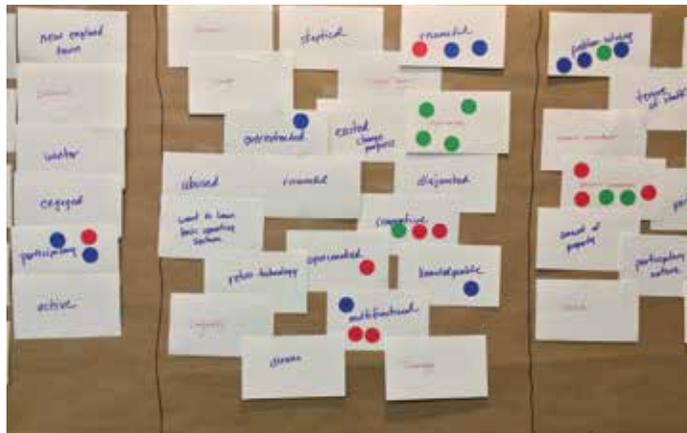
Through our master plan visioning process a central, overarching goal arose: BPRW's wish to function and be perceived of as a cohesive group. The department performs many roles for the City: maintaining and developing parks, trails, and open spaces; programming special events and recreation classes; operating the waterfront marina and campground; and maintaining City-owned buildings outside of the parks system. This broad set of responsibilities can result in confusion for the public about the many critical tasks that the department covers. Additionally, the department's old logo no longer conveyed the fresh energy and contemporary approach that leadership & staff bring to the community.

A branding study was conducted in conjunction with the BPRW Master Plan. The department was rebranded as Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront to encompass the diverse facets of the groups' efforts. A contemporary logo was designed, representing the union and integration of these three divisions, and harkening to the City of Burlington with a shape that also forms a "b." The logo can be reinterpreted to represent individual divisions as well.

The logo is part of a set of branding guidelines that has been deployed by the department as it has implemented the master plan. The new "b", already recognized by the community, now appears on signage, apparel, letterhead, business cards, and BPRW's recently launched website.



**UPPER LEFT**  
December 2014 branding work session with the BPRW leadership team and master plan consultants, Sasaki Associates.

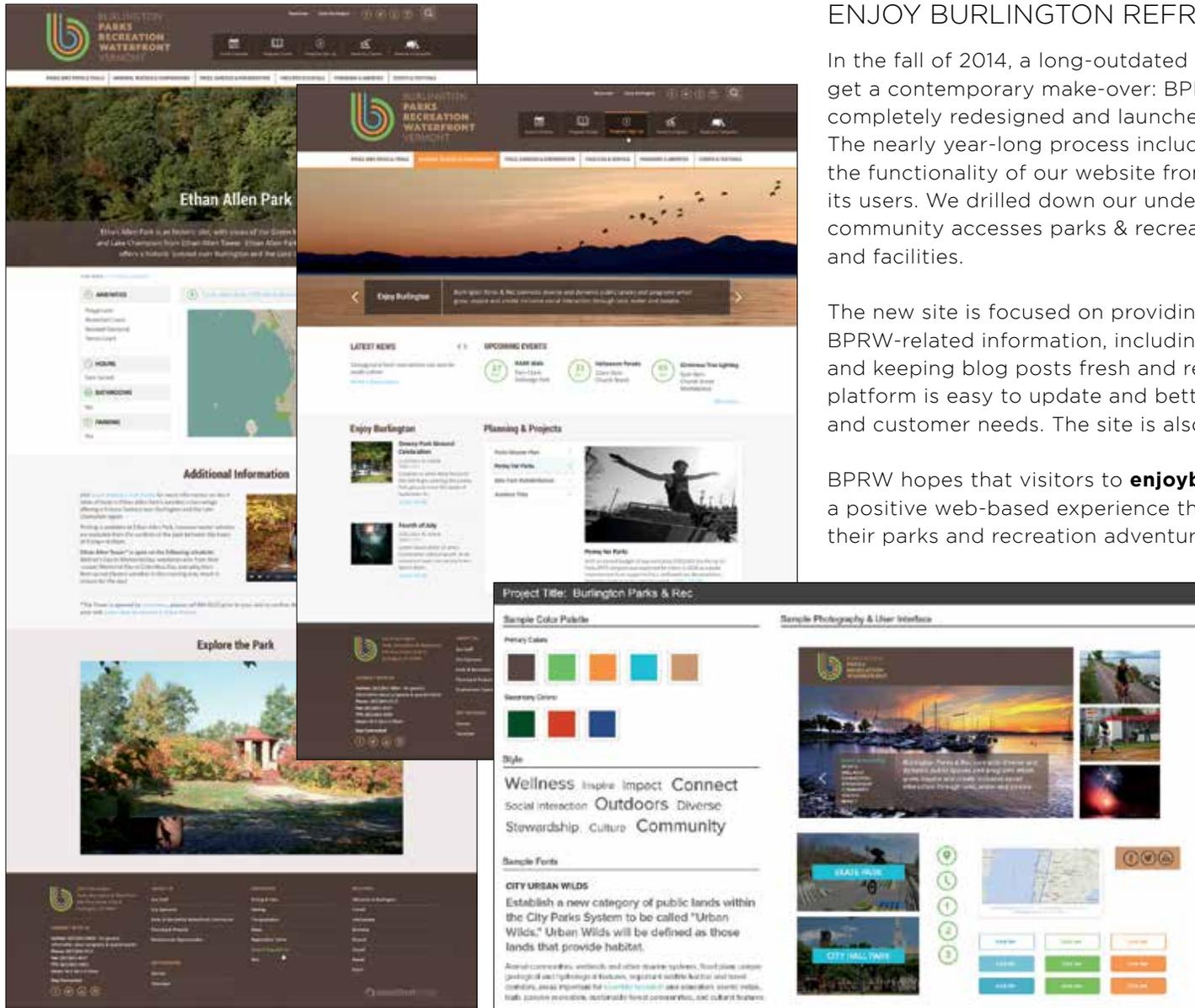


**MIDDLE LEFT**  
A branding exercise that revealed BPRW's traits and characteristics.

Over the past few years, intentional steps have been taken to rebuild the department's identity and, in turn, our relationship with and impact on the community:  
1-master plan  
2-rebranding  
3-website design & 4-wayfinding design.

**BELOW**  
BPRW's new logo representing Parks, Recreation, & Waterfront.





## ENJOY BURLINGTON REFRESH

In the fall of 2014, a long-outdated tool started to get a contemporary make-over: BPRW's website was completely redesigned and launched in July of 2015. The nearly year-long process included a revisioning of the functionality of our website from the perspective of its users. We drilled down our understanding of how the community accesses parks & recreation opportunities and facilities.

The new site is focused on providing easy access to BPRW-related information, including great images, and keeping blog posts fresh and relevant. The new platform is easy to update and better supports staff and customer needs. The site is also mobile friendly.

BPRW hopes that visitors to **enjoyburlington.com** have a positive web-based experience that directly supports their parks and recreation adventure!

**RIGHT**  
The conceptual evolution of website represented through mood boards and test pages. The design of the website incorporated ideas and aspects of the BPRW rebranding initiative.

# STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

## Moving Forward: Short-, Mid- & Long-Term Recommendations

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are strategic initiative recommendations for Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront. These recommendations are intended to guide the department and the community over roughly the next 10 years (2015 to 2024).

The recommendations are listed as short-term, mid-term, and long-term priorities. These time frames will give BPRW the opportunity to review and update the master plan accordingly.

**While the plan should be reviewed each year in order to accommodate any changes in priorities, a more thorough review will be completed every three years (2018, 2021, 2024).** This three-year review will include an update to the recommendations, noting work that has been completed and adjusting the strategic initiatives to reflect major changes. In addition, the three-year review should include an update of demographics and revised inventory of parks and amenities. During the second review cycle, another household community survey should be completed. It may also be helpful to have public input during these review cycles to ask for resident response to the plan's progress.

**THEY'RE DONE!**  
The BPRW Master Plan has been implemented as it has been developed. As this document has evolved, several strategic recommendations have been completed, with many others underway. These actions have already made a significant impact on both the community and the culture of the department as a whole.

### RECENTLY COMPLETED & UNDERWAY

#### RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)

Collaborate and combine general City facility capital costs with the Parks comprehensive capital plan to create a City-wide ten year capital plan.

#### ACTION

In 2015, a city-wide ten year capital plan was created through a cooperative interdepartmental effort. The plan began with a consultant-led inventory and assessment of all city assets (including parks facilities) and concluded with an understanding of upcoming capital need.

#### RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)

Align dedicated parks capital, including Penny for Parks and Parks Impact Fees, with City capital priorities considering additional funding opportunities and public requests.

#### ACTION

In conjunction with a City-wide effort to develop a 10-year capital plan, BPRW has developed a projected 10-year parks capital needs list. Projects in this list will be screened and prioritized annually, within the structure of the Penny for Parks program and with consideration of potential alternate funding sources. BPRW will continue seeking project requests from the community for consideration in the development of the annual project list.

**RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)**

Allocate labor dollars toward marketing support to increase program/park attendance and awareness of BPRW. For reference, agencies the size of Burlington typically have at least one full-time staff member dedicated toward marketing functions. This position can also include dedicated time toward corporate sponsorships. Supplement with local college marketing interns.

**ACTION**

BPRW's first Marketing & Outreach Manager hired in spring of 2015 and housed within the Planning Division.

**RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)**

Replace and redesign website.

**ACTION**

BPRW redesigned the website in the fall of 2014, launching the fresh enjoyburlington.com in the summer of 2015.

**RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)**

Develop design standards for park elements including benches, trash receptacles and bike racks.

**ACTION**

BPRW has a renewed focus on expanding our standards library, which today includes benches, trash receptacles, restroom standards and light fixtures.

**RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)**

Develop and implement new wayfinding & sign standards.

**ACTION**

Wayfinding design for parks, recreation paths & trails began in February of 2015.

**RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)**

Develop the Parks Foundation of Burlington to augment capital investment within the parks system. Focus primarily on capital funding of the Bike Path, Universally Accessible Playground & Imagine City Hall Park.

**ACTION**

In the spring of 2015, the Parks Foundation launched as a non-profit to support private fund raising for BPRW.

**RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)**

Develop park lighting standards.

**ACTION**

In 2014, BPRW created and adopted new park lighting standards. The new fixtures are energy efficient LEDs and Act 250/dark sky compliant.

**RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)**

Staff reorganization: evaluate all job descriptions for current and future growth potential, implement department-wide performance evaluations, investigate reporting structures to better streamline priorities.

**ACTION**

BPRW has undergone significant staffing and division reorganization. In 2014, a new evaluation template was developed, providing a common and supportive framework from which to conduct performance evaluations. The first round of Department-wide evaluations using this structure was completed in January of 2015 with great success. This tool supported open conversations between staff and leadership. Priority has been given to increasing staff support at the Miller Community Center, re-evaluating the Parks Division and formalizing the Waterfront Division, with Recreation assessment currently underway.

**RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)**

Improve City-wide work order systems and continue to invest in public request-for-service-systems like SeeClickFix.

**ACTION**

Internal facility work order management was improved in 2014 through the City wide facility assessment and work order system implementation (SchoolDude). Capacity for program, field & event request and need management has been improved through integration with existing reservation and program software (Maintrac).

**RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)**

Comprehensively assess the City's park lot coverage policy and amend to better support the parks abilities to support the community and the environment.

**ACTION**

In 2014, BPRW assessed the existing parks lot coverage policy and ratios in all parks. This information was evaluated and in 2014 a revised parks lot coverage policy was approved by the City Council and adopted by the City.

**RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)**

Create a standard for placement of new bench amenities and eliminate memorial bench policy.

**ACTION**

BPRW is developing a bench inventory detailing the location of memorial benches, bench types, bench condition, and ground treatment. The memorial bench program has been suspended during this process and will be evaluated with respect to the inventory findings and longer-term planning strategies.

**RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)**

Continue to improve technology; this is identified as one of the most significant areas needing improvement in the department. Use high value technology tools to improve public access and communication. Prioritize programs and tools that also improve staff function and do not shy from experimenting with new opportunities.

**ACTION**

In 2014, BPRW significantly expanded its social media presence. The Waterfront Division has significantly improved their ability to serve customers by upgrading software for Campground, Marina and Parking operations (Hercules). The City as a whole continues to invest in updated hardware and accounting software (New World). In addition, the City created an IT Department which included the hiring of the City's first Innovation & Technology Director.

**RECOMMENDATION (RECREATION)**

Increase offerings of special events based on community survey feedback.

- Hire an internal events coordinator to increase special events without reducing direct service programming to the community.

# SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (FY15 - FY18)

## RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)

Identify areas to better accommodate departmental storage needs, which will improve efficiencies throughout all divisions. There is a system wide shortage of storage areas. Needs include storage for existing and future equipment and vehicles.

## RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)

Develop an annual comprehensive marketing plan which presents a unified narrative voice, graphics uniformity, clarity and quality.

## RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)

Develop a regular review period that includes a cycle of reflection to evaluate projects, programs, staff and organizational structure.

## RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)

Investigate the feasibility for the Parks Foundation to oversee a scholarship endowment to increase support for residents with financial need. Improve system for identifying and informing residents in need of existing available support.

## RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)

Develop mobile technology capacity through improved software and hardware investment.

## RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)

Develop maps to better showcase priority areas including:

- Stormwater issues & opportunities map.
- Publicly accessible Greenways & Trails map.
- Event configuration map.

## RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)

Apply for agency accreditation through the Commission for Accreditation of Parks & Recreation Agencies (CAPRA).

- Input Burlington's data into PRORAGIS.
- Hire consultant to manage accreditation process.

## RECOMMENDATION (PARKS)

Update the Urban Forestry Master Plan.

- Account for improved infrastructure & stormwater management in the Downtown Core and Old North End.
- Identify areas of park or private land for reforestation.
- Identify riparian & wetland areas for additional plantings and flood remediation/protection in coordination with Conservation, Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD), the Intervale, and private property owners.

## RECOMMENDATION (PARKS)

Gain better understanding of stormwater & watershed opportunities through partnerships (DPW, Sea Grant, etc.).

- Start with Oakledge, Calahan & Smalley Parks: high opportunity with existing stormwater issues.
- Consider feature "blocks" within parks showcasing a certain stormwater management strategies.

## RECOMMENDATION (PARKS)

Increase conservation education opportunities through the introduction/expansion of wayfinding.

**RECOMMENDATION (PARKS)**

Develop policy on addition or elimination of assets considering these priorities:

- Connectivity & transportation issues.
- Soil hydrology & storm-water impacts to parks and connected systems.
- Number of existing like assets in the system and region.
- Perceived versus real demand for the asset.
- Impacts to maintenance budget.
- Improvements to accessibility, community health, and wellness & safety.

**RECOMMENDATION (PARKS)**

Work with DPW to identify a plan for the long term maintenance of park roadways; potentially establish percentage contributions by DPW and BPRW.

**RECOMMENDATION (PARKS)**

Identify & maintain an active inventory of open space for potential acquisition.

- Put particular focus on targeted areas for neighborhood park development and improved east-west connectivity as those are the two major limiting areas of the overall system.

**RECOMMENDATION (PARKS)**

Consider ways to increase funding in order to increase the amount of parks capital dollars. The median of capital spending for the PRORAGIS database is \$640,000. BPRW receives \$350,000 in capital funding annually, specifically for parks projects. This is significantly below what other parks agencies spend.

**RECOMMENDATION (PARKS)**

Implement preventative maintenance standards and programs for parks, beaches, trails, and facilities.

**RECOMMENDATION (PARKS)**

Conduct a bike parking inventory of all parks and develop a strategy to ensure that every park has bike parking considering quantity, type, and placement.

**RECOMMENDATION (RECREATION)**

Complete a comprehensive program evaluation including a full cost of service analysis to determine true costs of programs, services, and events. This should also include subsidy level goals for core programs. Community events should also be analyzed for direct and indirect costs.

**RECOMMENDATION (RECREATION)**

Increase offerings of special events based on community survey feedback.

- Research the possibility of offering more culturally diverse internal special events.
- Work with regional partners and producers on bringing a variety of appropriately scaled events to Burlington.

**RECOMMENDATION (RECREATION)**

Strengthen programmatic accessibility to include affordability, language barriers, physical barriers & transportation. Explore collaborative afterschool and summer program management structures to achieve efficiencies and opportunities.

## MID-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (FY19 - 22)

### RECOMMENDATION (RECREATION)

Facilitate a series of focus groups with New American, low income, and senior populations along with key advocates & partners to better understand recreation needs and how to best service those needs.

### RECOMMENDATION (RECREATION)

Increase staffing for athletic programs with particular attention to Pre-K offerings & diverse programming options.

