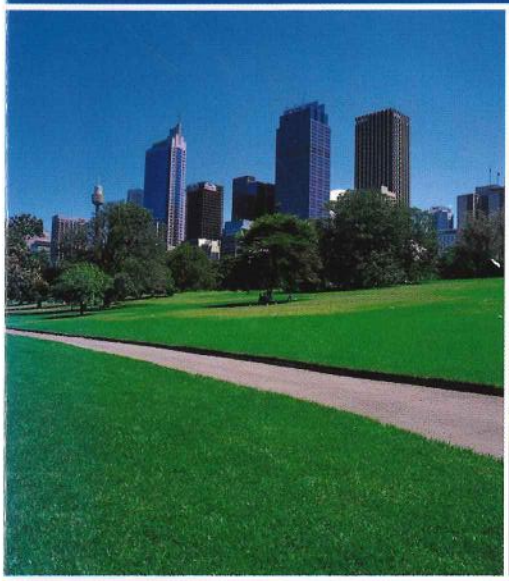
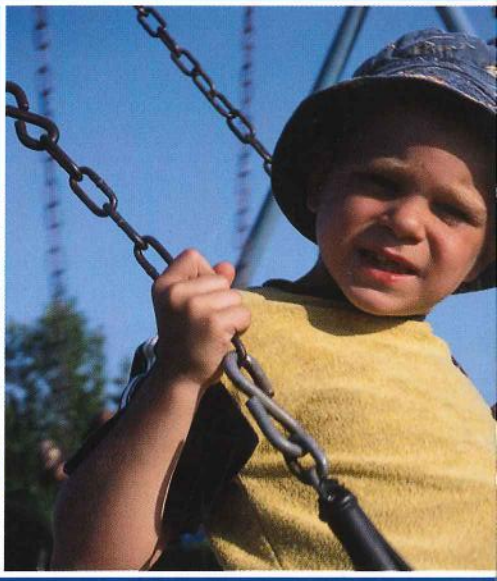
Community Benefits and Repositioning

The Keys to Park and Recreation's Future Viability





by **JOHN L. CROMPTON**
Distinguished Professor, Texas A&M University

First Edition

COMMUNITY BENEFITS AND REPOSITIONING
The Keys to Park and Recreation's Future Viability

by

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 7

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION 13

CONTEXT 15

OVERVIEW OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE BENEFITS MOVEMENT 17

CURRENT STATUS 19

THE PAYOFF FROM REPOSITIONING 21

CHAPTER 2 WHERE THE FIELD IS COMING FROM: THE USER-BENEFITS PARADIGM 25

GESTATION OF THE USER-BENEFITS PARADIGM IN THE BUSINESS FIELD 27

GESTATION OF THE USER-BENEFITS PARADIGM IN THE PARKS AND RECREATION FIELD 30

A Philosophical Foundation 30

The Impetus to Action 32

POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF A USER-BENEFITS APPROACH 34

Meeting Fundamental Human Needs 35

Benefits as Goals 38

Impetus for Partnering 39

Careful Design and Structure of Programs 39

LIMITATIONS OF THE USER-BENEFITS APPROACH 41
The Misconception of Marketing 42
The Inappropriate Model of Marketing 43

CONCLUDING COMMENTS 45

CHAPTER 3 WHERE THE FIELD IS MOVING: RATIONALE FOR A SHIFT IN FOCUS TO COMMUNITY BENEFITS 49

RATIONALE FOR A BROADER CONSTITUENCY 51

RETURNING TO THE FIELD'S ROOTS 53
The Rationale for Parks 55
The Rationale for Recreation 56

PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE COMMUNITY-BENEFITS PARADIGM 57

THE COMMUNITYWIDE BENEFITS PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES COULD POTENTIALLY DELIVER 61

CREDIBILITY OF THE EVIDENCE 65

NEXUS AND DISCONNECTS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTAL INVESTORS AND BENEFICIARIES 67

CHAPTER 4 REPOSITIONING: THE KEY TO A VIABLE FUTURE 71

WHAT IS REPOSITIONING? 75

AXIOMS OF POSITIONING 76
Axiom #1: Formulate a position statement 77
Axiom #2: Agencies do not position services, stakeholders do 82
Axiom #3: Positioning is a relative rather than an absolute concept 82
Axiom #4: Focus 85

TIME FRAME FOR REPOSITIONING 86

THE SET OF REPOSITIONING STRATEGIES 87
Real Repositioning 88
Associative Repositioning 88
Psychological Repositioning 91

Competitive Repositioning 102

THE IMPACT OF REPOSITIONING STRATEGIES 107

USING A SURVEY TO SELECT A DESIRED POSITION(S) 108

APPENDIX 1 EXAMPLE OF A PARKS AND RECREATION REPOSITIONING SURVEY 117

APPENDIX 2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES OF THE EVIDENCE RELATING TO THE FIELD'S POTENTIAL TO DELIVER 19 COMMUNITYWIDE BENEFITS 131

INTRODUCTION 132

BENEFITS RELATED TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY 132
Attracting Tourists 132
Attracting Businesses 134
Attracting Retirees 138
Enhancing Real Estate Values 140
Reducing Taxes 142
Stimulation of Equipment Sales 143

BENEFITS RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY 144
Protecting Drinking Water 145
Controlling Flooding 149
Cleaning Air 153
Reducing Traffic Congestion 156
Reducing Energy Costs 157
Preserving Biological Diversity 160

BENEFITS RELATED TO ALLEVIATING SOCIAL PROBLEMS 164
Reducing Environmental Stress 165
Community Regeneration 167
Cultural and Historical Preservation 168
Facilitating Healthy Lifestyles 170
Alleviating Deviant Behavior Among Youth 176
Raising Levels of Educational Attainment 178
Alleviating Unemployment Distress 179

In the past half-century, the parks and recreation field has passed through five stages, which comprise the Benefits Evolution Pyramid. The 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s was a period of expansion during which managers' roles could be characterized as focused on activity and custodial issues. In the late 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, the focus shifted to promotion and selling, and in some agencies this evolved into a focus on user benefits. Community benefits is the fourth stage in the Benefits Evolution Pyramid. It expands on the user-benefits foundation by embracing communitywide benefits. The final stage is repositioning, and this occurs when community benefits are aligned with the major issues of concern in a community. The implication of the Benefits Evolution Pyramid is that justification for tax support for parks and recreation is proportionate to the number of people in a community who perceive they receive benefits from parks and recreation agencies, so the strongest justification is at the apex of the pyramid.

Parks and recreation agencies in communities that progress to the upper stages of the Benefits Evolution Pyramid and embrace a community-benefits or repositioning focus are likely to see four major positive outcomes: (i) better understanding and appreciation of the significance of parks and recreation by stakeholders and professionals; (ii) stronger justification for the allocation of public funds to parks and recreation; (iii) clearer guidance for service prioritizations; and (iv) enhanced pride by agency personnel in the profession.

WHERE THE FIELD IS COMING FROM: THE USER-BENEFITS PARADIGM

Traditionally, parks and recreation agencies focused on offering programs and maintaining facilities. When the tax limitation movement emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, many agencies responded by adopting a more aggressive posture, where instead of merely offering programs and services or looking after facilities, they engaged in vigorous promotion and attempted to convince potential client groups to use them. A few progressive and enlightened agencies moved beyond vigorous promotion and embraced a user-ben-

efits orientation, which was the first stage of the contemporary benefits movement.

The gestation of the user-benefits paradigm in parks and recreation emanated from two main channels. First, it transitioned into the field from the sphere of business, which in the 1960s had redefined the concept of marketing after realizing that customers did not buy products, rather they bought benefits provided by the products. Thus, when marketing was embraced by the parks and recreation field in the late 1970s and 1980s, this user-benefits paradigm was central to it. The source of the second benefits channel was an effort launched by scientists in the U.S. Forest Service to scientifically identify the psychological outcomes associated with outdoor recreation participation. The terms "marketing" and "psychological outcomes" were not easily understood by professionals, the general public or elected officials, and so in the late 1980s the term "benefits" was introduced by Forest Service scientists to replace the more technical semantics.

The shift from activity-based management, where emphasis was on the supply of services and facilities, to benefit-based management, where concern was on the benefits those services and facilities delivered to users, was based on four major axioms: (i) these benefits met fundamental human needs, not only recreational needs; (ii) the starting point is to identify the benefits people seek, and the subsequent task is to develop services and facilities that will deliver those benefits rather than vice versa; (iii) needs often can best be met by partnering with other organizations; and (iv) services have to be carefully designed and structured if the desired benefits are to be delivered.

The user-benefits paradigm enhanced the field's effectiveness and professionalism, but it had marginal impact on elected officials' budgetary decisions. This lack of impact occurred because the concept of marketing borrowed from the business field was not adapted to fit the very different environment in which recreation and parks services were delivered. There were two major failings in the transition.

The first failing was a misinterpretation by recreation and parks' personnel of what marketing was. The purpose of marketing was incorrectly perceived by many to generate revenue. Thus, responding to political pressure "to do more with less," many recreation and parks agencies focused on efficiency and traded off equity. Effort was diverted to services that produced revenue, and investment was reduced to other services that had social merit but were costly to sustain. This resulted in there being less justification for public tax support, which was reflected in lower budget allocations.

The second failing was adoption of an inappropriate model of marketing. The business model undergirding the user-benefits approach was based on voluntary exchange. Benefits were offered to users who responded by exchanging something of approximately equal value (i.e., their taxes, fee payments, travel costs and time). In the business world, this is acceptable because firms receive most of their financial resources from their users of their services. However, in contrast, the largest portion of a parks and recreation agency's budget is likely to come from taxes provided by nonusers of its services, many of whom perceive they receive no benefits from investment of their tax dollars in the agency. Hence, the elected representatives of these nonusers do not perceive they have a mandate to provide support for the field.

Thus, the user-benefits paradigm has proved to be too limiting and incomplete to secure a viable future for parks and recreation. However, it provides a sound base upon which to expand the benefits approach

to the community level. Users are an agency's core constituency. They are likely to play a prominent role in securing agency resources because invariably they are the primary advocates, fundraisers, and "infantry" in referendum and lobbying campaigns. Thus, user benefits and high user satisfaction are likely to be necessary conditions for acquiring additional resources, but they are not likely to be sufficient. Hence, the challenge is to extend the user-benefits paradigm so it embraces nonusers, not to abandon the paradigm.

WHERE THE FIELD IS MOVING: RATIONALE FOR A SHIFT IN FOCUS TO COMMUNITY BENEFITS

The sine qua non for a profession is that it performs a necessary service for the public at large. This goes far beyond responding to the demands of particular user groups. If the paramount needs of a majority of residents are not met, the field does not deserve their support. Such widespread community support will be based primarily on the off-site benefits that accrue to nonusers rather than on the on-site benefits that accrue to users.

Pursuing off-site benefits returns the field to its roots because off-site benefits undergirded the acceptance of parks and, subsequently, recreation as services that governments should provide in the latter half of the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth century. The rationale for parks being a public tax-supported service was derived from a belief that they would contribute to four societal goals: democratic equality, social coherence, public health, and economic prosperity. Similarly, advocates of publicly tax-supported recreation argued that it would be an antidote to the rising problem of male juvenile crime and delinquency and be an effective vehicle for teaching good citizenship, so the whole community benefited.

The prevailing user-benefits paradigm adopted by parks and recreation agencies was borrowed from the business field and was based upon three major principles: (i) an open-system model of formal organizations; (ii) the concept of voluntary exchange; and (iii) self-interest motivation. The revised paradigm, which embraces the delivery of community benefits as its central feature is founded on three different principles that more accurately characterize the context in which parks and recreation agencies operate. They are: (i) a closed system, which is prescribed by a legislative body, rather than being responsive to the direct needs of users; (ii) resources are based on redistribution, rather than voluntary exchange; and (iii) allocation is driven by coercion mutually agreed upon, rather than unbridled self-interest.

Each of these principles emphasizes that the key constituency for an agency is the legislative body, which, respectively, (i) sets the goals; (ii) collects and dispenses the financial resources; and (iii) makes the rules and regulations that govern their use. The revised paradigm incorporates user benefits, so it extends the user-benefits paradigm rather than replacing it.

A major implication inherent in this revised paradigm is that the legislative body, as opposed to users of the agency's on-site services, makes the key decision on how many resources should be allocated to a parks and recreation agency. Its resource allocation decisions are likely to be based on perceptions of the value of the community benefits the agency offers to residents; the relative importance of those benefits in addressing issues of concern in the community; and the legislature's value system as to how these community benefits should be redistributed among different segments of the population.

A comprehensive set of 19 community

benefits that park and recreation agencies could deliver is identified and they are classified into three broad categories: economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and alleviation of social problems. In the political arena it is almost always advantageous to frame an issue in economic terms when presenting a case to a legislative group, and this can be done in most cases even with those community benefits associated with environmental sustainability and alleviation of social problems.

During the past 2 or 3 decades an impressive amount of scientific evidence has been published that confirms the potential of these community benefits. While this empirical evidence is uneven and incomplete, it offers strong enough support to justify advocacy for all of the identified community benefits in formulating policy.

When presenting a case based on a selected set of these community benefits, five caveats should be recognized. First, while the evidence represents the best knowledge available at this time, it is incomplete. Second, while all of these benefits *can* be delivered, the magnitude of their effectiveness is likely to be context specific. Third, park and recreation services can *contribute* to alleviating problems, but they are unlikely to be effective in isolation and partnering with others is likely to be de rigueur. Fourth, even when holistic responses are forthcoming, the problem being addressed is likely to continue to exist at some lower level rather than to be resolved absolutely.

A fifth caveat confronting those advocating investment in park and recreation services and facilities that offer communitywide benefits is that there is often a disconnect in the flow of dollars between government entities that make the investments and government entities that receive the cost savings or revenue enhancements accruing from those investments. While this disconnect is relatively minor with investments designed to enhance economic prosperity, it is a greater issue with those focused on environmental sustainability, and often is acute with investments whose intent is to alleviate social problems.

WHERE THE FIELD NEEDS TO BE: REPOSITIONING, THE KEY TO A VIABLE FUTURE

Positioning is the process of establishing and maintaining a distinctive and valued place in the minds of the general public and elected officials for parks and recreation. The present position of parks and recreation services which has existed in the minds of most stakeholders for several decades, is that they are relatively discretionary, nonessential services. They are nice to have if they can be afforded after the important essential services have been funded. The key to sustaining or increasing investments is for parks and recreation services to be repositioned so they are perceived to contribute to alleviating problems that constitute the prevailing political concerns of policy makers who are responsible for allocating tax funds.

There are four fundamental axioms of positioning. First there has to be consensus on a *position statement* that articulates the agency's desired position and drives its strategy and direction. The second axiom is that *agencies do not position services, stakeholders do*. Thus, repositioning is about parks and recreation connecting with the priorities of residents and elected officials. It means thinking, speaking, and dealing with constituents' perceptions, and using their language to tell the agency's story. It means asking, "How can we help solve your problems?"

The third axiom of positioning is that positioning is a *relative rather than an ab-*

solute concept. It is not viewed in isolation like image is; rather it is perceived within a framework that embraces comparison with competitors. It is not about how the field is evaluated in absolute terms. Rather, concern is with how important is it vis-à-vis other public services. The fourth positioning axiom is *focus,* which has two manifestations: (i) the number of positions sought should be small; and (ii) communications describing them should be succinct, consistent, and persistent.

Repositioning often involves shifting widely held, long-established, entrenched perceptions about the field. This means it is likely to take a long time to accomplish, and agencies should think in terms of a 10-year,rather than a 1-year time horizon.

There are four strategies that agencies can pursue to attain a revised position. *Real* positioning involves developing new services or restructuring existing services so they better contribute to addressing the issue expressed in the desired position. *Associative* repositioning means aligning with other organizations that already possess the desired position and acquiring some of their position from the related association. *Psychological* repositioning aims at changing stakeholders' beliefs about the outcomes that emanate from the services an agency offers, so the services better align with the desired position. This can be accomplished by using empirical scientific evidence to document the scope or magnitude of the benefits being delivered, by framing information in an unconventional way, or by using different nomenclature and terminology. The fourth strategy is *competitive* repositioning, which means altering stakeholders' beliefs about what an agency's competitors do.

These four strategies are complementary, not mutually exclusive. To accomplish a revised position, all four of them should be addressed and it is likely that some combination of them will be pursued simultaneously.

A desired position could be ascertained subjectively, for example, by reviewing issues that are paramount in election campaigns, or more scientifically by surveying a probability sample of residents. A questionnaire that has been developed for this purpose is included as Appendix I and an example of a simple technique for displaying and interpreting the results is described.

APPENDIX 2: 19 COMMUNITYWIDE BENEFITS THAT PARKS AND RECREATION AGENCIES COULD POTENTIALLY DELIVER

Executive summaries of the empirical evidence are provided in Appendix 2 for each of the 19 potential communitywide benefits the field could deliver. Six of these potential benefits are classified under the rubric of economic prosperity: attracting tourists, attracting businesses, attracting retirees, enhancing real estate values, reducing taxes, and stimulating equipment sales. Under the broad heading of environmental sustainability, the evidence supporting another six potential benefits is reviewed: protecting drinking water, controlling flooding, cleaning air, reducing traffic congestion, reducing energy costs, and preserving biological diversity. The final seven benefits relate to alleviating social problems: reducing environmental stress, regenerating communities, preserving culture and history, facilitating healthy lifestyles, alleviating deviant behavior among youth;,raising levels of educational attainment, and alleviating unemployment distress.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

CONTEXT

OVERVIEW OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE BENEFITS MOVEMENT

CURRENT STATUS

THE PAYOFF FROM REPOSITIONING

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

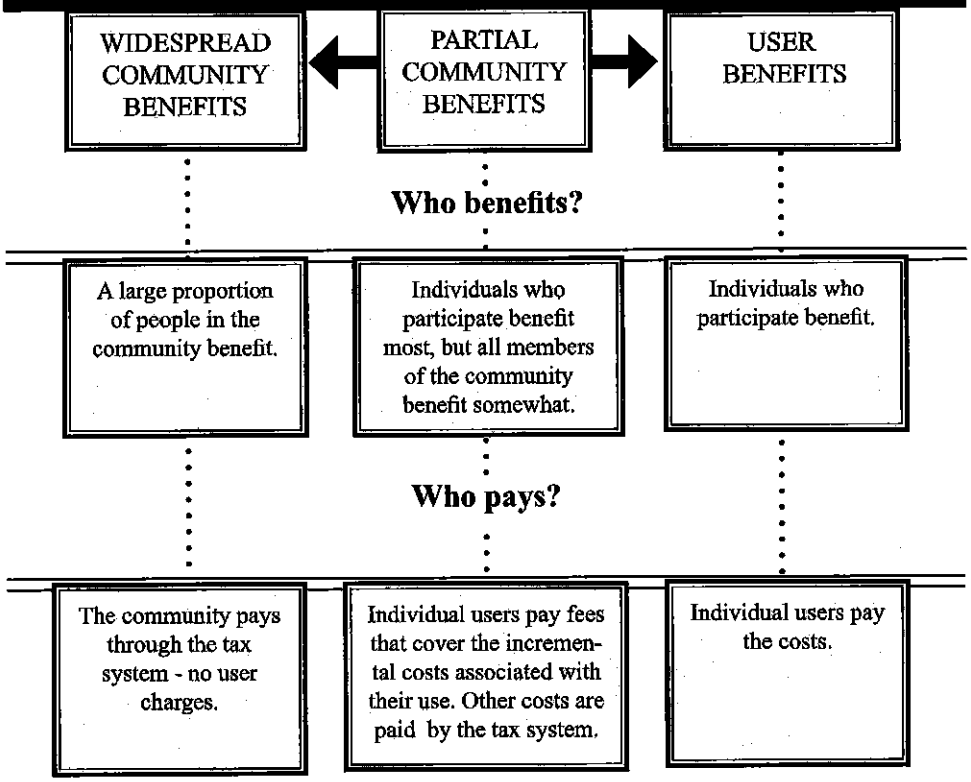
In the early 1990s at the dawn of the contemporary interest in "the benefits movement," a respected leader in the parks and recreation field observed:

> There has been a frantic attempt to document a variety of benefits of services. This documentation, while admirable, is not likely to have much impact on the public and upon political decision making unless such benefits are identified within a conceptual framework. Without such an overarching concept, identified benefits may be seen as a series of unrelated items that don't add up to much. Recreation, park, and leisure services have prospered during those historical periods when their leaders have acted in response to a problem of society after having established a conceptual basis for action (p. 56).[1]

During the 16 year period since these observations were made, much has been accomplished. Conceptual frameworks have emerged, most notably the Benefit Outcomes Approach to Leisure (BOAL)[2], and systematic research programs have empirically documented both the nature and magnitude of those benefits and the structural and environmental contexts in which they are most likely to flourish.

