



Swansboro Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Agenda

Town of Swansboro
Wednesday, March 20, 2024

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

- a. Staff Introductions

II. Adoption of Minutes

- [a.](#) February 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes

III. Reports

- [a.](#) **Monthly Report**
- b. **Upcoming Programs/Events**
- c. **Updates**

Festival Updates

IV. New Business

V. Old Business

- [a.](#) Splashpad Enhancement
- [b.](#) Master Plan Recommendation-Chapter 5

VI. Comments

VII. Adjournment

Next Meeting April 17, 2024, 5:30 PM

Town of Swansboro
Swansboro Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
February 21, 2024

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

The Swansboro Parks and Recreation Board met at the Swansboro Recreation Center for a regular board meeting on Wednesday, February 21, 2024. Jennifer Steele called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Members present were Jenifer Steele, Lawrence Abalos, Debra Pylypiw, and Matthew Prane. Members absent were Debbie Harnatkiewicz and Elena Messenger. Anna Stanley was present on behalf of the Town. The Board of Commissioners present were Doug Eckendorf, Joseph Brown, and William Justice.

- a. Election of Chair and Vice Chair- Jennifer Steel nominated to elect Deb Pylypiw as Chair. Lawrence Abalos seconded the motion. All were in favor, except for Matthew Prane who abstained from voting because he did not know the person well enough. Per North Carolina General Statue 160A-75 a board member who is physically present and has withdrawn from voting without being excused by a majority vote of the remaining members present, shall be recorded as an affirmative vote.

Deb Pylypiw nominated to elect Lawrence Abalos as Vice Chair and Jennifer Steel seconded the nomination. All were in favor except for Matthew Prane who abstained from voting because he did not know the person well enough. Per North Carolina General Statue 160A-75 a board member who is physically present and has withdrawn from voting without being excused by a majority vote of the remaining members present, shall be recorded as an affirmative vote.

II. Adoption of Minutes

- a. November 15, 2023, meeting minutes- The board reviewed the meeting minutes from November 15, 2023. Matthew Prane asked if the three vacant staff positions were filled. Director Stanley replied that three Recreation Aides were hired in November, but only two of those new hires are currently on staff. Matthew P asked if the third position is now vacant. Director Stanley will review staffing later in the meeting. Matthew P. asked about the CAMA permit for Ward Shore and if any projects would occur. Director Stanley replied that recommendations were made by NC Coastal Management and previous consultants that if a CAMA permit is expiring that a request to extend the permit should be made. The process to extend a permit is less difficult than having to apply for a new permit. The only work that may be done in the near future is additional marsh plantings. NC Coastal Federation has been contacted to consult if additional plantings are needed, but no response to date. Mr. Prane asked what had been done in the past at Ward Shore. Director Stanley replied that a Living Shoreline was completed in 2019 and parking spaces were added in 2020. Mr. Prane inquired about the tennis and

pickleball lessons and how the process worked. Director Stanley explained that the Pickleball league is run by the department and lessons are contracted through Tennis Bloc. The Parks and Recreation department receives a percentage from instructors contracted. Jennifer Steel asked if the department had reached out to Emerald Isle to inquire what they were doing. Director Stanly explained that the league was restructured in 2022 with new rules and regulations. Lawrence A. made a motion to approve the minutes, Matthew P. seconded the motion, and the meeting minutes were unanimously passed.

III. Reports

- a. **Monthly Report-** The November and December 2023 managers' report was provided to the board for review. Deb P. asked about ARP projects and Director Stanly replied she will discuss later in the meeting.

IV. New Business

- a. Board Meeting Times-The Board of Commissioners changed their board meetings to 6 pm. The Director was asked if the Parks Advisory Board wants to change their meeting time. Lawrence A. made a motion to keep the meetings at 5:30 pm, Jennifer S. seconded, and all board members were in favor.
- b. Master Plan Review-Director Stanley asked everyone to review recommendations in the Master Plan before next meeting.
- c. Staffing: Director Stanley went over staffing. Parks and Recreation has 2 full-time employees and just hired a new employee (Program and Event Manager) who is going to start to work March 18th. The Recreation Assistant is supposed to assist the Program and Event Manger for festivals, camps, and programs, but that position has been vacant on and off since 2019. Currently we have two Recreation Aids that serve as the Camp Supervisors and oversee the summer camps. They have been facilitating camp since 2021. At other times during the year, they assist with special events or any other kids' programming. The department has received many applicants for Recreation Assistants, but state they do not want to work with children. Recreation Aids cover the Rec Center, Visitor Center, reservations, answer the phones. They work 10-20 hours a week. Matthew P. asked where he could find information on the festivals. Lawerence A. and Director Stanley explained the festivals and smaller events Parks & Recreation offer. Matthew P. also asked how the schedule works for festivals and events. Staff for the festivals and events are scheduled for 8 hours and the town staff also help with each event. Matthew P. asked as the advisory board, what does he do to help the festivals? Director Stanley said that each month she will tell them what events she needs help with, and they can volunteer. Several members brought up the Easter event and Director Stanley provided more insight to this year's event in terms of coordination and sponsorship. It will be held on a Saturday morning, and she had

to rework the budget this year due to a lack of sponsorship. Matthew P. had one more question regarding staffing about budgeting for staff. Director Stanley explained that it was not budgeted for the number of staff members, but for the number of hours needed for staff. Matthew P. asked if we are hurting for the missing positions and Director Stanley transitioned into New Budget Requests to answer the question.

- c. New Budget Requests-Director Stanley submitted in the budget for another full-time position, Recreation Coordinator. This person would oversee the summer day camp and assist in developing and facilitating programs. Matthew P. asked for do we have documentation that proves we need these positions because of the growth. Director Stanley explained that with another full-time position, then part-time hours would decrease. Having someone here full-time would have part-time drop to just nights and weekends Director Stanley stated that she is trying to not to increase the budget too much, but there are areas that need to be increased. This includes pickleball which needs more balls, new nets, and something better to clean the courts. Programming supplies will increase because of pickleball and summer camp. Matthew P. asked about lights. Director Stanley called Duke Energy and put in a work order, but she has not heard from them since. The Directors has the plans; but new quotes are needed for the finance department. The lights are to be put around the trail, the courts, and on Recreation Way. Matthew P. asked if the lights were included in the budget, which they have not because new quotes are needed from Duke Energy. Matthew P. asked about the skate park and if it was going to reopen. Director Stanley and Lawrence A. responded that the lawyers have provided no updates and courts are to remain closed until further notice.

V. Old Business

- a. Splashpad Enhancements- Director Stanley reviewed the plans for the splashpad enhancements and pointed out the drawing in the packet. The concrete will be extended around the pad and the seating wall will be halfway around. Pavers will be in front of the building instead of concrete. The budget was \$50,000, the concrete work came to \$35,650, so there is about \$14,000 remaining. Director Stanley provided two options for shade and amenities. Option 1 is one shade is 14 x 14 and 18 x 18, which came to \$28,000. The second option is one 20 x 20 which comes in at \$20,000. Deb P. asked if the shade has rollers because if it does, then it may be expensive to fix. Director Stanley said they are quick release and can be taken removed during storms. Matthew P. asked if these were the only options to go with before making a motion to move forward with option 1. He suggested building a permanent gazebo that can withstand a hurricane, with 30-year shingles. Director Stanley said that could cost \$50,000 and could investigate it, but time is of the essence. Matthew P. thinks it would be a lot cheaper to build a gazebo and worries about the cost and frequency of replacing the canvas material because of the sun. Director Stanley is worried about time and having the funds

encumbered by the end of the year. Deb P. recommended doing the motion via email once a quote is made so that they could move faster. Matthew P. even suggested local businesses do metal roofing and even lighting eventually. Three companies have conducted site visits but did not respond. Matthew P. expressed concern over the material of the shades and stated that a simple gazebo could be cheaper than \$28,000. Matthew P. asked what the timeline was, and Director Stanley said that the funds need to be used by the end of the year. The concrete company was ready to start in March, but we need everything else installed beforehand.