### RECOMMENDATION (RECREATION)

Implement significant recreation recommendations. More tactical recommendations are included in the Recreation Assessment in THE BACKUP.

### RECOMMENDATION (WATERFRONT)

Update the Harbor Management Plan.

- Include wind and waves study.
- Improve Harbor Wayfinding and Signage.

### RECOMMENDATION (WATERFRONT)

Conduct environmental studies at southern end of the harbor in anticipation of future expansion of marina services.

### RECOMMENDATION (WATERFRONT)

Make Lake Champlain water quality and stewardship a public priority.

- Review and enhance recreational water quality testing.
- Improve public access to information and education around water quality.
- Pursue Clean Marina designation.

### RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)

Develop marketing & business plans for major facilities.

### RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)

Develop a plan for connectivity among facilities and parks; coordinate with Safe Routes to Schools plans and Local Motion bike path connection research.

### RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)

Develop a financial pro forma and public process for Memorial Auditorium building alternatives, including selling, leasing, or renovating the facility.

### RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)

Add Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront amenity information to the NRPA PRORAGIS database.

- As part of PRORAGIS, perform a calculation of economic benefits of BPRW services and events.

### RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)

Complete the design and construction of the 8-mile Burlington Bike Path Rehabilitation.

### RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)

One of the significant program priorities for Burlington is outdoor winter recreation opportunities. Consider the development of an outdoor recreation amenities like a sled hill & toboggan run or outdoor ice rink with a warming hut.

**RECOMMENDATION (PARKS)**

Increase trail management and access:

- Improve Arms Park trail system to include Mountain Bike and Nordic skiing use.
- Formalize Leddy Park trail system and strengthen connection through bike path rehabilitation.
- Formalize and improve the Intervale recreation trail.

**RECOMMENDATION (PARKS)**

Evaluate the size of existing dog parks and possibly develop an additional dog park in the southern end of the City. Consider implementing a dog park funding mechanism through usage fees.

**RECOMMENDATION (PARKS)**

Prioritize new assets based on community survey and level of service standards:

- Additional regulation size soccer/football/lacrosse field; potential sites include Leddy Park, Starr Farm, private or school property.
- Additional regulation adult softball field; potential sites include modifying existing field at Schifilliti Park or school property.
- Universally accessible playground, off-leash dog area and recreation rink; potentially sited at Oakledge Park.
- Expansion of community gardens, particularly in the Old North End and South End.

**RECOMMENDATION (PARKS)**

Increase park maintenance staff; the average 16.7 acres/ FTE in the PRORAGIS database but in Burlington the number is almost 40 acres/ FTE.

**RECOMMENDATION (PARKS)**

Perform an accessibility inventory of the parks system, either during park by park siting study development or as an independent activity. Develop a minimum accessible percentage to strive toward in all parks. Dedicate a specific amount of capital funds to accessibility improvements each year.

**RECOMMENDATION (PARKS)**

Update Management Plans for Urban Wilds.

**RECOMMENDATION (PARKS)**

Encouraging buffer/natural zones, tying into community desire for more passive recreation areas (i.e. Urban Reserve & Barge Canal).

**RECOMMENDATION (PARKS)**

Develop a list of current assets to re-imagine or remove based on community survey & Level of Service standards as well as BPRW policy.

- Appletree Park Tennis Courts: sited on wetland, requires consistent and costly maintenance due to soil hydrology and drainage issues.
- Oakledge Park Softball Field: sited on area with poor drainage and limited accessibility.
- Schmanska Park Tennis Courts: deferred maintenance coupled with demand for new amenities like Cane Ball.

**RECOMMENDATION (RECREATION)**

Create a regional recreation roundtable to discuss partnership opportunities and other ways to have a more regional approach to recreation service delivery.

## LONG-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (FY23 & BEYOND)

### RECOMMENDATION (RECREATION)

Dedicate recreation labor resources to new supporting positions: Special Population's Programmer and Therapeutic Recreation Specialist.

### RECOMMENDATION (RECREATION)

Initiate a community out-of-school resource mapping exercise to identify available afterschool and summer learning opportunities.

### RECOMMENDATION (WATERFRONT)

Improve & increase capacity at revenue and tourism centers. These play key roles in the way the City of Burlington funds the parks system. 60-70% of the BPRW budget is derived from external revenues as compared to the national median of 33%.

- Develop comprehensive capital & business plans for the renovation of North Beach Campground. This will require significant reinvestment including renovation of showers, laundry & maintenance facility, roads, increased full site hookups and expanded sites.
- Launch Southern Marina Expansion/Park-on-the-Water at Perkins Pier; this project is supported by a \$1.5M federal grant through the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department.

### RECOMMENDATION (WATERFRONT)

Work with the Community and Economic Development Office (CEDO) to develop a tourism plan for Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront services and events.

### RECOMMENDATION (BPRW)

Add an internal staff position to oversee BPRW's use of technology as well as overseeing data analytics.

### RECOMMENDATION (PARKS)

Holistic analysis & redesign of Battery Park to clarify the site's historical significance while improving its aesthetic and functional performance. Analysis should consider UVM's 2013 Archaeological Management Plan and the site's historical relevance as part of the 1812 and Civil Wars.

### RECOMMENDATION (RECREATION)

Identify more community indoor, multi-use recreation space.

- The Miller Center provides ~18,000 SF of indoor programming space for the entire City. National comparison suggests that leaves Burlington with a deficit of ~22,000 SF. Given our cold climate, an additional 46,000 SF of new multi-purpose space is recommended.
- Consider the creation of a new multi-purpose recreation center located close to the downtown area with easy access to the southern part of the City.
- Despite limited reflection in the community survey, community indoor aquatics is definitely a missing part of Burlington offerings. The development of an aquatics facility should be explored both through municipal development and non-profit/private partnerships.

### RECOMMENDATION (WATERFRONT)

Evaluate North Beach Campground & Marina for new uses including innovative revenue streams and partnerships.

## IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

The following is a list of suggestions for the successful implementation of the strategic initiative recommendations. It represents the commitment and discipline required to integrate the BPRW Master Plan implementation process into daily operations.

1 - The BPRW values and Strategic Recommendations become the guidepost for the entire department. When decisions or responses to the community are needed, the plan serves as the reference point for decision making and whether or not new issues or responses to the community are of higher importance than what's been established as existing direction.

2 - Include the master plan as part of Commission member and employee orientation programs.

3 - Post the plan's executive summary on the BPRW website and track results on the site. Track and share progress with interested partners and community members.

4 - Identify a primary staff person (or team) to be the "champion" of the plan's implementation to ensure success. This staff person is responsible for monitoring progress and works with staff to effectively integrate the plan into the department.

5 - Identify secondary staff persons to be the "project leader" to manage actions associated with each specific recommendation. Each recommendation generally requires a cross functional team of employees to support the completion of the initiative.

6 - Report on the plan's progress regularly. Break the plan into separate fiscal years and report on one year at a time, as an ongoing annual work plan. Each recommendation for any given fiscal year should include a list of strategies, developed in the previous fiscal year, that support its completion. It is the project leader's responsibility to report on his/her initiative, and updates should be made on a quarterly basis.

7 - At the end of the year, develop a written review, along with supporting documentation, of progress on the plan.

8 - In addition to an annual review, a more comprehensive three year review will occur in FY18, FY21, FY24, etc. These reviews will include updates on demographic information, additional community surveys, park & amenity inventory, and revision of the recreation program recommendations.

9 - Update major stakeholders on the plan's implementation and results on an annual basis.

10 - Conduct staff meetings on a regular basis, such as semi-annually to review the plan's progress and results. Provide a progress update to the BPRW Commission as well.

11 - Complete an annual review of the upcoming year's recommendations to determine if any priorities have changed. This might be part of an annual retreat in which successive years' recommendations are discussed as part of the annual budget process. The recommendations should tie into the budget development. The plan's action plan includes three time frames: FY15-FY18, FY19-FY22, and FY23 & beyond.



This schedule provides the opportunity for updates during those time frames.

12 - Post a chart of each year's recommendations on office walls in administrative areas with a check-off column designating completion as part of a visual management program. Staff meetings should regularly include discussion of related strategies. This will help emphasize the plan's importance and BPRW's commitment to successful implementation. If there are ideas for new strategies that arise throughout the year, include them on a written "parking lot" and review them as part of the annual review to determine if they supplant any existing initiatives.

## CONCLUSION

BPRW aspires to build upon its legacy of providing outstanding recreational opportunities, community partnerships, and environmental stewardship for the community. The department is poised to embrace and enhance its new brand identity integrating comprehensive and holistic approaches to recreation programming, operations and maintenance, capital planning, and marketing. This commitment ensures BPRW's continued role in service to the community, further developing our magnificent parks system according to the initiatives of the BPRW Master Plan. These strategic initiatives provide a clear direction and focus for the future of our parks system that is drawn from community input, identified need, and stewardship of the environment. The result is the renaissance of our parks system, already tangible, teaming with impactful opportunities to benefit Burlington and beyond.

## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

BPRW Strategic Initiatives	
<i>Recently Completed &amp; Underway</i>	
✓	Create a City-wide ten year capital plan.
✓	Align dedicated parks capital with City capital priorities.
✓	Allocate dollars toward marketing to increase program/park attendance and awareness of BPRW.
✓	Replace and redesign website.
✓	Develop design standards for park elements including benches, trash receptacles and bike racks.
✓	Develop and implement new wayfinding & sign standards.
✓	Develop the Parks Foundation of Burlington to augment capital investment within the parks system.
✓	Develop park lighting standards.
✓	Staff reorganization: evaluate job descriptions, implement evaluations, investigate structures.
✓	Improve City-wide work order systems and continue to invest in public request-for-service systems.
✓	Comprehensively assess and amend the City's park lot coverage policy.
✓	Create a standard for placement of new bench amenities and eliminate memorial bench policy.
✓	Continue to improve technology.
✓	Hire an Internal Events Coordinator to support special events.
<i>Short-Term Recommendations (FY15-FY18)</i>	
	Identify areas to better accommodate departmental storage need.
	Develop an annual comprehensive marketing plan.
	Develop a regular review period that includes a cycle of reflection.
	Investigate the feasibility for the Parks Foundation to oversee a scholarship endowment.
	Develop mobile technology capacity through improved software and hardware investment.
	Develop maps to better showcase priority areas.
	Apply for CAPRA accreditation.
	Update the Urban Forestry Master Plan.
	Gain better understanding of stormwater & watershed opportunities through partnerships.
	Increase conservation education opportunities through the introduction/expansion of wayfinding.
	Develop policy on addition or elimination of assets.
	Work with DPW to identify a plan for the long term maintenance of park roadways.
	Identify & maintain an active inventory of open space for potential acquisition.
	Consider ways to increase funding in order to increase the amount of parks capital dollars.
	Implement preventative maintenance standards and programs for parks, beaches, trails, and facilities.
	Conduct a bike parking inventory and develop a strategy to ensure that every park has bike parking.
	Complete a comprehensive program evaluation.
	Increase offerings of special events based on community survey feedback.

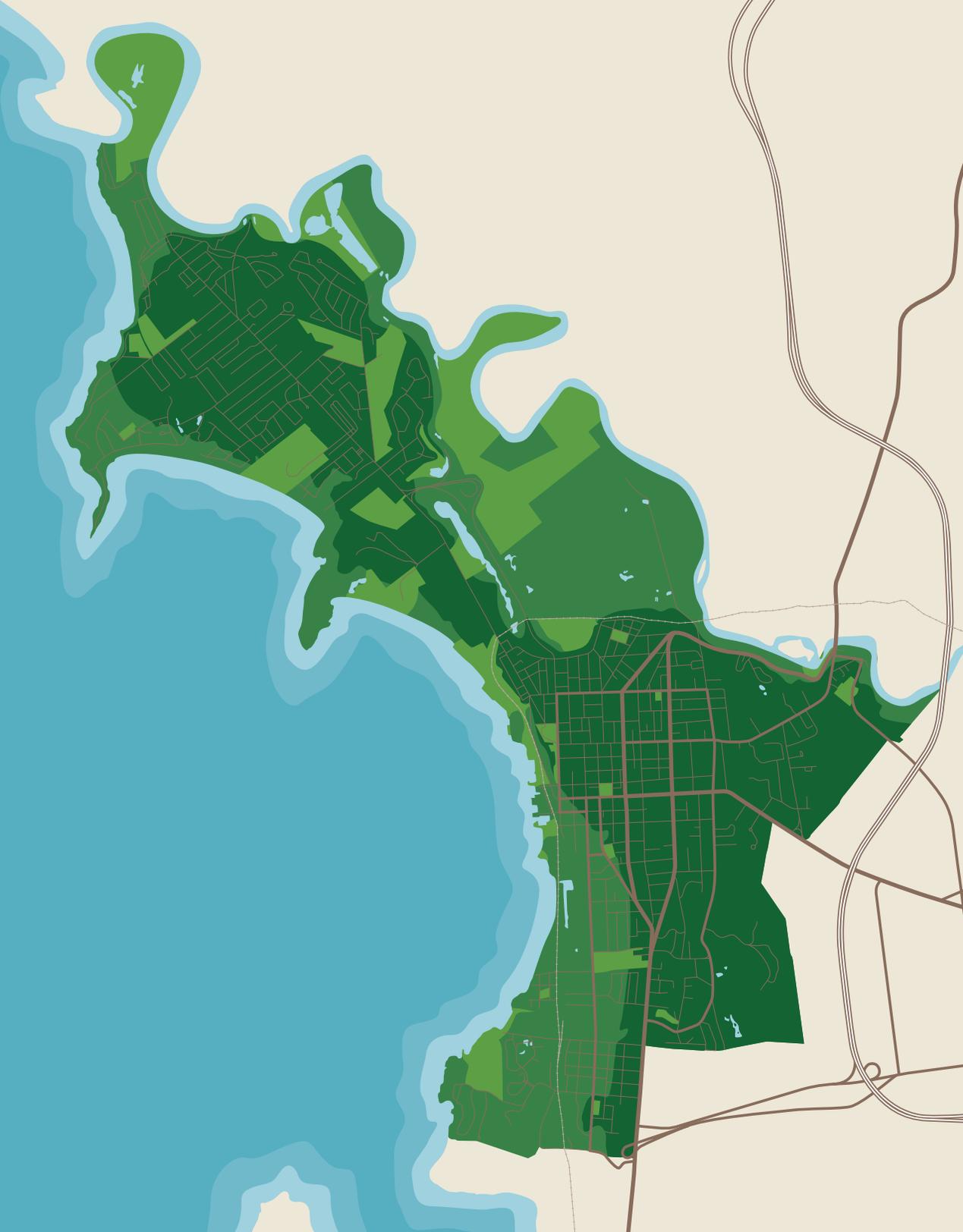
	Strengthen programmatic accessibility.
	Facilitate focus groups to better understand recreation needs and how to best service those needs.
	Increase staffing for athletic programs.
	Implement significant recreation recommendations.
	Update the Harbor Management Plan.
	Conduct environmental studies of southern harbor in anticipation of future marina expansion.
	Make Lake Champlain water quality and stewardship a public priority.
<i>Medium-Term Recommendations (FY19-22)</i>	
	Develop marketing and business plans for major facilities.
	Develop a plan for connectivity among facilities and parks.
	Develop a financial pro forma and public process for Memorial Auditorium building alternatives.
	Add BPRW amenity information to the NRPA PRORAGIS database.
	Complete the design and construction of the 8-mile Burlington Bike Path Rehabilitation.
	Consider outdoor winter recreation opportunities.
	Increase trail management and access.
	Evaluate existing dog parks and possibly develop an additional dog park in the southern end of the City.
	Prioritize new assets based on community survey and LOS standards.
	Update Management Plans for Urban Wilds.
	Perform an accessibility inventory of the parks system.
	Increase park maintenance staff.
	Encouraging buffer/natural zones, tying into community desire for more passive recreation areas.
	Develop a list of current assets to re-imagine or remove based on community survey & LOS standards.
	Create a regional recreation roundtable to discuss partnership opportunities.
	Dedicate recreation labor resources to new supporting positions.
	Initiate a community out-of-school resource mapping exercise.
	Improve & increase capacity at revenue and tourism centers.
	Work with CEDO to develop a tourism plan for BPRW services and events.
<i>Long-Term Recommendations (FY23 &amp; Beyond)</i>	
	Add an internal staff position to oversee BPRW's use of technology as well as overseeing data analytics.
	Analysis & redesign of Battery Park to clarify historical significance and improve aesthetics & function.
	Identify more community indoor, multi-use recreation space.
	Evaluate North Beach Campground & Marina for new and innovative uses.