This evolution of the benefits movement has been the work of a relatively small group of researchers who recognized the need to change the field's prevailing activity/custodial mindset, thought intensively about the problem over several decades, and offered a prescription for a new paradigm. They came from different disciplinary backgrounds and institutional bases, and developed their research programs in different areas of the field. Nevertheless, together they developed

Exhibit 1-1 Implications of the Range of Benefits Continuum



a common perspective that represents a new paradigm offering a focused, scientifically documented expression of what the parks and recreation field is and what it does.

Elected officials cannot be blamed for "not getting it." Responsibility for communicating the benefits of parks and recreation to them has to be assumed by professionals. Hence, the immediate challenge is to diffuse the new paradigm so that a wider spectrum of professionals in the field "get it." That is the intent of this monograph. It is one of a series planned by the National Recreation and Park Association that will examine in detail the scientific evidence relating to the benefits that it claims park and recreation services have the potential to deliver.

This book is the prelude to that series. It describes how the new paradigm evolved and the principles upon which it is based; it reviews the benefits claimed for the field and provides an executive summary of the scientific evidence relating to each of the 19 community benefits identified; and it describes how to communicate the value of these benefits to taxpayers and elected officials in terms that will resonate with them so they will respond by allocating commensurate additional resources for parks and recreation services.

The terms "user benefits" and "community benefits" are used throughout the monograph so it is important that readers have a clear understanding of the meaning of these terms from the outset. The distinctions between them are summarized in the range-of-benefits continuum shown in Exhibit 1-1.

The primary characteristic of services delivering *user benefits* is that these benefits, for the most part, are received by participating individuals rather than by the rest of the community. It is usually possible to exclude people who are not willing to pay for the service. When individuals receive most of the benefits from a service, it seems only fair and logical that they should pay to cover most of the cost of providing for them. Many would categorize services such as adult athletics, and facilities such as skiing developments, equestrian stables, and marinas as amenities from which benefits are received almost exclusively by users.

At the other end of the continuum shown in Exhibit 1-1 are *widespread community benefits* from which a large proportion of community residents benefit, rather than only a small number of users benefiting. Because the benefits are shared by all or most residents, the cost of these services is borne by a community's general fund, rather than by revenues paid by individual users. Facilities such as urban parks typically are considered to deliver widespread community benefits, because not only do a relatively large proportion of residents tend to use urban parks, but also urban parks may contribute such benefits as reducing the "heat island effect," alleviating rapid storm water run-off, ameliorating air pollution, and enhancing real estate values, all of which benefit many residents who do not directly use urban parks often.

Exhibit 1-1 shows that there is another category termed *partial community benefits,* which lies somewhere between the first two. These have some attributes of the other two categories in that some of the benefits are received by individual users, but some benefits also accrue to nonparticipants. For example, if an athletic tournament attracts teams from out of town, then user benefits are received by the individuals participating, but the community as a whole receives benefits derived from spending in the jurisdiction by out-of-town visitors.

OVERVIEW OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE BENEFITS MOVEMENT

This monograph traces the evolution of the benefits movement through the five stages the author perceives to have evolved in the past half-century:

Early Stages: In the 1950s to early 1970s, managerial responsibilities could be characterized as being activity/custodial focused. In the late 1970s, the "tax revolt" stimulated a shift to the second stage, which had a promotion/selling orientation. In some agencies, this subsequently evolved to the third stage, which was focused on user benefits.

Community Benefits: Expanding from the foundation of user benefits to a broader focus on communitywide benefits.

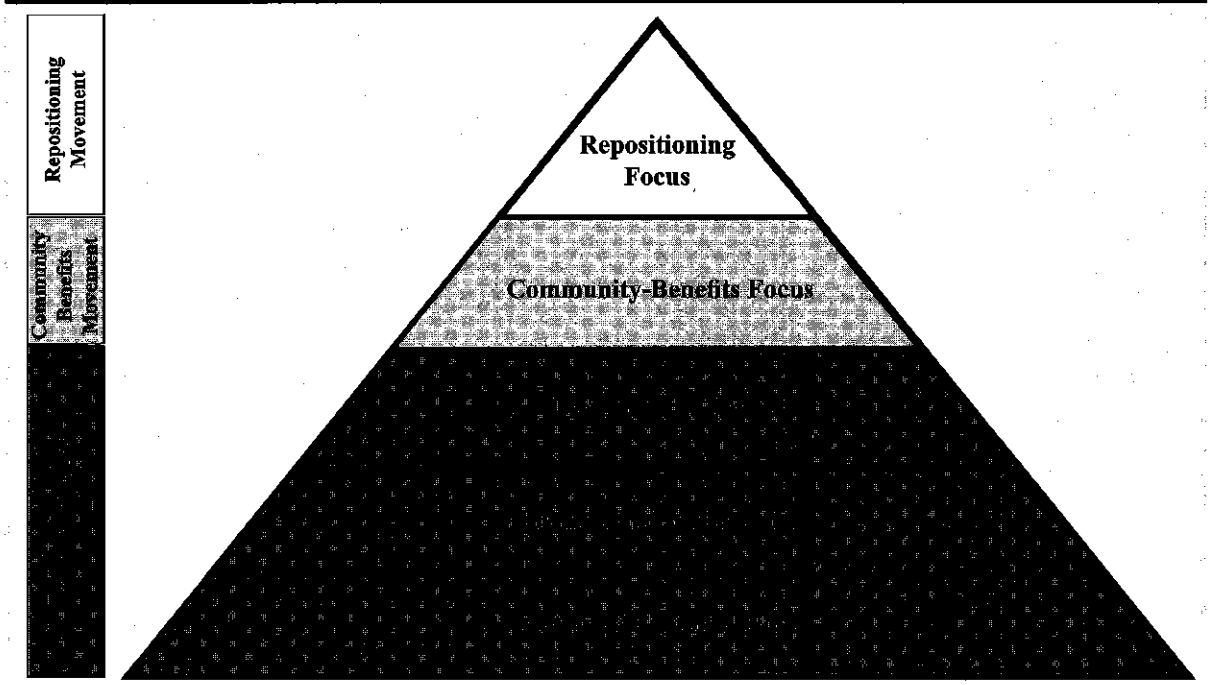
Repositioning: Repositioning the field by aligning communitywide benefits with the major issues of concern in a jurisdiction

These transitions are occurring sequentially in the field of parks and recreation. Progress has been slow but encouraging. Although it has been slow, it has been significant for a profession that is only about 40 years old, if a profession is defined as needing an empirical body of knowledge on which to base its practice.[3] The stages suggest a hierarchy of perspectives among agencies and professionals exist, which is illustrated in Exhibit 1-2.

Despite the progress of the benefits movement in the past 4 decades, Exhibit 1-2 suggests that most agencies and professionals appear to be operating at the two lowest levels of the Benefits Evolutionary Pyramid. Smaller numbers have embraced a user benefits focus, and a relatively small avant-garde set of agencies and professionals are pioneering the focus on community benefits and repositioning.

The distribution shown in the pyramid is typical of the way in which new ideas filter through a profession. Drawing upon his 35 years experience as a researcher working with the U.S. Forest Service, B.L. Driver, who is recognized by many as having led the contemporary benefits movement, observed:

Exihibit 1-2 The Benefits Evolution Pyramid



I believe that about 5 to 15 percent of professional parks and recreation managers will readily accommodate and apply new scientific information about the benefits of leisure that is understandable to them with necessary technology-transfer help by scientists. These truly professional practitioners will then, in turn, influence other practitioners to pay attention and slowly apply the results of the research. I have seen this happen many times since about 1975 as more scientific knowledge about the benefits of leisure has emerged, and it continues to happen slowly (n.p.).[3]

Stuart Udall, whose work as secretary of interior in the 1960s arguably established him as the founder of the modern park and conservation movement, observed:

> Ideas must precede action, and sometimes the seeds of thought have a long period of germination. Reform must begin in the minds of men and a significant segment of society [has to accept the values] before effective action can commence (p. 34).[4]

As the stages of the pyramid are described in the subsequent chapters of this monograph, readers are invited to locate their own modus operandi and that of their agency on the continuum. And they are challenged to develop action plans designed to move them closer to the repositioning focus at its apex, which is where parks and recreation agencies are most likely to flourish.

CURRENT STATUS

There is a tendency for advocates and professionals in parks and recreation to be pessimistic when they discuss resources allocated to the field. Often there is a sense that the field is regarded by elected officials and (by inference) residents as being relatively insignificant. They point out that compared to the amounts invested in other services, expenditures on parks and recreation are low. In absolute terms this assessment is correct, but in relative terms compared to the field's status in 1990, the evidence is overwhelming that support and resource allocations for the field are growing substantially. Consider the following:

- In the 7 year period between 2000 and 2006, 1,269 propositions supporting parks, recreation, and conservation at local and state level were voted on. Seventy-six percent of them passed authorizing capital expenditures of over $26 billion.[5] This pass rate is higher than any other type of ballot measure.

- Expenditures by local governments on parks and recreation between 1995 and 2000 increased in real dollar terms (i.e., the impact of inflation is removed) by 58 percent which amounted to an average of $595 million per year.[6]

- In the 14 years between 1990 and 2005, real dollar budget allocations to parks and recreation by local governments increased by 64 percent which was a higher percentage increase than for any other local government service.[7]

- The number of land trusts formed in the United States increased from 400 in 1981 to over 1,600 in 2005.[8]

- In 1998 land trusts protected 4.7 million acres; by 2003 this had doubled to 9.4 million acres.[8]

- At the federal government level, state assistance grants in the Land and Water Conservation Fund have received relatively little funding. In the 1986-1995 decade, typically funding was around $30 million a year. It fell to zero in the 1996-1999 period, and subsequently peaked at $144 million in 2002. In 2006, $28 million was appropriated for this program. When allocated among all 50 states, these are relatively small amounts. However, substantial increases in support for the field at the federal level have come from:

  - The Transportation Improvement Program, was initiated in 1992 and is embedded in the SAFETEA-LU Transportation Bill and was in its predecessors ISTEA and TEA-21. It authorizes funds for landscaping and enhancements; for bike lanes, greenways, and multipurpose paths; and for trails and other amenities such as mitigation of damage to ecosystems, wetland banking, and acquisition of scenic easements. In the 18 years before this enhancement program was launched, the federal government spent $40 million in total on bicycle and pedestrian facilities. In the first 6 years after they were authorized, over $1 billion was invested in these facilities.[9] Currently SAFETEA-LU contains over $1 billion per year in guaranteed funding for the enhancements program.

- The 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, which provides $1 billion per year for after-school programs. It started in 1997.

- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which probably has had a greater negative impact on the environment than any other government entity, but in the past 2 decades, the Corps has undergone a gradual "greening" to the point where it currently spends 20 percent of its $4.2 billion annual budget on habitat restoration, conservation, and environmental projects.[10]

- The 2002 Farm Bill, which provided $20.8 billion for conservation programs over 6 years, which was up from $9.2 billion for the previous 6-year period.[10]

- The Sport Fishing Restoration Account in the "Wallop-Breaux" trust fund, which allocates $450 million annually for sport fish restoration, protection of coastal wetlands, increasing boating access, and reducing water quality impacts from recreational vehicles.

- The Department of Justice budget, which initiated its Title V Local Delinquency Prevention Grants in 1992. In 2006, $70 million was allocated to this program.

At the federal level of government, the transportation, agriculture, and energy development programs contain the most money outside of defense and social security. Thus, it seems logical for park and recreation advocates to focus on these programs for funding opportunities.

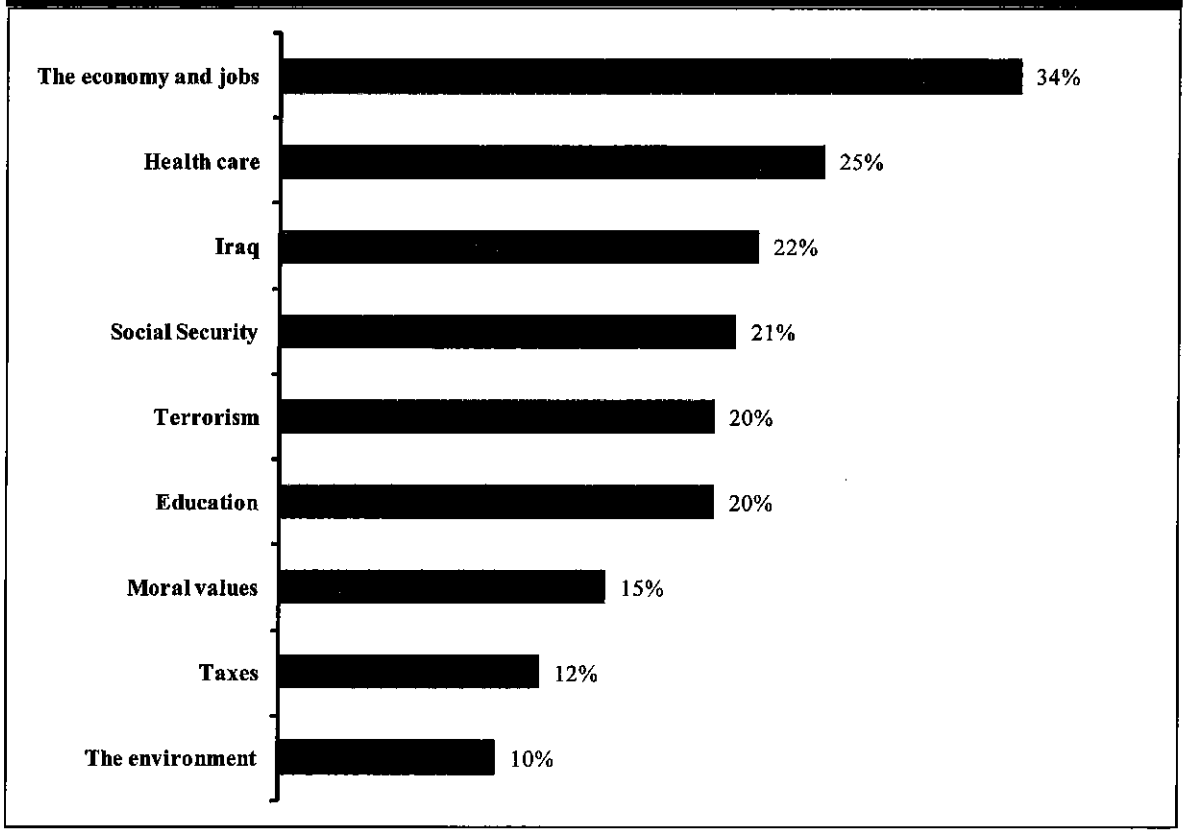
These substantial increases in financial investment confirm growing support for the field among the general public and elected officials, but there are four caveats that temper the general satisfaction of advocates with these trends. First, while aggregate financial increases have been substantial at the local level, some local agencies have not benefitted from this national trend. Second, even with these increases, aggregate local funding for parks and recreation remains low in comparison to most other public services.[7]

Third, there have been only marginal increases at the state level. When measured in 2004 dollars, operating budgets for all state recreation and park facilities and services increased only 16 percent from $3.14 billion in 1990 to $3.63 billion in 2004. When the scope is narrowed to state park agencies' operating budgets, the increase is from $1.47 billion in 1990 to $1.69 billion in 2005 (or 15 percent).[11]

Fourth, some of the indices reported here primarily reflect capital investments in the field, and in many cases these have not been accompanied by concomitant increases in operating funds.

The challenge confronting the field was encapsulated in a national survey of voters.[12] When voters were given a generic question relating to creating "strong national standards to help our land, air and water," 79 percent reported they were "strongly or somewhat" in favor of such proenvironmental policies. However, when these voters were presented with a list of nine issues and asked which "is most important to you personally?" (see bar chart in Exhibit 1-3) the environment was rated last. Similar residual goodwill and potential political influence was reported in a national survey in which the authors concluded "53 percent of those who never used local parks said their community received a great deal of benefit from such resources" (p.82).[13] These data suggest there is a large latent res-

Exihibit 1-3 National Opinion Poll: Which one of the following issues is most important to you personally?



Source: Public Opinion Strategies & Hart Research - Nichols Institute Research Project 2005

ervoir of support for parks and recreation, but this will not be transposed into additional resources until the field is repositioned as being much more important to society than it is presently perceived to be.

The results of opinion polls and surveys such as these and voters' willingness to pass bond issues for capital investments in parks and recreation suggests there is much more public support for the field than current resource allocations imply. The challenge is to translate this grass roots support into political support. It can be a winning issue politically if it is presented properly. The lack of widespread awareness and understanding of park and recreation's capacity to deliver an array of community benefits means the field is underleveraged. Focusing on community benefits and repositioning offers a strategy for strengthening the field's financial status by unleashing the latent funding potential which is implicit in the generic widespread public support for the field.

THE PAY-OFF FROM REPOSITIONING

It has been noted that:

> Professions, like organizations and individuals, can become so involved with the routines

> of daily activity they may lose sight of that for which they are working. Short-term objectives, momentary crises, and the latest fad or operating techniques tend to distort their perceptions. It is easy to assume that tomorrow will be like today and that what we are doing is what we ought to be doing - that we are where we ought to be (pg 46). [14]

If professionals focus all their energies on doing a good job of managing the park, recreation center, or swimming pool for which they are responsible, then that will define the level of their relevancy.[15] As a field, we must think more broadly about our relevance in society. If we fail to do so, then nothing broader will happen and we will be marginalized. As the adage goes: "If you do what you've always done, you'll get what you've always gotten." If we do what we have always done, the field will be treated as it currently is by legislators. If we have ambitions to do more, then we have to change. Given the increased sophistication with which other fields present their case and the increased pressures on governments to offer more and better services, if parks and recreation continues to do what it has always done, then it can expect fewer resources in the future.

Elected officials want to appear knowledgeable and authoritative about an issue. If they are to champion and become salespeople for a park and recreation project, they have to be thoroughly briefed. It must become "their" project. This can only occur if the field's professionals have a thorough understanding of a project's return on investment to the community.