VI. Comments

Commissioner Justice-Thanked the Parks Department for what they do and understands that sometimes they are the last to get funded. He stated that he is more than happy to help in any areas needed and reach out to companies that are not following back up with Director Stanley. He thinks the more people that call, the better. If there is additional funding needed for programs and events, he suggested to come to the board.

Commissioner Brown- Asked about a particular concrete company, and Director replied that the company was contacted, made a site visit, but never responded to correspondence requesting a quote. Commissioner Justice suggested Task Contracting and the Director stated that is company the department is using. Justice asked if the price was comparable and Director replied that yes, compared to the quote received last year, but that quote did not even include the seating wall.

Commissioner Brown also said that he is here to help, to get to know Parks & Recreation, and for Parks & Recreation to get to know him.

Commissioner Eckendorf- He believes Matthew is a good addition to the advisory board and that Parks & Recreation does great work. He said that he is glad to be there and is looking forward to the other meetings.

Matthew P. asked if there is anything they need to have more guidance and high priority. Director Stanley explained that the advisory board is to make recommendations and support the department. Director Stanley stated that the role of the advisory board is to make recommendations related to projects, events, and budget. Staffing and budgeting is the biggest challenge. The department has made progress to be like the other departments in the town. Matthew P. is excited to be a part of the board and lend a hand in the town.

Commissioner Brown- Asked about staffing and how many hours were needed each year, and Director Stanley said it was about 4,500 hours and said that she would like one more full-time staff member, but also limited on office space. There is a

workstation in the classroom, but a staff member would not be able to occupy that space during the summer because of summer day camp.

Deb P. said that regarding the shades there was a motion on the floor from Lawrence, but it will be tabled for next month.

Matthew P. asked what the next big event was, which is Touch a Truck on April 20 and then PirateFest is May 11. The next festival is Arts by the Sea on June 8.

Commissioner Eckendorf asked about selling shirts at festivals and Deb P. responded that it is a huge risk because of potential cancellations. and now there is a deal with a sponsor that is no risk. Once the festival is over, the vendor sends us the check. It suggested that the department setup a permanent kiosk with Parks and Recreation shirts, cups, etc.

VII. Adjournment

Jennifer S. made a motion to adjourn at 7:08 pm and Matthew P. seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

Next Meeting March 20, 2024

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Festivals/Events

- Began preparing end of year projections
- 2024 vendor policies and applications revised and posted.
- Applications are beginning to come in for Arts by the Sea and Mullet Festival.
- Sponsorship packet revised and sent to previous sponsors. Began soliciting new sponsors.
- Continue to train a Recreation Aide that will be assisting with festival planning.
- Began collecting quotes for all 2024 festivals: Portable toilets, sound, tents, golf carts, shuttles, security, and other logistics.
- Contacted Onslow County Code officer for permit application for July 3 fireworks.
- Working with Hampton Inn to provide discount codes for Arts by the Sea and Mullet Festival vendors and patrons.

Mullet-

- All bands have been booked, finalizing contracts to send out

ARP Projects

Splashpad Renovation

- The splashpad area will include concrete bench seating, a patio area with large shade structure and seating options (benches, picnic tables), The patio area will connect to the playground area. The concept is to provide a cohesive area while still having splashpad separate from the playground.
- Conceptual drawings received for concrete work for the area.
- Met with Task Contracting, waiting on quote
- Obtaining quotes shading and seating options.

Commercial Toilets & Drinking Fountain w/ bottle fillers.

- Install new toilets in the outdoor restrooms: Municipal Park, Pirates Den, and Bicentennial Park.
- Met with plumber that completed the concession stand project. Site visit was conducted and proposal was to be sent. Never received information after the site visit and vendor would not return calls.
- Currently looking for a new plumber for the project.

Completed

- Utility Terrain Vehicle
- Church Street Dock Cameras
- Rope Climber in Municipal Park
- Parks Maintenance Truck Replacement

Miscellaneous

- Met with Pickleball committee to review 2024 league information. Fees remain the same for this year, membership packet updated, new ladder league to begin in February, and reviewed supplies and equipment needed for next fiscal year.
- Began planning for the annual PirateFest in partnership with Onslow County Parks and Recreation.
- Executed annual contracts for on-going reservations and instructor contracts.
- Executed annual contract for playground maintenance and software application.
- Attended webinar for a weather safety software application to monitor on-site weather and an alert system.
- Began preparing for the Program and Event Manager vacancy.
- Attended quarterly review meeting with Computer Warriors.
- Attended the annual Recreation Resources Directors Conference.
- Began preparing budget for 2024-25 fiscal year.
- Worked with Onslow County Board of Elections to offer early voting at the Recreation Center.

- Met with Swansboro High School Marching Band Volunteer Coordinator to discuss ways to have the band involved in departments special events and festivals.
- Attend bi-weekly departmental managers’ meeting.
- Continue to manage staff timesheets, hours tracking, and schedules.
- Continue to manage and monitor budget and funds.
- Continue to manage on-going weekly and monthly reservations.
- Continue to manage parks, repairs, and work with the Public Works Department for maintenance.
- Serve on the Onslow County Senior Games Committee, meetings held once a month.
- Attend weekly Zoom meetings with NCRPA (North Carolina Recreation and Park Association) Director's call.
- Serve on the Jacksonville Onslow Sports Commission board as a liaison. Attend quarterly meetings, update the board on the department’s programs, events, and festivals.
- Attend quarterly meetings for the Onslow County Tourism Board.
- Attend Board of Commissioner meetings.
- Conduct Parks Advisory Board meetings.

Metrics-social media

Media Outlet	Followers	Page Reach	Post Engagement	Page Visits	New Followers
Facebook	16,063	19,756	2,745	3292	208
Instagram	775	10		20	15

Activity Report

Organization Activity

From 1/15/2024 to 2/14/2024

	Registrations	Reservations	Memberships	Check-Ins	Profiles Created
All	139	35	15	0	76
Resident	20	6	4	0	5
Non-Resident	119	24	11	0	71
No Residency Set	0	0	0	0	0
Demographics					
< 18	6	1	0	0	8
18 - 65	92	23	8	0	54
65+	41	6	7	0	14
Male	45	10	10	0	28
Female	94	20	5	0	48
Other Genders	0	0	0	0	0
Online vs In-House					
Online	25	0	0	N/A	32
In-Person	114	30	15	N/A	44

Revenue

Slip Fee - Town Dock	\$1305..50
Rental Fees-Parks	\$25
Rentals Rooms	\$2805
Rec Program Fees	\$14555
Gym Memberships	\$345
Dog Park Memberships	\$170
Vendor Fees	\$560
Festival Sponsorship	\$2000