**ABOVE**  
Strategic initiative checklist: a summary of the recommendations that will guide the BPRW community over the next ten years.  
Let's grow together!

**WHEW!**



# THE BACK-UP



# FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

## Goals & Context

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### THE FRAMEWORK

The 2015 Burlington Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Master Plan is the uniting parks & recreation plan for the department and the community. The plan provides a framework for decision making of future service delivery and resource allocation, guiding roughly the next 10 years (2015 through 2024). The planning process began in May 2013 and concluded in September of 2015.

**The goal of the plan, as outlined in the initial RFP, was to: “Develop a community-supported plan that provides guidance for future development and redevelopment of the City’s parks, recreation programming, waterfront, open space, trails and facilities. This master plan will guide policy development, prioritize demands and opportunities, and generate a strategic action plan to be updated every three years.”** The BPRW Master Plan will be incorporated into the City of Burlington’s Municipal Development Plan (MDP). In addition to the goal developing a community-supported parks system plan, other goals included:

- Integration of core values in the delivery of services.
- Strengthening a regional approach to parks and recreation services.
- Aligning services and programs with changing demographics.

- Creation of a narrative for the department to better tell it’s story while building the BPRW brand and community relationships.
- Deployment of departmental cultural change with new leadership.

### CONTEXT FOR THE PLAN

The planning process included a review of several other existing or ongoing City plans:

- 2013 Chittenden County ECOS Plan
- 2013 planBTV: Downtown & Waterfront Master Plan
- 2013 Update to the 2004 Open Space Protection Plan
- 2012 Burlington Bike Path Feasibility Study
- 2012 Imagine City Hall Park Master Plan
- Penny for Parks Annual Capital Plan
- City-wide Annual Capital Improvement Plan

Three of these plans, in particular, have relevance to the Parks Master Plan. These include planBTV: Downtown & Waterfront, the 2013 Open Space Protection Plan Update, and the 2013 Chittenden County ECOS Plan.

## planBTV: DOWNTOWN & WATERFRONT

planBTV: Downtown & Waterfront addresses comprehensive land use and development plans focused on Burlington's Downtown and Waterfront. The Plan integrated land use, transportation, land development, urban design and public infrastructure into one planning document. The Plan outlined seven themes:

- **Vibrant Economy**
- **Transportation Choice**
- **Active & Healthy Living**
- **Access to Nature, Arts, People, Entertainment**
- **Environmental & Cultural Stewardship**
- **Sense of Place**
- **Creativity & Innovation**

All of these themes have a relationship with BPRW services. In addition, several planBTV recommendations are directly related to BPRW: waterfront improvement, Imagine City Hall Park redevelopment, Battery Park master planning, marina support services, and the implementation of recommendations from the Burlington Harbor Management Plan.

## OPEN SPACE PROTECTION PLAN

The 2014 Open Space Protection Plan (OSPP) Update adapts the original 2004 vision and goals to reflect progress made on past goals. This plan also included public input to test current public perceptions of Burlington open space. Subsequently, the open space inventory was updated to reflect the current status and use of open space in the City. Then, community input

and geographic information of the updated inventory were developed into a matrix that will be used to guide future open space acquisitions. Finally, open space policy goals were developed to guide future decisions related to both acquisition ideas and management recommendations for existing public lands.

## CHITTENDEN COUNTY ECOS PLAN

The ECOS Plan serves as the combined Chittenden County Regional Plan, Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. Goals of the Plan include:

- **Natural Systems** Design and maintain a strategically planned and managed green infrastructure network composed of natural lands, working landscapes, and open spaces that conserve ecosystem values and functions, and provide associated benefits to our community.
- **Social Community** Promote the skills, resources, and assurances needed for all community members to participate in the workforce and in their family, civic and cultural lives, within and among their neighborhoods, and in the larger community.
- **Economic Infrastructure** Build the region's capacity for shared and sustainable improvements in the economic wellbeing of the community through support of both local and globally competitive initiatives.
- **Built Environment** Make public and private investments in the built environment to minimize environmental impact, maximize financial efficiency, optimize social equity and benefits, and improve public health.

# ASSESSING THE PARKS SYSTEM

## Park Resources & Recreation Services

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### PARK RESOURCES

**Park & Facility Assessment/Inventory & Level of Service Standards** The purpose of this assessment was to provide a detailed synopsis of all parks, waterfront, open space, trails and facilities located within the City of Burlington. The assessment delivered a thorough inventory, analysis of forecasted needs, existing gaps in the system, and strategic recommendations. Additionally, the inventory included an overview of needed renovations, improvements, and system opportunities, and Level of Service Standards - information about parkland, facility, and amenity comparisons to other similarly sized cities throughout the United States.

**Mapping** This process included park mapping by classification and major amenities by facility standards. GIS was utilized to create a service area analysis for specific parks, waterfront, open space, trails and facilities. The mapping process was used in conjunction with the standards analysis and to form the basis for identifying gaps in service and potential opportunities for future facility development and capital planning.

### DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS

**Financial Review** This review was an in-depth analysis of BPRW finances. It included a benchmark analysis comparing the department to national averages including personnel expenses, capital budgets, and

organizational assets based on the population size. This tool will allow the department to evaluate resource allocation for the future. Moving forward, BPRW is fiscally focused on fairness, forward-thinking, and facts.

**Financial Benchmark Review** The following information reviews BPRW financial information as it relates to staffing and population comparisons. This data was derived from the National Recreation & Parks Association, PRORAGIS (Park and Recreation Operating Ratio and GIS) database. 81 agencies were selected as benchmark comparatives. All of the comparative agencies have a population of between 25,000 and 75,000, with a median population of approximately 48,000. The agencies are all departments within city governments. The cities are represented in approximately 20 states throughout the United States. It is important to note, very few agencies in the New England region have entered their data on the PRORAGIS site, so this region of the country is under-represented.

The number of full-time BPRW staff approaches the benchmark comparison of the upper quartile (75%) of 44 full-time staff. For the purposes of comparing parks & recreation departments, Burlington's number of full-time staff is 40, which excludes six custodial positions servicing City buildings. Additionally, BPRW's cemetery staff is included in this number; the vast majority of park & recreation agencies do not manage cemeteries.

The total BPRW salary budget is under the upper quartile by \$200,000. Comparing Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) to the populations, there are 359 residents per FTE. This is closer to the lower quartile than the median. Even with a personnel budget near the upper quartile, the total operating budget of \$5,048,566 is closer to the median than the upper quartile. 63% of the operating budget is personnel related. The national average of the personnel expense compared to the total operating expense is closer to 50%. These expenses spread over the total population are at the national average at \$119 per capita. The result of the operation expenses being at or below average is that the revenue per capita and revenue per total operating expense are much higher than the national average. In fact, they are higher than the upper quartile by 19% in revenue per capita and 30% in revenue per total operating expense. The total revenue for the department is \$6,111,485. Of the total revenue, 58% (\$3,564,800) comes from non-tax revenue. This is also 19% higher than the upper quartile.

Burlington has a lower acres/1,000 population than the median city in the random sample, as 12.2 acres. This stat does not include the WVPD public

parks. When WVPD lands are factored, acreage per resident increases to 23.5 acres per thousand residents. However, acres of parkland maintained per maintenance FTE is significantly higher than other reporting agencies, suggesting the need for more park maintenance staff. While the average city has park maintenance staff maintaining almost 17 acres per FTE, Burlington staff maintain 78% more than the upper quartile of reporting agencies, at almost 40 acres per FTE. It is worth noting, the database does not take into account the amount of mowable acres or undeveloped park acreage, therefore, there are limitations to the data.

Along with efficiency in park maintenance, BPRW is also more productive in generating revenue per capita. Whereas, the median agency produces \$37/capita, Burlington produces \$84.24/capita. Correspondingly, the agency greatly exceeds the percent of revenue per total operating expense of 70.6%. The median agency produces 33.33% of revenue/total operating expense. The numbers indicate that Burlington is under-represented in total capital cost/capita. The lowest reporting agencies have \$4.94/capita of capital dollars, and median agencies have \$14/capita.

<b>BPRW COMPARISONS TO NATIONAL STATS</b>				
	<b>Lower Quartile</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Upper Quartile</b>	<b>Burlington</b>
<b>Full-Time Parks &amp; Recreation Staff</b>	19	30	44	40
<b>Total Personnel Expenditures</b>	\$1.5M	\$2.3M	\$3.4M	\$3.2M
<b>Acres/1,000 Population (not including WVPD lands)</b>	10.30	14.40	20.20	12.20
<b>Acres of Parkland Maintained/Maintenance FTE</b>	6.10	12.70	22.40	39.85
<b>Population/FTE</b>	7	1,187	2,224	359
<b>Revenue/Capita</b>	\$15.00	\$37.00	\$65.00	\$84.24
<b>Revenue/Total Operating Expense</b>	22.81%	33.33%	52.77%	70.60%
<b>Total Capital Cost/Capita</b>	\$4.94	\$14.00	\$40.00	\$8.27
<b>Tax Cost/Capita</b>	\$16.90	\$39.20	\$61.50	\$60.18

Burlington spends \$8.27/capita. This is important as this funding assists with infrastructure improvements.

**Organizational & Leadership Assessment** One of the elements included in the scope of the BPRW Master Plan was an Organizational & Leadership Review. The full report is not included within the body of the plan as it serves as an internal document for departmental leadership. The purpose of this assessment was to review the organization staffing and structure. Organizational and leadership strengths have a significant role in the successful deployment of a master plan. A substantial part of the information and recommendations included in the assessment came from staff input and three employee focus groups. These groups included BPRW's Leadership Team, Parks staff and Recreation staff, representing a cross-section of all divisions and levels of staff within the agency. The analysis also included a review of the organization chart, departmental culture and change in leadership. The goals of the assessment included:

- Analysis of the organization structure.
- Review of staffing levels.
- Employee perspectives of staffing structure, and future human resource requirements.

Consensus findings showed:

- Most employees feel the organization structure works well.
- Staff generally feels stretched with workload.
- Job responsibility organization seems to be an area in need of further clarification and definition.
- A lack of marketing support exists, which impacts

recreation program registration, community awareness, and a lack of overall department identity.

- There are limitations to current technology use, but there are efforts being made to improve in this area.
- Parks staff have responsibility beyond typical park maintenance duties as they are also responsible for custodial and building maintenance of City buildings.
- A lack of programming support exists at the Miller Center.
- Employees appreciate the change in leadership in the department, and there is a general feeling that BPRW is moving in the right direction.
- Employees have high regard for their ability to partner with other organizations.
- Employees feel as though the department does a good job connecting with residents.

## RECREATION PROGRAMS & SERVICES

**Demographics & Trends Report** This report includes data from BPRW, the City and supplemental information from census tract demographic data obtained from Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI). ESRI is the largest research and development organization dedicated to Geographical Information Systems (GIS), specializing in population projections and market trends. For comparison purposes, data was also obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau. This analysis includes information such as household income, ethnicity, gender, age, and other demographic information. Also included is a trends analysis outlining local, regional, and national recreational trends. Key trends were identified and

applied to decision making and future positioning of the department.

**Recreation Assessment** This assessment included a review of programs and service offerings of the BPRW, including core program identification, a current program assessment, marketing approaches and program guide review, recreation programming standards, customer requirements, and measures. The assessment also includes a review of age segment distribution of offerings, program life cycle analysis and a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) for future program direction.

**Visioning** This exercise included a discussion of the overall findings from all of the technical reports, community survey, and community input. Discussion occurred during a staff workshop to review the findings and recommendations as well as a brainstorm exercise to prioritize System Themes. Departmental values and were also reviewed. This information influenced the final master plan recommendations.

**Strategic Initiatives** The list of strategic initiatives included specific recommendations for BPRW to be targeted for implementation over the next 10 years. The recommendations are categorized according to short-term, mid-term and long-term time frames, which correspond to a review cycle of every three years.

**Implementation Guidelines** This section lists a series of guidelines for successful implementation including methods of monitoring progress, reporting results, and communication with City leaders, staff members, partners, and the public.

## DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE

BPRW is responsible for Burlington's 550+ acres of open space, 39 parks, 35 miles of public trails including the Burlington Bike Path, 3 public beaches, 12,000+ park and street trees, 44 public buildings, 14 community gardens, and 3 cemeteries in addition to recreation programming.

In 2015, the department re-organized into 5 distinct divisions:

- **Parks Division** Oversees all maintenance for public facilities in addition to core functions of grounds, trees, park buildings, conservation & community gardens, and cemeteries.
- **Planning Division** Oversees capital project management, parks planning initiatives, and department marketing & communications functions.
- **Recreation Division** Oversees all programming and event planning.
- **Recreation Facilities Division** Oversees the management, programming and operations of the Leddy Ice Arena and Miller Recreation Center.
- **Waterfront Division** Oversees the Community Boathouse Marina, North Beach & North Beach Campground, parking, gate & park attendants throughout the system.

# VOICES OF THE BTV COMMUNITY

From the Community, Staff, Leadership & Partners

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## OUTREACH EFFORTS

An important element of the plan included a variety of input processes to ensure resident participation in the future direction of the agency. These processes included multiple public meetings, a community open house, a series of focus groups, stakeholder & key leader meetings, a statistically valid survey, and online engagement tool.

**Community Survey Results** A statistically valid household survey was administered as part of the project and assessed satisfaction levels, facility use information, program & facility needs, and how well needs are being met. Over 400 households returned the survey, which greatly exceeded the minimum number of surveys required for the analysis. The survey tool is useful in identifying priorities and corresponding resource allocation.

**Online Mapping Tool & Survey** The statistically valid household survey was complemented by the launch of an online mapping tool, which invited community members to weigh in qualitatively on the park system. Community participation in the “MyBurlington” survey remained lower than the household survey, however, the data received helped to illuminate issues within individual parks and reinforced the strength of the waterfront.

**Focus Groups** The consulting team met with BPRW staff members in a series of focus groups. The input and review summary was useful in determining future programming & facility opportunities, potential partnerships, opportunities for improvement, and challenges that BPRW will face in the next ten years.

**Partnerships** This exercise reviewed BPRW’s significant partnerships with a specific focus on areas needing strengthening. Partnerships are critical to the department’s success. While BPRW has an excellent reputation for collaboration and partnership, there is always opportunities for improvement. This is particularly true for ongoing dialogue and relationships with other government providers of parks & recreation opportunities within the region.

**Additional Input** As described, the planning process included a series of public input methods. In addition, the process included a successful public bike ride event in conjunction with the Burlington Bike Path Rehabilitation Project and participation in Mornings with Miro meetings with Mayor Miro Weinberger.

## COMMUNITY INPUT SUMMARY

The following is a summary of feedback generated from the community meetings that were part of this planning process.

## **1 - What are examples of organizational strengths that we need to make sure we build on for the development of the plan?**

Vision: new departmental leadership is well suited to sustain the organization. Many sessions included consideration of what talents are required in today's environment.

Sensitivity to the needs of Burlington as a diverse community: residents expressed gratitude for their opportunities (and more than a little frustration at the inability to optimize the assets for everyone's needs).

Good will & partnerships with people and (local and regional) organizations: given the current mood of more demand for services and spending less, BPRW benefits from positive relationships with the community. That said, there is a sense that too much planning and not enough performance is becoming standard operating procedure in Burlington.

The local population is passionate about their parks, are active participants in services and frequent users of the system. BPRW manages some of Burlington's most iconic and unique features not limited to Oakledge Park, Leddy Beach, North Beach, the Burlington Bike Path, Waterfront Park, City Hall Park, among many others. BPRW offers a diverse set of programs and services attracting all sorts of visitors.

BPRW utilizes a collaborative spirit and maintains effective partnerships, which the organization needs to sustain. The reputation also speaks to the community support and behooves the organization to reach back with a robust media presence. There are a number of parks and connecting trails that need continuous maintenance due to bike/ped wear & tear. Funding is the final part of the plan and it needs resolve.

## **2 - What do you consider to be the most significant issues facing BPRW over the next five years?**

Funding: the best planning in the world will not deliver the resources needed. This topic was discussed in nearly every group.

Priorities: though many ideas have merit, only a few can be implemented. Transparency (like Pennies for Parks has established) is seen as a positive approach to planning what actions are undertaken.

Effectiveness: clear take-aways included issues that will impact most of the users of the system such as connecting the bike path north-to-south through downtown (including public transportation options to get people to and from resources) and resolving issues about how the docks and lake interfaces are managed (some abandoned land issues).

Infrastructure: some of the most significant issues mentioned frequently relate to the inventory of assets, infrastructure of trails & parks, and how to fund improvements. Amenities have been getting a lot of use, a good sign, but need protection and care. Courts and other playing surfaces are also in need of attention and need to be tended properly or updated due to usage.