By committing to read this monograph and subsequently to act upon it, you have recognized the legitimacy of the observation that "leisure professionals who do not keep up with advances are just as professionally irresponsible as medical doctors who do not keep up with advances in their medical sciences" (p. 354).[16] Agencies that embrace the benefits approach through to the community benefits or repositioning levels of the Benefits Evolution Pyramid are likely to see four major positive outcomes.[16]

Better understanding and appreciation of the significance of parks and recreation by stakeholders and professionals. The final two stages of the Benefits Evolution Pyramid make community benefits explicit, not merely implicit. Benefits are the way of expressing to others, as well as to the field's professionals, the nature of parks and recreation's contributions to society. Indeed, without a community-benefits approach, the field has no raison d'etre. Exhibit 1-1 indicates that community benefits are its sole justification for receiving tax resources. The perspective shifts from "trivial fun and games" for a relatively narrow segment of users, to delivering benefits that address important community issues and meet fundamental human needs: "Widespread understanding of the benefits of leisure, will increase public support for leisure and such support is necessary to any profession that delivers a social service that is highly dependent on public funding" (p. 364).[15]

Stronger justification for the allocation of public funds to parks and recreation. By designing parks and recreation services so they address community issues and contribute to alleviating community problems, agencies are better able to justify their budget requests. Elected officials are being held more accountable and must be able to explicitly explain how their investments in parks and recreation benefit community residents. Consequently, it is appropriate that they require agencies to develop outcome-oriented performance mea-

sures and to provide evidence-based justifications for their budget requests.

Clearer guidance for service prioritizations. Responding to the question, "What business are we in?" in community-benefits terms, defines the long-term vision of what an agency is striving to become and establishes the boundaries within which objectives, strategies, and actions are developed. The commitment to benefits-based performance measures in the budget process clarifies managerial objectives and directs the prioritization of resource allocations.

Enhanced pride in the profession. The trivial "fun-and-games" connotations associated by many with recreation and parks have caused some professionals to feel uncomfortable and defensive. Sometimes professionals have a self-esteem problem. They are not convinced themselves that what they do is important, so they don't prioritize their cause with the conviction and enthusiasm needed for an agency to develop a high profile in a community. It has been suggested that:

> The two biggest challenges facing the leisure professions are for each of us (i) to understand the science-based knowledge about the benefits of leisure and its important contribution to a society and (ii) to communitcate those contributions to others outside our profession (p. 22).[2]

The focus on benefits is likely to increase professionals' pride in their community and in their career choice and encourage more highly talented people to enter the field.

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CHAPTER 2

Where the Field Is Coming From: The User Benefits Paradigm

GESTATION OF THE USER-BENEFITS PARADIGM IN THE BUSINESS FIELD

GESTATION OF THE USER-BENEFITS PARADIGM IN THE PARKS AND RECREATION FIELD
A Philosophical Foundation
The Impetus to Action

POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF A USER-BENEFITS APPROACH
Meeting Fundamental Human Needs
Benefits as Goals
Impetus for Partnering
Careful Design and Structure of Programs

LIMITATIONS OF THE PRIVATE BENEFITS APPROACH
The Miconception of Marketing
The Inappropriate Model of Marketing

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

CHAPTER 2

WHERE THE FIELD IS COMING FROM: THE USER-BENEFITS PARADIGM

This chapter describes and traces the evolution of the first three stages of the Benefits Evolution Pyramid (Exhibit 1-2): activity/custodial focus, promotion/selling focus, and user-benefits focus. The chapter starts with a brief overview of the evolution of similar stages in the business field because this preceeded the evolution of the user-benefits paradigm in parks and recreation and was the model that many agencies adopted. The subsequent sections discuss both the positive implications of the user-benefits approach and its limitations. The discussion concludes that the user-benefits approach is incomplete and too limiting to secure a viable future for park and recreation, but that it is a sound base upon which to expand into community benefits and repositioning.

GESTATION OF THE USER-BENEFITS PARADIGM IN THE BUSINESS FIELD

In 1960, Levitt published a seminal article in the *Harvard Business Review.* Many argue that this article was the conceptual foundation from which the modern field of marketing developed. Levitt pointed out that companies which focused myopically on enhancing the efficiency of their product to achieve the status of "unchallenged superiority," rather than focusing on customers' needs, invariably became obsolete and consequently disappeared.[1] He noted that customers purchase products that best contribute to satisfying their needs and commented:

> The view that an industry is a customer-satisfying process not a goods-producing process, is vital for all businessmen to understand...Given the customers' needs, the industry develops backward...creating the things by which customer satisfactions are achieved (p. 55).[1]

Levitt emphasized this meant that to remain relevant and viable, businesses should define their business (what they are trying to achieve) in terms of customers' benefits, not in terms of products that the business currently produces. Examples from the business sector illustrating implications of this principle are shown in Exhibit 2-1.

Thus, for example, Levitt argued that many movie companies disappeared because, "Movies implied a specific, limited product. This produced a fatuous contentment, which from the beginning led producers to view TV as a threat. Hollywood scorned and rejected

TV when it should have welcomed it as an opportunity to expand the entertainment business" (p. 45).[1] Levitt's insight from almost a half century ago is reflected in contemporary times by most of the surviving movie companies being divisions of entertainment companies that embrace not only traditional television networks but cable and pay-for-view television, electronic games, record labels, DVDs, live entertainment, and so forth.

Exihibit 2-1 Illustrations of Myopic Business Definitions Related to Customer Needs

Myopic Definition of an Industry	Customers' Needs
Movies	Entertainment
Lipsticks and makeup	Beauty and hope
Furnaces, air-conditioners	"Warmth service"
Buggies	Transportation
Railroads	Transportation
Photographs	Memories
Soap	Cleanliness
Shipping	Transportation/Floating vacation
Cross (or another brand) pens	Gifts
Book publishing	Information/Entertainment
Drills	Holes
Hotels	Convenient accommodation
Tin cans	Packaging
Circuses	Thrills
Spectacles	Vision
Dentistry	Painfree teeth and a nice smile
Newspaper	News, features, entertainment
Lawn mowers	1 inch high grass
Oil	Energy

Another frequently cited example from that era is attributed to Charles Revson, who was responsible for building Revlon cosmetics into the thriving enterprise it became. When he was asked what his firm produced, he answered, "In the factory we make cosmetics, and in the drug store we sell hope" (p. 18).[2] Women use lipsticks and make-up, but they do not buy those products; they buy hope! [2]

This shift to a user orientation in the 1960s gave rise to the emergence of "benefit segmentation":

> The belief underlying this segmentation strategy is that the benefits which people are seeking in consuming a given product are the basic reasons for the existence of true market segments. Experience with this approach has shown that benefits sought by consumers determine their behavior much more accurately than do demographic characteristics or volume of consumption (p. 31).[3]

Levitt's contribution was integral to the evolution of a philosophy of marketing in the late 1950s and early 1960s, which said that the social and economic justification for an organization's existence is the satisfaction of customer wants. This simple and intuitively appealing conceptualization superceded two supply-oriented philosophies, which had dominated business's thinking in two previous eras known as the Product Era and the

Selling Era. They are briefly reviewed here because they characterized mindsets that prevailed in most park and recreation agencies before the user-benefits paradigm emerged.

The Product Era was associated with the advent of the assembly line, which made it possible for the first time in history to produce large quantities of relatively inexpensive products. Customers, many of whom could not previously afford to buy, readily absorbed these products as fast as they were offered for sale. Demand exceeded supply, so business managers concentrated their efforts on enhancing efficiency of the supply. They were primarily concerned with supplying more of what they produced, rather than with selling what they had produced or trying to learn what customers wanted them to produce.

Ultimately aggregate market demand stabilized, but more suppliers were producing products with a result that supply exceeded demand. Thus, companies recognized a need to stimulate and arouse demand for their products and the Selling Era emerged. Sales departments were established to sell products aggressively. At this point, businesses moved from a product orientation to a selling orientation. Their main concern, however, remained supply and the product being sold, rather than the benefits that customers wanted or received.

The Marketing Era emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s when some companies and influential academics like Levitt realized that a sale was not predominantly dependent on an aggressive sales force, but rather on a customer's decision to purchase a product. They recognized that a company was more likely to succeed if it tried to look through its customers' eyes, identify their needs, and produce products that delivered benefits that met those needs.

A decade after Levitt's contribution when the Marketing Era was being embraced by enlightened businesses, Kotler published two articles in the *Journal of Marketing,* which were conceptually important in the transition of this new benefits-based marketing philosophy into the parks and recreation field.[4,5] He identified the fundamental principle undergirding marketing in these terms:

> The core concept of marketing is the transaction. *A transaction is the exchange of values between two parties*. The things of value need not be limited to goods, services, and money; they include other resources such as time, energy, and feelings (p. 49).[5] [Italics in the original.]

Kotler explained that an organization's mission was to deliver benefits valued by customers, and in exchange recipients provided resources to support the organization. Kotler suggested that this relationship was not unique to business firms. Rather, it could be broadened to embrace nonprofit and public organizations, and the array of goods, services, and ideas they supplied. In so doing he assumed there were minimal differences between private and public sector management, and argued for the universality of marketing applications stating: "Generic marketing is a logic available to all organizations facing problems of market response"(p. 54).[5] This "broadening of the concept of marketing" proposal received widespread visibility.

Thus, by the early 1970s two axioms were established in the marketing literature. First, the goal of businesses was to create products that delivered benefits that met customers' needs. Second, this guideline for successful businesses could be extended into the realm of all other organizations that supplied

goods and services, including public park and recreation agencies.

GESTATION OF THE USER-BENEFITS PARADIGM IN THE PARKS AND RECREATION FIELD

A Philosophical Foundation

In 1974, Gray and Greben produced a seminal benchmark paper commissioned by the National Recreation and Park Association in which they expressed disillusionment with the prevailing perspectives of parks and recreation professionals, stating, "They are activity centered. Definition in terms of activities is unsatisfactory" (p. 49).[6] They argued that this activity orientation meant the field was still focusing on supply and had a custodial mentality believing that its mission was to look after facilities:

> For 30 or 40 years or more, the recreation and park movement has been deluded by a false perception of recreation. This has warped our services, given us false priorities, prevented effective evaluation of results, and inhibited our ability to interpret what we do. Worst of all, it has prevented us from developing an understanding of our goals and methods (p. 50).[6]

They went on to state, "We should have discovered long ago the nature of the business we are in, but we have not...The critical questions are not, How many were there? or who won? The critical question is, What happened to Jose, Mary, Sam, and Joan in this experience?" (p. 49, 50).[6]

The fallacy of the prevailing evaluation measure of counting how many were there has been pointed out by other commentators using an analogy with a hospital: "Hospitals need better measures of their contributions to society than just counts of the patients coming and leaving in that we also need to know what happened to the patients while they were in, and before they left, the hospital" (p. 4).[7]

An agency has buildings, parks, and natural areas, but what is their purpose? This shift to a focus on user benefits recognized that the field is not about the parks and facilities, it is about the experiences people have while there. Professionalism means not only being knowledgeable about the field's "technology," but also being knowledgeable about leisure behavior; people's motives, aspirations and experiences; and the benefits they seek.

Discussion should focus not on what a park is but on what it does for people in the community. Gray and Greben proposed a definition of recreation that addressed that question: "Recreation is an emotional condition within an individual human being that flows from a feeling of mastery, achievement, exhilaration, acceptance, success, personal worth, and pleasure. It reinforces a positive self-image" (p. 49).[6] By listing a proposed set of benefits that individuals seek from the use of park and recreation facilities, they sought to transform the field's perceptions of its business from a supply to a user-benefits orientation. They recognized that their list was intuitive and perhaps limited and urged that the field's researchers, "Undertake a systematic investigation of the outcomes of park and recreation experiences and develop a taxonomy of human benefits" (p. 56).[6] They understood that evolving to a benefits paradigm would not be easily achieved: "Acting on that knowledge in recreation and park agencies will be difficult...but it is necessary if we are substantially to improve our services" (p.

51).[6]

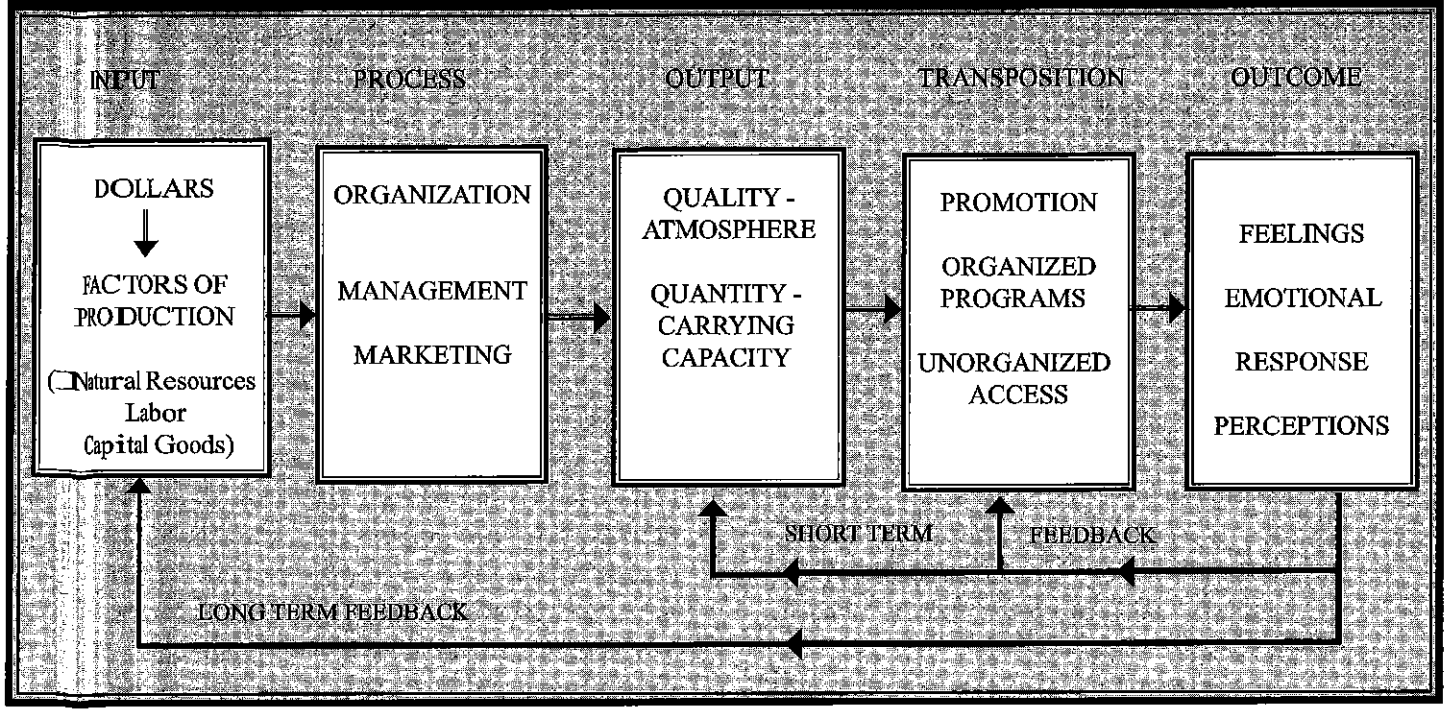
It has been suggested that the limited scientific knowledge regarding the benefits of leisure that was available in the early 1970s was in itself a reason for the field's focus on an activity/custodial role:

> As a result of the limited scientific knowledge about the benefits of leisure, most park and recreation practitioners (and researchers and educators) did not understand what recreation was and viewed it as an activity, like eating is an activity. The cause and effect links between benefits and settings, etc., were not known or understood. Ergo, there was too little credible knowledge available for planners and managers to use to manage other than for activities.[8]

The shift in paradigm envisioned by Gray and Greben was conceptualized in a systems model that appeared in the first volume of *Leisure Sciences* in 1977.[9] The model is reproduced in Exhibit 2-2. The energizer of the system is dollars, which are required to activate the three factors of production: natural resources, labor, and capital goods. These are processed into outputs (a facility or service) through the application of management and marketing skills by members of an organization. The outputs are the vehicles that managers have available to facilitate outcomes, which have emotional feelings (benefits). The author pointed out that the most commonly used performance measure was participation numbers, which is an output not an outcome measure. He argued this was inappropriate and quoted Gray and Greben:

> Too often departments and managers in recreation have concentrated on deploying and process-

Exhibit 2-2 A Recreation Management System



> ing inputs without having any notion that the ultimate goal should be an enriching personal experience. Their emphasis has been placed on producing recreation programs rather than providing solutions to people's needs, and their objectives have not been framed in response terms of personal experience. Rather, they have operated either without clear objectives or with objectives that were concerned only with Output or Promotion (p. 65).[9]

The authors of a more contemporary variation of this model similarly stressed that the outputs were merely "the opportunities created to provide benefits" (p. 194) and went on to emphasize: "The critical point to understand is that the managers and associated providers do not produce most of the outcomes. Instead, the customers use the opportunities to produce satisfying experiences and other benefits for themselves and for other people who receive spin-off benefits" (p. 195).[10]

The Impetus to Action

Gray and Greben's paper in 1974 was an indictment of the field's supply-focused modus operandi at that time. It received wide visibility and was extensively discussed in professional forums. However, it has often been noted that a change in paradigms is not likely to occur until there is a crisis. Crises force a reappraisal of existing operating methods and persuade managers that yesterday's formulas for success may no longer work. The tax revolt in the mid-1970s transformed the political landscape and provoked such a crisis in the parks and recreation field.

In the previous 50 years, government spending swelled from one-tenth to one-third of United States' gross national product.[11] During this period, the political emphasis was on expanding the array of services delivered. After the tax revolt, political emphasis shifted to either reducing, or at least not raising, taxes. It was noted at the beginning of this era, "This is the new environment in which many park and recreation agencies now have to operate" (p. 37).[12]

By the end of 1979, 22 states had reduced property taxes, 18 states had reduced income taxes, and 15 states had cut sales taxes. By 1990, only six states were not constrained by some form of tax limitation.[11] One of the implications of this transformation was greater competition for available government funds than in the pretax revolt period, since in real dollar per capita terms many local governments had fewer resources available.

The creed of all public agencies confronted with this challenging new political environment became "doing more with less," a mantra that led many in the parks and recreation field to move away from a focus on simply supplying services. They were now required to justify that these services were needed, which they sought to do by increasing the number of participants. They were also required to generate more revenue and become more self-sustaining.

To meet these new mandates, most park and recreation agencies followed the route taken by their business bretheren a decade or so earlier and moved from their Activity/Custodial (Product) Era into a Promotion (Selling) Era. They adopted a more aggressive posture where instead of merely offering programs and services or looking after facilities, they aggressively promoted them attempting to convince potential client groups to use them. A few progressive and enlightened agencies, however, moved beyond this and embraced a marketing orientation with its focus on iden-

tifying clients' needs and creating programs that delivered benefits that met those needs. Thus, in responding to the tax revolt crisis, park and recreation agencies tended to follow the evolutionary pattern that characterized the behavior of businesses in previous decades when they were required to adapt to changing external conditions.

This shift toward a focus on benefits was reflected in a widely used textbook, which was published in 1980.[12] This text introduced the concepts of marketing to the parks and recreation field. It reaffirmed Kotler's contention that marketing was appropriate for all organizations rather than only for businesses, and it reinforced the earlier work by Gray and Greben. Its central message was:

> People expend their money and time resources with the expectation of receiving benefits, not the delivery of services themselves. *People don't buy programs or services; they buy the expectation of benefits. Programs themselves are not marketable. Only their benefits have a value to client groups. The physical service or program itself is simply a vehicle for the user benefit it conveys.* The distinction has enormous significance for the way in which a recreation and parks agency defines its business... Participants purchase benefits; the programs are simply a means to an end (p. 311).[12] [Italics in the original.]