Program/Event Manager Monthly Report

- Processed Payments/Refunds for programs and special events
- Emailed monthly distribution list the upcoming programs/events for the department
- Created program proposals
- Dock Slip reservations/Pump Outs
- Compiled daily deposits
- Advertised/promoted all programs/special events on social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, JD News
- Created all programs/events in RecDesk for registration
- Created program proposals for new programs to be approved by Director
- Completed instructor payouts for recently finished programs

Planned Programs**Tennis and Pickleball Lessons – December 12-February 4**

- Not ran by Swansboro Parks and Recreation
- Posted on RecDesk with link to their website to register
- Printed flyers

Tai Chi Class – January 4-February 8

- Instructor made the decision to make max number of participants to 10 due to overcrowding.
- 6 week series
- Program maxed out at 10 participants

HIIT Bootcamp Fitness Class – January 6-January 27

- 4 week series
- As of 1/24/24 – 5 drop ins, 3 series registrations

POUND Fitness Class – January 6-February 3

- 5 Week Series
- As of 1/24/24 – 20 drop ins, 6 series registration
- Will move into multipurpose room if available due to increased participation

Wooden Snowman Box Workshop – January 11

- Program by Susan Swain
- Program cancelled due to no registrations

Fellowship Night – January 15

- Theme: New years

Paint and Sip ENCORE: Hydrangeas – January 18

- Finger painting class for adults
- As of 1/1/24 - 7 registered
- As of 1/24/24 – 9 registered

Teacher Workday Camp – January 22-23

- 1/1/24 - 11 participants registered for both dates

- Completed program maxed at 12 participants for both dates

HIIT Bootcamp Fitness Class – February 3-February 24

- 4 weeks series

Play with paper Pulp – February 10

- Art program for kids in the works by Carolyn McDearmon

POUND Fitness Class – February 10-March 9

- 5 week series
- Series starting directly after January series ends per instructor request

Teacher Workday Camp – February 19

- Cancelled due to no one being about to oversee the program

Cook with your Kid: Pie Making – ~~January 20~~ February 24

- As of 1/1/24 - 12 participants, 5 on waitlist
- Instructor had to cancel due to COVID, rescheduled to 2/24/2024
- Informed participants and refunded those who requested for one; filled their spot with waiting list

Tai Chi Class – March 7-April 11

- 6-week series

Tennis and Pickleball Lessons – March 16-May 11

- Not ran by Swansboro Parks and Recreation
- Posted on RecDesk with link to their website to register
- Printed flyers

HIIT Bootcamp Fitness – March 2-March 23

- Would be a 5-week series, however, instructor will be out of town the last week so he requested to have a 4 week series

Teacher workday Camp – April 1

- As of 1/24/24 – 2 participants registered

Teacher Workday Camp – April 29

- As of 1/24/24 – 1 participant registered

Tai Chi Class – May 9-June 13

- 6 week series



Product Description

The Rectangle Hip shade structure is a great shading option for schools, parks, and churches. This versatile design can provide shade for anything — from whole playgrounds to picnic areas. We have over 100 standard-size options, with the option of creating custom sizes if needed. You can choose from many fabric color choices so you can create a look to match your facility.

Standard Features

- 8 ft., 10 ft., 12 ft. Entry Heights
- Surface or In-Ground Mount
- Without or With Glide Elbow™ (Up to 1,100 Sq. Ft.)
- Traditional Shade Fabric
- Size Minimum: 10'
- Size Maximum: 60'
- 20-Year Warranty on Framework
- 10-Year Warranty on Fabric

Custom Options

Item V - a.

Custom sizes are available from 10 ft. to 60 ft.
Custom entry heights are available from 8 ft. to 20 ft.

Coastal or Northern Customers:

For customers in coastal areas or northern climates, we recommend adding our optional Glide Elbow™ fabric tensioning accessory. Not only does this accessory makes it easier to install and tension your fabric, but it also makes it easier to remove the fabric in the event of bad weather. Remove fabric before bad weather, such as heavy snow or hurricanes, to protect the shade's fabric and frame. Our frames are rated for wind gusts up to 150 mph when the shade's fabric is removed.

Quick Highlights

Product Resources:

[Color Options](#)

[General Product Specifications](#)

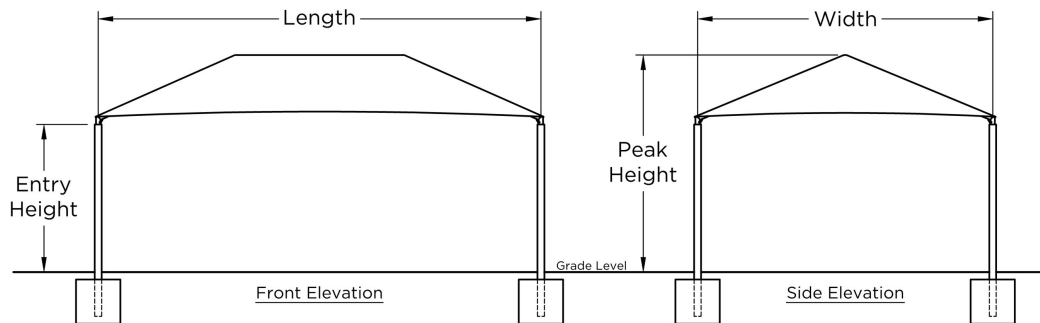
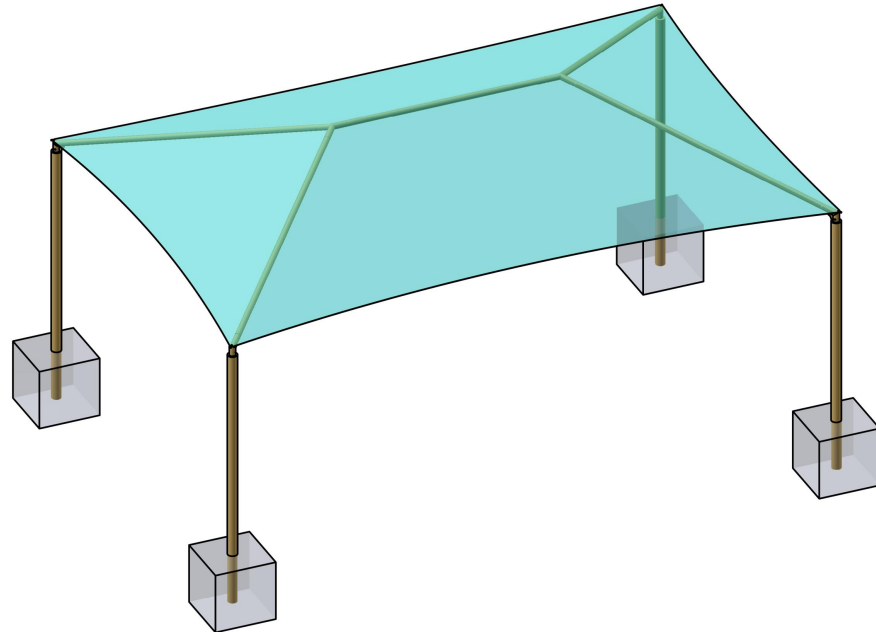
[Downloadable CAD & 3D Files](#)

[Glide Elbow Quick Release](#)