Diversity: BPRW needs to be agile and flexible in being able to plan for increasing community diversity. Engaging all aspects of the community may be difficult, but clarity of process within a concrete plan will excite to public.

Other related comments include:

- Long-term emphasis on moving in the right direction.
- We have orphan parcels that are not managed.

- Look outside the city for a more regional approach.
- There is no planning process for the urban reserve.
- Having an answer for people informing them about when things will happen.

**3 - What opportunities are there for improvement or areas of weakness that BPRW needs to strengthen in order to effectively implement the plan in these specific areas?**

Eliminate analysis paralysis: overcome a minor negative reputation of inactivity.

Act decisively & communicate clearly (using means that are convenient for everyone including third-party resources) so that all constituents understand BPRW's priorities.

Continued, customized outreach to all parts of the community: Burlington does not see itself as a place that is like other places. The ability to provide feedback that demonstrates sensitivity to this concern would earn many fans and reinforce positive impressions.

What seems to be the impetus for the weaknesses of the department is congestion (of people and ideas). Communication then is important with the community, as are the relationships with schools and public works.

Accessibility and space have become an issue; if you plan for more parking it takes up space. There is a lack of accessibility for canoes, kayakers, etc. The parks now become crowded, leading to more calls for open spaces – which of course includes the need for reliable accessibility (ADA) and the amenities of maintenance/garbage/signage and ecological protection. The list of parks with the most room for improvement includes: Leddy Park, City Hall Park, Waterfront Park, Arms Park,

Community Boat House, and the Burlington Bike Path. The Moran Plant is a concern. A concert venue would be nice, centrally located and can house the amenities such as restrooms and water fountains.

There must be cost conscious behavior, but ultimately the general idea is getting people to come, stay, and spend money. Possible ideas include building a new year-round regional ice rink or swimming. Other general themes include:

- We try to find the perfect plan and we end up not doing anything.
- Repeatedly told things will happen, but they don't.
- The Department is too busy, perhaps that is the scope of the operation.
- They need to learn how to say no and have a priority list that governs those decisions (responding to squeaky wheels vs. what's good for the whole).
- There are many people who are willing to pitch in. Harnessing this power is an opportunity.

Beyond the major themes of parks, open space, amenities, the waterfront, and facilities are more specific weakness to address:

- Pennies for Parks is an indication that projects are appropriately developed based on the needs of the population.
- Wait list is 10 years for a boat slip.
- Scholarships for up to 50% off, but it's complex and to qualify and register.
- World refugee day celebration at Schmanska Park should continue

- Let the market influence what stays on the roster of programs.

**4 - Do you have any suggestions for future programs, facilities, services that currently do not exist?**

Two services that have the most suggestions relate to biking and the waterfront’s marina. As trails develop, the public could bike to trails instead of driving and then biking on trails, linking all the parks. Create solutions to reduce parking, as cars take up space. Give that space to the people especially around the water’s edge. Establish more bike stations, possibly even a bike valet.

For parks, establish park programming and in case of emergency have a protocol response. Safety is a concern, with suggestions of placing food/water in parks, plus easier accessibility with regards to ADA and trails. Accessibility too is important for the waterfront marina as respondents wish to attract more boats to the dock.

Also receiving attention are open spaces. They have both the potential to be a revenue generator (solar field, sledding hill) but can also be home to ‘sketchy’ characters. Suggested as well is to create open spaces that are more public with community gardens, a warming shelter and winter village. Better signage and connection with public works for stormwater management would be helpful. Think flexibly with regards to the new Americans.

Lastly, new sustainable sources of funding should be explored to ensure the ability to maintain and upgrade infrastructure and amenities in the future. Diversification of revenue streams would help bring stable funding

for year-over-year improvements to BPRW-managed spaces.

- Grilling facilities need upgrading.
- Pond hockey, broomball, curling, and disc golf.
- Cyclecross.
- Leddy parking lot (a huge underused space in a great location).

**5 - Any ideas on how BPRW can strengthen or build new partnerships within the City or regionally?**

With many ideas for strengthening and building partnerships, schools comes up on top as the one most mentioned as an opportunity be it parks as outdoor labs for scientific study, or creating a student run community or finally, teaming with the YES program. The second most common responses relates to sponsors and commercial ventures, which for some may have an unwelcome influence but some have a 20-year history with certain sponsor/volunteers. Key Bank is also a long-standing sponsor. Continue sharing common vendors.

To maintain and obtain safe, manicured trails/bike paths, teaming up with UVM ensures the path’s safety. Other partnerships include: the Intervale, work alongside private clubs, friends groups, AARP, and regional health initiatives. Possible additional partnerships and other thoughts:

- We want to provide better boating access; the City is focusing on improving this.
- Leave-no-trace sensibility and accountability, public health community.

- Non-profits could give contributions.
- Enable access to lake as a “trade” with other regions (you can use our parks, we can use your golf courses?).
- “Velo vert” puts the BTV paths to shame (it is a rails to trails project) Canadian Park System is highly regarded.
- Association of Africans living in Vermont, Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program.
- Dog walker volunteer brigade.
- Agricultural land, campground and fires.
- Licensing for food trucks at Oakledge Park on weekends or concessions at little league games.
- Accessibility group looking at issues particularly around parks.
- Encourage structured opportunities to ski.
- Terrain park in the winter; maybe private partners.
- We need more things to do in the winter time.
- Sponsor interns working with the department for marketing support.

**6 - Do you have any ideas for improvement in BPRW’s environmental stewardship and sustainable practices?**

Create more pocket parks and an emerald necklace; create connectivity for trails, habitats and parks. Find out ways to lessen energy bills; life cycle of design is important to consider. A great opportunity is composting as a way to deal with waste in parks, but what to do with stormwater and runoff? Mowing

practices and treatment of organic materials are a concern. Create a marketing and public relations strategy to continually put those issues in front. Lastly, as law states, recycling bins must be placed side by side with garbage cans. Other notes:

- Parts of Leddy Park look like the woods! That is fantastic!
- Access to the rinks could be made more efficient.
- Streets have compromised how people move around the city.
- Parks needs to express better what they do. Pennies for Parks? Why not a dime? Don’t they deserve it?
- Straightjacketed by “internal” rules. Paths that are dirt, erosion... paved paths would break “impervious cover” restrictions contribute to the problem.
- CIP to identify projects that are cost avoidance or efficiency.
- Parks needs focus...Leddy has so many inefficiencies. We need to evaluate these issues.
- Better coordination of stewardship program. Groups adopt parks.

**7 - How would you assess BPRW’s efforts in communicating with its residents? Any ideas for improvement? How would you assess BPRW’s brand and image?**

There appears to be lots of room for improvement with regards to brand and image. Although there is pertinent information on the website, it may not be easy to find. There needs to be an upgrade and fresher take on communication on the website. A blog format is recommended allowing for conversation, and Survey

Monkey publicizes progress. The marketing should be inclusive and should have the ability to reach all parts of the community.

The image has room for improvement. The logo and look appear out of date. As one participant expressed “graphic design really does matter,” so a cohesive signage aesthetic is a specific example of improvement. Because things appear out of date, possibly partner with a marketing firm to freshen up the look of signage/brand/logo. Other notes on communication include:

- BPRW is better at reaching out to the community.
- An accessible facility can become obsolete just from steady (not increasing) use.
- There should be an online list of amenities and parks.
- If neighbors are the volunteers, they have ownership and want to limit use.
- Penny for Parks web page that looks like a bulletin board – show progress, context.
- There is no consistency in look between the City and Enjoy Burlington.
- People take for granted what they offer, but association isn’t always clear.
- Front Porch Forum is effective.
- The marketing (tourism) platforms should be better connected to the larger area – Lake Champlain “Byway”.

**8 - One of the hallmarks of great parks & recreation agencies is their ability to provide access to all. Are there under-served populations we need to make sure we address?**

The more popular and ‘must haves’ of a great park are the basics such as space, safety, maintenance and beauty. Expanding on those four hallmarks, the space must be welcoming while not overcrowded with easy accessibility to both community space and private spots. Signage, restrooms and proper infrastructure ensure those safe and welcoming places. Maintenance is important for the health of the ecosystem and botanical diversity of the park. Lastly, beauty is a sought after commodity both in terms of art and architecture and in terms of a sanctuary and mother earth. Most respondents mention walking paths and opportunities for exercise as other hallmarks of a great park system. The organization must protect assets and acquire parkland. More remarks regarding hallmarks and providing access included:

- Justification and transparency is critical.
- Act 250 is extreme – some language protects residents’ interests over public good (Lake street resident resent Penguin Plunge in their front yards).
- Does the department/population embrace the entrepreneurial plan to finance programs? Master plans scares me - start with the customer, consider the assets. How are those two entities brought together?
- Reconsider the marina.

Remarks regarding under-served populations:

- Some parks are more accessible than others. How can we create strategies that work within the public, including the North End, which has the size of the park serving the right population? Cultural events, schools, and the United Way are all opportunities to serve and include New Americans.

- It is challenging with non-English speakers. The success stories are based on neighborly behavior.
- Those who should be considered may not be in the room. Take the process to “target populations”.
- United Way is a good connector.
- A possible collaboration right away for plazas, slow streets, etc.

**9 - Remarks regarding ensuring the plan’s success:**

This is a good time in terms of economy, management, culture shift and opportunity, so the expectations and enthusiasm are high. Due to the excitement for the plan, feedback and an active and transparent plan process are expected for the plan’s success. Parks are for the people; clarifying the to-do list within the concrete plan is owed to them. Also, each park may need mini-neighbor based boards and plans presented park by park. Ultimately, community input is crucial as is the continuous feedback and coordination of funding will ensure the plan’s success. Other comments:

- If the plan is neighborhood-based, do you have special assessments for particular areas?
- All-season parks are needed.
- Park issues are their issues, but they are City issues too.
- The City has underfunded its building assets.
- The arts gets 50% of funding outside of the City.
- There will be a number of capital campaigns such as the library.

**10 - Can you think of any questions I have not covered or any additional information you would like to share?**

- There doesn’t seem to be a lot of reaching out to other communities.
- Make urban environment cleaner, safer.
- Accountability from users – make it your own!
- Run-off is a HUGE problem.
- Make the survey methods clear and demonstrate the thought process is right-headed.
- Conservation Board supports the Open Space Plan. The plan should be more of an action plan to demonstrate priorities for easements, acquisitions, of land for public purpose (east-west connectivity for example.) Let’s see what people want. We have a half-cent conservation fund... the City needs to know that the fund is being used in a transparent way. Plan should empower ACTION. There’s always lots of talk. I want to see stuff happen.
- This Plan is critical to BTV success. I don’t hear anything back in terms of keeping the public engaged.
- Battery Park is an architectural park.
- We are on a long term effort to be more focused on metrics through City stats.

**COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS**

Leisure Vision conducted a Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment Survey between August and September of 2013 to help establish usage and satisfaction for current parks and facilities. The survey was also intended to help determine BPRW’s priorities for the future

development of parks & recreation facilities and programs & services. The survey was administered by mail and by phone. Leisure Vision worked extensively with BPRW staff in the development of the survey questionnaire. This work allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future system.

Surveys were mailed to a random sample of 2,000 households in the City of Burlington. The same day the surveys were mailed, each household that was to receive a survey also received an electronic voice message encouraging them to complete the survey. The goal was to obtain a total of at least 400 completed surveys. A total of 551 surveys were completed. The results of the random sample of 551 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/- 4.2%. The return rate was 28%. The complete survey results with cross tabulation information are available upon request. The following information includes a brief summary of the results.

According to the survey, households identified Waterfront Park as the most used during the past 12 months at 81%. A close second was Oakledge Park at 69% in which households have used during the past 12 months. Overall, when asked, 83% of respondents rated the physical condition of City of Burlington Parks as either excellent (19%) or good (64%).

A series of questions were asked of Household Respondents regarding programs and services. Based on the sum of respondent's top two choices, the parks and recreation program services that households identified as most important include: times programs are offered (42%), quality of instructors (36%), and location of programs (32%). Of the 23% of households

that indicated that they participate in recreation programs, 90% were either very satisfied (42%) or somewhat satisfied (48%) with the location of programs. Eighty-seven percent (87%) were either very satisfied (44%) or somewhat satisfied (43%) with the safety of programs. Eighty-six percent were either very satisfied (28%) or somewhat satisfied (58%) with the times programs are offered.

When asked about the overall quality of the recreation programs in which households have participated, 32% rated the overall quality as being excellent and 57% rated the quality as good. Households surveyed also identified parks and recreation programs that they have a need for. Sixty-one percent (61%) indicated a need for special events. Other activities included: outdoor winter recreation (54%), adult fitness and wellness programs (41%), nature programs/environmental education (37%), boating and sailing activities (35%), and adult continuing education programs (31%).

Special events was also ranked the highest (34%) as a program that respondents participate in the most while outdoor winter recreation (26%) was second and ice-skating/figure skating, boating and sailing activities and youth sports programs were third (11%).

One key to providing quality programming is that it also matches community needs. As part of this survey, citizens were asked how well the facilities and programs meet the community's needs. Facilities play a crucial part in meeting these needs. According to the survey, 88% of households indicated a need for walking and biking trails. Other facilities where there is a significant need indicated were beach areas (75%), large community parks (68%), and small neighborhood parks (65%). This apparent need is also directly related to the

types of facilities that are felt to be the most important to the households surveyed. Of the top four choices, walking and biking trails (54%), beach areas (29%), and small neighborhood parks (26%) were the most important.

Of the programs indicated as meeting the needs, ice skating met the highest percentage of household needs at 75%. Other programs meeting the needs with a high percentage of the community are youth sports (69%), before and after school programs (57%) and youth summer camps (57%). However, unlike the facilities, the programs that are reported to be most important to the households do not correspond with those currently meeting the greatest need. These programs with the greatest “value” are special events (37%), outdoor winter recreation (34%) and adult fitness and wellness (24%).

The overall level of satisfaction of services provided in relation to outdoor facilities was very high. On average, over 78% of the households surveyed were either “very” or “somewhat” satisfied with the number of parks and walking/biking trails along with the maintenance of these parks. When asked for a level of support that respondents would give to improve existing parks and facilities, 87% responded that they would be “very” or “somewhat” supportive. This is not surprising due to the high percentage of satisfaction. There is also a correlation between the level of support to improve the facilities with those facilities that the respondents felt were most important.

Marketing plays an important role in creating awareness of services and amenities. There cannot be an assumption that there is a general knowledge of these services because they are a part of the community.

Sixty-one percent (61%) of the households surveyed indicated they learned about department programs and services from the brochure. Other methods indicated were: word of mouth (52%), newspaper (47%), website (39%) and flyers at facilities (28%). However, when asked what prevents respondents from using department facilities and programs, 29% stated that they do not know what is being offered. Twenty percent (20%) indicated that their particular interest in a program or facility is not offered.

## PARTNERSHIP REVIEW

One of the elements included in the BPRW Master Plan was a review of existing partnerships as well as opportunities for new areas of collaboration. Partnership review included discussion with other City departments, neighboring parks & recreation agencies, and the Burlington School District. Beyond discussions of those relationships, BPRW also has opportunities to pursue public private partnership opportunities as a way of augmenting department resources.

During the public input process, a focus group was held with staff from neighboring parks & recreation agencies to discuss opportunities to working together. Currently, not much collaboration exists and there is a feeling of duplication of services among agencies. The meeting was attended by staff from the City of Winooski, City of South Burlington, and the Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD). The WVPD district includes seven municipalities, including Burlington. At this meeting, the attendees all expressed interest in more fully developing collaborative approaches to the provision of parks & recreation services. They thought a good start would be to simply find out what each agency is doing as well as having ongoing group

meetings to share program collaboration ideas.

At this time, agencies have a difficult time fielding enough teams for athletic leagues. This was an obvious area for collaboration. Winooski has a need to find basketball courts for youth leagues. There was also discussion about the possibility of teaming together for water based events such as kayaking.

Currently, BPRW is involved in partnerships with Safe Routes to School, and Local Motion in relation to Go for Gold and research on Burlington Bike Path connections. These relationships are working well. BPRW also works closely with other City departments, including the Department of Public Works (DPW) and the City Economic Development Offices (CEDO). Strengthening these relationships may result in greater efficiency and effectiveness as well as improve BPRW's contribution to the City's overall economic development.

Another significant partnership that exists currently and has potential for further development includes the Burlington School District. The City is currently collaborating on cost control measures, which will include BPRW. Indoor recreation space is a critical need in the community. As a result, there may be opportunities to consider recreation needs in future school renovations. In addition, there may also be opportunities with private schools, colleges, and the University of Vermont for joint approaches to program spaces.