The authors went on to offer an illustrative list of these benefits, which is incorporated into the more comprehensive list offered in Exhibit 2-3. Flying a kite, throwing a frisbee, walking with friends and family, sitting under a tree, or hitting a softball, ostensibly appear to be unimportant, trivial activities. However, this superficial view is a misinterpretation that confuses means with ends. The activities themselves are not important. What is important is the benefits that accrue to people from engaging in these activities.

At the same time the benefits approach was being introduced into parks and recreation under the banner of marketing, a parallel effort launched by Driver and his associates was emerging in the field of outdoor recreation. Its genesis dated back to the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC) whose 27 volume report was published in 1962. The chair of the commission, Laurance Rockefeller, requested that a report be produced that would "articulate the relationship between outdoor recreation and physical and mental health. This we feel is most important to our central mission " (p. 19).[13] Despite this charge and its stated importance to the commission, no such report was produced because there was too little scientific documentation to support a separate ORRRC study report on this topic.

Driver's institutional base was the U.S. Forest Service, and he initiated a long-term program of research designed to better understand the nature of "recreation experiences" and to scientifically identify the "psychological outcomes" associated with outdoor recreation participation. The term "psychological outcomes" was a scientific operationalization of benefits. His guiding philosophy was that an agency's mission is not merely to manage resources, it is more fundamental - to justify the acquisition of those resources in the first place.

He developed a set of Recreation Experience Preference Scales for measuring those outcomes that were widely tested and used by the research community.[10,14] Like his peers who were in the vanguard of using a market-

Exhibit 2-3 Potential Benefits Sought by Individuals by Participating in Park and Recreation Programs

- Social interaction with friends and family kin.
- Social interaction with previously unknown others.
- Ethnic and cultural identity.
- A gain in prestige; social recognition; status. The mastery of particular skills may be regarded as a form of "conspicuous consumption," which brings forth peer group recognition.
- Excitement; an adrenaline rush; exhilaration.
- Ego-satisfaction of achievement and accomplishment; a desire to be successful.
- Security; to be part of a group that gives a sense of belonging, connectedness to others, and a sense of affection.
- The feeling of being important and having responsibility; growth of self-worth and self-confidence.
- Fantasy; illusion; offering temporary escape from the realities and routines of everyday life.
- Relaxation and alleviation of stress and tension, which may be obtained from hard or no physical effort.
- Catharsis from "flow" to alleviate negative tensions, anxiety, anger and unwanted adrenaline.
- Acquisition of knowledge; satisfaction of curiosity.
- Feeling of well-being and vitality that derive both from exercise and physical fitness, and from mental alertness.
- Regression; the desire to "let your hair down" and act in a puerile, adolescent way.
- Aesthetic enhancement derived from being in an attractive natural environment.
- Challenge and risk, which lead to self-exploration, self-discovery, and self-development and may be obtained from sailing or skydiving, or from acting, dancing, or fly fishing.

ing framework, Driver argued that managers in federal and state land agencies must address their users' preferences in terms of psychological outcomes sought, rather than in terms of activities pursued. These outcomes, not activities, provided answers to the question, *why* should these services be provided?

One of Driver's important contributions was the popularizing of the term "benefits approach," which replaced the earlier more technical terms of "psychological outcomes" and "marketing." He recognized that the psychological outcomes term sounded too technical to resonate with the general public. The problems with the word "marketing" are discussed later in this chapter. The word "benefit" refers to specific ways in which a particular recreation and park service either improves the condition or state of an individual or group, or prevents a worse condition or state from happening.[15] Driver introduced this transition to benefit terminology in his own research program in 1987 and subsequently popularized it in the benchmark text, *Benefits of Leisure*.[16] He did this by both commissioning and coordinating the efforts of the authors who wrote its 35 chapters articulating the state of knowledge at that time and by arranging for its publication.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF A USER-BENEFITS APPROACH

The benefits or psychological outcomes listed in Exhibit 2-3 are user-benefits (Exhib-

it 1-1) that, for the most part, accrue only to individuals engaging in the recreation activity. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, progressive recreation and park agencies embraced this user-benefits approach. They perceived that it ensured the focus was retained on benefits sought by client groups and that the agency did not become preoccupied with programs, services, or the agency's internal needs and organization.

The user-benefits orientation has at least four positive outcomes:

(1) There is a recognition that these are fundamental human needs, not only recreational needs, which are being met.

(2) The goal is benefits not programs. Each of the benefits listed in Exhibit 2-3 can be delivered via a wide array of programmatic vehicles. The starting point is to identify the benefits sought by a target client group, and the subsequent stage is to select the program that will deliver it to them most effectively and efficiently.

(3) In some cases, the fundamental needs listed in Exhibit 2-3 can best be met by partnering with other agencies and organizations both from within and outside the recreation and parks field.

(4) Programs have to be carefully designed and structured so they will deliver intended outcomes. Adopting an activity-centered approach of merely providing opportunities leads to many participants not receiving intended benefits.

These implications are elaborated upon in the following paragraphs.

Meeting Fundamental Human Needs

The premise that the benefits listed in Exhibit 2-3 are fundamental human needs leads to the proposition that probably all of them can be realized through human endeavors other than participation in recreation pursuits. Thus, benefits such as social interaction with others, prestige, excitement, ego satisfaction of achievement, security, self-worth, and others listed in Exhibit 2-3 may be experienced by many professional and middle-class individuals in their work environment. However, the shifts from a manufacturing to a service economy, and from a regional or national to a global economy, mean that a growing proportion of the population will not have access to jobs that are likely to facilitate these benefits.

For a growing number of Americans who are employed, the potential for deriving satisfaction from their work is small. Many people have had to reduce their aspirations and to take jobs for which they are technically overqualified, with a result that they find the work boring, frustrating, and generally not satisfying. Further, there is evidence that the risk of unemployment causes people to stay in jobs they dislike and even to forego the opportunity of a better job elsewhere because they fear loss of seniority would leave them more vulnerable to being made redundant in the new organization at the first economic downturn.

Exhibit 2-4 lists the 20 occupations (out of the more than 700 recognized by the Bureau of Labor Statistics) that are projected to generate the largest number of jobs in the U.S. from 2002 to 2012.[17] These 20 occupations account for over 35 percent of the 21.3 million total increase in jobs anticipated in this time period. Fifteen of the 20 occupations are low paying (less than $27,500 per

Exhibit 2-4 The 20 Occupations Projected to have the Largest Job Growth in the U.S. 2002-2012

Job Category	2002	2012	Change		Income Category
			Number	%	
Registered nurses	2,284	2,908	623	27	1
Postsecondary teachers	1,581	2,184	603	38	1
Retail salespersons	4,076	4,672	596	15	4
Customer service representatives	1,894	2,354	460	24	3
Combined food preparation and serving workers, including fast food	1,990	2,444	454	23	4
Cashiers, except gaming	3,432	3,886	454	13	4
Janitors, and cleaners, except maids and housekeeping cleaners	2,267	2,681	414	18	4
General and operations managers	2,049	2,425	376	18	1
Waiters and waitresses	2,097	2,464	367	18	4
Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants	1,375	1,718	343	25	3
Truck drivers, heavy and tractor-trailer	1,767	2,104	337	19	2
Receptionists and information clerks	1,100	1,425	325	29	3
Security guards	995	1,313	317	32	4
Office clerks, general	2,991	3,301	310	10	3
Teacher assistants	1,277	1,571	294	23	4
Sales representatives, wholesale and manufacturing, except technical and scientific products	1,459	1,738	279	19	1
Home health aids	580	859	279	48	4
Personal and home care aides	608	854	246	40	4
Truck drivers, light or delivery services	1,022	1,259	237	23	3
Landscaping and groundskeeping workers	1,074	1,311	237	22	3

Income Category:

1 = >$41,800
2 = $27,500 - $41,799
3 = $19,710 - $27,499
4 = <$19,710

Source: Hecker [17]

year) service jobs.

If people are working as retail salespersons, customer service representatives, fast food preparers, cashiers, or janitors, there is little likelihood that they will receive the fundamental benefits listed in Exhibit 2-3 from their job. For these individuals, such basic human needs will have to be found in their familial or leisure milieus if they are to be experienced. The low-paid, low-status employed constitute a potentially disaffected, alienated group with a need to find meaning for their lives in a leisure milieu. This is the meaning of the leisure revolution. It has nothing to do

Exhibit 2-5 Why Recreation Matters

As a teenager growing up in Liverpool, England, the author periodically worked at a bakery at weekends and during vacations. The bakery provided bread and confectionaries to the Merseyside conurbation. The bread was baked in large ovens and neophytes to the bakery's workforce were given the job of loading the loaves into the ovens or taking them out when they were baked. It was hot, hard, sweaty work and considered the least desirable job in the plant. In accordance with normal practice, longevity in the plant brought the author promotions, which did not mean more money in the paycheck, but rather a shift to a workstation further away from the ovens!

The author's final job at the bakery was as back man on the slicing machine. It was here that he met Colin Makin who first taught him why recreation matters. Makin was the front man on the slicing machine. The slicing machines were located at right angles to the main belt, which delivered the freshly baked loaves from the ovens. The back man's job was to take a pallet from a nearby stack, place it on the slicing machine belt, which was located perpendicular to the main belt, and transfer 20 loaves from those that were bouncing down the main belt on to the pallet. When that had been done, he pressed a button to activate the belt and the pallet moved on to Makin who was the front man. It hit a stopper and the belt shut down.

At that point Makin played his role in the production process. He pressed a button which activated the slicing blades. They descended on the loaves, sliced them, and then rose back to their starting position. Makin's second and final duty was to activate the belt that sent the newly sliced loaves along to the wrapping machines. Makin was widely perceived to have the best job in the plant. Every couple of minutes he pressed the slicing machine button, then the belt activation button, and that was his job for 46 hours a week.

While he was doing this mindless job, he was always talking. His most popular topics were Liverpool Football Club (arguably the finest soccer club in Europe), where he attended every home game and traveled to some of the away games; the youth soccer team that he coached; the darts- and cribbage ladders and teams in which he participated at his local pub; the flowers and garden he tended at the terraced (row) house where he lived; and the vegetable gardens he grew at an allotment he leased from the city council.

The author gradually came to realize that these activities defined Colin Makin. They were the focus of his life, and they provided him with some of the fundamental human needs described in Exhibit 2-3. Without this set of recreation activities, there would have been little joy in Makin's life. Certainly, it is difficult to see how any of the fundamental human needs described in Exhibit 2-3 could have been obtained from pressing the two buttons at the bakery for 46 hours a week.

with the availability of time; rather, it has to do with where people find their reason for being. For many, it is found increasingly in a leisure rather than in a work context.

Exhibit 2-5 describes the author's first exposure to the central role that leisure can play in the lives of workers with intrinsically uninteresting jobs. Colin Makin's leisure environment was where he found much of his identity as a human being. His leisure activities provided many of life's satisfactions. The delivery of park and recreation services that

address the benefits listed in Exhibit 2-3 takes on greater importance to many individuals as the prevailing shifts in the contemporary economic environment are accentuated.

Benefits as Goals

A second positive outcome of a user benefits approach is that conceptualizing benefits as goals rather than programs means an agency's planning process goes from the right to the left side of the recreation management system shown in Exhibit 2-2.[9] That is, it begins with desired user benefits, works backwards to identify services that will deliver them, and justifies funding on the basis of the user benefits to be delivered. In their 1980 book, the authors, who introduced the benefits approach to the parks and recreation field from a marketing perspective, wrote:

> *In defining the business we are in, the key question is not, "What is the best way these benefits can be facilitated through recreation and park services, given the resources available?" This would be what is referred to as marketing myopia, since the agency is defining its role narrowly in terms of the traditional programs and services, that have always constituted its product rather than in terms of client benefits. The appropriate question to ask is, "What is the best way these benefits can be facilitated, given the resources available?"* (p. 309) [Italics in the original.]

For example:

- Social interaction with others may be obtained through a nutrition program.
- Desire for security may be satisfied through an "Adopt a Grandparent Program," whereby senior citizens without families in the community are matched with families who do not have grandparents nearby.
- Feeling important and having responsibility may come to young people from visiting senior citizens or helping with their chores or garden work (p.313).[12]

The authors went on to note *"these activities facilitate opportunities for client groups to obtain the same benefits that may be sought from more traditional recreation and park programs"* (p. 313). [Italics in the original.] A decade later, one of the park and recreation field's leading figures observed: "Debate about the inclusion of formerly foreign disciplines (e.g., child care, counseling, services for the aging, substance abuse prevention, intervention and diversion, gang outreach, wellness) into many urban department missions has become academic" (p. 62).[18] In short, by focusing on a repertoire of traditional programs, park and recreation agencies were missing opportunities to remain relevant by responding to the emerging issues associated with a changing society.

If an agency defines its business in terms of specific programs, it is likely that it will miss opportunities. There is likely to be a wider range of programs than those traditionally delivered by an agency if the agency is structured to deliver a particular benefit. When the starting point is the user benefits sought, then focusing on a client group's interests, capacities, and skills is likely to suggest programs that are best suited to deliver the benefit. Consider the following example from the author's personal experience:

- Socialization is a primary benefit sought by many single senior citizens. Traditionally, recreation and park agencies have offered programs such as arts and crafts, dancing, cards and other games, and trips in an effort to meet this need. One agency recognized there were many whom they were not reaching because those seniors had no interest in these traditional programs. They brainstormed the question, "How else can we deliver socialization to seniors who are singles?" One of several viable options that emerged was a lunchtime meal program. It was offered at recreation centers from 12 to 2 p.m. once or twice a week. A nominal charge covered the cost. Staff facilitated introductions and organized activities that extended existing social networks at the luncheons. They became the highlight of the week for many seniors. Traditional recreation programs would never have attracted many of them, but by starting with the benefit first and working backward to find a program that would appeal to those whom they were not reaching, the agency made a substantive contribution to the quality of life of these seniors.

A corollary of the implication that people may derive a given benefit from very different programs is that different people may derive different benefits from the same program.

Impetus for Partnering

A third positive outcome from a user-benefit approach is a realization that people live holistic lives and, therefore, addressing their problems from the perspective only of a recreation and parks agency often is too limiting to be effective. Frequently, all the resources and expertise needed to deliver benefits to a target group are not available within a recreation and parks agency. In order to acquire them, coalitions and partnerships have to be assembled.

For example, if the goal is to deliver growth in self-worth, gain in prestige, and ego satisfaction of achievement among disadvantaged youth, it is likely that partnerships with the school system, families involved, juvenile court and parole authorities, job training agency, health and welfare departments, and other community groups may be needed. This philosophy was expressed by a parks and recreation director in the following terms, "We do not view ourselves as existing in independent silos! We believe there is nothing we cannot do in our community for youth with the resources we have, but it means each organization has to get past the notion of protecting its turf. However, people have to learn to do that" (p. 20).[19]

Careful Design and Structure of Programs

It has been observed that "one of the leisure delivery system's most prominent weaknesses has been the assumption that the benefit achievement naturally occurs through participation in any recreation opportunity regardless of the structure, context, and leadership associated with that opportunity" (p. 69).[20] A fourth positive outcome of a user-benefits approach is recognition that additional structure is likely to be needed in order to facilitate social interaction, gain in prestige, security, or whatever.

Exhibit 2-6 offers an example of the structure needed. It shows the objectives of a neighborhood teen program offered in Aus-

Exhibit 2-6 Neighborhood Teen Program: Program Objectives and Means to Achieve and Measure Objectives

Objective	Means for Achieving Objective	Means for Measuring Objectives
To motivate youth to stay in school and mantain passing grades	a. provide tutoring b. show interest and discuss advantages of youth staying in school c. provide points for getting good grades and being in school	Protective Factor Items: Value on Achievement Positive Attitude Toward the Future Other Measures: Improved school attendance Improved grades Attend tutoring sessions on a regular basis
To provide a setting where youth can feel a sense of belonging, be off the streets and in a positive, supportive environment	a. create a positive, supportive club environment b. provide mentoring and interaction with other teens c. provide opportunities for teens to be responsible and make positive choices through leadership of the teen club	Protective Factor Items: Neighborhood Resources Sense of Acceptance and Belonging Other Measures: Repeat attendance Efforts to recruit other teens to join the program
To increase participants' abilities to make positive choices about issues such as avoiding drug and alcohol usage, avoiding gang membership, avoiding pregnancy, and sex education	a. utilize services of outside organizations to provide information about drug and alcohol abuse and safe sex/abstinence practices b. provide alternatives to feeling a sense of belonging without having to join a gang	Protective Factor Items: Models for Conventional Behavior Other Measures: Express negative attitudes toward use of alcohol/drugs Amount of time spent with youth undertaking conventional behavior Membership in gang Increased participation in teen programs
To contribute to participants' personal growth and job readiness	a. teach job-related skills b. provide opportunities for teens to hold jobs and learn appropriate job-related skills	Protective Factor Items: Neighborhood Resources Value on Achievement Positive Attitude toward the Future Other Measures: Ability to fill out a job application Knowledge of where to look for a job Successful pursuit of job opportunity when available

tin, Texas, by the parks and recreation department. This is a teen club program designed to help youth develop life skills, knowledge, and attitudes that will enable them to grow into productive adults. While the program is "fun" and uses recreational experiences to attract participants, the overall goal is to aid and enhance the quality of life for youth by providing relevant, diversified, educational, and recreational programs and services within a safe and positive learning environment. The program's objectives are listed in the first column. The second column describes the structuring that took place in order to facilitate accomplishment of the objectives. The third column lists the measures that were used to evaluate whether the objectives were achieved. Again, the starting point was identifying the benefits to be delivered, and the program content and structure were designed subsequently specifically to facilitate delivery of those benefits.

LIMITATIONS OF THE USER-BENEFITS APPROACH

In their 1974 treatise, Gray and Greben reported:

> In most cities, publicly supported recreation and park budgets are an embarrassingly small portion of the total...It is difficult to identify any great overall community interest and knowledge [of the recreation and park] movement or of our leaders. (Compare this with concern for law and order, public education, etc.) (p. 32).[6]

Thirty years later, this observation is probably equally legitimate.

While recognition existed among many of the field's professionals that the transition from activity-based management to a focus on user benefits enhanced the field's effectiveness and professionalism, it became apparent by the 1990s that it had a relatively small impact on changing perceptions of the field's relative importance among elected officials. The evidence for this was the limited growth in agencies' operating budgets, which are a statement of elected officials' priorities.

In the 36-year period from 1965 to 2000, capital investment by local governments in parks and recreation facilities. when measured in standard 1990 dollars to remove the impact of inflation, was approximately $70 billion. Tax support for operating revenues over the same period however, increased by less than 5 percent in real dollar terms.[21] The authors who reported these findings commented,

> These data appear to endorse the prevailing conventional wisdom that while voters are prepared to invest substantial capital resources at bond referenda, their elected representatives, who in most cases establish operating budgets, are reluctant to provide concomitant levels of tax support to operate those facilities (p. 136).[21]

Further evidence of the relatively low budgetary status of the field was provided when annual local government expenditures on parks and recreation were expressed as a proportion of total local government expenditures. The resultant percentages in the 1980s and 1990s were substantially lower than those in the 1960s and 1970s.[21]

In the author's view, the primary reason for the lack of improvement in the field's prioritization was that the user-benefits model

adopted by the recreation and parks field was borrowed from the business field but was not adapted to fit the very different external environment in which recreation and park services were delivered. There were two major failings in the transition: (i) a misinterpretation of what marketing was, and (ii) adoption of an inappropriate model of marketing by recreation and parks personnel. These are discussed in the following sections.