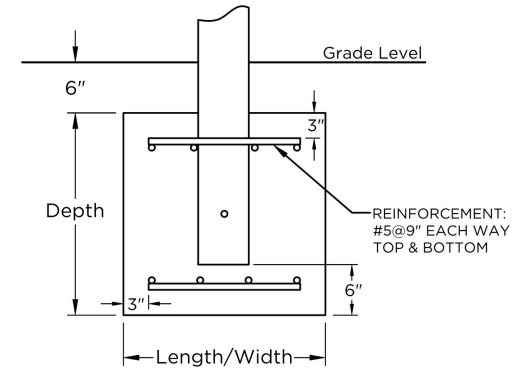
[Warranty](#)

Hip Shade

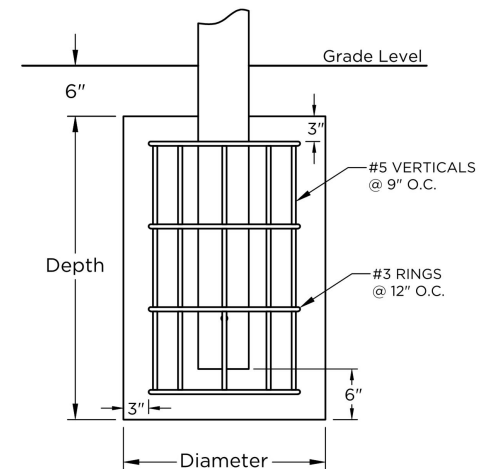
Length	20'	Width	16'	Entry Height	8'
Peak Height	11.23'	Elbow	Standard	Column Mount	Embedded
Column Size	Ø5.0" 11-Ga	Rafter Size	Ø2.875" 12-Ga	Ridge Size	Ø2.875" 12-Ga
Column Length	11'	Rafter Length	11.37'	Ridge Length	5.17'
Dome Qty.	1	Column Qty.	4		



Square Footing		
Column	Length & Width	Depth
Single Cap	2.26	3
Double Cap	N/A	3



Auger Footing		
Diameter	Single Cap Depth	Double Cap Depth
1'-6"		
2'-0"	3.92	N/A
2'-6"	Out of range	N/A
3'-0"	Out of range	N/A



SuperiorShade

QUOTE

SHADE SIZE

SHADE STYLE

20 X 16

Hip Shade

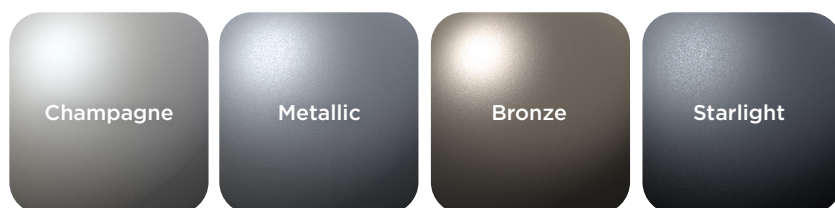
These drawings are for reference only and should not be used as construction details. They show the general character and rough dimensions of the structural features. Exact spans, fasteners, materials, and foundations can be determined by a licensed professional engineer upon request. Estimated footing size above is based on 1,500 PSF soil bearing pressure.