BPRW also desires to develop more Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). These cover the gambit from "outsourcing", to traditional public-private partnerships, to privatization. In each case, this is a means to apply the resources of the private-sector in meeting the needs of the public.

- Outsourcing is the contracting by a public agency for the completion of government functions by a private-sector organization. The government agency provides payment for services and/or facilities through government funds for the execution of a function that may have previously been done by the agency itself.
- Privatization is the sale of a government owned asset to the private-sector, for private operation of a function that might have previously been done by the public-sector.
- Public-private partnerships are a means of utilizing private-sector resources in a way that is a blend of outsourcing and privatization. PPPs can involve the design, construction, financing, operation and maintenance of public infrastructure or facilities, or the operation of services, to meet public needs. The objective of a PPP is to provide a more efficient & cost effective means of providing the same or better level of service at a savings to the public.

There is tremendous growth in outsourcing, privatization, and PPPs across the country. Today, the average American city contracts out 23 of its 65 basic municipal services to the private-sector.

BPRW has identified future development that could potentially include public-private partnerships. Possible locations include City Hall Park, Oakledge Park & Blanchard Beach and Blodgett Park.

BPRW could also create a foundation to augment financial resources. Many agencies use foundations to assist with fund raising for special events, developing capital campaigns for new facilities, or creating scholarship programs for economically underprivileged families.

# DEMOGRAPHICS & TRENDS

## Local & Regional Perspectives

### DEMOGRAPHICS & TRENDS

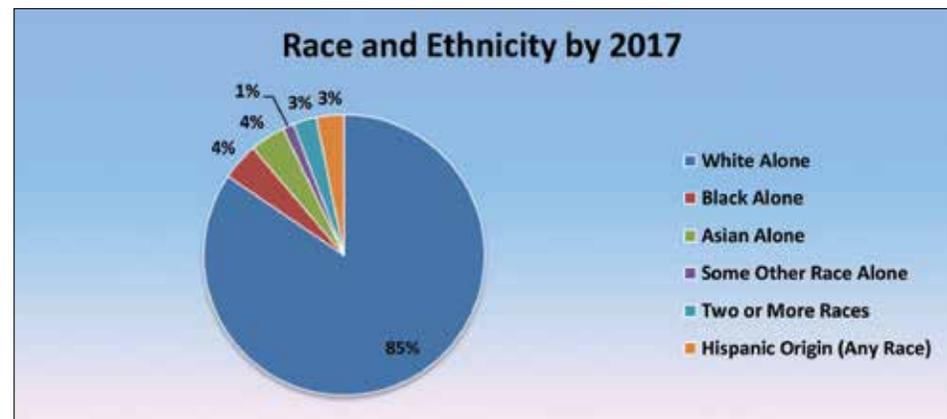
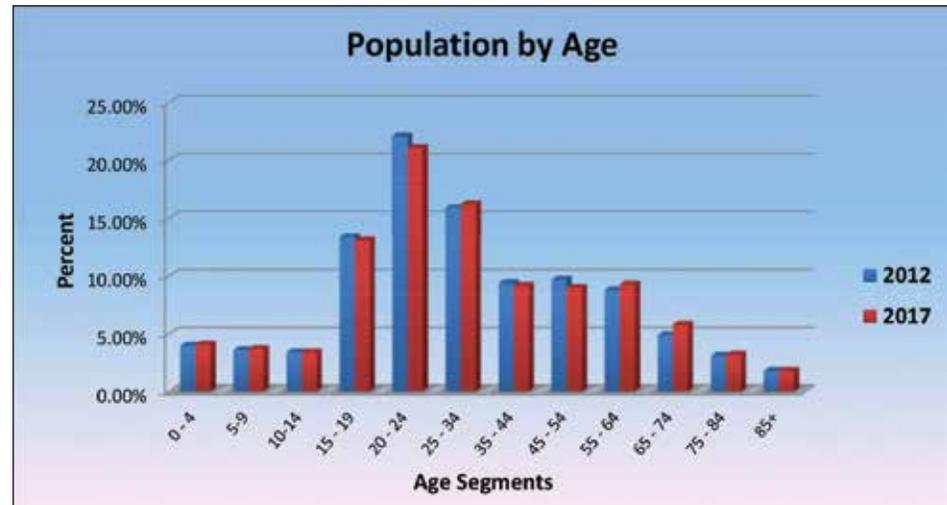
The following report is a culmination of information derived from Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), The Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) and Physical Activity Council (PAC). This information compiles results for age, gender, race, ethnicity and household income of Burlington residents and compares the data to state and national statistics. Demographic projections from ESRI give an outlook through 2017. Recreational trends are explored at the local and national levels to direct future planning.

### METHODOLOGY

Demographic data used in the analysis was obtained from Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI), the largest research and development organization dedicated to Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and specializing in population projections and market trends. All data was acquired in October 2013, and reflects actual numbers as reported in the 2010 US Bureau of the Census and demographic projections for 2012 and 2017 as estimated by ESRI. The City of Burlington was utilized as the demographic analysis boundary

### AGE SEGMENT

Age segments appear to remain relatively constant



with a slight decrease in ages 15-24 and 35-44 and the greatest decrease occurring for ages 45-54 by 2017. The greatest increases by 2017 will be ages 65-74, a testament to the aging baby boomer population. From a program and services perspective, this suggests a need to expand services for the active adult population.

## RACE & ETHNICITY

Race and ethnicity for Burlington according to the Census 2010 is 88.9% of the population White, 3.9% of the population Black, 3.6% of the population Asian, and the rest of residents are of some other race. It is projected that Burlington will continue to maintain its current diversity, with 1.7% reduction for the White population by 2017. Additionally, the Black population is expected to increase from 3.9% to 4.4%, the Asian population from 3.6% to 4.2 %, and the Hispanic population from 2.7% to 3.3% by 2017.

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Based on the Census 2010, 16,119 households are in Burlington with an average household size of 2.19 persons. The median age is 26.7 aging to 27.4 through 2017. Of these households, 6,561 were identified as families, representing 40.6% of the total households. According to the demographic and income profile, households identified as families will increase slightly by 2017. The median household income is currently estimated as \$37,333 and is projected to increase to \$43,828 by 2017.

The Burlington, Vermont area rate of population growth is projected to be slightly higher than the state average, but remains significantly lower than national average. The number of households, families and homeowners

Population by Age	Census 2010		2012		2017	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0 - 4	1,730	4.1%	1,729	4.0%	1,752	4.1%
5 - 9	1,565	3.7%	1,558	3.6%	1,579	3.7%
10 - 14	1,476	3.5%	1,456	3.4%	1,490	3.4%
15 - 19	5,807	13.7%	5,729	13.4%	5,676	13.1%
20 - 24	9,250	21.8%	9,456	22.1%	9,125	21.1%
25 - 34	6,666	15.7%	6,787	15.9%	7,002	16.2%
35 - 44	4,096	9.7%	4,001	9.4%	3,992	9.2%
45 - 54	4,248	10.0%	4,133	9.7%	3,898	9.0%
55 - 64	3,593	8.5%	3,760	8.8%	3,997	9.3%
65 - 74	1,948	4.6%	2,081	4.9%	2,515	5.8%
75 - 84	1,317	3.1%	1,316	3.1%	1,386	3.2%
85+	721	1.7%	751	1.8%	782	1.8%

Race and Ethnicity	Census 2010		2012		2017	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White Alone	37,727	88.9%	37,889	88.6%	37,675	87.2%
Black Alone	1,653	3.9%	1,694	4.0%	1,903	4.4%
American Indian Alone	131	0.3%	139	0.3%	171	0.4%
Asian Alone	1,510	3.6%	1,592	3.7%	1,816	4.2%
Pacific Islander Alone	21	0.0%	36	0.1%	62	0.1%
Some Other Race Alone	273	0.6%	288	0.7%	354	0.8%
Two or More Races	1,102	2.6%	1,119	2.6%	1,213	2.8%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	1,144	2.7%	1,196	2.8%	1,412	3.3%

Summary	Census 2010	2012	2017
Population	42,417	42,757	43,194
Households	16,119	16,190	16,608
Families	6,561	6,520	6,538
Average Household Size	2.19	2.20	2.18
Owner Occupied Housing Units	6,553	6,649	6,803
Renter Occupied Housing Units	9,566	9,541	9,805
Median Age	26.7	26.8	27.4

## DEMOGRAPHICS & TRENDS

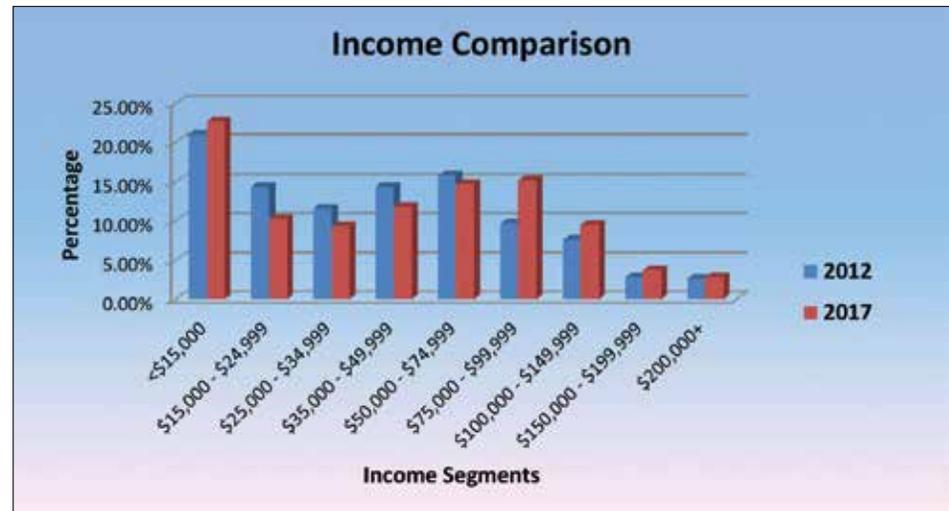
has also increased; however, is still lower than national averages. The median household income is projected to increase greatly in the \$75,000 to \$99,999 segment. Most other income segments will see a slight decline by 2017. Burlington's median household income remains significantly lower than the national and state median.

- Burlington median household income: \$37,333
- National median household income: \$53,058
- Vermont median household income: \$54,804 (2011)

### LOCAL RECREATION TRENDS

Recreation trends information was also derived from ESRI and is a report entitled Sports and Leisure Market Potential. These data are based upon national propensities to use various products and services, applied to the local demographic composition of the City of Burlington area. Usage data were collected by Growth for Knowledge Mediamark Research and Intelligence, LLC. (GfK MRI) in a nationally representative survey of U.S. households. MPI (Market Potential Index) measures the relative likelihood of the adults in the specified area to exhibit certain consumer behavior or purchasing patterns compared to the U.S. An MPI of 100 represents the U.S. average.

Based on projected population, the top recreational activities that Burlington residents will participate in (based on percentage of population as well as above the national average with an MPI over 100) include the activities listed in charts on page 115.



Households by Income	2012		2017	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<\$15,000	3,417	21.1%	3,765	22.7%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	2,324	14.4%	1,700	10.2%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	1,873	11.6%	1,544	9.3%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	2,325	14.4%	1,965	11.8%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	2,559	15.8%	2,434	14.7%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	1,564	9.7%	2,531	15.2%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	1,228	7.6%	1,584	9.5%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	460	2.8%	613	3.7%
\$200,000+	432	2.7%	464	2.8%

Product/Consumer Behavior	Expected Number of		MPI
	Adults	Percent	
Participated in aerobics	4,299	11.6%	116
Participated in archery	1,496	4.0%	155
Participated in backpacking/hiking	4,430	11.9%	126
Participated in baseball	2,718	7.3%	141
Participated in basketball	5,121	13.8%	147
Participated in bicycling (mountain)	1,481	4.0%	108
Participated in bicycling (road)	4,577	12.3%	127
Participated in boating (power)	2,468	6.7%	109
Participated in bowling	5,267	14.2%	122
Participated in canoeing/kayaking	2,054	5.5%	116
Participated in downhill skiing	1,119	3.0%	103
Participated in fishing (fresh water)	4,986	13.4%	104
Participated in fishing (salt water)	1,579	4.3%	93
Participated in football	3,792	10.2%	164
Participated in Frisbee	3,049	8.2%	150
Participated in golf	3,734	10.1%	98
Play golf < once a month	1,709	4.6%	116
Play golf 1+ times a month	1,609	4.3%	81
Participated in horseback riding	1,346	3.6%	119
Participated in hunting with rifle	1,712	4.6%	97
Participated in hunting with shotgun	2,011	5.4%	130
Participated in ice skating	1,210	3.3%	112
Participated in jogging/running	4,883	13.2%	123
Participated in martial arts	1,091	2.9%	209
Participated in motorcycling	1,198	3.2%	89
Participated in Pilates	1,382	3.7%	112
Participated in roller skating	722	1.9%	94
Participated in snowboarding	1,695	4.6%	236
Participated in soccer	2,472	6.7%	154
Participated in softball	1,817	4.9%	125
Participated in swimming	6,892	18.6%	96
Participated in target shooting	1,394	3.8%	98
Participated in tennis	1,937	5.2%	122
Participated in volleyball	1,569	4.2%	121
Participated in walking for exercise	9,184	24.8%	83
Participated in weight lifting	5,211	14.0%	119
Participated in yoga	2,329	6.3%	107
Spent on high end sports/recreation equipment/12 mo: <\$250	2,176	5.9%	132
Spent on high end sports/recreation equipment/12 mo: \$250+	1,584	4.3%	110
Attend sports event: auto racing (NASCAR)	2,911	7.8%	108
Attend sports event: auto racing (not NASCAR)	2,433	6.6%	104
Attend sports event: baseball game	5,961	16.1%	109

## NATIONAL RECREATION TRENDS

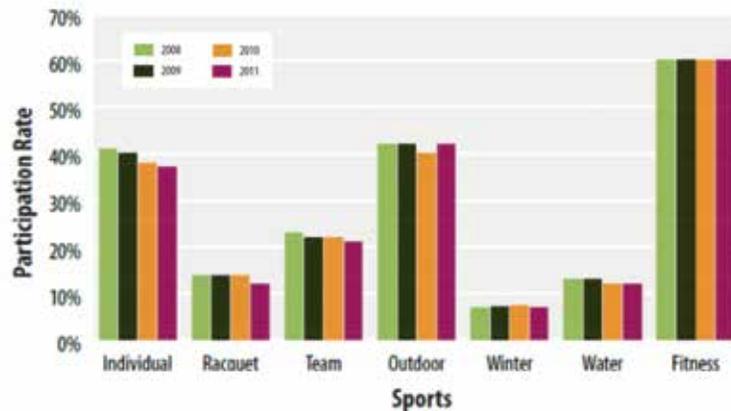
Additional recreational trends were derived from the Sports, Fitness & Recreational Activities Topline Participation Report (2012) developed by The Sports & Fitness Industry Association, a top national researcher in the sports and fitness industry. The data reflecting the national trends stem from a statistically valid survey which over 38,000 online responses were compiled and analyzed. These surveys were then weighted against a total population of 283,753,000 ages 6 and up. The following variables were used: gender, age, income, household size, region, and population density.

Overall, many activities are experiencing a slow increase and/or decline due to the recent poor economic conditions, including those that have a cyclical pattern. However, a few activities have made a foothold and are increasing in participation. In general, the survey revealed the following:

- Fitness sports remain the most popular physical activity and includes activities such as yoga, boot camp-style training, and other classes.
- Increased participation among a number of key sports and activities.
- An expressed desire to increase the amount of travel done for participation in favorite sports and recreational activities.
- Aspirational activities show a desire and demand to participate in the coming year.
- An expressed desire to participate in favorite sports and recreational activities with some areas showing an increase in spending which is encouraging.
- Niche sports, like racquet sports, show a slight decline.

- Significant opportunities to engage inactive populations in swimming and working out.
- Smart phone apps for fitness and nutrition recording.

In particular, the categories of participation include individual sports, racquet sports, team sports, outdoor sports, winter sports, water sports and fitness sports.



As the chart above reveals, individual, team, and winter sports have slightly decreased while water and fitness sports have held steady. Other categories despite their slight decrease have remained steady and are expected to gain participation with the economy. The survey revealed that 76% of Americans have participated in some activity in the last four years; however, the general trend is that Americans have become more inactive with the rate of inactivity increasing from 21.5% in 2007 to 23.9% in 2011. Inactivity increased among young adults aged 18 to 24 and 35 to 54. Conversely, inactivity rates fell slightly among children ages 6 to 12 from 16.6% in 2010 to 16% in 2011. This decrease may be a result of efforts towards the fight against

childhood obesity. Additionally, for adolescents ages 13 to 17, inactivity fell from 16.7% to 16.4% which, although modest, is a positive step in the right direction.