The Misconception of Marketing

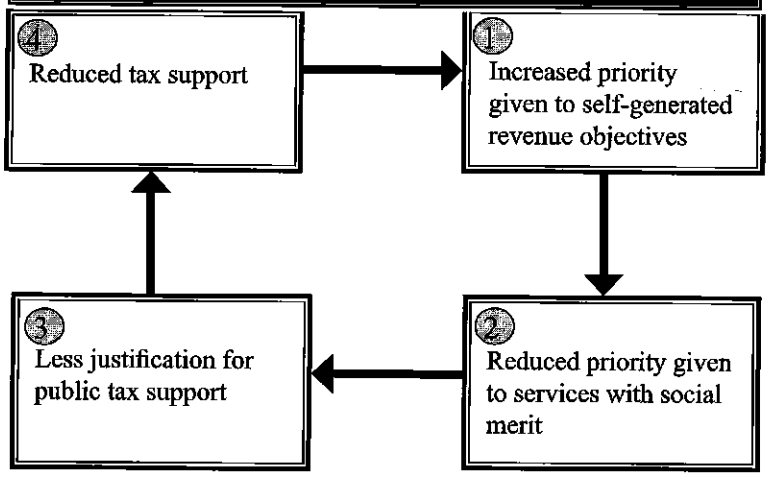
The business connotations associated with marketing when it transitioned into public parks and recreation in the late 1970s were problematic. One contemperary author has observed, "Confusion swirls around the topic of marketing like smoke from some eternal flame. Like smoke, this confusion both irritates and obfuscates" (p. 8).[22]

From the beginning, it was emphasized that marketing offered a philosophy and a set of tools that were generic: *"A marketing orientation is a state of mind appropriate for all public and social service agencies regardless of size or the particular emphasis of their programs"* (p. 6).[23] [Italics in the original.] The tools and orientation could be used by all types of organizations, but their application was determined by the mission and objectives being pursued. In the business world the mission is to generate profit, so the marketing philosophy and tools are used to that end. In contrast, in parks and recreation, the mission is to deliver specified social benefits, and the philosophy and tools should be applied to that end. However, this distinction was not grasped by many who consequently misunderstood and misused marketing's philosophy and tools by trying to pursue business objectives in the social service context of parks and recreation.

This misapplication was encouraged by the tax-cut environment and its mantra of "doing more with less," which prevailed in the late 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. In the business world, the key to effective marketing is to direct offerings exclusively at responsive client groups and ignore all others. To elicit a purchase from people in nonresponsive segments requires an extensive commitment of resources and is unlikely to be profitable, so these segments typically are ignored.

By adopting this philosophy in parks and recreation efficiency was pursued at the expense of equity, which similarly meant ignoring nonresponsive segments that were expensive to serve and focusing on services that would generate revenues so the agency would be less dependent on tax support. This focus resulted in local park and recreation agencies increasing their self-generated revenues substantially. In real dollar terms on average those revenues more than tripled between 1965 and 2000 from $5.1 billion to $16.1 billion. By the 1990s, for every $2 of tax funds received by local agencies, agencies gener-

Exhibit 2-7 The Tax Support Downward Spiral

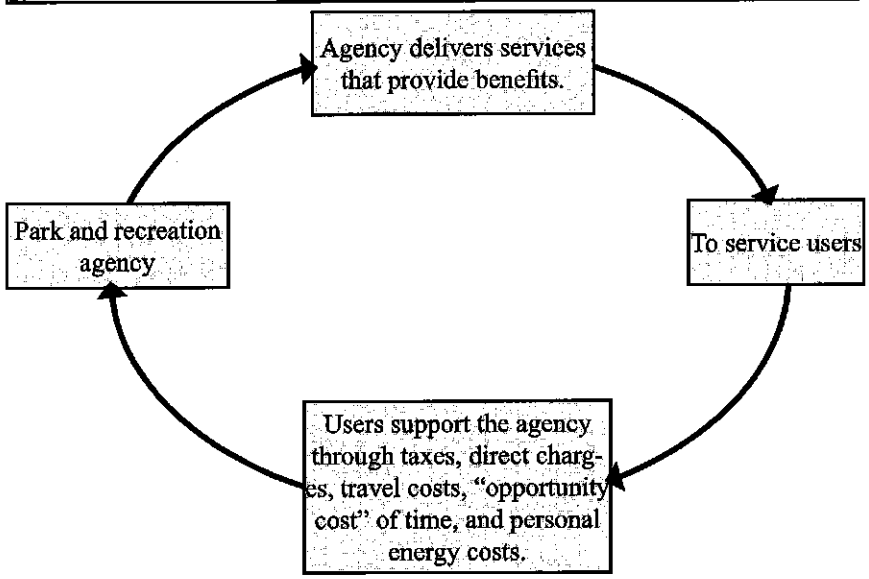


ated $1 from users of their services.[22] However, in the late 1990s the proportion of operating expenses emanating from self-generated revenues plateaued, suggesting the potential of these funds for replacing tax revenues had been maximized.

Exhibit 2-7 shows the downward spiral of tax support that the fixation on generating revenues created for many park and recreation agencies. The emphasis on revenue generation led to focusing on responsive market segments with an ability and willingness to pay for services. At the same time, services that may have social merit but did not produce revenue were cut. This led to less justification for public tax support and an expectation that users should pay for their personal benefits, and the downward spiral continued. With remarkable prescience, 30 years ago Gray and Greben observed:

> We are turning control of our social enterprises over to the accounting mind. The accounting mind reaches decisions by a method in which short-range fiscal consequences are the only criteria of value. Recreation and park services will not survive in that kind of environment. Most of the great social problems that disfigure our national life cannot be addressed in a climate dominated by that kind of value system (p. 50).[6]

Exhibit 2-8 The Voluntary Exchange: Conceptualization of Marketing



The Inappropriate Model of Marketing

The second failing associated with adopting the model of marketing derived from business was that it proved to be insufficient for describing and explaining the broader mandate of a public parks and recreation agency.

Exhibit 2-8 shows the user-benefits paradigm that was adopted in recreation and parks. The voluntary exchange mechanism that undergirds this paradigm requires something of value be offered to users who respond by exchanging something else of value. The essence of the paradigm is that it is an exchange relationship between a park and recreation agency and users of its services. An agency delivers services that provide benefits that users seek. Users provide support to the agency through their payments of tax dollars and program charges, travel costs for such items as transportation, the oppor-

tunity cost of not engaging in another activity during the time they spend involved with a service, and the personal energy and effort expended to use the service.

The limitation of this model is that it includes only direct users of the agency's services, and nonusers are excluded. The implication of this is that users and not general taxpayers should pay most of the costs of providing these services because they receive most of the benefits from them. In the business world, this is acceptable because firms receive most of their financial resources from their service users. However, the largest portion of a park and recreation agency's budget is likely to come from taxes, which are provided not only by users but also by nonusers of its services. But Exhibit 2-8 shows no exchange with this nonuser group, so the paradigm is not designed to deliver benefits to them. If they perceive they receive nothing of value from the agency, then they are likely to be ambivalent to the use of public tax dollars to fund an agency's services. Consequently, there is no mandate for the elected representatives of these nonusers to provide tax support.

The incongruency of this situation is illustrated in Exhibit 2-9. It reflects a common situation where tax resources are being used to deliver benefits to a relatively small subpopulation of users, even though the resources are contributed by everybody. The cerrated lines in Exhibit 2-9 acknowledge that some tax resources go to services that deliver communitywide benefits, and that user fees pay some of the costs of serving those users. However, in many agencies there is a perceived line of incongruity indicating that many taxpayers and elected officials believe much of the tax resource allocation to parks and recreation is used to deliver services to the small sub-population of users. This perceived inequity puts the field in a vulnerable position because it is not defensible.

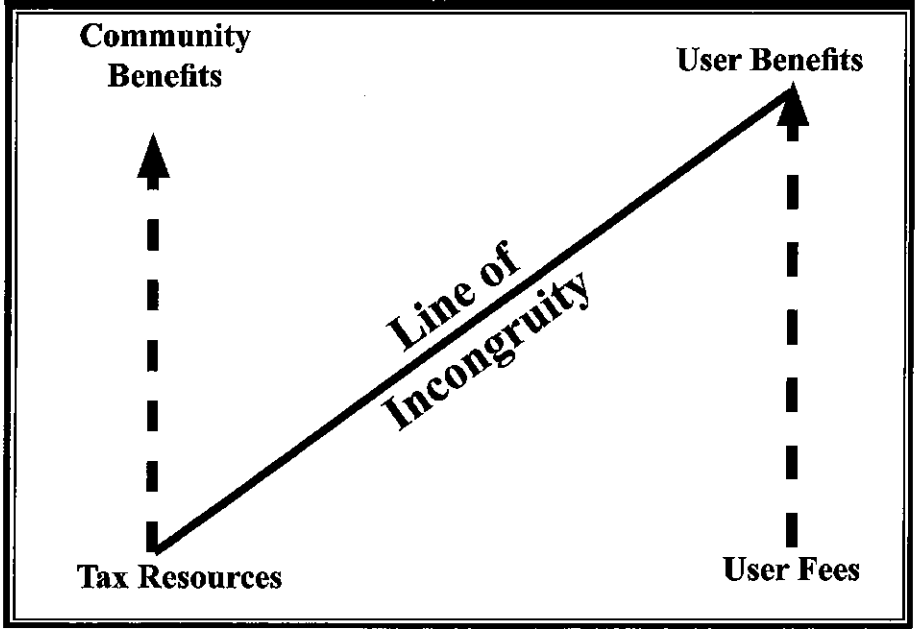
The consequences of this incongruity have accentuated in recent decades and are likely to continue to do so because the rationale for supplying public recreation programs (not parks) is eroding. The original intent was to create opportunities for people who would not otherwise have access and who, as a consequence, would use their "idle hands" to engage in socially deviant behavior. It was not part of the original rationale to serve everybody. Nevertheless, 30 years ago, Gray and Greben commented, "Unfortunately, even as late as the 1970s, recreation and parks professionals attempt to remain 'all things to all people'" (p. 31).[6] In the current era, it is even more difficult to justify public subsidy of extensive recreation services for all sections of the population.

For an ever-increasing majority of a community's residents, there has been an outpouring of alternate and competitive opportunities to public recreation offerings from home-based leisure in the form of electronic games and entertainment, from nonprofit organizations offering opportunities in arts, sports, and education;,and from commercial leisure companies involved in fitness and health clubs, theme parks, recreation amenities (golf, tennis, ice-rinks, marinas, et al.), gambling enterprises, concerts, and vacations.

The increased marginality of public recreation amenities resulting from this competition has produced a skepticism about the merits of supporting their provision. The days of recreation centers, senior centers, and youth centers being perceived as core amenities that all communities should offer are probably over. The public sector's role amidst the plethora of competition is relatively small. It may be strategically important in specific contexts, but it is increasingly marginal.

Recreation and park agencies tradition-

Exhibit 2-9 Incongruency Associated with the User-Benefits Paradigm



ally have depended on user satisfaction, number of participants or programs, or revenue generated as their primary performance indicators. Demonstrating performance in these terms has been the primary justification for securing sustained or increased tax allocations. However, these are inadequate performance indicators because they do not incorporate nonusers' evaluations of an agency and nonusers are often in the majority in a community.

While user-benefit-driven programs may lead to higher levels of satisfaction among participants and attract more revenue and increased numbers, such user-benefits are unconvincing to nonusers and elected officials who are ambivalent or opposed to using public tax dollars to fund programs that offer benefits only to a limited number of users.

Servicing user groups will always be a central element of the field's mission, but in many jurisdictions, user groups have proven too narrow a constituency for sustaining or securing additional resources. Providing resources to a parks and recreation department so a minority of residents can have enjoyable experiences is likely to be a low priority when measured against the critical economic, health, safety, and welfare issues with which legislative bodies are confronted.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

This chapter has provided an overview of the field's preferred modus operandi during the past 3 decades. It traced the shift in focus from an activity/custodial orientation through an aggressive promotion orientation, to a user-benefits orientation. It concluded that the user-benefits paradigm is too limiting and incomplete to secure a viable future for parks and recreation.

Nevertheless, before moving to higher stages of the Benefits Evolution Pyramid (Exhibit 1-2) in the following chapters, which offer keys to the field's future viability, it should be recognized that there are philosophical, pragmatic, and political rationales for agencies to embrace user benefits as part of their modus operandi. They should be regarded as a base to expand upon, rather than an outdated irrelevancy to be abandoned.

From a *philosophical* perspective, it was noted earlier in the chapter, user benefits derived in a leisure milieu make a substantial contribution to meeting the fundamental human needs of many who do not obtain them from any other facet of their lives.

A second *philosophical* rationale stems from a recognition that while most benefits from participation accrue to users, in some instances there is a "benefits chain of causality," which has the potential to contribute to societal goals:

> Cardiovascular fitness is beneficial to the extent that a healthier, longer-living individual acts in such a way that...Heightened self-esteem is beneficial to the extent that an individual who feels better about herself or himself acts in such a way that...A greater sense of family solidarity or an individual is beneficial to the extent. (p. 21).[24]

In each case the individual's personal benefit could have positive impacts on society (it also could have none or negative impacts!). In short, in some instances user benefits may have positive outcomes for the broader community.

This notion of a "benefits chain of causality" is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.[20] It has led to the suggestion that in these cases user benefits could be called "on-site first-order benefits," while the public benefits that result from them could be termed "off-site or second-order benefits." The following example illustrates this:

> First-order beneficial consequences of developing family cohesiveness may include reduced family stress, reduced spouse or child abuse, or a general reestablishment of family values. Over the long term, these first-order consequences may lead to a set of second-order beneficial consequences to society. In this scenario, the second-order beneficial consequences would eventually result in cost savings to all citizens because of reduced health and welfare costs (p. 66).[20]

A *pragmatic* perspective of the user-benefits paradigm recognizes the distinction between services that are part of an agency's "core area of mission," which relates to communitywide benefits, and those that are part of its "extant mission," which relates to its more entrepreneurial and proprietary activities.[25] While core services are appropriately financed from a jurisdiction's general fund, for those facilities and services designed and structured to deliver proprietary benefits to particular groups (e.g., golf courses, marinas, adult athletic programs) the user-benefits paradigm is entirely appropriate. Such services often are financed from enterprise funds that are intended to be self-sufficient without any tax support. That is, all capital, operating and overhead costs are met by revenues accruing from users. In essence, they are a business operated by a public sector entity, so the business world's user-benefits paradigm fits well.

In the 1980s, positive *political* outcomes were anticipated from adopting the user-benefits paradigm: "A commitment to marketing is likely to result in more popular and legislative support. To the extent that marketing improves the satisfaction levels of client groups, an agency is likely to receive improved support for its activities from legislators" (p. 33).[23] This proved to be naïve because it ignored the lack of attention to benefits for nonusers.

However, users are a central constituency. They are likely to play a prominent role in securing agency resources because invariably they are the primary advocates, fundrais-

ers, and "infantry" in referendum and lobbying campaigns. Thus, user benefits and high user satisfaction are likely to be necessary conditions for acquiring additional resources, but they are unlikely to be sufficient. Hence, the challenge is to expand the conceptualization so the user-benefits paradigm is extended to embrace nonusers, not to abandon that paradigm.

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CHAPTER 3

Where the Field Is Moving: Rationale for a Shift in Focus to Community Benefits

RATIONALE FOR A BROADER CONSTITUENCY

RETURNING TO THE FIELD'S ROOTS
The Rationale for Parks
The Rationale for Recreation

PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE COMMUNITY-BENEFITS PARADIGM

THE COMMUNITYWIDE BENEFITS PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES COULD POTENTIALLY DELIVER

CREDIBILITY OF THE EVIDENCE

NEXUS AND DISCONNECTS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTAL INVESTORS AND BENEFICIARIES

CHAPTER 3

WHERE THE FIELD IS MOVING: RATIONALE FOR A SHIFT IN FOCUS TO COMMUNITY BENEFITS

RATIONALE FOR A BROADER CONSTITUENCY

An agency's equity capital is accumulated from taxes, and those paying the taxes require evidence that they are receiving a return on their equity investment. Whether an entity be a public agency, nonprofit organization, or commercial business, society must value its contributions in order for it to secure the resources it needs to continue to operate. Hence, it is insufficient for an agency to demonstrate that it delivers services well; it has to demonstrate that these services contribute to the community's general welfare. The sine qua non (indispensable condition) for a profession is that it performs a necessary service for the public at large. This goes far beyond responding to the demands of particular user groups.

Shifting the paradigm to focus on community benefits that are important to a wide spectrum of residents mainstreams the field with the community's vision and goals. If park and recreation agencies are not perceived to be delivering relevant community-wide benefits that are considered by taxpayers and elected officials to be important, then the agencies are likely to be disconnected from the majority in a community. And if there is no sense of connection, there is no constituency for supporting tax investment. Thus, in the 1990s there was an emerging recognition of the vacuity of providing subsidized services, which were justified by the rationale that narrow segments of the population wanted them.

The prevailing sentiment among many was: If only some segments of our community use park and recreation services, then why should the rest of us have to pay for them? If the paramount needs of a majority of residents are not met, the field does not deserve their support. Elected officials' guiding philosophy is likely to be utilitarianism (i.e., using resources to provide "the greatest good for the greatest number"). Given their stewardship role, the scarcity of resources, and the precepts of democracy, these officials have no logical alternative. Thus, it has become

increasingly clear that additional resources are likely to be forthcoming only when support for the field extends beyond that of existing users who directly benefit from the services delivered. It has been noted that:

> Elected officials in the United States and Canada tend to hold the erroneous belief that most or all of the benefits of leisure accrue to the individuals who use leisure services, and that there are few if any spin-off benefits from this use to society in general. This contrasts with their views about the social merits of other social services (e.g., education, health services, transportation, police and fire) for which these elected officials acknowledge large benefits to society beyond those that accrue to the direct users of those services (p. 351).[1]

The authors are pointing out the wide acknowledgement that having an educated society results in better living standards for all, not only for those who receive the education; that investing in inoculations and disease prevention reduces the spread of disease through society, while restoring those who are ill to good health enhances society's productivity; and that investing in public transportation and hike/bike trails reduces automobile congestion and pollution, which benefits those who do not use these amenities. Similar community

Exhibit 3-1 It's not just fun and games

When the hospital board bemoans the high costs of health care, we must be there to remind them that the hikers and the bikers are not crowding our trails just for the scenery. These trails do more for the physical, mental and spiritual wellness of the population than any hospital could ever hope to accomplish.

Recreation is not only big business, it is good for business. When the Convention and Visitors Bureau talks of tourism, we must be there to remind them that what tourists like to do is what we do best. One of our chief products is enjoyment, and nothing brings tourists and their dollars to a town like the promise of a good time.

Every kid cannot dunk a basketball; every kid cannot hit a home run. We create silly little games so that everybody wins. We are there to make sure that at least one time in his life, a child will run home to say, "Mom, today I was number one." And so when they ask why do we engage in those silly little games, we must be there to remind them that we are in the business of building self-esteem.

When the police chief asks for more officers, we must remind the decision-makers that recreation is more than fun and games. On a daily basis we engage thousands of young people in constructive and positive activities. Were it not for the opportunities we provide, those idle hands and energetic bodies may well turn to less constructive and less positive activities. It is cheaper to recreate than to incarcerate.

When the Human Relations Commission makes its report on the State of Race Relations, we must remind them that we break racial barriers everyday. We provide opportunities for people of different races and ethnic backgrounds to taste victory, only after they have set aside those artificial barriers of color and status and work together as a unit, each contributing some unique and necessary talent. If they can do it on the courts and on the playing fields, just maybe they can do it in society.

Source: Charles Jordan, from an address to the 1986 Congress of the National Park and Recreation Association.

benefits emanate from some of the services provided by park and recreation agencies, but they have not received similar widespread acknowledgment.