Powder Coat Color Options

Gloss

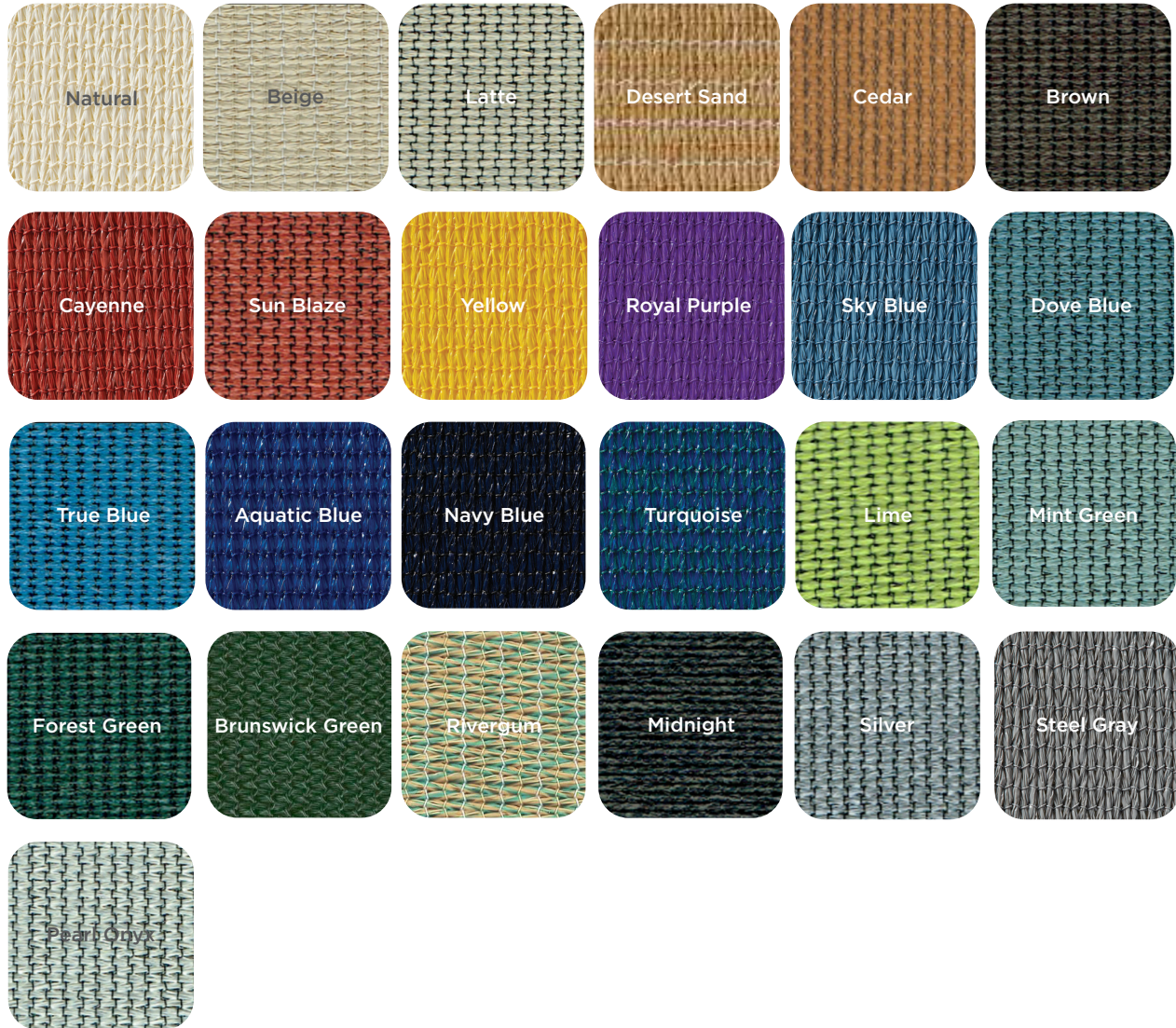


Matte, Textured or Metallic



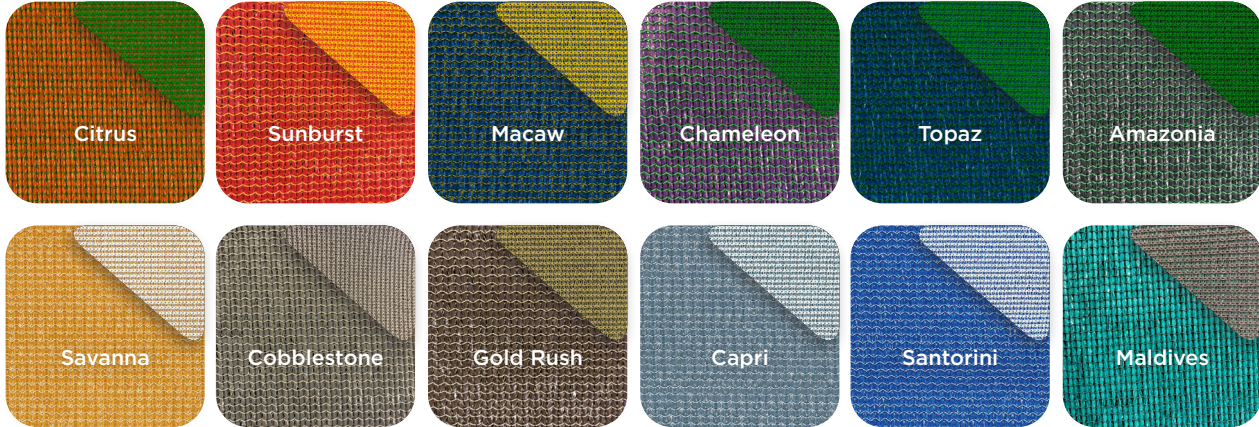
Fabric Color Options

Traditional



Fabric Color Options

Dual Shade



Waterproof





5 RECOMMENDATIONS + IMPLEMENTATION



OVERVIEW

The comprehensive planning process is an opportunity to create a coordinated vision for a Department to guide the next 10 years. Comprehensive plans are a system-wide approach to evaluating progress, identifying opportunities and problem solving. The results, as well as the planning process itself generates new ideas and collaborative conversations that would not occur as part of the day-to-day operations of a department. This plan’s recommendations and implementation strategy result directly from an extensive information gathering process involving community input, staff and stakeholder input, analysis of existing parkland and programs, research, and data.

The following data sources informed recommendations:

- > Staff Meetings + Interviews
- > Parks + Recreation Trends
- > Park + Facility Inventory
- > Benchmarking
- > Recreational Needs Survey
- > Demographics + Trends
- > Level of Service

Lastly, an implementation plan with prioritized action items is the final step in bringing the parks and recreation master plan vision to reality. Implementation is not a linear process but an ongoing iterative process that will rely on large funding investments. Feasibility studies, master plans, phasing plans, and business plans are some of the short to medium-term action items steps the Town may pursue to understand various levels of investment and resources necessary to enhance the parks system overall. Effective implementation strategies are based on highly collaborative processes that span across the various Town Departments, community leaders, strategic partners, and elected officials resulting in multiple benefits to the community.

The recommendations presented in this plan have been further refined into strategies or action items and prioritized as short-term, mid-term, long-term or ongoing. Action items receiving higher priority are those supported by significant community input or are items that have been delayed or postponed in the past but have significant bearing on accomplishing the recommendations of this plan. Each action item indicates a responsible party to foster accountability within the Department as well as component of the parks and recreation system as it relates to parks and facilities, programs, operations, and maintenance.

Implementation Plan Key

GOAL	TIMELINE	TIMELINE CODE
Short-term	1 – 5 years	ST
Mid-term	5 – 10 years	MT
Long-term	10 + years	LT
Ongoing	Continual	OG



PARKLAND + FACILITIES

RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY
<p>Continue to provide high quality park experiences by continuing to make investments and upgrades to parks as it relates to functionality and design standards.</p>	<p>Maintain and update existing parks and facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Develop a schematic drawing to capture potential layout and redevelopment of Pineland Park > Complete a detailed list of upgrades for individual parks along with cost estimates to present in requesting funding as part of operational budget or CIP. 	<p>ST-MT</p>
	<p>Upgrade parks to include amenities reflecting the latest trends and community needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Additional basketball courts > Additional pickleball courts > Access to greenways and trails 	<p>ST-MT</p>
	<p>Leverage technology.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Identify apps that create virtual environments and recreational experience "co-creation" via mobile devices activated at playgrounds and park amenities. 	<p>ST, OG</p>

To provide relevant and diverse parks, the Town of Swansboro should continue to review industry trends and utilize resident surveys to understand evolving recreation interests, needs and wants. A diversity of amenities leads park users to extend their length of stay and appeals to a wider audience of park visitors. A combination of amenities with low barriers to entry and on trend amenities provide all visitors with recreation opportunities. This is something Swansboro Parks and Recreation is already achieving and has the potential to heighten the user experience even further.

One of the best ways to promote consistency of recreational quality and department character is through department branding. Wayfinding adheres to Town branding, provides directional clarity, and often expands park identity. This plan recommends continuing to apply and creatively augment existing brand standards to apply to selecting site furnishings, signage, and entryways in the parks. This will result in a defined character of the entire Swansboro park system, reinforcing the overall brand of the Town.

RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY
<p>Position Parks and Recreation as an essential public service.</p>	<p>Develop a public information campaign to raise awareness and stimulate individuals or groups to seek information about the positive impacts the Swansboro Parks and Recreation Department's efforts, successes, and the positive impact it has on the Town.</p>	<p>ST</p>
	<p>Schedule and conduct bi-annual or quarterly informal conversations with Town Council members to convey the Department's latest achievements.</p>	<p>ST-OG</p>
	<p>Perform data analyses to map tax values of properties located within walking distance or 5-minute driving distance from parks.</p>	<p>ST-MT</p>

Expand tax base - Evidence shows residential development adjacent to parks and trails have higher property values and sell for more than properties further away from park services. Proximity to parks increases property value and increases revenue from property taxes. Research has shown that a 5% increase in property values for houses within 500 feet of a park is a conservative estimate of the change in property value due to proximity to a park.

Maintain a healthy community - Access to parks and trails have significant impacts on health and wellness. As medical research continues to reveal the benefits of an active lifestyle, communities are beginning to see providing parks and trails as a form of preventative care for their residents. Programs such as ParkRx are building relationships among health care providers, residents, and local governments to understand and enhance the important role parks and trails play in keeping communities healthy and vibrant.

Just as water, sewer, and public safety are considered essential public services, parks are vitally important to establishing and maintaining the quality of life in a community, ensuring the health of families and youth, and contributing to the economic and environmental well-being of a community and a region. Parks and recreation, however, does not always receive the same priority as other services like police and fire. Ensuring the Town provides an appropriate level of service for parks and facilities within their expanding community will be essential to preserving the small-town character residents desire.

The amplification of parks and recreation as an essential public service must be accomplished with the understanding the existence of competing demands for infrastructure improvements. As the Town grows, there will be more competition for funding, necessitating validation of investment decisions and tracking of outcomes. The recreational needs survey results indicated that 80 percent of respondents agree that public parks add to the quality of life in a community, and 79 percent of respondents believe recreation and

parks are an essential service to the Town. Both data points suggest there is community support to justify prioritizing investment in the park system. Achieving this objective will require a multifaceted approach to elevating the profile of parks and recreation within the Town.

The Department should understand and communicate the many widespread community benefits that access to parks and recreation services provides. Research indicates that parks strengthen local economies, provide quantifiable health and wellness benefits, and expand the community's tax base by increasing property values. Identifying and tracking performance measures, such as economic impact and health outcomes will be essential to communicating the positive outcome of parks and recreation services.

RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY
<p>Enhance and expand the Park System to meet community needs and wants.</p>	<p>Strategically acquire land for park development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Consider acquiring 18 acres suitable for development by 2031. > Construct 2.75 miles of trails by 2031. 	<p>MT-LT</p>
	<p>Activate underused park spaces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Employ “tactical urbanism” by making low-cost, temporary changes to underutilized areas of the parks. > Engage the community to determine long-term dedication of space. 	<p>ST-OG</p>
	<p>Construct a gymnasium as an addition to the Swansboro Recreation Center.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Determine cost estimates. > Identify funding sources. > Develop site and building design. > Construct, maintain and program the facility. 	<p>MT</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Identify opportunities to invest in and/or develop partnerships to provide facilities and amenities recognized by the community as priority recreational needs: (1) Hiking Trails; (2) Roadway Biking Infrastructure + Playgrounds; (3) Canoe-Kayak Access, Saltwater Fishing Access, Bicycling-Mountain Biking; (4) Outdoor Swimming Pool; (5) Water-play/Splashpad + Picnic Shelters 	<p>ST-MT</p>

The recreational needs study conducted as part of this plan identified recreational amenities among the highest demand for residents of Swansboro. As a note to assist the Town with prioritization decisions, the amenity highest in demand (hiking trails) ranked over ten percentage points (11%) less than fifth highest ranked amenity (indoor pool). Swansboro Parks and Recreation currently provides a robust level of service in terms of motorized and non-motorized boat access, saltwater fishing access, playgrounds, splashpad and picnic shelters. The department also offers programs that take participants to Hammocks Beach State Park where there are opportunities to hike and bike.

In-demand recreational amenities listed above also include both indoor and outdoor swimming pools. The Town of Swansboro, a government entity and provider of public services has not entered this realm of recreation service provision. Costs associated with constructing, managing, staffing, and programming pools and aquatic facilities are often far more than a local government can fund and sustain. For example, a pre-pandemic (2018) feasibility study for an indoor 50-meter, 8 lane community pool in Las Cruces estimated the cost of construction to be over \$18 million with an annual operational cost of nearly \$650,000.¹²

¹²City of Las Cruces, NM. Cost Benefit Analysis on the Construction of a 50- Meter Community Pool. Economic Development Department. September 2018. <https://www.lascruces.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1120/Cost-Benefit-Analysis-on-the-Construction-of-a-50-Meter-Community-Pool-PDF>

There is no question that municipal pools have many benefits. Municipal pools are inexpensive to access and provide aquatics programs and the unique benefits of providing a competitive sport, a recreational activity, and life-saving skills. In addition, pool usage is not bound by age, gender, or an individual's socioeconomic conditions. An article in Municipal Association of South Carolina quoted Charleston Councilwoman Kathleen Wilson as saying "a quality municipal pool is a sign of a functioning, healthy community. As our communities grow, these are the sorts of features residents are demanding."¹³ Demand within communities for public swim facilities has not been seen to wane despite the mostly broad knowledge of associated fiscal constraints. Cities and towns recognize that even in places with many planned residential developments that offer pools, most community residents do not have access to swim facilities. Taking that into consideration, even small local governments like Amery Wisconsin have invested in feasibility studies to determine whether proposed aquatics facilities are sound investments.

Taking into consideration the constraints facing the Town of Swansboro, this plan recommends the Town first focus its investments on recreational amenities more within its financial and operational reach, then in the medium term (5-10 years), invest in a professionally prepared feasibility analysis into a new pool facility. Many Swansboro residents have easy access to the White Oak River, yet the majority of residents and visitors have to drive to a public entryway to access the water. Therefore, this plan recommends prioritizing expanding public access to the river for residents and visitors to canoe, kayak, paddle board, etc.

CASE STUDY – Town of Amery, Wisconsin

The City of Amery is located in rural Wisconsin and has a population of 2,974. Although there are three lakes (including two public beaches), and a river within city limits, community members felt the City needed a pool. In 2017, the City conducted an internal study to assess the feasibility of an outdoor pool in Amery.

The study provided results of a community poll and a survey of municipalities in Wisconsin who operate pools. It was determined that all the municipalities funded construction, at least in part, through their tax levy as a regular capital expenditure or borrowed the funds and placed it on their debt levy. Some municipalities reduced the financial burden on their tax levy by applying for grants, running fundraising campaigns, and collaborating with other entities.

This particular study failed to accurately capture estimated average costs for construction but did list the average maintenance costs at \$102,828. Pools must also be operated by maintenance personnel and lifeguards. On average, personnel costs were higher than maintenance costs at \$131, 194.

The Amery Wisconsin study ultimately recommended to City Council that the City should not pursue the construction and development of a pool or aquatics facility. It went on further to recommend more attainable efforts to better connect the community with water-based recreation. The first recommendation was to launch an awareness campaign to inform users of Amery's lakes and rivers and the recreation amenities available there. The second recommendation was to invest in upgrading, enhancing, and adding to existing water-based recreation infrastructure. The study concluded with a recommendation to commission a professional consultant to develop a feasibility study examining site selection, design, construction cost estimates, and expected operational costs.

¹³ Uptown Magazine Municipal Association of South Carolina, *Public pools benefit residents but take work*, Municipal Association of South Carolina, 2017.

RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY
<p>Leverage parks and greenways as a platform to meet larger community goals.</p>	<p>Economic Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Continue to work with the Swansboro Tourism Development Authority and the Onslow County Tourism Office to advertise Swansboro special events and park amenities. > Partner with Onslow County and East Carolina University to determine interest in conducting an economic impact study 	<p>ST-OG</p>
	<p>Multimodal Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Examine past milestones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > E.G., "Connect intersections of Hammocks Beach Road or Queen's Creek Road with NC 24. > Invest in a greenways plan. 	<p>ST-MT-OG</p>
	<p>Coastal Resource Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Continue to maintain existing waterfront recreational infrastructure to a high standard/preserve CAMA waterfront access points. > Revisit the Waterfront Access and Development Plan, 2012 to determine what natural resource protection objectives and actions have been achieved. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > E.G., "Create a single source map that [identifies] wetland areas within town limits." 	<p>ST</p>

Multimodal Transportation: As expressed throughout this plan, the Town of Swansboro’s population is poised to grow over the course of the next 15-30 years. Town leadership partnered with NCDOT to create the Town of Swansboro Bicycle Plan with the goal of creating a community network of bicycle trails connecting the Historic District with municipal and school facilities, parks, and neighborhoods. The plan recommended the Town place priority on roadway and bicycle-pedestrian planning to include improving the pedestrian and bicycle network with additional sidewalks, multiuse paths, and greenways. The current parks and recreation comprehensive master plan recommends the Town of Swansboro revisit the 2011 plan to determine what of its recommendations have been achieved and move toward investing in a greenways plan – either as a single entity or in partnership with other government bodies like Onslow County and North Carolina State Parks.

Coastal Resource Protection: An obvious theme echoed throughout this plan is Swansboro’s identity as a coastal community and the water-based recreation opportunities it currently provides and plans to provide in the future. The Town developed a plan for waterfront development in 2012 and updated its CAMA land use plan in 2019 – whereby the importance of parks was noted for being vital for protecting waterfront access. The Town has already accomplished several items from these plans including improvements to Ward Shore and

Riverview Parks. The current parks and recreation comprehensive plan recommends the Town identify goals from the two aforementioned plans that have not yet been accomplished and work with other Town of Swansboro departments to prioritize coastal and environmental resource protection projects impactful of the Town’s parks.