Increased spending areas will likely be seen in lessons, instruction, and camps (24.5%); individual sports events (23.1%); and team sports at school (22.8%).

### INCREASING PARTICIPATION

The survey revealed that one of the best ways to increase activity and participation later in life is to encourage casual play at the younger ages and in school through physical education. The survey points out that an adult who participated in physical education while in school is four times more likely to participate in a racquet sport and about three times more likely to participate in team, outdoor, winter and golf. Through the institution of more opportunities for casual play, there is strong correlation that it translates the casual play into a core activity later in life. In particular, the survey examined the difference between Generation X and Generation Y population.

Generation Y (born 1980-1999) are twice as likely to take part in team sports than Generation X (born 1965-1979). Although much is explained by age difference, the psychological tendency of Generation Y is more positively disposed to team sports than their Generation X predecessors who are more individual in nature. Generation Y is also more social in their interactions: the way they play (gravitating towards team sports), the way they exercise (including a tendency to participate in group exercise), and in the way they communicate (social networking, Facebook, Twitter).

Fitness sports remained the most popular physical activity. The participation rate has held steady at 60% over the last 4 years. There are also opportunities to engage the inactive populations. Swimming ranks as a popular “aspirational sport” for inactive participants ages 6 to 12 and 45 and older. Working out with weights and fitness machines are the top “aspirational sports” for inactive participants ages 13 to 44.

The economy has also had a slight impact on sports and recreation spending. While many active people are still not spending money on sports and recreation, more people spent the same amount or increased spending, rather than spending less.

In order to increase participation, knowing the trends and what various users groups are interested in participating is crucial. Significant changes in specific activities (both increases and decreases) over the past 2 years are summarized and listed below. This data

NATIONAL SPENDING TRENDS			
	<i>Spend More</i>	<i>Spend Same</i>	<i>Spend Less</i>
Team Sports at School	22.8%	64.6%	12.6%
Team Sports Outside of School	21.6%	66.3%	12.4%
Travel for Sports & Rec	22.5%	64.2%	13.3%
Lessons, Instruction & Camps	24.5%	62.9%	12.2%
Gym Membership/Fees	20.7%	67.6%	11.7%
Individual Sports Events	23.1%	65.1%	11.3%
Golf Membership/Fees	15.5%	71.4%	13.7%
Tennis Membership/Fees	9.9%	76.2%	12.9%
Winter Sports	17.6%	66.8%	15.5%
Outdoor Recreation	20.7%	70.1%	9.2%
Sports/Rec Clothing	16.5%	69.2%	14.1%
Sports/Rec Footwear	16.4%	70.4%	13.2%
Sports/Rec Equipment	16.0%	66.7%	17.3%

was extracted directly from the PAC study, 2012, SGMA Participation Topline Report © 2012 SGMA Research.

**Team Sports** Over the last 2 years, there has been a slight rebound in the traditional team sports area. These include decreases in negative growth in baseball (+2%), football (+12%), softball (+31%) and wrestling (+4%). Trending growth in the newer more evolving transplant sports like Lacrosse continue to grow at significant rates.

TRENDS: TEAM SPORTS	
Baseball	-6.0%
Basketball	-1.4%
Football	-4.0%
Ice Hockey	5.6%
Lacrosse	29.1%
Roller Hockey	-13.3%
Soccer	-2.1%
Softball (Fast Pitch)	-3.1%
Softball (Slow Pitch)	-14.9%

**Fitness** Class-based fitness & exercise programs, like Zumba, continue to drive positive participation for these types of fitness activities. Many agencies around the country have moved these classes outside and are using parks as programming space. Several systems have also advertised the availability of park space for contractual instructors to use for class activities.

Another recent trend includes “functional fitness”, as reported in the April 22, 2013 *New York Times* article “Gyms Move from Machines to Fitness Playgrounds”. Sandbags, ropes and climbing areas are taking over the floor space as part of a functional fitness movement. Companies such as Lifetime Fitness are removing

## DEMOGRAPHICS & TRENDS

weight machines and are replacing them with open areas of space for people to use as more natural strength training, rather than being locked in a machine.

“Fun” fitness is also a current trend. Exercises like P90x or Insanity has proven that you don’t need a lot of equipment to be healthy. These types of classes will be growing in popularity in parks & recreation departments. Group cycling continues its rapid growth as younger fitness enthusiasts embrace this high performance group exercise as well as program variations to attract the beginner participant. For most age groups, swimming for fitness and weight training are the two most frequently mentioned activities that people indicate they would like to participate in.

TRENDS: FITNESS	
Aerobics (High Impact)	23.4%
Aerobics (Low Impact)	4.1%
Elliptical	14.8%
Running/Jogging	17.8%
Group Stationary Cycling	29.2%
Treadmill	5.7%
Walking for Fitness	1.7%
Abdominal Machine	-4.9%
Pilates	-3.0%
Stretching	-4.4%
Free Weights	11.3%
Home Gym	1.8%
Weight/Resist. Machines	1.2%

While Pilates has shown an incredible 10-year growth trend, the past 2 years have seen a participation decline. Perhaps participation migrated to Yoga, as participation is up across all levels for the year.

Generation Y fitness participants are showing a higher propensity to go with group oriented programs. Running and walking for fitness continue to show strong and consistent growth. Running is up 17% in year to year growth.

**Outdoor Sports** Compared to previous years, outdoors sports have experienced significant increase in participation. BMX has seen the greatest growth with an increase of over 30% in the last two years.

TRENDS: OUTDOOR SPORTS	
Bicycling/BMX	5.4%
Camping	-10.1%
Fishing (Fresh)	-4.4%
Target Shooting	6.5%

**Individual Sports** Much like the trends for individual fitness participation, sports are showing significant declines across most levels of participation.

TRENDS: INDIVIDUAL SPORTS	
Billiards/Pool	20.0%
Golf	-5.2%
Martial Arts	-24.2%
Roller Skating	-18.6%
Scooter Riding	-15.7%
Skateboarding	-16.7%
Badminton	4.5%
Table Tennis	1.7%
Tennis	-4.2%

## SURVEY RESULTS & TRENDS

A total of 551 surveys were completed for BPRW's 2013 Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment Survey. The following responses relate to demographics and trends for the City of Burlington. A number of the questions and respondent answers relate directly to fitness and wellness activities.

- Adult fitness and wellness programs was the number one answer (41%) for recreation programs that respondent households have a need for. This is consistent with local and national trends.
- Staying consistent with local and national trends, adult fitness and wellness programs was rated second (24%) behind special events (37%) for recreation programs that the most important to respondent households.
- The most important parks and recreation facility is walking and biking trails; 88% of households indicated a need for walking & biking trails.
- 34% of respondents feel walking and biking trails should receive the most attention from BPRW. This was among the top three choices, lake beaches and areas (41%) and Burlington parks (39%) being the other two.
- A total of 86% were either “very supportive” (68%) or “somewhat supported” (18%) to develop new walking & biking trails that connect to existing trails.
- Respondents rated the most important improvement that could be made to the BPRW system: walking and biking trails (66%).

# ASSESSING RECREATION PROGRAMS

From the Community, Staff, Leadership & Partners

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## ASSESSMENT

This assessment includes an analysis of BPRW's program and service offerings. The report offers a detailed perspective of recreation programs and events and helps to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for future program direction. It also assists in identifying core programs, program gaps within the community, and future program offerings for residents based on community input and trends. Program findings were based on comments from the statistically valid Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment Survey results, public input process, a review of program information, program assessment worksheets completed by staff, and interviews and meetings with the staff. In addition, marketing materials such as the program guide and the website were reviewed.

## SURVEY RESULTS FOR REC PROGRAMS

The 2013 Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment Survey has significant relevancy to recreation program offerings, future positioning and marketing of programs. Leisure Vision has also compiled a national database of survey results. The database is referenced in several result areas for Burlington. Some of the highlights of the 2013 Survey included:

- BPRW was rated as the number one (68%) provider for parks & recreation programs and facilities. The national average of other communities in the Leisure

Vision database is 48% of residents participate/visit programs, services, and/or facilities.

- The satisfaction with overall value offered by the BPRW (those households expressing somewhat or very satisfied) is 68%. The national average for satisfaction toward value is 61%.
- 23% of households have participated in recreation programs in the last twelve months. The national average is 35%.
- Of the 23% of households that indicated they had participated in recreation programs over the past twelve months, 89% rated the quality of programs as either "excellent" or "good." The national average is 88%.
- Programs that are most important to households are special events i.e. concerts, movies etc. (37%), outdoor winter recreation (34%), and adult fitness and wellness programs (24%).
- Programs respondent households participate in the most are special events i.e. concerts, movies etc. (34%), outdoor winter recreation (26%), ice skating/figure skating (11%) and youth sports programs (11%).
- In assessing how households find out about programs and facilities, 61% of households learn about programs and activities from the Program Guide, 52% from friends and neighbors and 47% from newspaper

articles and advertisements. The national benchmark for awareness in the agency program guides is 54% from a program guide, 41% from friends and neighbors and 39% from newspapers and advertisements.

- In assessing reasons that prevent households from using programs or facilities more often, the top three reasons include: do not know what is being offered (29%), program or facility not offered (20%), and program times are not convenient (19%).

Analyzing these results will help provide suggestions for future programming and/or how to improve upon current program offerings. Realizing who is using services and the reasons why they may not, will also provide invaluable leads to marketing strategies as well as service placement. References to the survey results are noted throughout the following sections of the Recreation Assessment.

## CORE PROGRAM IDENTIFICATION

The ability to align program offerings according to community need is of vital importance to successfully delivering recreation services. At the same time, it is also important to deliver recreation programs with a consistent level of quality, which results in consistent customer experiences. Core programs are generally offered each year and form the foundation of recreation programs. In assessing the categorization of core programs, many criteria are considered. A list of the criteria includes:

- The program has been provided for a long period of time.
- Offered three to four sessions per year or two to three sessions for seasonal programs.

- Wide demographic appeal.
- Includes 5% or more of recreation budget.
- Includes tiered level of skill development.
- Requires full-time staff to manage the program area.
- Has the ability to help solve a community issue.
- High level of customer interface exists.
- High partnering capability.
- Facilities are designed to support the program.
- Evolved as a trend and has resulted in a “must have” program area.
- Dominant position in the market place.
- Great brand and image of the program, based on the Department’s experience of offering the program over a period of time.

Core programs, by definition meet at least the majority of these criteria. The establishment of core programs helps to provide a focus for program offerings. This focus, in turn, creates a sense of discipline for quality control of these program areas and helps to reduce variation of service for the program participants. It must be noted that the designation of non-core programs does not suggest they are unimportant. It just means there may be less focus and fewer programs compared to core programs. A HHC Core Program Assessment is attached as a tool to use in determining future core program areas.

During discussions with staff and reviewing the core programming criteria, the following programs were identified as core program areas:

- Adults/Seniors
- Arena Programs
- Camps at Memorial Auditorium
- Day Camps, Afterschool, Adventure-based
- Events at Memorial
- Special Events
- Youth Athletics and Camps

### PROGRAM MIX

The program mix or the distribution of types of programs offered should represent the programming needs of the residents. Therefore, this should be evaluated annually through an assessment process. In addition, the program offerings should include emphasis on the delivery of core programs. In reviewing program offerings listed in the 2013 winter/spring and spring/summer department program guides, the list of core programs and number of activities offered included:

- Adult/Senior: 50 (29.4%)
- Camp (includes athletic camps): 39 (22.9%)
- Fitness: 15 (8.8%)
- Special Events: 17 (10%)
- Youth Athletics (does not include athletic camps): 12 (7.1%)
- Youth General (includes early childhood programs): 37 (21.8%)

### PROGRAM PRIORITY SPREADSHEET

The adjacent chart incorporates survey information into a Program Priority Spreadsheet that identifies program priorities for the department. Three variables from the community survey were used in developing program priorities, as follows:

- Estimated number of households in Burlington that have a need for a recreation program.
- Estimated number of households in Burlington whose needs for recreation programs are only being met 50% of less.
- Recreation programs and activities that are most important to households.

The programs were then ranked according to each of the three variables, and then totaled for a final ranking. The programs are grouped into three categories:

- High priority is represented in green.
- Medium priority is yellow.
- Low priority is blue.

As a result, programming areas such as adult fitness and wellness, adult continuing education, nature and environmental programs, special events, outdoor winter recreation, water fitness programs, and programs for adults 55+ are a high priority for the community. There is significant household need for the program, there is a large percentage of household who feel that need is largely unmet, and the programs were deemed to be either the first, second, third, or fourth most important program.

PROGRAM PRIORITY SPREADSHEET (Findings from the 2013 Burlington Community Survey)							
Program	Q9%	Q9 Rank	Q9a%	Q9a Rank	Q10%	Q10 Rank	Total Rank
Adult Fitness & Wellness Programs	47%	3	76%	7	24%	3	13
Adult Continuing Education Programs	31%	6	78%	3	16%	5	14
Nature Programs/Environmental Education	37%	4	75%	9	16%	5	18
Outdoor Winter Recreation	54%	2	62%	14	34%	2	18
Special Events (concerts, movies, etc.)	61%	1	48%	17	37%	1	19
Water Fitness Programs	24%	8	84%	1	8%	13	22
Adult Programs for 55+ Years	21%	11	75%	9	12%	7	27
Boating & Sailing Activities	35%	5	47%	18	18%	4	27
Adult Sports Programs	24%	8	72%	11	9%	10	29
Tennis Lessons & Leagues	17%	14	78%	3	7%	15	32
Adult Art, Dance, Performing Arts	25%	7	59%	15	9%	10	32
Youth Learn to Swim Programs	14%	17	78%	3	4%	19	39
Youth Sports Programs	21%	11	31%	21	12%	7	39
Youth Art, Dance, Performing Arts	17%	14	72%	11	7%	15	40
Ice Skating & Figure Skating	24%	8	29%	22	9%	10	40
Therapeutic Recreation Programs	13%	18	83%	2	3%	21	41
Youth Summer Camp Programs	19%	13	44%	19	10%	9	41
Programs for Teens	12%	19	76%	7	5%	17	43
Programs for People with Disabilities	8%	22	77%	6	4%	19	47
Before & After School Programs	15%	16	42%	20	8%	13	49
Preschool Programs	10%	21	67%	13	5%	17	51
Youth Fitness & Wellness Programs	12%	19	59%	15	3%	21	55



**LIFE CYCLE ANALYSIS**

The program assessment included a life cycle analysis of the core programs selected for review. This assessment helps to determine if BPRW needs to develop newer and more innovative programs, reposition programs that have been declining, or continue the current mix of life cycle stages. This assessment was based on staff members' opinions of how their core programs were categorized according to the following areas.

- Introduction stage: getting a program off the ground, heavy marketing.
- Growth stage: moderate and interested customer base, high demand, not as intense marketing.
- Mature stage: steady and reliable performer, but increased competition.
- Decline stage: decreased registration.