A primary reason for this lack of widespread acknowledgment was articulated by one of the founders of the contemporary benefits movement: "People in the leisure professions do not understand well the benefits of leisure and have not articulated sufficiently the scope and magnitude of the benefits they do know" (p. 351).[1] Many professionals in the field have not made the connection between what they do and community benefits. They have failed to provide leadership in this area. Given *their* lack of understanding, it is not reasonable to expect taxpayers and elected officials to understand the field's potential contributions. An early eloquent illustration of the leadership that is required is reproduced in Exhibit 3-1.

To gain the support of nonusers, an agency has to provide a convincing answer to the fundamental marketing question, "What is in it for them?" Broader community support is likely to be dependent on an agency's ability to demonstrate (in easily recognized, preferably quantifiable, terms which taxpayers and elected officials understand) that park and recreation services are effectively and efficiently addressing issues of importance to the community.

Widespread community support will be based primarily on the off-site benefits that accrue to nonusers, rather than on the on-site benefits that accrue to users. The off-site beneficiaries can be classified into two categories. First, are those receiving identifiable economic, social, and environmental benefits from park and recreation services, which are the primary concern of this monograph. A second category of off-site beneficiaries is comprised of those who receive "psychic" benefits from knowing an agency is acting in a stewardship role to protect resources from despoilation, or providing opportunities for the emotional and educational growth of young people. Although psychic benefits are not discussed here, it should be noted that several studies have established the amount these off-site "appreciatives" are willing to pay in taxes for these benefits "is sizeable and exceeds by several orders of magnitude the on-site users' willingness to pay for such management" (p. 18).[2]

RETURNING TO THE FIELD'S ROOTS

Many will be familiar with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which is reproduced as Exhibit 3-2. These needs are grouped in ascending order of importance: physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization. As a person fulfills one need, a higher-level need becomes more important. The hierarchy suggests that those needs essential to survival must be addressed first. Only when such basic needs as sustenance, food, water, air, shelter, health, and safety have been met does attention shift to the desirable, but less essential, needs of belonging, esteem, and self-actualization.

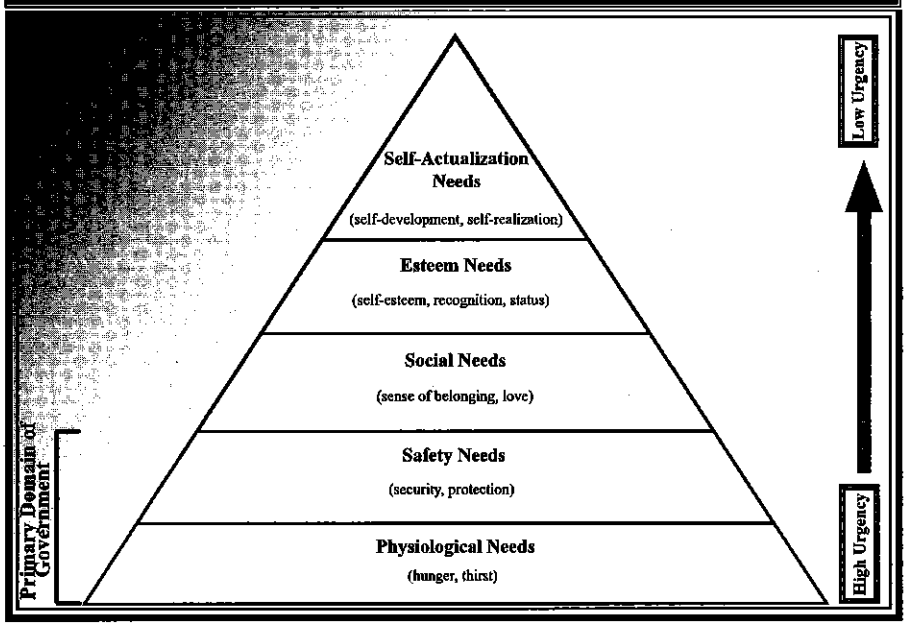
Thus, the most urgent imperative of government is to focus on these two foundation levels of the pyramid. The perception that parks and recreation contributed to meeting these urgent and basic needs is the reason the field originally was embraced by local governments as a tax-supported public service.

The reason to review the field's roots at this point is to draw lessons from how society viewed parks and recreation in the field's nascent years and to use those lessons to inform and guide contemporary decisions and policies. It has been observed that:

> History is a road map. It tells us who we are, how we got

where we are and where we ought to be going. It may be less definite on the "ought" than on our origins and path, but it does offer direction and a rationale for what we do (p.47).[3]

Exhibit 3-2 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Park and recreation services emerged as a social movement at the end of the nineteenth century. These services were viewed as a means through which compelling community problems could be resolved. It was recognized that the field could make a substantial contribution to society by alleviating or resolving the consequences of contemporary problems.

Concerns undergirding the field's emergence were not unlike those which exist today:

> Many of the conditions that our forebears faced are not too dissimilar from those confronting us now. Concerns for the environment, the underclass, the displacement of workers resulting from new technologies, waves of new immigrants, people living on the street or in overcrowded slums where both adult and juvenile gangs wreak havoc: these were the issues of the 90s—the 1890s. They are also the problems of today (p. 47).[3]

In recent decades many practitioners and the general public lost sight of this community mandate. Adverse financial conditions forced agencies to become more efficient and effective in their operations, but operational concerns supplanted concerns about mission and values:

> By becoming good managers, park and recreation professionals may have done themselves and their systems a disservice. They were more concerned about how they were to perform than why the performance was necessary. This is not an indictment of the need to be effective managers; rather it is an expression of the times when technique and procedures seemingly were more important than reasons for service (p. 8).[3]

The primary lesson to be learned from this history is "To get people to believe in you and to support you, you must do something worthwhile, something that meets their

needs" (p. 47).[4] The acceptance of parks and subsequently of recreation as services that governments should provide in the latter half of the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth century was driven by a belief that they contributed to providing basic community needs rather than merely responding to the desires of groups of individuals.

The Rationale for Parks

The support for parks as a public amenity in the mid-nineteenth century was undergirded by four social ideals: democratic equality, social coherence, public health, and economic prosperity.[5] The first two of these social ideals related to behavior concerns and were viewed as core elements in community building. Emerging class divisions and sense of social rank in the United States were perceived by some to threaten the safety and fabric of society. There was a belief that *democratic equality* would be fostered by providing the uplifting environment of a park with opportunities to engage in "healthful" recreations such as strolling, picnicking, and croquet playing. Since these activities were enjoyed by all classes, the various groups would come to appreciate each other's recreation, take part in them, become better acquainted by mingling with each other, grow socially homogeneous, and thus parks would promote greater democratic equality. This exemplified a belief that class barriers could be eradicated through the creation of a "commonweal" – places designed to foster public interaction and well-being.

Social coherence referred to "morality" and sprang from concern with rising levels of crime. A cause of this was perceived to be the alienation of some social groups from the mainstream of society. It was argued that parks augmented social cohesion by strengthening "the local pride and affection of the inhabitants" (p. 8).[5] Parks were seen by Frederick Law Olmsted as incubators of safety and social order. He wrote that "despite the 'bad reputation' of New Yorkers, they were exceedingly law abiding in the parks" (p. 46).[5] As evidence of this, it was noted in 1869 that "In the Central Park, only 568 arrests have been made, and these of a trivial character, out of 30,731,847 visitors" (p. 83).[5]

Whereas the first two social ideals addressed behavioral concerns, the second two related to the material well-being of society. The third social ideal providing impetus for parks was *public health*. Parks were thought to provide fresh air, which counteracted "miasmas." The putrification, waste material, sewage and filth that characterized conditions in the new rapidly growing industrial cities of the nineteenth century were believed to create diseases, which were then transmitted by noxious, invisible gases called "miasmas":

> The belief gave rise to the maxim, "Cleanliness is next to godliness." Parks were open; green and clean spaces where spontaneous generation of disease did not occur because purifying vegetation and the site's openness broke up miasmas. Like lungs, a park brought in fresh, healthful air and expelled tainted, dangerous gasses (p. 32).[5]

The case for parks as an antidote for miasmas was made by reputable medical authorities. For example, John H. Rauch, M.D., in his "Report on Public Parks," which was prepared at the behest of the Chicago Academy of Sciences in 1869, noted:

> A series of facts...clearly proving that the infection and diffusion of malaria or noxious

> emanations are arrested by trees, whose structure and canopy of foliage act in a three-fold capacity – first as a barrier to break the flow, second as an absorbent of those emanations, and third as eliminators of oxygen (p. 38).[6]

In 1808, Lord Chatham had railed against a proposal to convert part of Hyde Park in London to other uses by saying "the parks were the lungs of London" (p. 28).[7] Long after the myth of miasmas had been exposed as the nature of germs and disease transmission was better understood, the cliché that parks were "the lungs of a city" remained. In the United States, the "father" of the urban parks movement, Frederick Law Olmsted, made liberal use of the lungs metaphor and of medical thinking of the time to develop a convincing case for the restorative power of open space.[7]

The public health issue contributed to the raised value of properties proximate to parks. In contemporary times, the *proximate value* derives from both convenient access to a park and the views of it enjoyed by adjacent owners. But in the formative years of urban park development in the United States, some of the proximate added value also emanated from a park's perceived ability to protect local residents from miasmas.

The *economic value* of parks had three facets. First, was the notion that working people needed places to recuperate and regenerate from the exhausting factory work occupying most of their lives. Parks were seen as potential rejuvenators of enervated workers. A "recharging of their batteries" would enable them to be more productive in the work milieu. A second facet was that major parks attracted tourists who spent money in the local economy from which many local residents benefited.

The third economic facet was the proximate principle, which stemmed from the willingness of many people to pay a larger amount for property located close to parks than for a home that did not offer this amenity.[8] The higher value of these residences meant that their owners paid higher property taxes. Olmsted presented evidence based on his Central Park and Prospect Park projects which showed that if the incremental amount of taxes paid by each property that was attributed to the presence of a nearby park was aggregated, it was sufficient to pay the annual debt charges required to retire the bonds used to acquire and develop the park.[8] Hence, he concluded a park may be obtained at no long-term cost to the jurisdiction.

The extensive influence of the Olmsted firm was such that the legitimacy of this proximate principle was widely accepted by elected officials across the United States in the late 1800s and early 1900s.[8]

The Rationale for Recreation

A review of articles published in the 1890 to 1930 period confirms that the proliferation of municipal recreation programs and departments in the early decades of the twentieth century was primarily attributable to three beliefs. These three beliefs were a conviction that recreation had substantial instrumental value (i) in preventing juvenile delinquency and in positively intervening to reduce it; (ii) for fostering health; and (iii) for improving citizenship. Pioneers in the recreation field, such as Luther Gulick, believed that school playgrounds and recreation were vital to a democratic order and the socialization of individuals. An extensive sampling from these articles has been published elsewhere.[9] There was no equivocation in them about the "rightness" of providing recreation for these instrumental purposes. The influen-

tial authors of these articles, which commonly appeared in major newspaper editorials and other popular media, wrote with conviction and passion.

A pervasive characteristic of the advocacy emanating from these early articles was a recognition that it was not the programs or facilities per se that had instrumental value, rather it was the interactions with leaders in those contexts that was the critical factor. The extracts from newspaper articles listed in Exhibit 3-3 offer a feel for the sentiments that resulted in recreation becoming a public tax-supported service.

PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE COMMUNITY-BENEFITS PARADIGM

The lessons of the field's roots suggest that what is required today is a revised mindset – indeed a paradigm shift – by which the field's core mission becomes the delivery of community benefits, while those services that are more proprietory and focus on user benefits be regarded as subservient and of secondary importance. In general terms, this is likely to mean that prioritization of services will rank parks and natural areas first, man-made facilities second, then programs last. There will be exceptions to this (for example, intervention programs targeted at at-risk youth), but in most contexts parks and natural areas are likely to provide most community benefits, while most recreation programs are likely to offer primarily user benefits.

The user-benefits paradigm, which was discussed in Chapter 2, is reproduced again as Exhibit 3-4. It was based upon three major principles: (i) an *open-system model* of formal organizations; (ii) the concept of *voluntary exchange*; and (iii) *self-interest motivation*. The community-benefits paradigm rejects all three of these principles arguing that they are inconsistent with the environment in which park and recreation agencies operate, and it posits alternative principles.[10, 11]

The *open system* model views a parks and recreation agency as being able to respond directly and quickly to the needs of an array of different segments. It assumes the agency has sufficient independence to enable it to respond quickly to the environment in which it operates and that it is the primary decision-maker, free of a requirement to constantly refer actions for authorization to a higher authority. These conditions are not typically associated with park and recreation agencies. Rather, managers are responsible to an elected legislative body, which limits their discretion by giving them carefully proscribed performance measures that assess their effectiveness and efficiency in achieving the legislative body's goals. Major decisions are made by the legislative bodies; such decisions characteristically take a relatively long time period to evolve; and the legislative body's focus is on servicing the community as a whole rather than particular segments. These are the characteristics of a *closed-system*.

Exhibit 3-4 shows that the user benefits paradigm relies on *voluntary exchange*. An agency produces services that deliver benefits, while recipients in return provide financial resources to the agency in the form of fees and taxes. However, this is a mischaracterization of what occurs. In most communities, any fees collected go to the jurisdiction's general fund, not to the agency. Further, taxes are not "voluntarily exchanged"; rather they are contributed often reluctantly and are a legal obligation demanded by a legislative body. Taxes are collected from residents, pooled as a common resource, and then redistributed in the form of services to residents. Thus, *redistribution* not *voluntary exchange* is the relevant principle.

Exhibit 3-3 The Role of Recreation in Alleviating Antisocial Behavior Among Youth: Voices from the Past

The most satisfactory result in establishing public playgrounds has been the decrease of juvenile crime, which is said to be almost 50 percent. For that reason, more public playgrounds should be opened, especially in the congested districts of large cities. It is on the playground that character is formed, which is afterward brought into "practical play" by our leaders in thought and action. Every variety of psychological study is open to the resourceful and tactful teacher in the advantages offered by the public playground. (Extracts from a letter by H. Roosevelt Ostrom published in the *New York Times*, June 14, 1902.)

Supervised playgrounds, parks, amusements, manual labor classes and boys' clubs have in 5 years reduced juvenile crime and delinquency 96 percent in the industrial center of Binghamton in New York State, according to figures recently compiled by the Broome County Humane Society and Relief Association. (William I. Engle (1919). Supervised Amusement Cuts Juvenile Crime by 96 percent. *The American City* 21(6): 515-17.)

In his report to the Russell Sage Foundation, Allen T. Burns says, "To provide a probation district with adequate play facilities is coincident with a reduction in delinquency of from 28 percent to 70 percent, or 44 percent as an average."

L.H. Weir, Chief Probation Officer of Cincinnati says: "In 1906 there were 1,748 children legally before the Juvenile Court and 410 were handled unofficially making a total of 2,158 children. Of these, 1,450 were delinquents. In the fall of that year a beginning was made in opening playgrounds in the downtown portions of the city. In the year just closed, there were 993 delinquent children before the court. Each year has noted a marked decrease. While some of the decrease may be due to other causes, the work of the courts for instance, we are perfectly sure that one of the main factors has been the opportunity afforded the thousands of children in the most congested district of the city to play in a natural and spontaneous manner."

Edward C. Hill, President of the Trenton Playground Commission says: "Playgrounds were established in Trenton, N.J., as a municipal undertaking about the middle of 1906. The police records show a decrease of 28 percent in the number of arrests of boys, while the arrest of men 20 years of age and upward shows an increase of 10 percent. It is fair to assume that if there had been no playground supervision, the arrests of boys would have shown an increase corresponding to the increase in the arrest of the men."

Mr. Loman, the special superintendent of delinquents in Dallas, Texas, says that the result of establishing Trinity Play Park there has been that the number of juvenile offenders in the cotton mill district has been reduced more than 80 percent during the last year, although the number of children has increased 9 percent. (Crime statistics show most offenders are under 21 years and the figures drop wherever recreation is provided, *The New York Times*, November 26, 1922.)

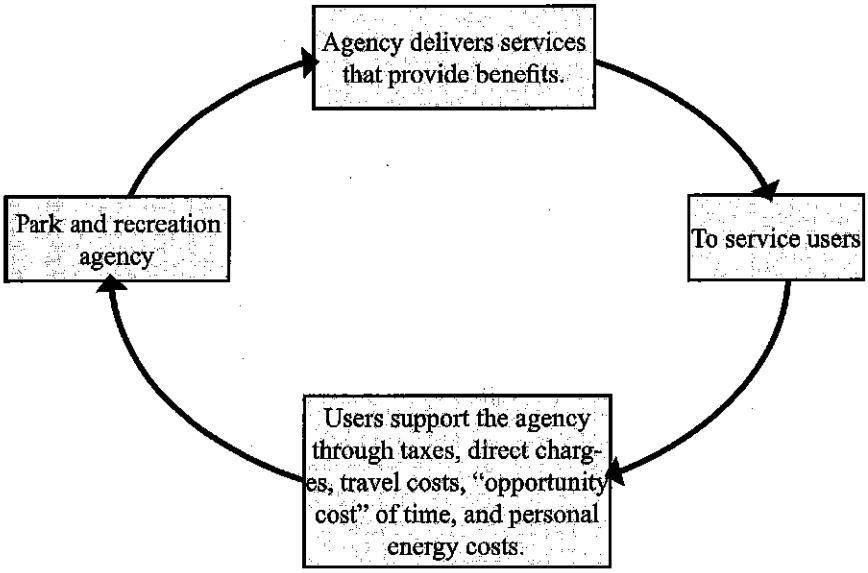
We find New Orleans today with 13 playgrounds, showing less juvenile delinquency than in 1909, although the city has increased in population over 60,000 in this period. (Playgrounds Cause Child Crime Wane, *New Orleans Item*, February 4, 1923.)

From Bluefield, West Virginia, which used to send, on an average, approximately 50 boys a year to the state reformatory, came a report that during the last 3 years, when the city has had, under competent direction, playgrounds and a boys' club, only two cases have been given over to the reformatory. (Supervised Play Cuts Delinquency, *Christian Science Monitor*, April 17, 1924.)

Chief of Police Conlon of Leominster, Mass., says that delinquency cases in Leominster averaged 91 a year prior to the organization of Community Service, the local recreation agency. Since its coming, the number decreased to 53 in 1923. (Money is Sent for Kiddies' Play, *Des Moines Capital*, April 17, 1924.)

In the communities where there are playgrounds, where healthful sports are encouraged, the morality of boys is high. Not a boy was taken into the juvenile court this year from the neighborhood where there is a playground. (Finds Investment in Youth Pays the Community Well, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, *Daily Herald*, February 6, 1925.)

Exhibit 3-4 The Voluntary Exchange: Conceptualization of Marketing



The user-benefits paradigm contends that pursuit of personal *self-interest* is the essential motivation between an agency and its user publics. It suggests there is a quid pro quo that says, "If you give me what I want, then in return I will give you what you want." This principle is of limited use because park and recreation agencies often cannot offer the quid pro quo as the benefits individual groups may seek are not in the long-term interests of the broader community.

This point was illustrated by Hardin's parable, *The Tragedy of the Commons.*[12] A village had a pasture that was fixed in size but accessible to all its residents. Motivated by self-interest, all the villagers sought to maximize their own use of the pasture by grazing as many cattle on it as possible and expanding the size of their own herds. Villagers failed to recognize that the long-term cumulative effect of pursuing their short-term independent self-interest goals would harm their collective interest. Without adequate and timely collective measures, the pasture and the villagers' source of sustenance was destroyed. Hardin's suggested solution was "mutually agreed-upon coercion," that is coercion agreed upon through democratic voting procedures by a majority of the people affected, which would restrict how many cattle each villager could graze on the pasture. The stewardship role of park and recreation agencies, which mandates them to reconcile use of a resource with preservation of the resource's physical and ecological integrity, means that *mutually agreed-upon coercion* better characterizes their modus operandi than does facilitating unbridled personal self-interest.