Economic Development: Recreation and parks are frequently viewed as cost centers that generate revenue for only a fraction of the costs they incur. Parks departments themselves have frequently reinforced this idea by only reporting annual financial data, rather than reporting economic impact data which captures a wider variety of considerations. Parks provide intrinsic environmental, aesthetic, and recreation benefits to our cities. They are also a source of positive economic benefits. They enhance property values, increase municipal revenue, bring in homebuyers and workers, and attract retirees.

These resources can include technology like spending tracking software, This software can be expensive, but savvy communities typically share the cost of economic development tools with partner agencies. Town staff can also use reliable spending formulas to establish a baseline estimate of the economic development impact of recreation services. By understanding their economic impacts, decision makers can better evaluate the creation and maintenance of parks.

5 KEY POINTS

How cities use parks for ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

<p>01</p> <p>REAL PROPERTY VALUES ARE POSITIVELY AFFECTED.</p> <p>As early as the 19th century the positive connection between parks and property values was being made.</p> 	<p>02</p> <p>MUNICIPAL REVENUES ARE INCREASED.</p> <p>Increased property values and increased municipal revenues go hand in hand. Property tax is one of the most important revenue streams for cities</p> 
<p>03</p> <p>AFFLUENT RETIREES ARE ATTRACTED AND RETAINED.</p> <p>They increase the tax base and are "positive" taxpayers, using fewer services than payed for through taxes.</p> 	<p>04</p> <p>KNOWLEDGE WORKERS AND TALENT ARE ATTRACTED TO LIVE AND WORK.</p> <p>Knowledge workers prefer places with a diverse range of outdoor recreational activities, from trails to rock climbing.</p> 
<p>05</p> <p>HOMEBUYERS ARE ATTRACTED TO PURCHASE HOMES.</p> <p>The National Association of Home Builders found that 65 percent of home shoppers surveyed felt that parks would seriously influence them to move to a community.</p> 	



PARK MAINTENANCE

RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY
Identify and track maintenance needs of the existing park system.	Develop a maintenance management plan linked to maintenance standards.	ST
	Develop a maintenance management training program for any Public Works staff assigned to maintaining parks.	ST-MT

Maintenance Management Components:

Maintenance Zones: Define the level of maintenance required for each area within the parks and the frequency of tasks. Identifying maintenance zones can increase efficiencies and promote asset preservation for parkland, facilities, and amenities.

Work Order System: Manages existing workloads and use the data collected regarding time spent and cost to improve the understanding of maintenance needs and ultimately forecast maintenance needs annually.

External Contractors Protocol: Identifies jobs that can achieve a cost-benefit advantage from being outsourced to a private contractor.

Design Standards: Account for maintenance and operational cost over an asset's lifetime.

Lifecycle Analysis: Tracks needed replacements and renovations of amenities. This tracking method will also account for full cost of ownership.

Evidenced through the community engagement process, residents, stakeholders, and elected officials truly recognize the value of parks and recreation. However, there is less recognition and understanding regarding the amount of maintenance and staff hours that go into maintaining the parks in a way that meets or exceeds the public's expectations.

Park maintenance is a foundational element of providing a safe and high-quality park system and parks and recreation staff work every day to achieve that status. Park maintenance also includes many hidden costs and unseen time expenditures. For example, mowing requires transportation of equipment to and from sites, any time needed to repair or replace equipment and refueling, in addition to time spent on the mower itself.

Daily maintenance tasks typically include landscaping and trash removal. Long-term maintenance includes items such as structural repairs and unplanned maintenance needs. It is important to have records of the time and funding expenditures needed to achieve all maintenance needs so the department can be properly staffed and funded. A well-planned maintenance strategy will include full accounting of the time and budget required to meet short term, long term, and unplanned maintenance needs.

This plan recommends the Town of Swansboro create a comprehensive maintenance management plan that establish standards to forecast management needs as the system evolves.



RECREATION PROGRAMMING

RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY
<p>Develop programs that activate spaces and encourage the community to experience parks, recreation facilities, and activities.</p>	<p>Expand current program inventory to include outdoor activities that take advantage of Swansboro’s unique outdoor spaces and facilities. Partner with local specialists. Examples could include: yoga on the Downtown Pavilion or Bicentennial Park lawn, wildlife watching at Riverview Park, moonlight paddles, etc.</p>	<p>ST</p>
	<p>Invest in a gymnasium as an addition to Swansboro Recreation Center to grow the Department’s menu of recreation programs, services, and activities.</p>	<p>MT-LT</p>
	<p>Create capacity within the Department to offer town-provided youth sports.</p>	<p>ST-MT</p>

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of not only one’s personal physical health, but also demonstrated our capacity to adapt our habits and activities to take place outdoors when accessing indoor space was prevented. When gyms and recreation centers shut their doors, parks, trails, and open space gladly took their place. An article in Fortune Magazine described recent data gleaned from workout and travel apps revealing users’ shifting preferences. The data revealed that hiking is now more popular than interval training, participation tennis and pickleball have doubled and some cases even tripled in 2021. The turn to “green exercise” and greater engagement with the outdoors is likely the future recreation administrators are looking into. Lines between indoor and outdoor exercise are consistently being blurred, with the public showing a great level of interest in bringing activities traditionally held inside to outdoor, shared civic spaces.

This plan recommends the Town of Swansboro determine the capability and feasibility of utilizing existing park and open spaces beyond their traditionally intended usage – and begin to adopt the viewpoint that most public spaces can become multifunctional and easily adjustable to accommodate community needs and emerging trends. Tied to this recommendation is a proposal for youth sports programs developed and administered by the Town of Swansboro Parks and Recreation Department. Over 20 percent of survey respondent reported being dissatisfied with youth programming offerings in Swansboro. Furthermore, 70 percent of respondents believed athletic programming should be offered by the Town.

The notion of outdoor activities being in high demand does not diminish the need to couple park space with indoor recreation facilities. This plan recommends the Town expand the Swansboro Recreation Center to include a gymnasium. Results from the current parks and recreation master plan recreational needs survey pointed to a need for the Town of Swansboro to invest in expanding its indoor recreation offerings. Indoor pickleball was one of the most desired activities, as were indoor fitness and wellness programs. Additionally, the majority of survey takers (57%) either agreed or strongly agreed that the Town needs an indoor gymnasium.

RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY
<p>Expand education and learning through connections to history and the natural environment via park amenities and recreational programs.</p>	<p>Explore opportunities to educate community members and visitors about Swansboro’s history and natural heritage with recreation programs and park enhancements – like educational kiosks, QR code tour, etc.</p>	<p>ST</p>
	<p>Partner with state, regional, and local environmental educators, history interpreters, and nature programmers to offer activities and programs.</p>	<p>ST</p>

Both the needs assessment and public input revealed Swansboro residents highly regard and value nature, the environment, and the outdoors. Participants in the resident intercept survey exercise identified this value more often than any of the other available options as it tied with the strongly held value of people and community.