<b>Introduction</b> <i>Getting a program off the ground, heavy marketing</i>	<b>Growth</b> <i>Interested customer base, high demand, not as intense marketing</i>	<b>Mature</b> <i>Steady performer, reliable success</i>	<b>Decline</b> <i>Signs of tailing off, increased competition</i>
<b>BPRW PROGRAM LIFE CYCLE STAGES: Adults &amp; Seniors</b>			
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Growth</b>	<b>Mature</b>	<b>Decline</b>
Sailing	Senior Mystery Trips Soccer Specialty Classes Tennis & Pickleball Yoga & Fitness	Basketball Table Tennis Volleyball Indoor Soccer American Sign Language	Senior Bus Trips Golf
<b>BPRW PROGRAM LIFE CYCLE STAGES: Day Camps, Afterschool, Adventure-based</b>			
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Growth</b>	<b>Mature</b>	<b>Decline</b>
Youth Educational Programs Youth Fitness Programs	Outdoor Adventure Camps Specialty Summer Camps	Champ Camps Drama Camps Recreation Nutrition Program Bolton Valley Skiing School Vacation Camps	
<b>BPRW Program Life Cycle Stages: Youth Athletics &amp; Sports Camps</b>			
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Growth</b>	<b>Mature</b>	<b>Decline</b>
Cheer	Lacrosse Sailing Track & Field	Baseball Basketball Skateboarding Soccer	Golf Indoor Soccer Softball Tennis

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Growth</b>	<b>Mature</b>	<b>Decline</b>
<i>Getting a program off the ground, heavy marketing</i>	<i>Interested customer base, high demand, not as intense marketing</i>	<i>Steady performer, reliable success</i>	<i>Signs of tailing off, increased competition</i>
<b>BPRW PROGRAM LIFE CYCLE STAGES: Leddy Arena Programs</b>			
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Growth</b>	<b>Mature</b>	<b>Decline</b>
All Day Specialty Camps		Camps Group Lessons Ice Shows	Competitions Summer Figure Skating School
<b>BPRW PROGRAM LIFE CYCLE STAGES: Camps at Memorial Auditorium</b>			
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Growth</b>	<b>Mature</b>	<b>Decline</b>
Future Stars Camps	April Break Camp Afterschool Music Program Circus Camp Summer Rock Camp	Dance Camp Feb/Apr Break Camps	
<b>BPRW PROGRAM LIFE CYCLE STAGES: Events at Memorial</b>			
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Growth</b>	<b>Mature</b>	<b>Decline</b>
7 Days Tech Jam Annex Art/Work Space Nightmare Vermont	242 Music Camps Afterschool Music Programs Circus Camp Dance Camps First Night Vermont Discover Jazz Fest Y Camps Zumbathon	242 Music Events Basketball Leagues Large Music Concerts (Main Hall)	
<b>BPRW PROGRAM LIFE CYCLE STAGES: Special Events</b>			
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Growth</b>	<b>Mature</b>	<b>Decline</b>
	Candy Can Hunt	Eggstravaganza Kids Day July 3rd Independence Day Pomerleau Holiday Party Senior Holiday Dinner Senior Picnic	Cardboard Box Parade Pet Show

The percentage distribution of programs according to life cycle categories includes:

- Introductory programs: 12.9%
- Growth programs: 32.9%
- Mature programs: 44%
- Decline programs: 14.2%

The recommended standard for percentage distribution (according to other agency benchmarks in the Heller + Heller database) is 60% of programs should be in introduction and growth stages, and 40% in the maturation and decline stages. For Burlington, the percentage is 45.8% introduction/growth and 54.2% maturation/decline which are not consistent with the benchmark. As can be seen from the charts on the following pages, some program areas such as Arena Programs, Special Events and Youth Athletics and Sports Camps have higher percentages of offerings in the mature and decline stages. The 60/40 split should be reviewed system-wide, but is also a good measure for individual core program areas. According to the results from the 2013 community survey, special events programs had a significant household need, yet there were several events designated as mature or declining program.

Program areas in decline should be targeted for repositioning or deletion. Mature programs should be monitored closely in order to prevent decline in registrations. Some agencies, in order to develop accountability for an increased percentage of introductory programs, establish a performance measurement indicating new programs initiated by each staff member. Additionally, it's important to continuously monitor customer expectations and

requirements as a way of determining how to reposition programs.

### AGE SEGMENT ANALYSIS

Park and recreation systems should strive for an equitable balance of offerings for various age segments, including:

- Youth age 5 and under
- Youth ages 6-12
- Youth ages 13-17
- Adults 18-49
- Adults/Seniors 50 and over

The percentage of program offerings in each age category should closely match community demographics. The information below demonstrates the age segment percentages of BPRW 2013 winter/spring and spring/summer program offerings, calculated by reviewing the Program Guides and counting the number of programs offered for each segment. Programs and events offered for all ages, such as family special events, were not included in the list. The age distribution of programs is as follows:

- Youth age 5 and under: 38 (13.1%)
- Youth ages 6-12: 97 (33.3%)
- Youth ages 13-17: 39 (13.4%)
- Adults 18-49: 7 (16.8%)
- Adults/Seniors 50 and over: 68 (23.4%)

This distribution reflects that programs are most geared towards individuals ages 6-12 with 33.3% of

programming in this area. Adding the youth category ages 5 and under increases the total program percentage to 46.4%. Recreation assessments in the Heller + Heller database typically have an average of 70-80% of program offerings geared toward youth 12 and under. Therefore, Burlington has a much better distribution of programs among age groups and should continue to do so.

## CURRENT PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

**Adults/Seniors** Current national trends show decreasing participation among senior and adult programs. In the last five years, adults are now working longer, spending is more conservative, and there are additional, less expensive opportunities from competitors for recreation.

A possible solution to increase participation of active adults is to create a task force, or launch group, with residents to help determine program ideas while creating a community connection. Trends and applications in lifestyle programming for active adults include several areas of interest. Findings are categorized in six dimensions of human wellness that influence optimal health, well-being and quality of life. These program areas include: 1 - Physical, 2 - Social, 3 - Intellectual/Creative, 4 - Emotional, 5 - Vocational and 6 - Environmental. Active adults are vitally interested in the social program area, which can include walking and biking clubs. The adult/senior program area already has mostly fitness related programs being offered.

Fitness programs continue to be a nationwide trend. Increasing offerings for fitness programs is recommended due to wellness trends and the ability to reach all age groups. In addition, adult fitness and

wellness programs ranked highest in the Program Priority Spreadsheet from the Community Survey. Another growing area for active adults is sports leagues for 45+, 55+ and older. Working cooperatively with surrounding communities can help start up these types of sports leagues. This was mentioned as an opportunity for regional partnership during the input session with neighboring providers of recreation and park services.

A more recent fresh trend is a website: meetup.com. The concept for meetup.com is for individuals to search already formed special-interest groups that “meet up” in the area that is searched. There are currently ninety-six groups within a five-mile radius of the Burlington area. Utilizing this site may be a tool to build adult programming or increase rental opportunities for BPRW.

According to the 2013 community survey question related to parks and recreation programs, specific adult programming or programming that includes adults was listed frequently in the top ten as shown in the graph in the previous pages.

**Fitness** Fitness & wellness tends to be the most popular type of program across the United States. The age range in fitness programming is 18+. Fitness and wellness programming continue to be a nationwide trend not only for adults, but also children. A wellness program for children is an area for potential growth. There are an increasing number of grant opportunities to assist in programming to help youth become more physically fit.

Increasing offerings in fitness and wellness is recommended due to community need and increased revenue opportunities. According to the 2013

community survey, 38% of households have a need for indoor fitness and exercise facilities.

**Special Events** Special events are listed as the number one need among households for parks and programs. Most of the special events in Burlington were listed as being in the mature or decline stages. Special events are an important offering for the community. Implementing changes and enhancements to events are a way show commitment to a popular service and to build trust from the community. If events are becoming routine and static, forming a task force of residents/ staff for community events is a great way to create new ideas.

**Youth Athletics** Youth athletic programming is listed as a medium priority in the Program Priority Spreadsheet. Reviewing the 2013 winter/spring and spring/summer Program Guides, roughly 7% of programs offered are youth athletics. This figure did not include athletic camps. Eight of the twelve athletic programs listed in the Life Cycle Stages are listed in the mature or decline stages. Any program area in decline should be targeted for repositioning or deletion. Mature programs should be monitored closely in order to prevent decline in registrations. Implementing changes and enhancements to improve this program area is a necessity.

**Youth General** Programs in this area reference any program that is not related to athletics, special events or camps for youth. This category represents roughly 21% of programs offered in the 2013 winter/spring and spring/summer Program Guides. Although there is no specific data related to youth general programs as a whole in the 2013 community survey, programs listed in various categories in the Program Priority Spreadsheet list this area as a medium or low priority. Examples are

before and after school programs, youth art, dance, performing arts, preschool programs and programs for teens.

**Future programs** As mentioned earlier in the Program Priority Spreadsheet programming areas such as adult fitness and wellness, adult continuing education, special events, outdoor winter recreation, and nature programming are high priorities for the community. BPRW should focus on developing and programming in these key areas. In addition to the importance of special events to the community, these events experienced an increase in revenue in 2011 and 2012.

Reviewing demographic information, 24.4% of residents are in the age segment 19 and under. This figure is consistent with the need for youth programming in Burlington. Implementing changes and enhancements to current programming are a way show commitment to popular services and to build trust from the community. The need for nature and environmental programs is consistent to findings from other district and department communities who have completed the Leisure Vision Community Survey process. Furthermore, Burlington residents appear to have a heightened interest in sustainable practices and may have an interest in programs that reinforce “going green.”

In reviewing the inventory of BPRW program offerings, there is a need to provide services for persons with disabilities. While this program area did not result in a high need for the program according to the community survey, an important need exists for a limited population. In reviewing the inventory of program offerings, there is an absence of programs geared toward individuals with disabilities or mention of

inclusion services. There should be a certified individual on staff that oversees this program area. This can be a program area neighboring agencies could share the costs associated with special needs programming in offering programs on a regional basis.

Some trends seen in the region include offering classes outdoors in key park locations. Programs such as yoga are well suited for outdoor locations. Park systems around the country are also experiencing an increase in private contractors using parks for their classes. There may be opportunities to host these programs in park locations.

Local farming, gardening, and cooking classes are also gaining in popularity across the country. Given Burlington's significant interest and long term commitment to local farming, there may also be opportunity for the department to offer programs related to these areas. Likewise, cooking classes are gaining in popularity around the country.

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The chart below reflects three years of financial data provided by BPRW staff. It was noted that Adult/Senior program financial information are rolled into the

budgets of Recreation Coordinators 1 and 2. From the three year revenue history, Day Camps, Afterschool and Adventure-based program revenues have significantly increased from 2011 (101%). Other program areas have either seen a revenue increase or slight decline. From the three year expense history, Day Camps, Afterschool and Adventure-based program expenses have significantly increased from 2011 (69%). Other program areas have either seen an increase in spending or slight decline. Net revenue financial information is also depicted with figures in red representing a loss.

## REC PROGRAM BEST PRACTICES

A key to developing consistent services is the use of service and program standards. Several program standards have been put in place, however the majority of these standards deal with the certification of instructors. Having standards provides a more consistent service environment. As program growth continues, and as staff time permits, additional standards can be put into place throughout the entire recreation program system, such as customer requirements, instructor standards, and program consistency.

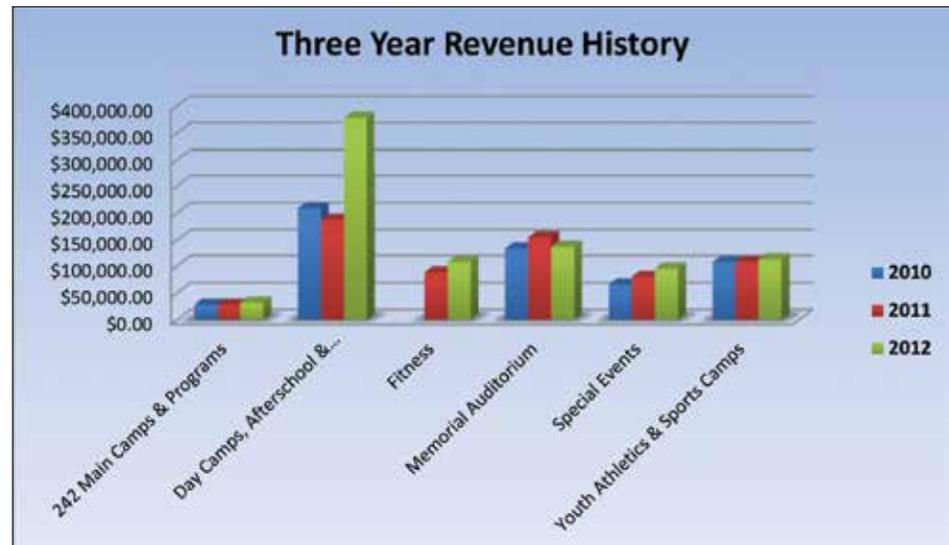
<b>BPRW NET REVENUE INFORMATION (figures in red represent a loss)</b>			
<b>Program</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
242 Main Camps & Programs	(\$46,233.00)	(\$47,486.00)	(\$43,700.00)
Day Camps, Afterschool & Adventure-based	\$12,000.00	(\$45,000.00)	(\$16,000.00)
Fitness Programs	N/A	\$58,925.00	\$72,044.00
Memorial Auditorium Programs	(\$77,124.00)	(\$74,914.00)	(\$43,427.00)
Special Events	(\$30,966.00)	\$34,550.00	\$45,612.00
Youth Athletics & Sports Camps	(\$37,555.00)	(\$40,000.00)	(\$42,000.00)

## ASSESSING RECREATION PROGRAMS

In addition to standards, efforts should be made to develop a listing of key customer requirements for core program/membership areas. Key customer requirements are defined as those areas of the program purchasing process that are most important to registrants. For example, an adult softball player's key requirements may include: cost of the league, quality of athletic field maintenance, cleanliness of restrooms, quality of the umpires, game times and location of the facility. Identifying key requirements is vitally important for staff to deliver well in the items most important to the customer.

Key requirements should be identified by customers and can be included as part of an importance/performance matrix. This determines how important a requirement is to the customer and how the BPRW is performing. Examples of standards include:

- The instructor to participant ratios are appropriate for the participant to feel attended to and safely directed.
- Instructor must check that all class equipment/supplies are available and room setups are in place prior to start time.
- Instructor completes a 30-second site survey to look for potential hazards or safety concerns.
- Each instructor will be provided a tool kit or "instructor packet" that includes their class or program roster with phone numbers or email addresses, name tags for participants, customer evaluations to hand out to users, registration forms, a program guide, pertinent park information and emergency phone numbers, thank you cards for the instructor or program supervisor to give to participants at the end of the class, and an introduction sheet of what will



be occurring in the program or class, how it will be conducted and what outcomes we hope to achieve. Instructor should also check with participants to make sure roster information is accurate.

- Customer feedback methods are in place to seek input from participants on their expectations of the program and the results of their experience. These methods should include pre and/or post evaluations, focus groups, trailer calls, and general program surveys.
- Class, program curriculum, or work plans will be prepared by the instructor before the class or program is to begin and then signed off by the appropriate program supervisor within the recreation division.
- A class or program budget will be prepared for each activity and shared with the instructor or supervisor on how class monies are spent. Final budget results will be documented at the end of the program segment and then shared with the supervisor or manager.
- The general standard for class cancellation will be three business days before the class begins which may include class combination.
- Holiday hours for facilities must be posted at least eight days ahead.

Program registration reports should be reviewed by core program or facility area and set up as cost centers in order to determine overall expense and revenue for the key areas. These reports should be done on a quarterly basis and condensed to a higher level of detail.

Some areas closely track financial performance, while others do not. A robust measurement system generally

includes a more comprehensive set of measures, including:

- Program capacity rate (ratio of total maximum enrollments for number of spots filled).
- Number of programs per age segment.
- Customer satisfaction toward the registration system.
- Facility utilization rate.
- Program success rate (or cancellation rate).
- Cost recovery rates by core program area.
- Number of new programs offered annually.
- Household percentage of program participation.
- Percent of programs in introduction and growth stage.
- Market penetration by age group.
- Customer retention, repurchase intent, and referral.

## FACILITY ASSESSMENT

As part of the Recreation Assessment, a Facility Assessment was performed, which includes a list of indoor programming space. This space includes the Robert Miller Community Center, Memorial Auditorium, the Community Boathouse, and Leddy Ice Arena.

The Miller Center is a multi-purpose facility that includes:

- Full-size gymnasium
- Community room with commercial kitchen
- Conference room
- Kids room & art room

The Miller Center, BPRW's one multi-purpose facility, is 22,000 SF. Of that amount, BPRW uses 17,680 SF with the remaining space leased to other providers of service, including the Sara Holbrook Teen Center. Previously, the facility included a fitness center, but the school district owned the equipment, which was recently removed. The fitness room was then converted to a wellness room, which now houses programs such as yoga, dance, and other group exercise activities. Additional popular programs and activities include pickle ball, youth camps, youth gymnastics, youth and adult athletics, and room rentals.

Memorial Auditorium is also 22,000 SF and includes a main floor and stage, a leased basement annex, a loft, and 242 Main. The auditorium has approximately 19,000 SF of space and the basement is currently being leased. The Auditorium has been operating since 1928 and supports concerts, dances, exhibitions, banquets, civic engagement meetings, and conventions. 242 Main offers music oriented programs for young adults and teens. This includes programs such as the After School Music Program, Rock Music Camp, and Rock and Roll Vacation. The building is in serious need of improvements. As for future direction of Memorial, the City will need to research options including leasing, renovating, or selling the building. A partnership opportunity may exist if the decision is made to renovate the building.

The Community Boathouse and Marina operation includes a boathouse facility with a downstairs café and an upstairs primarily used for private rentals such as receptions, meetings, and parties. This is a seasonal facility, operating from mid-May through mid-October. The marina includes boat slips and moorings. Charter boats operate out of the marina.

The Paquette Arena at Leddy Park is 47,000 SF and offers both Olympic-sized and studio-sized rinks as well as an upstairs meeting/party room. The facility supports public skating, skating lessons, private rentals, and hockey. The rink is home to Burlington's Youth hockey organization, Burlington and Colchester boys and girls high school hockey programs, Full Stride Hockey adult programs, and the Champlain Valley Skating Club.