The user-benefits paradigm shown in Exhibit 3-4 has been ubiquitous in the parks and recreation field, but a viable future requires that it be replaced by the community-benefits paradigm shown in Exhibit 3-5. This shows that local resources for a jurisdiction's general fund primarily come from taxes paid by both users and nonusers. The legislative body with responsibility for the general fund then redistributes those funds among departments, one of which is a parks and recreation agency. The agency uses most of these funds to deliver services that provide community-wide benefits to all its residents. But it uses some of them to deliver benefits only to users. The users in return invest fees (which are collected by the agency but passed through to the general fund), travel costs, and their time.

The three principles undergirding this community-benefits paradigm are: (i) for the most part, it is a closed system whose actions

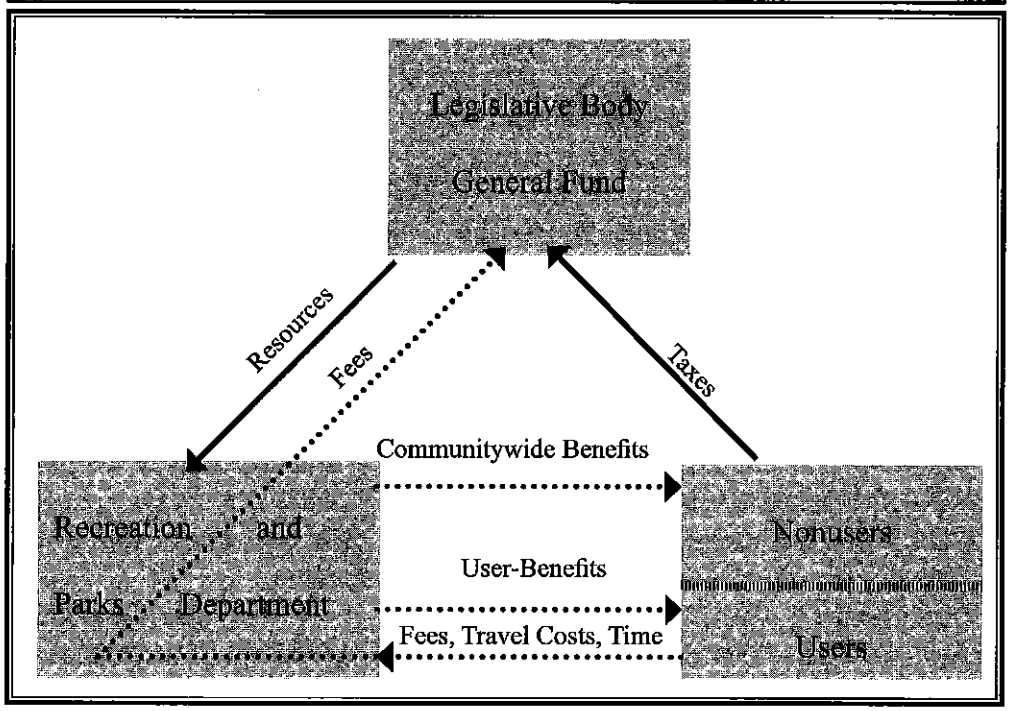
are proscribed by a legislative body; (ii) a central body redistributes the resources it collects; and (iii) the paradigm eschews unbridled self-interest in favor of mutually agreed-upon coercion. Each of these principles emphasizes that *the* key constituency for an agency is the legislative body, which, respectively, (i) sets the goals; (ii) collects and dispenses the financial resources; and (iii) makes the rules and regulations that govern their use.

The community-benefits paradigm confirms that an agency's ability to acquire the resources necessary to make effective contributions is dependent on its relationship with the central legislative body. The paradigm incorporates the user-benefits paradigm (shown in Exhibit 3-4) so, rather than replacing it, it extends and adds value to it.

The new community-benefits paradigm recognizes that the role of the central legislative authority is dominant and that the park and recreation agency assumes a place and role within the larger redistribution system. Given that an agency's well-being is dependent on its legislature's redistribution decisions, the key question is: What guides those decisions? There are three drivers of those decisions: (i) perceptions of the value of the community benefits the agency offers to residents; (ii) the relative importance of those benefits to the legislature's efforts to address issues of concern in the community; and (iii) the legislature's value system as to how these community benefits should be redistributed (e.g., equally to all segments of the jurisdiction, a larger share to the economically disadvantaged, or a larger share to those who pay the most taxes; or whatever).[13]

The first of these drivers, which discusses the value of community benefits that park and recreation agencies could deliver, is briefly reviewed in the remainder of this chapter and addressed in detail in Appendix 2 of this publication. There is an implicit promise and assurance that a decision to invest in the agency will result in the agency delivering specified community benefits to the jurisdiction's residents, which will enhance their general welfare over an extended period of time. Elected officials are under relentless pressure to minimize taxes and so will be reluctant to allocate additional funds for parks and recreation unless they are convinced they

Exhibit 3-5 The Community Benefits Paradigm



will offer a good return on their investment.

The second driver, relating to the relative importance of parks and recreation, is concerned with repositioning the field and is the subject of Chapter 4. The third driver has to do with alternate notions of equity and is outside the scope of this publication.[13]

A majority of research in the parks and recreation field to date has focused on better understanding the behavior of users and potential users and on the relationship between agencies and their users. This focus reflects the priorities dictated by the user-benefits paradigm. However, the three drivers of the new paradigm direct that the field's research should be reprioritized to address the nature, extent, structure, context, and value of community benefits; their use and effectiveness in repositioning the field; and explications of the slippery concept of equity. As science provides more evidence as to the nature, magnitude and contextual parameters of the communitywide benefits associated with parks and recreation, then park and recreation professionals have a responsibility to widen their horizons and become more confident in their advocacy claims for the field.

THE COMMUNITYWIDE BENEFITS PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES COULD POTENTIALLY DELIVER

A comprehensive set of 19 communitywide benefits that agencies potentially could deliver is summarized in Exhibit 3-6. Understanding the potential contributions of these benefits is a prerequisite for using them effectively. This set of community benefits is intended to be complete. Obviously, not all agencies will have the potential or inclination to deliver all of these benefits. An agency's mission or resources may exclude some benefits from being considered, while characteristics of the jurisdiction in which an agency operates may make some of them irrelevant. Further, it will be emphasized in Chapter 4 that benefits should be prioritized and that an agency should commit to addressing only two or three of them.

The 19 community benefits are classified into three categories: economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and alleviation of social problems.

An executive summary of the rationale and empirical evidence documenting the field's role in delivering each of these benefits is provided in Appendix 2. Although all three categories of benefits are listed in Exhibit 3-6, in the political arena it is almost always advantageous to frame an issue in economic terms when presenting a case to a legislative body. Thus, Exhibit 3-7 shows that potential environmental and social benefits also are likely to have positive economic outcomes for a community. The nature of these economic benefits is discussed in Appendix 2.

This does not mean that parks and natural areas should be justified by their economic contributions alone. That would ignore the social and environmental contributions many of them make. However, if no economic measure of their value is offered, then it will be assumed by elected officials that they have no economic value. The merits of parks and natural areas will not be prominently prioritized and ranked against other measurable services if they are not measured in economic terms. The costs are relatively easy to calculate, and the absence of such a calculation of approximate economic benefit can mean there is an inherent unbalance in the information used by elected officials and taxpayers to make decisions. An awareness of the economic value of these benefits is likely to result in more of those decisions being positive.

Exhibit 3-7 also shows that the "benefit chain of causality" is likely to be the main ap-

Exhibit 3-6 Communitywide Benefits that Park and Recreation Agencies Could Potentially Deliver

Economic Prosperity

Economic development is widely viewed as being central to a community's economic prosperity because it is viewed as a means of enhancing the tax base. The enhancement is perceived to provide additional tax revenues, which governments can use either to improve the community's infrastructure, facilities, and services, or to reduce the level of taxes that existing residents pay. It is seen also as a source of jobs that provide income, which enables residents to improve their quality of life. Park and recreation agencies can be a central contributor to economic development. That role may take the form of:

1. **Attracting Tourists:** The major factor considered by tourists when making a decision about which communities to visit on a pleasure trip is the attractions that are available. In most cities, those attractions are dominated by facilities and services operated by park and recreation agencies and their nonprofit partners (parks, beaches, events, festivals, athletic tournaments, museums, historical sites, cultural performances, etc.). Without such attractions, there is no tourism.
2. **Attracting Businesses:** The viability of businesses in the highly recruited high-technology, research and development, company headquarters, and services sectors in many cases is dependent on their ability to attract and retain highly educated professional employees. The deciding factor of where these individuals choose to live is often the quality of life in the geographic vicinity of the business. No matter how quality of life is defined, park and recreation opportunities are likely to be a major component of it.
3. **Attracting Retirees:** A new, clean growth industry in America today includes the growing number of relatively affluent, active retirees. Their decisions as to where to locate with their substantial retirement incomes is primarily governed by two factors: climate and recreational opportunities.
4. **Enhancing Real Estate Values:** People frequently are willing to pay more for a home located close to a park or natural area than they are for a comparable home elsewhere. The enhanced value of these properties results in their owners paying higher property taxes to governments, reflecting the benefits they receive from their proximate location. When the incremental amounts of property taxes that are attributable to the park are aggregated, they are likely to be sufficient to pay a substantial proportion of the debt required to retire the bonds used to acquire, develop, or renovate the park.
5. **Reducing Taxes:** There is a prevailing myth that development is the "highest and best use" of vacant land. Consequently, growth is perceived to be the key to enhancing the tax base and keeping property taxes low. The reality is that while residential development is likely to generate significant tax revenue, in most cases the cost of providing services and infrastructure, especially schools, to the development is likely to exceed the tax revenue emanating from it. So the taxes of existing residents will increase. Creating parks and natural areas is likely to be a less expensive alternative to taxpayers than residential development.
6. **Stimulation of Equipment Sales:** Manufacturers and retailers of recreational equipment and others who sell related services (equipment repairs and leasing, outfitters, et. al.) depend on the availability of recreation facilities at which people can use the equipment. This creates jobs and income for residents and sales tax revenues for government.

Exhibit 3-6 Communitywide Benefits that Park and Recreation Agencies Could Potentially Deliver (Continued)

Environmental Sustainability

Parks and natural areas enable nature to perform environmental services cost effectively that otherwise would require costly investments in infrastructure and technology to provide. These services include:

7. **Protecting Drinking Water:** Development of watersheds brings degradation to both aquifer and surface sources of drinking water. The degradation emanates from septic and sewer systems, from lawn and garden chemicals, and from rooftops, parking lots, and highways runoff. In addition, the development removes the natural processes that filter pollution. Keeping water clean by acquiring or preserving watersheds as natural areas is almost always less expensive to taxpayers than having to invest in the expensive equipment needed to clean them after they have been polluted. The impervious surfaces created by development redirect runoff from water aquifers into culverts and drainage ditches, so in addition to adversely affecting its quality, development may result in reduced quantity of drinking water.
8. **Controlling Flooding:** When flooding occurs, it is testimony that the efficient and effective drainage system created by nature has been abused either by the overdevelopment of watersheds or the infilling of floodplains. Controlling flooding involves substantial cost in dredging, channeling, concreting, and building dikes and levees. This is expensive, tends to deflect the flooding to downstream areas, rather than resolve it, and periodically fails in times of atypical storms with disastrous consequences. (This was vividly illustrated in New Orleans in 2005.) Creating substantial park and open space areas in the watersheds and preserving floodplains as greenways manages the flow of the runoff more effectively and less expensively than do concrete sewers and drainage ditches.
9. **Cleaning Air:** Air pollution threatens the health of those with asthma and other respiratory diseases, contributes to heart and lung disease, and increases the risk of cancer. Trees and vegetation improve air quality by removing from the atmosphere: (i) ozone, other gaseous pollutants, and toxic chemicals; (ii) particulate pollutants; and (iii) carbon dioxide. Urban areas have especially high concentrations of these pollutants from traffic, boilers, generators, and other sources, and trees are a relatively inexpensive way to mitigate these pollutants.
10. **Reducing Traffic Congestion:** A complementary strategy for cleaning air is directed at reducing traffic congestion. Automobile travel can be reduced by providing hike and bike trails to encourage people to walk and ride, rather than to drive. In addition to alleviating air pollution, diverting people to trails reduces the magnitude of investment needed in highways and encourages people to exercise and embrace a more healthy lifestyle.
11. **Reducing Energy Costs:** The urban heat island effect is caused by the dark surfaces of rooftops, roadways, and parking lots in urban areas absorbing the day's heat and radiating it at night. As a result, cities cool less at night than do surrounding rural areas, and they remain hotter during the days. The shade and evapotranspiration provided by trees act as natural air conditioners to help keep both individual homes and cities cooler, reducing the amount of energy and cost needed to do this.
12. **Preserving Biological Diversity:** Gene pools of species and ecosystems may be essential for future human survival. Species as yet unknown or unresearched may hold the key to future food, medicine and fiber sources. The preservation of natural areas and the creation of conservation corridors connecting them are of prime importance in preserving genetic diversity. *(continued on next page)*

Exhibit 3-6 Communitywide Benefits that Park and Recreation Agencies Could Potentially Deliver (Continued)

Alleviating Social Problems

From a societal perspective, all of the issues identified in this category of benefits are effectively summarized by the mantra "Pay now or pay later." A failure to invest resources in delivering services that will preempt the potential social problems is likely to result in society paying a much higher cost at a later date to resolve the problems when they have escalated to a more serious level. If people are exposed to more than one or two of these social problems so they become mutually reinforcing, then the impact of them may be sufficiently great to reach the chronic problem level, which is embraced by the term "social exclusion." Often the challenge is to assist vulnerable groups, frequently young members of ethnic minorities, in becoming employable and to engage in civic life and civil society. It involves bringing marginalized residents into the mainstream to strengthen community cohesion. Parks and recreation is potentially a strong vehicle for facilitating this social process of enhanced connectedness.

(xiii) **Reducing Environmental Stress:** Environmental stress may involve both psychological emotions, such as frustration, anger, fear and coping responses, and associated physiological responses that use energy and contribute to fatigue. It is experienced daily by many who live or commute in urban or blighted areas. Parks in urban settings have a restorative effect that releases the tensions of modern life. Evidence demonstrating the therapeutic value of natural settings has emerged in both physiological and psychological studies. The cost of environmental stress in terms of work days lost and medical care required is likely to be substantially greater than the cost of providing and maintaining parks, urban forestry programs, and oases of flowers and shrubs.

(xiv) **Community Regeneration:** Regeneration involves improving the physical, social, community, and environmental aspects of an area. Effective regeneration is unlikely to be forthcoming if park and recreation services are not an integral part of it.

(xv) **Cultural and Historical Preservation:** Without a cultural history, people are rootless. Preserving historical remnants offers lingering evidence to remind people of what they once were, who they are, what they are, and where they are. It feeds their sense of history and often is critical to community identity.

(xvi) **Facilitating Healthy Lifestyles:** Growing recognition exists that the key to curtailing heath care costs lies in prevention of illness so people do not have to be treated by the expensive medical system. Many health problems are caused by people making bad lifestyle decisions. Engagement in physical exercise is a function of personal and social factors, behavioral change programs, and the physical environment. Traditionally, park and recreation agencies have focused on programs. Recent evidence suggests the extent to which the physical environment is "activity friendly" is a central factor because it makes it easier to elect to exercise.

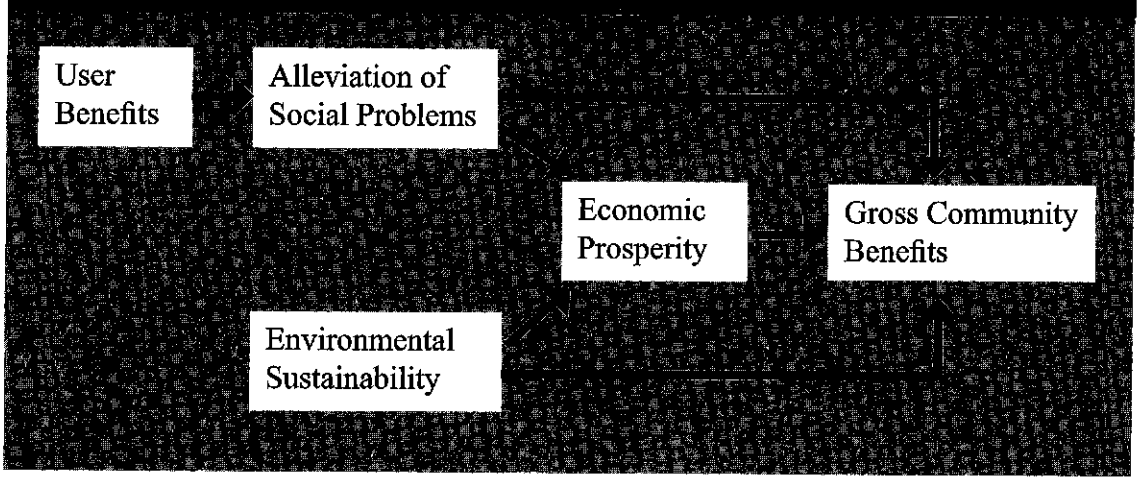
(xvii) **Alleviating Deviant Behavior Among Youth:** Strong evidence exists demonstrating the effectiveness of recreation programs in preventing "at-risk" youth from engaging in deviant behavior. These programs are likely to be most effective when their characteristics include: being carefully structured to provide interactions and relationships with adult leaders; leadership opportunities for youth; intensive and individualized attention to participants; a sense of group belonging; engagement in challenging tasks and activities; youth input into program decisions; and opportunities for community service. The return on investment of such programs is substantial when it is related to the costs of incarceration.

(xviii) **Raising Levels of Educational Achievement:** There has been a movement to increase the amount of time that children are involved in educational activities beyond regular school hours in order to enhance their educational achievement levels. Recreation has proved to be an effective "hook" for persuading many to participate in after-school programs. Children are permitted to engage in the recreation activities only after they have completed the educational enrichment components of the program.

(xix) **Alleviating Unemployment Distress:** Park and recreation agencies can contribute in two ways. First, they are extraordinarily well positioned to create meaningful construction, renovation, repair, and maintenance projects that can absorb relatively large numbers of people who are unemployed. Conservation and park work is relatively labor intensive. It offers many opportunities for unskilled people to enter the workforce and to subsequently develop vocational skills that expand their employability options. Second, agencies can develop recreation programs targeted specifically at this group and designed to provide some compensatory benefits.

proach used by park and recreation agencies to alleviate social problems.[14] This meant that first-order benefits to users are likely to be a prerequisite for the effective delivery of second-order benefits to the community. In alleviating social problems, user benefits often are a necessary but not a sufficient condition for delivering the desired community benefits. It is anticipated that if individuals receive personal benefits (e.g., growth in self-worth, self-confidence, social recognition, gain in prestige), the social problem of deviant behavior, for example, will be reduced. However, it must be recognized that alternate outcomes could occur (i.e., personal benefits may result in greater deviant behavior or have no impact on such behavior).