The Town should consider a vision for historical and cultural programming and how to foster culture, heritage, and place. This may include compiling the history and heritage of a place, identifying community partners and organizations, and determining diverse venues for arts and cultural expression. Culture and Arts was the third most commonly cited value among residents that participated in the resident intercept interviews. Therefore, this plan recommends Swansboro Parks and Recreation continue to invest in the physical and human infrastructure necessary to connect the community to parks and programs that are conducive to experiential learning.

RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY
Use program management principles to maximize department efficiency.	Use the program lifecycle model to assist decision making to introducing, continuing, and retiring programs.	ST + OG
	Reference the age segment analysis to understand imbalances in service distribution among age groups.	ST
	Employ the program classification framework to justify program pricing strategies and cost recovery policy.	ST + OG

This plan’s program assessment uses program management principles as a framework for evaluating the Swansboro Parks and Recreation’s operational approach to recreation programming. With the baseline understanding this plan provides, the Department can develop metrics and goals for expanding and diversifying program offerings. Using program management principles will provide information needed to justify additional resources to expand programming based on community need, validate decisions and track results such as participation, customer satisfaction, and cost recovery.

The program management principle of annually tracking the lifecycle of all programs will help ensure the best program distribution and identify early when a program is transitioning into decline. This also demonstrates a logical approach to terminating declining programs. Based on the Program Lifecycle Analysis completed as part of this plan’s program assessment, the Department should terminate programs that fall into the decline and or saturation phase. Currently, the majority (53%) of Swansboro Parks and Recreation’s are in the beginning phases (Introduction, Take-Off, and Growth) with over half in the growth stage, nearly one quarter (21%) are considered to be saturated or declining.

Programs in decline are representative of two out of the Department’s five FUN Recreation Program Areas (Fitness + Wellness, Family) and include Yoga/Zumba, Kid’s Night Out, and Cook with Your Kid. This plan recommends the Department seek feedback from those who are participating in those activities to understand what draws them to the programs and enhance those factors as necessary. The Department might also consider the way these programs are advertised, as a lack of information may be contributing to their decline.

RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY
Base decisions for introducing new programs based on community needs and recreation trends.	Understand recreation trends to evaluate correlation with current department offerings.	ST + OG
	Use the results of the recreational needs survey and public input to justify introducing new programming.	ST
	Use program assessment data to determine the success and value of current offerings.	ST
	Continually seek information related to current recreation program trends.	ST + OG
	Continue to monitor the demographics of the town to ensure the needs of the community are being met.	ST + OG
	Continue to provide best in class festivals and special events and expand activities where resources are available.	ST + OG

Results from the recreational needs survey and public input should inform selection of new programs. Top program desires expressed by the community included

Recreational Needs Survey

1. Special Events + Festivals
2. Outdoor Fitness Classes
3. Indoor Fitness Classes
4. Educational Programs
5. Swimming

Public Input

1. Special Events + Festivals
2. Outdoor Movies + Concerts
3. Fitness + Wellness Programs
4. Outdoor Adventure Programs
5. Environmental Education/Nature-based Programs

Understanding new and emerging trends in parks, recreation, and cultural resources will help the Department craft programming that meets needs in exciting fresh ways. For example, “fitness and wellness programming” is a community priority, but residents’ expectations of engaging programming have changed over time, with current trends leaning toward outdoor and mind/body exercises. Focus groups and surveying are effective tools for determining user expectations of fresh programming. Department staff can select programming with the highest potential for success by aligning stated community needs with emerging trends.

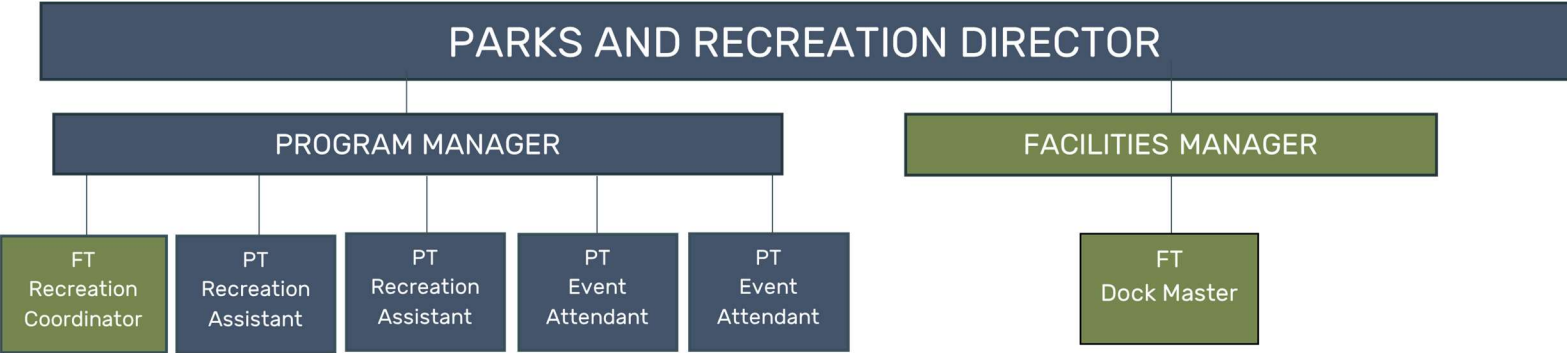


OPERATIONS

RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY
Build staff capacity to meet growing community needs.	Expand the organizational structure to meet current and future demands.	ST-MT
	Track staff workloads seasonally to identify opportunity to build capacity.	ST + OG

Providing a sound foundation of knowledge among Department staff elevates skillsets, increases efficiency, and builds capacity employees and the Department as a whole. These elements are necessary to increase capabilities in employees to manage the responsibilities that arise from implementing a Comprehensive Master Plan or adding services and amenities as the system evolves.

To develop an adequately staffed Department using best management practices, customer-focused outcomes, and performance measure tracking to demonstrate excellence in service delivery. Based on the Operations Assessment, conversations with staff, and community need, this plan recommends the Town consider expanding their organizational structure to include new staff. Items shaded in green represent future new positions.



↑ Proposed Organizational Chart

RECOMMENDATION	STRATEGY / ACTION ITEM	PRIORITY
<p>Continue to grow the marketing, communication, and brand identity of the Department.</p>	<p>Identify creative ways to market the Department.</p>	<p>ST + OG</p>
	<p>Continue to promote the Department’s unique identity.</p>	<p>ST +OG</p>
	<p>Create and implement social media outreach standards and policies for the Swansboro Parks and Recreation Department.</p>	<p>ST</p>

Brand positioning has value beyond attracting participants to recreation programs, activities, events, and parks. Parks and recreation departments are often the only department within a local government where the public chooses to spend their disposable income.

The Department should have a communication strategy to guide outreach campaigns. A communication strategy sets the tone and direction so that all communication activities, products, materials, and design work together to achieve stated outcomes. Efforts should be made to portray the positive role the Swansboro Parks and Recreation Department plays in town. Even minor achievements can be spun into fun and educational social media posts highlighting the Department’s strengths. The Department should use data, key performance indicator graphics, and other creative methods to engage followers in improvements initiatives

As part of the overall communication strategy, the Department should develop a marketing and social media policy to direct staff on standards, brand identity, and tone of social media posts. This policy should outline the overall philosophy to social media, the marketing process, marketing methods, contributor roles, and desired outcomes. Parks and recreation requires a higher level of customer engagement in social media platforms to attract customers in a competitive market. The Department’s engagement on social media should reflect the fun an engaging experiences that residents have at the Town’s parks and programs.