

Parks & Recreation

City of Missoula • 600 Cregg Lane • 721-PARK

General Guide to Citizen Initiated Park Planning and Development December 2007

Citizens and civic minded groups are welcome to take an active leadership role in improving park and recreation facilities in their neighborhoods.

For the greatest success and to make best use of your time please take the following steps.

- *Contact Parks and Recreation to request the Department's involvement as soon as possible*
- *Include a licensed landscape architect as soon as possible*

The primary phases in most projects are as follows:

- 1) Pre-Planning and Research
- 2) Scope, Schedule & Projected Budget
- 3) Master Site Plan/ Project Plan & Financial Planning
- 4) Design Development, Construction Documents
- 5) Bidding and Award
- 6) Construction
- 7) Occupation & Maintenance

1) Pre-Planning and Research

Pre-planning is the phase where all possible information regarding the parcel, park, area, amenities, history and surroundings is researched. This is also the phase where compliance with the Urban Area Master Park Plan, Open Space Plan, Non-motorized Transportation Plan, Neighborhood Plans and other related policies and plans are researched for compliance with the proposed project.

Task Checklist (Pre-Planning and Research)

- Inventory and Assessment the site's existing conditions (cultural, biological and physical attributes)
- Review of focus area in larger context including other parks, trail connections, public lands, schools, traffic patterns, shopping areas, etc. How will plan and improvements impact these areas and vice versa?

- Research historic documents on any lands proposed for planning or development. Include historic archives and newspaper articles. Check City Council, County Commission, City and County Park Board Actions.
- Check for all legal descriptions, surveys, ROW's, property boundaries, encroachments, plats, zoning, and conditions for area.
- Conduct a site survey if necessary. Verify property boundaries, site topography, and location of all existing features in the park.
- Photograph and make copies of all pertinent site findings and documents research.
- Develop citizen survey to determine interests and priorities of neighbors. Work closely with Parks Department on survey and dispersal to assure adherence to Master Park Plan and other pertinent community or neighborhood plans. Also, all questioning should avoid polarizing neighbors and users.
- Document your process via meeting minutes, actions taken, research findings, etc. This step will help greatly when securing public funding sources.

2) Scope, Schedule & Projected Budget

During this phase we want to use the info gained from Pre-Planning and Research to further develop on project.

Task Checklist (Scope, Schedule, Projected Budget)

- A licensed landscape architect should be involved in this step and through design. Parks can provide a list of qualified professionals.
- Plan a timeline for all tasks from pre-planning through design and construction as early in the process as possible.
- Develop a budget for pre-planning and master site (or project) plans. Neighborhood grants and service club projects can be good tools.
- Develop early cost estimates and funding options. Staff can assist with this. Keep in mind park development typically ranges from \$100,000 to \$200,000 per acre. General costs for park amenities: Shelter \$30,000-\$100,000; Playground \$30,000-\$100,000 for “shelf” equipment, Restroom \$75,000-\$150,000; Basketball Court \$15,000-\$25,000; Tennis Court \$45,000-\$60,000. Costs vary based on existing conditions, size of facility, materials, etc.
- Research possible funding sources such as City, State and Federal funding & grants, private individual & corporate donations & grants, foundations, neighborhood fundraisers, etc.

3) Master Site Plan/ Project Plan & Financial Planning

Upon completion of the earlier steps, you now have good information regarding your project and scope. This information should comply with or further the various adopted Plans as well as reflect the information gained in your survey. It is critical that Parks Department planning staff and a licensed Landscape Architect (or appropriate professional) is involved in this process.

Master Planning is the point where all gathered info from preplanning is shared in a public charrette or workshop. A trained facilitator and/or Parks Department staff leads this process with the help of the neighborhood or civic group. (See attached example of a Park Design Workshop outline)

Task Check List (Master Site Plan Workshop)

- Solidify project budget
- Secure funding for process
- Meet with core leadership team, consultants and Department staff to develop specific plan and steps of Master Site Plan Workshop
- Set date with Parks Department and Neighborhood/s and Group/s interested in project
- Advertise process
- Synthesize and summarize information from earlier steps for public presentation
- Prepare materials and set agenda for the workshop/charrette
- Conduct Workshop
- Engage in developing Draft Master Site or Project Plan (primarily done by Landscape Architect under the direction of the Parks Department)
- Share Draft with neighborhood/s and group/s and accept additional comment
- Make changes as necessary
- Park Board or appropriate leadership adopts plan/project (this step and who is involved in approval of plans and projects is dependent upon scope of project, ownership of land, and other possible factors)
- Upon adoption of Plan or Project, funding must be secured to continue process.

Notes:

- 1. Typically Tasks 4 through 7 are coordinated by the Parks Department with neighborhood involvement.**
- 2. Schedule Planning: the following dates are a typical project schedule for neighborhood park development.**
 - A. March 1 (any year) – Contact Parks Dept to be included on Department calendar for initial preplanning steps for the coming planning season (October through February)**
 - B. March 1 (the following year) – Plan that each step will take approximately one year to fund and complete.**
 - C. December 1 (after steps 1 – 3 are complete) – Complete construction documents in order to construct during following construction season which is April through early November.**

Note: Step B above, can be condensed into a shorter timeframe if sufficient funding is available for the professional services needed for design and construction document production.