According to the NRPA PRORAGIS database, the average amount of square footage of indoor recreation space is 61,340 SF for cities of a population of 25,000-75,000 nationwide. This includes multi-purpose space, and not special facilities such as indoor ice. Burlington has about 63% of that amount of indoor multi-purpose space (approximately 39,000 SF), or a shortage of 22,340 SF according to the national average. These square footage comparisons do not account for school use by community park and recreation agencies. Heller + Heller Consulting uses a standard of 2.0 square feet of multi-purpose indoor space per person for colder climate agencies. According to this standard, Burlington should have 84,694 SF of space, or an additional 46,000 SF of multi-purpose indoor space. An additional center could become a regional draw, attracting residents from surrounding towns.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Review the Program Priority Spreadsheet and prioritize future program offerings accordingly, such as adult fitness and wellness, nature and winter time outdoor programs. Continue to offer programs that may not fit into the high priority category as long as they are continuously successful.
- Develop a BPRW Marketing Plan, which provides an overview of strategic marketing efforts. This should be supplemented with business plans for individual program and facility areas.
- Review program offerings with neighboring communities on an annual basis to create opportunities for partnerships in program offerings.
- Strengthen marketing by dedicating resources to this function.
- A possible solution to increase participation of active adults is to create a task force, or launch group, with residents to help determine program ideas while creating a community connection. Adult programming was listed frequently in the Community Survey (The question: Respondents Have and Need for the Following Parks and Recreation Programs).
- Allocate labor dollars toward special recreation programming, possibly in partnership with other neighboring communities.
- Increasing offerings for fitness programs is recommended due to wellness trends and the ability to reach all age groups. This is also an area that earns revenue for the department. Another growing area for active adults is sports leagues for 45+, 55+ and older. Working cooperatively with surrounding communities can help start up these types of sports leagues.
- A wellness program for children is an area for potential growth. There are an increasing number of grant opportunities to assist in programming to help youth become more physically fit.
- Special events are an important offering for the community. Implementing changes and enhancements to events are a way show commitment to a popular service and to build trust from the community. If events are becoming routine and static, form a task force of residents/staff for community events to create new ideas.
- There is a wide age range for Friday Night Game Nights. This may deter parents from registering. Perhaps split up into separate-aged programs or communicate if ages are broken up.

# CONSIDERING OPERATIONS

## System Vision, Needs & Stormwater Considerations

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### PARK SYSTEM VISION

In December, 2013, the consulting team and BPRW staff met for a day of visioning to discuss overall master plan findings and preliminary discussion of strategic recommendations. The session included a review of criteria for great park systems, according to the Trust for Public Land:

- A clear expression of purpose.
- Ongoing planning & community involvement.
- Sufficient assets in land, staffing, and equipment to meet the system's goals.
- Equitable access.
- User satisfaction.
- Safety from physical hazards & crime.
- Benefits for the city beyond the boundaries of the parks.

Based on the discussion, strengths of the Burlington system include:

- Quality & size of assets.
- Users are satisfied with the system.
- Many visitors and tourists visit the City and BPRW facilities.

- Regional impact.
- Community involvement.
- Staff involvement & commitment to vision.

Suggestions for BPRW improvement:

- Measure of economic benefit.
- Clear exposure of purpose.
- Level of service.
- Consistency about how things get done, are programmed, are maintained.
- Social issues/transient population.

There was a brainstorming session that resulted in seven themes that serve as the over-arching framework for the future vision of the system. These will serve as the major focus areas and support future positioning of the department. BPRW's system themes are:

- People: recognizing culture, community & partnerships.
- Wellness: enhancing recreation opportunities & programming.
- Connection: linking parks to people.
- Stewardship: protecting & preserving our environment.
- Community: creating inclusive social spaces.

- Service: streamlining operations.
- Impact: motivating economy.

## MEETING THE NEEDS

Burlington is home to approximately 520 acres of City owned and operated parks. This translates to 12.2 acres per thousand residents, which is just above the national standard (12 acres per thousand residents). Most of the City's parkland (55%) is within large regional parks like Oakledge and Leddy. The remaining acreage is in community parks (32%), neighborhood parks (13%) and mini parks (<1%). Ideally, neighborhood parks would represent a larger percentage of the overall parkland (29%), but regional parks like Ethan Allen Park serve double-duty as neighborhood parks by offering amenities like playgrounds.

The primary gaps in service are in field sports, specifically adult baseball, adult softball and regulation size soccer/football/lacrosse, and indoor recreation such as a fitness center and indoor swimming. There is a deficit of neighborhood park land and a surplus of regional park land. The Open Space Protection Plan suggested the identification of potential pocket parks which provide small shared community spaces that enhance social interaction and create green refuges especially in the urban core. There is also a deficit of community parkland.

## CITY-WIDE STORMWATER STRATEGY

Stormwater management in parks draining to Lake Champlain should prioritize water quality. Potential water quality measures may include bioswales, erosion control planting, sediment forebays, regrading and, in extreme cases, mechanical filters.

Stormwater management in parks draining to the Winooski River or the City's storm sewer should control for quantity in addition to quality. BPRW should work with the City's Stormwater Manager to set the threshold for allowable stormwater quantity. As an example, Massachusetts regulation requires that quantity is controlled to pre-development levels for 2, 10, 25 and 100-year design storms. Potential water quantity measures may include reshaping the land to reduce slopes and create retention areas, modifying surface materials to slow overland flow and increase infiltration, reducing catchment area by storing stormwater from building roofs in cistern or rain barrels, and directing runoff from parking areas toward retention areas.

## LOT COVERAGE CONSIDERATIONS

Lot coverage refers to the portion of a zoning lot which, when viewed from above, is covered by a building or other impervious surface. Historically, City zoning ordinances have regulated the allowable lot coverage to control the density of development and, by default, stormwater runoff. In Burlington, parks belong to a zoning district called Recreation/Conservation - Recreation/Greenspace (RCO-RG). Until recently, the maximum lot coverage for this district was 5%, with the intention that parks should not discharge stormwater. In reality, to provide the basic amenities required of an urban park system, almost all of Burlington's parks exceed 5% coverage. In January of 2014, as proposed by BPRW, the City Council Ordinance Committee amended the zoning ordinance for the RCO-RG district effectively increasing the allowable lot coverage for several parks.

The amended ordinance was based on a benchmarking study of similar parks across the country. The study looked at parks by type.

**Mini Parks** These parks serve their immediate neighbors. Each park usually offers a few small amenities such as seating, play equipment and ornamental planting. Lot coverage for similar parks in peer cities range from 25%-75%. Benchmarks:

- Pritchard Park, Asheville, NC - 61%/0.4 acres
- Ira Keller Fountain Park, Portland, OR - 31%/1 acre

**City Plazas & Squares** These spaces serve a wide constituency and may be symbolic centers for the community providing seating, flexible gathering spaces, public art, memorials, lighting and infrastructure for performances. Lot coverage for similar parks in peer cities range from 50%-100%. Benchmarks:

- City Hall Plaza, Boston, MA - 98%/8 acres
- Santa Fe Plaza, Santa Fe, NM - 51%/1 acre

**Neighborhood Parks** These parks provide walkable park amenities for surrounding neighborhoods and include lawn, paths, playgrounds, ornamental planting, shade trees, court sports, and occasionally small structures. Lot coverage for similar parks in peer cities range from 10%-50%. Benchmarks:

- West Austin Park, Austin, TX - 10%/4 acres
- Aston Park, Asheville, NC - 40%/8 acres

**Community Parks** These parks provide walkable park amenities for multiple neighborhoods. Visitors walk and drive to these parks. Amenities include lawns, paths, field sports, court sports, special sports facilities, community gardens, performance spaces, a range of natural & ornamental vegetation, pavilions, vending, restrooms, and other structures. Lot coverage for similar parks in peer cities range from 15 %-30 %.

- New Haven Green, New Haven, CT - 22%/15 acres
- McKinley Park, Sacramento, CA - 16%/28 acres

**Regional Parks** These parks provide amenities for the entire city, surrounding communities, and visiting tourists. Parking is available for many visitors who drive to these parks, but there are often walkable amenities for immediate neighbors. By virtue of their size, regional parks provide unique features like woodlands, trails, natural resource areas, water bodies, major sports complexes, historic sites, beaches, and camping. Lot coverage for similar parks in peer cities range from 5%-25%. Benchmarks:

- Look Park, Northampton, MA - 18%/132 acres
- Deering Oaks Park, Portland, ME - 27%/54 acres

**Special Use Parks** These spaces provide a single amenity that requires specific infrastructure and design. Uses may include harbors & marinas, golf courses, performance venues, ropes courses, pool facilities, skate parks, historic sites, and sports complexes. Lot coverage for similar parks in peer cities varies widely (5%-100%) due to varying requirements for parking, building, and gathering space. Benchmarks:

- Northeast Harbor Marina, Northeast Harbor, ME - 80%/4 acres
- Prescott Park Waterfront, Portsmouth, NH - 40%/10 acres

While lot coverage regulation can serve to guide development density, it is actually a blunt instrument for mitigating stormwater runoff. This is because impervious surfaces such as buildings and pavement are only part of a site's effective imperviousness. The subsurface soil conditions must be considered as well. For example, if a park is situated on dense clayey soils, the addition of a parking lot will do little to increase

the amount of run-off leaving the site. It will, however, increase the speed of runoff. But if designed to retain stormwater, this development will result in a net zero increase in runoff leaving the site.

Site topography is an equally important factor. Consider a bowl-shaped park that pools with water during rain events. No site modification, other than introducing a storm sewer, will direct more water, will direct more water toward the river or lake. That said, if the site's soils allow for infiltration, adding impervious surfaces will slow the infiltration rate, which impacts groundwater recharge. As a result, any site development in parks must begin with analysis of the soils and topography to truly assess the stormwater implications of the design.

## IMPROVING INFILTRATION

Encouraging stormwater to infiltrate back into the water table should be a priority in all parks. Designing for infiltrations begins in the planning stages with analysis of site topography, soils, and existing use.

**Topography** The shape of the land greatly influences the rate of runoff. Water flows quickly across steep slopes, especially when the surface creates minimal friction such as exposed soil. This results in less infiltration because water does not have time to percolate through the soil. Conversely, shallow slopes and depressions minimize the rate of overland flow giving water more time to seep into soil.

**Soils** In the United States, soils are divided into four hydrologic soil groups based on estimates of runoff potential. Soils are assigned to one of these four groups (A-D) according to the rate of water infiltration when

soils are not protected by vegetation, are thoroughly wet, and receive precipitation.

**Existing Use** The current configuration of amenities & materials on site can greatly impact infiltration - both negatively and positively. Design should respond to these conditions.

With thorough site analysis in place, design proposals should site amenities where they will make the minimum impact on run-off. Similarly, retention and infiltration features should be sited where they will be most effective.

- Design gradual slopes & coarse surface materials to slow the rate of surface flow. This will promote percolation where soils permit.
- Locate impervious surfaces in areas with least pervious soils groups to minimize impact to overall effective infiltration rate.
- Locate infiltration features above soils that will promote stormwater recharge. When infiltration is unlikely, focus on retaining water for reuse or aesthetic impact.
- Minimize costs by infiltrating water close to where it hits the ground.
- Pervious surface materials (porous asphalt, porous pavers, rubber play surfaces, wood chips, gravel) can help provide usable space while mitigating impacts on the site's perviousness. However, these materials require maintenance to ensure performance and these cost implications must be considered when selecting materials. Pervious surface materials only reduce imperviousness when used in areas with permeable soils.

# SPREADING THE WORD

## Program Guide, Website & Future Positioning

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### MARKETING APPROACHES

BPRW recently hired its first Marketing & Outreach Manager, specifically dedicated to department marketing. Departments the size of Burlington typically have a full-time, dedicated marketing person. Ideally, BPRW should have an overall annually marketing plan, along with business plans for major program and facility areas.

### PROGRAM GUIDE

The 2013 winter/spring and spring/summer program guides were reviewed by the consultant team. Below are highlights and suggestions to enhance the most viewed marketing piece that BPRW uses to communicate services, programs, and information to customers. The program guide cover layout gives readers a chance to see multiple experiences from users. The cover also includes the BPRW logo and website address.

Typically the front and back covers are printed in a higher quality paper. These four pages (front, front inside cover, back inside cover and back) should be utilized to advertise special or community events or important upcoming programs.

Overall, the BPRW program guide is simple and concise. Changing the font for both the descriptions and headers can be an easy way to add a catchy new look.

A fresh look is an enhancement for marketing programs and events. Consolidating and deleting unnecessary white space can add room for additional photos and information. Cutting down on the number of pages can also provide savings.

Program guides are typically the most important marketing technique used by parks & recreation agencies. According to national information, 53% of residents in communities across the country find out about programs from guides. For Burlington residents this stat is 61%. Virtual, online flipbook-style guides are easier to read and more readily available on smart phones. Creating links on the virtual guide where a customer can click and go directly to the online site would help increase online registration.

The use of social media logos (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) let the community know that they can obtain parks and recreation information via smart phones.

The strategic placement of information and photos throughout the guide is essential to the overall design. Promoting opportunities for community rental facilities is also an important revenue source.

Listing the BPRW festival & event schedule is a nice way for the community to plan for upcoming events. Consider a dashed line around the box to suggest cutting out the calendar.

The Parks and Facilities map is unique. However, the lack of street names may confuse park users and customers. The layout and content should be redesigned.

The addition of “new” programs is important for the community and keeps things fresh. Coming up with a catchy logo or “new” icon for these new programs will help capture the attention of the reader.

The Burlington Bike Path Rehabilitation Update is a nice feature. The Penny for Parks at Work information is also great information for residents.

Below are some additional suggestions to help communicate a consistent message to readers.

- There is no staff directory. Listing staff members provides a sense of open communication and also communicates the appropriate staff members to reach for questions.
- Label program locations with headers that read “Off-site Program Locations”.
- Use the age segment 18+ to communicate the program age (not 18-99).
- Include fitness & wellness programs together since they are an active trend locally and nationally.
- Certain classes do not fit the health and wellness category (Puppy class, ASL, etc.). Make sure classes are placed on appropriate pages.
- Adult and family programs are an odd mixture of programs to be placed together, unless specifically listed in the table of contents.
- In addition to photography permissions, also request social media permissions.

- Create a “Camp Page” header for all the various camps, not youth programs. Call them cultural arts, athletic, etc.
- Include the link address with Facebook icon at least once in the guide.
- Including photos for The Howard Chapel, Oakledge Park and North Beach in the program guide will help make a first good impression to the potential user. Pictures help sell an experience. Labeling photos as to where it is from can assist in the promotion.

## WEBSITE

Websites are becoming increasingly more important as a marketing tool that supports identification of agency brand and image. The 2013 community survey reported that 39% of households learn about services from the BPRW website. The program guide, learning from friends & neighbors, and newspaper articles are the three most popular methods of creating awareness.

On the BPRW website, include core program options so the reader does not always have to open the flipbook to view this information. An enhancement for some parks and facilities would be to include a “take a tour” video. Utilize the calendar to its fullest to share more information with the community. Listing important program dates, special events, registration dates, etc. are other options.

Technology has given us endless opportunities to promote agencies and there are always ways to improve a website improvement. Often, a user’s first experience with an organization may be through it’s website.

A process should be put into place to consistently assess the BPRW website, at least on an annual basis. Assessment should include:

- Accessibility
- Content
- Customer usage
- Internal support
- Maintainability

The assessment should also include external customer feedback, commonly acquired through focus groups. In addition to full-time and part-time staff, contractual instructors should review the site and provide feedback for areas of improvement.

Over the next few years, the projected number of people using both smart phones and tablets to access websites will continue increasing greatly. In order to maximize outreach to target markets, the development of a wireless application protocol (WAP) enabled website is recommended so that it may be easily viewed by potential users on their devices.

BPRW has adapted to the increasing amount of social media sites that are available to all users. Agency participation in social media platforms results in additional staff time and focus to manage them. These platforms allow the community to be more informed and connected to the City. These available opportunities provide distinct ways to promote and market BPRW.

## FUTURE POSITIONING OF BPRW

The most significant elements of the BPRW Master Plan are the call to action and the future positioning of the department. The plan synthesizes several technical reports, inventories, analysis, and community input. These elements are important in setting the stage for the most important part of the plan: the strategic initiatives. While planning is important, it is the implementation of the plan's action items that is most critical to ensuring the department's success. This master plan will assist BPRW in determining resource allocation based upon community needs and the overall health of the parks system. It also positions the department to pro-actively make decisions and receive the greatest return on investment of taxpayer dollars. Finally, will continue to be a major initiative for all department employees, providing a united sense of direction for day-to-day work and long-term goals.