Exhibit 3-7 Relationships Among Different Categories of Benefits



Nevertheless, the "pay now or pay later" mantra that characterizes these issues means that reduced costs, which are the economic benefit outcomes accruing from alleviating social problems, can only occur if on-site benefits are effectively delivered to the individuals who in aggregate are creating these problems. Thus, efforts to stimulate community regeneration, alleviate deviant behavior among youth, raise levels of educational achievement, encourage healthy lifestyles, and create employment opportunities are all addressed by making a positive on-site impact with individuals who are perceived to be the source of these problems. In contrast, on-site benefits to users are not a prerequisite outcome for park and recreation agencies to contribute directly to a community's economic prosperity or its environmental sustainability.

CREDIBILITY OF THE EVIDENCE

In previous eras, support for the community benefits claimed by park and recreation services was primarily based on faith, intuition, common sense, occasional anecdotal evidence, and "naive" research, which may (or may not!) have incorporated the best scientific techniques available to those working in earlier eras. This research may not survive contemporary peer review as being good science.

Credible scientific research in this field, with a few notable exceptions, started to emerge in the 1960s and 1970s. It was stimulated by the 27 volumes constituting the report of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission in 1962; the expansion

in graduate education in this field in the major universities in the late 1960s and early 1970s; the rapid increase in interest, visitation, and participation in public park and recreation services in the second half of the twentieth century; and the dawn of widespread accessibility to computing capacity in the late 1960s and early 1970s, which strengthened research designs and encouraged the use of more powerful statistical tools.

During the past three or four decades, the field's knowledge base has expanded exponentially. This rapid increase in knowledge has included investigations of the benefits associated with parks and recreation. Thus, in reviewing the field's scientific literature, one leading researcher recently concluded, "I believe we have come a long way in essentially less than a half-century and have much to be proud of" (p. 524).[15] He goes on to argue: "In fact, few areas of scientific inquiry have realized such advancements in so short a time" (p. 529). He concludes by writing:

> We now have good documentation that the benefits of leisure are tremendous – so much so that I now firmly believe that leisure, broadly conceived, provides as much or more total benefits to the citizens of most industrialized countries (i.e., ones in which basic needs for food, shelter, health services, and sanitation have been taken care of reasonably well) than any other social service, including health and educational services. This conclusion about the great social significance of leisure is based in part on the pervasiveness of leisure services to all domains of human endeavor and in part on the great size of the "leisure economic sector" of many if not most, countries (p. 531).[15]

When the field's advocates fail to make the scientific case because either they are not informed or they are uncomfortable with the extent of the supporting evidence, others seize on that hesitancy to bolster their own case at the expense of parks and recreation. They make the lack of scientific certainty in this field the basis of their countercase for development, extraction, grazing, or whatever, even though they have no stronger scientific support for their own case. Thus, their response when opposing a park or conservation proposal is likely to be:

> We cannot justify using land for a park (or conservation use) and not using it for the economic benefit of the community because there is no scientific or economic argument for doing so.

It has been suggested that "the evidence is limited, uneven, and incomplete" (p. 43),[16] and that "there is an urgent demand for more evidence" (p. 8).[17] Indeed, there would probably be widespread agreement that the empirical evidence is incomplete, so in some cases the conclusions drawn from it must be considered tentative. However, managers and elected officials do not have the luxury of delaying decisions until unequivocal, uncontestable evidence is available. They have to base their decisions on the current knowledge base. Policy issues in all contexts are frequently based on incomplete information. Indeed, if no policy decisions were made until all desired information was available, then nothing would be done about anything!

Although the availability of empirical evidence means the field no longer has to rely on faith, a need still exists both for evan-

gelism to disseminate this knowledge and skilled presentation work that will make the case in a coherent and robust manner. Most professionals are not exposed to the scientific journals where the evidence is published. Hence, they are unaware of it. It has been observed that: "While great strides have been made in establishing closer working relations between practitioners and leisure professionals in the academic and research institutions, much additional progress is needed in achieving better technology transfer to the actual delivery of leisure services" (p. 530).[15] The goal of Appendix 2 in this monograph is to synthesize these empirical findings to provide professionals with an executive summary of the scientific literature relating to each of the 19 potential community benefits described in Exhibit 3-6.

"Evidence or faith? It is time to decide" was the title of a recent conference relating to benefits associated with this field. This question may have been legitimate even a decade ago, but today it is a straw man! The dichotomy is inappropriate. Critics who argue inadequate evidence is available to support the potential contributions of these benefits are wrong. Strong enough empirical support exists for all of the benefits listed in Exhibit 3-6 to justify their advocacy in formulating policy.

At the same time, it is important that advocates are circumspect in making benefit claims and that they do not overreach or overpromise. Their circumspection should recognize five caveats. First, while the evidence is the best knowledge available, it is incomplete.

The next three caveats are contained in the statement: Park and recreation services *can contribute* to *alleviating* societal problems. The three italicized words each represent a caveat. "Can" communicates that select benefits do not always occur and their effectiveness is likely to be context specific, dependent on such factors as the way services are structured; the commitment and ability of the leadership; resources invested in them; and the community, bureaucratic, and political environments in which they are delivered. "Contribute" conveys that an agency's programs are unlikely to be effective in isolation and that partnering with other agencies, departments or organizations is likely to be de rigueur. "Alleviate" connotes that even when holistic responses are forthcoming, the problem being addressed is likely to continue to exist at some lower level rather than to be resolved absolutely.

A final caveat should acknowledge that the government entity that accepts responsibility for investing in park and recreation services that deliver community benefits may not be the entity that receives the cost savings or revenue enhancements that accrue from those benefits. This issue is elaborated upon in the following section.

NEXUS AND DISCONNECTS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTAL INVESTORS AND BENEFICIARIES

In many instances a disconnect happens in the flow of dollars between government entities that invest in services delivering community benefits and the government entities that receive the cost savings or revenue enhancements that accrue from those investments. Conceptually, if selfless, joined-up thinking prevailed, this should not be a concern because, by definition, community benefits accrue to all and taxes are paid by all. However, the political reality is that it does matter, because elected officials are held accountable for their economic stewardship of the public body to which they are elected. Consequently, they are reluctant to incur

costs, if the economic benefits and associated political credit for those benefits flow to other government entities or organizations.

The disconnect problem is relatively minor among the public benefits classified under **economic prosperity** in Exhibit 3-6. The costs associated with park and recreation services designed to *attract tourists, businesses, and retirees; enhance real estate values; reduce taxes; and stimulate equipment sales* are mostly incurred by local governments, and their residents are the beneficiaries of those investments. The only disconnects in these scenarios are that most of the resultant revenues accrue in the form of jobs and income or tax savings to residents rather than being captured directly by the city's treasury. Additionally the enhanced tax base the city creates also benefits school districts, counties, and other entities who levy a local tax, so they are "free riders" (i.e., they receive economic benefits but do not participate in the economic investment). The disconnect becomes more acute when investments of tax funds are made by state or national entities, because most of the resultant economic benefits often accrue to local residents.

Among the public benefits under **environmental sustainability**, local investments in *protecting drinking water, controlling flooding, cleaning air, reducing traffic congestion* and *reducing energy costs* benefit local people. In the case of protecting drinking water, the city treasury directly benefits from not having to invest in expensive water filtration equipment. In the other three cases, the benefits accrue directly to residents. The reestablishment of natural watercourses to *control stormwater runoff* often is beyond the funding capability of a local community and requires state or national investment. In these cases, the benefits accrue to locals while the costs are incurred by the broader class of state or national taxpayers. However, it can be argued that these higher levels of government often created the problem by financing the original construction of the infrastructure and destruction of the natural waterways, so it is appropriate they pay to rectify the problem. State and national funding to assist in *preserving biological diversity* is appropriate because the benefits extend beyond those who live in the local area.

The lack of nexus and the disconnect problem is most acute with the benefits listed under **alleviating social problems** in Exhibit 3-6. They are of two types. First, the "pay now or pay later" mantra associated with programs in this category could be reconfigured into a political maxim of "current elected officials pay now and future elected officials reap the savings later." Today's officials are being asked to incur the negative political consequences associated with raising taxes to fund these programs, but they may not be in office to receive the political credit when the later benefits emerge. This is antithetical to the guiding criterion of many politicians, which is to provide benefits to constituents in the short term anticipating this will facilitate their reelection, and extend the costs into the future beyond the tenure of their term in office so they become the responsibility of successors. This disconnect makes it challenging to secure investment for community benefit programs in this category.

The second type of disconnect associated with alleviating social problems is between government entities. *Community regeneration, alleviating deviant behavior among youth, and alleviating unemployment distress* may all lead to cost savings to those county, state, and federal agencies responsible for financing parole supervision, incarceration, unemployment, welfare, foster home services, counseling, et. al. But when park and recreation agencies seek to alleviate these social problems, it is municipal jurisdic-

tions for the most part that are asked to fund these programs. Similarly, using park and recreation programs as vehicles for *raising levels of educational achievement* means the benefits accrue to school districts; and much of the cost savings derived from *facilitating healthy lifestyles* and *reducing environmental stress* is likely to accrue to hospital districts and state and federal agencies responsible for health care (although residents may also gain from lower health insurance premiums). Again local officials are being asked to incur the political costs of raising taxes to finance these programs, while the political benefits go to others. Since any cost savings will not improve their budgets, they are often reluctant to invest in such programs.

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CHAPTER 4

Repositioning: The Key to a Viable Future

WHAT IS REPOSITIONING?

AXIOMS OF POSITIONING

Axiom #1: Formulate a Position Statement

Axiom #2: Agencies do not position services, stakeholders do

Axiom #3: Positioning is a relative rather than an absolute concept

Axiom #4: Focus

TIME FRAME FOR REPOSITIONING

THE SET OF REPOSITIONING STRATEGIES

Real Repositioning

Associative Repositioning

Psychological Repositioning

Competitive Repositioning

THE IMPACT OF REPOSITIONING STRATEGIES

USING A SURVEY TO SELECT A DESIRED POSITION(S)

CHAPTER 4

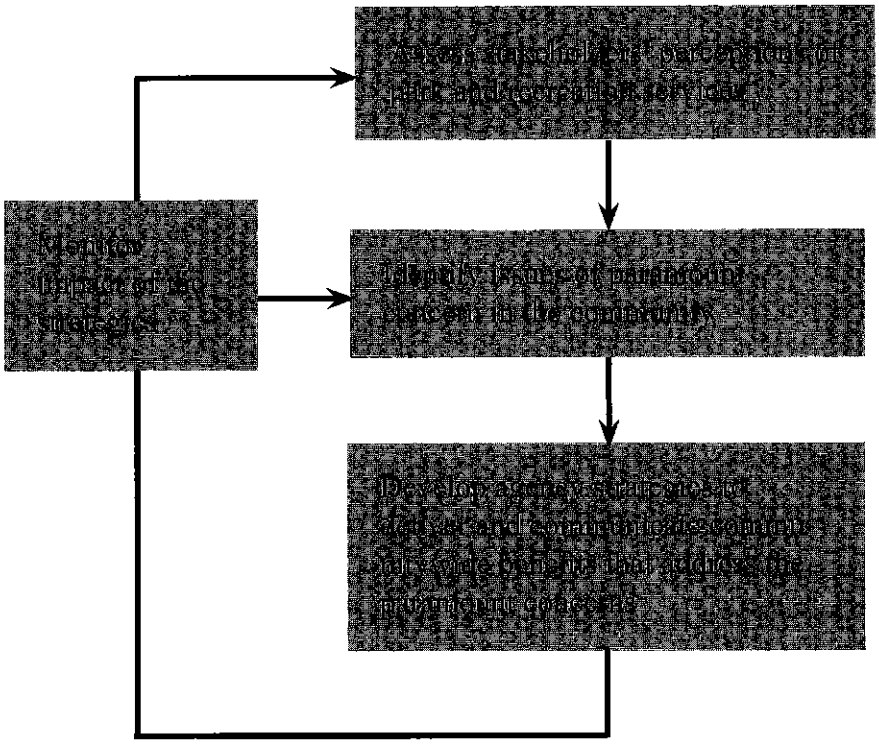
REPOSITIONING: THE KEY TO A VIABLE FUTURE

In their seminal 1974 treatise Gray and Greben lamented, "We are not identified with the major problems that confront our total American Society," which they characterized as a "deep concern and disappointment" (p.33).[1] They went on to recommend that the field should "focus park and recreation services on the great social problems of our time and develop programs designed to contribute to the amelionation of those problems" (p. 52). Fifteen years later in 1989, this failing was again recognized when it was noted that advocating the provision of park and recreation opportunities for their own sake lacked political clout.[2] In 2004, a major research study on "the language of conservation" designed to identify terminology that resonates positively with voters concluded:

> DO NOT *focus on creating new parks for their own sake*. Instead, connect parks to a broader goal. While the focus groups demonstrated that [the term] "neighborhood parks" is better than the generic term "parks" (neighborhood parks resonates because it implies access and public use), the concept of new parks suffers in the abstract. For example, just 22 percent say a lack of neighborhood parks is an extremely or very serious problem. However, positioning parks in relation to children improves the concept. Fully 59 percent say that creating "parks and other places where children can play safely" is a very important reason for their state or local community to buy and protect land (p. 3).[3] [Italics in the original.]

Linking parks to children's safety reiterates the plea articulated by Gray and Greben 30 years earlier, confirming the contention in Chapter 3 that park and recreation services have to be shown to contribute to solving community problems before elected officials see them as being a priority at budget time.

Exhibit 4-1 The Process of Orchestrating a Shift in an Agency's Strategic Direction



The failure to respond sooner to this reality may reflect a lack of confidence in the scientific evidence supporting the purported benefits associated with the field. However, the discussion in Chapters 2 and 3 showed that sufficient evidence now exists to support many of the benefit claims.

When an agency thinks in terms of how it can contribute to alleviating and aligning with a politically important concern, it is embracing a concept which is termed "positioning." Positioning entered the lexicon of the business world in the early 1970s[4] and has become established as one of the most central and powerful ideas in the marketing field. Indeed, an agency's position is more important to its future viability than what the agency actually does. Understanding and implementing positioning is *the* key to park and recreation agencies securing resources from legislative bodies.

Chapter 3 provided the rationale for emphasizing the field's potential for delivering communitywide benefits, and the nature of these potential benefits was summarized. Chapter 4 describes how an agency can orchestrate a shift in its strategic direction by using a relevant subset of these community benefits to sustain or acquire additional budget allocations. The process is summarized in Exhibit 4-1 and it frames the structure and context of this chapter.

The starting point is to identify an agency's stakeholders' perceptions of park and recreation services. It is likely that they will be perceived as having social merit, nice to have if they can be afforded, but as being relatively discretionary when compared to other services for which the jurisdiction is responsible. To change this, an agency has to identify issues that are of paramount concern in the community and select a subset of public benefits that parks and recreation can deliver to address those issues. The challenge then is to use four interrelated strategies to both deliver those benefits and to communicate to stakeholders that they are being effectively and efficiently delivered. The four strategies are *real*, *associative*, *psychological*, and *competitive* repositioning (These strategies are defined and discussed later in the chapter). Periodic monitoring is required regarding the extent to which both stakeholders' existing perceptions and key community issues have changed, and adustments must be

made to the strategies accordingly.

WHAT IS REPOSITIONING?

A *position* refers to the place that parks and recreation occupies in the minds of elected officials and the general public relative to their perception of other services that are competing for public tax dollars. *Positioning* is the process of establishing and maintaining a distinctive and valued place in the minds of the general public and elected officials for parks and recreation relative to other services. *Repositioning* is a deliberate set of actions designed to change an agency's existing position. The originators of the positioning concept observe: "Positioning is thinking in reverse. Instead of starting with yourself, you start with the mind of the prospect. Instead of asking what you are, you ask what position you already own in the mind of the prospect" (p. 219).[5]

The present position of park and recreation services, which has existed in the minds of most stakeholders for several decades, is that they are relatively discretionary, nonessential services. They are nice to have if they can be afforded after the important essential services have been funded. The perceived lack of relevence of these services among elected officials and taxpayers for addressing important issues is manifested by the absence of park and recreation concerns from the political platforms of candidates for local, state, and federal offices.

Some of the services that recreation and park agencies offer will always be discretionary and nonessential, "nice to have if they can be afforded." These services have social merit and a tradition of being offered in communities, but they will continue to struggle for budget allocations. Recreation centers, ice rinks, and senior centers, for example, may fall into this category in many communities as they are likely to offer benefits to individual users rather than communitywide benefits.

The key to sustaining or increasing investments in park and recreation services is for them to be repositioned so they *are perceived to contribute to alleviating problems that constitute the prevailing political concerns of policymakers who are responsible for allocating tax funds.* Only when they are properly positioned will park and recreation services be perceived positively as part of the solution to a jurisdiction's problems, rather than as peripheral services that are "nice to have" but which are a drain on a community's tax resources.

Positioning is about connecting an agency's services with a cause that is important to taxpayers and elected officials. Elected officials want to make improvements, so the agency's focus has to be upon what it can contribute to help elected officials accomplish their goals. One indicator of an agency's success in accomplishing this is to observe how central park and recreation services are represented in the narrative of elected officials. Are they frequently quoted or discussed as solutions to issues in stump speeches?

The "big idea" associated with repositioning is that funds are *invested in solutions* to a community's most pressing problems. The term "investing" suggests a positive, forward-looking agenda with a return on the investments. Elected officials usually have no mandate to fund programs; their mandate is to invest resources in solutions.

At this time, parks and recreation services typically are not an integral element in the repertoire of strategies used by government entities to address issues of concern. However, in Chapter 3 it was shown that the field has the potential to attain this status. The challenge for the next decade will be for the field to attain it. The key question is:

"What can parks and recreation deliver more effectively and efficiently than other agencies or organizations contribute to resolving important community problems."

Recreation and park agencies will always have a need for substantial support from tax dollars. There is widespread adoption of the many non-tax-supported funding and acquisition techniques that are available, but their use will not change the reality of the need for a core tax budget for much of what the field does. Money is not the field's problem because government entities have substantial budgets at their disposal. Inability to justify that park and recreation should receive a greater proportion of these budgets is the problem. The challenge for advocates is not to persuade elected officials to raise general-fund taxes to enhance park and recretion services, because in most contexts that is an improbable outcome. Rather, the task is to raise the field's prioritization in the competition for existing tax funds. Thus, repositioning recognizes that the challenge is not economic per se; rather, it is political.

Members of legislative bodies responsible for an agency's budget decisions are elected on the basis of political platforms comprised of issues they perceive to be of concern to community residents. Thus, their mandate and moral obligation is to direct resources to address those issues. Unless elected officials are aroused by the agency's potential to do this, resources will not be forthcoming. If park and recreation services are not perceived to be addressing those issues, then agencies should expect their budgets to be reallocated to other services that do address them. This represents a logical and honorable action by elected officials.

In a private sector context, repositioning a product or service frequently receives urgent attention when sales are declining or stagnant, which is analogous to park and recreation agencies whose tax support is waning. The goal of repositioning is to create a long-term sustainable position(s) that will enable an agency to compete for public resources in the future with confidence. In many contexts, positioning is likely to be the only available inoculation against serious budgetary illness.

Other public agencies such as those responsible for education, police, fire, roads, tourism, economic development, and health already have established positions. When residents are asked to describe the community benefits these agencies deliver, most are likely to be able to do it. Recognition of how their position(s) influence all (or a large majority of) residents' lives results in these agencies receiving priority budgetary treatment. If parks and recreation fails to attain a similarly relevant position in its publics' minds, it is likely to be marginalized.

Positioning operates at several levels in a parks and recreation agency. In this book, concern is with positioning the agency itself. However, programs and services also can be positioned with respect to competitive alternatives. For example, at the program level, the issue may be: "What is the aerobics program's position vis-à-vis those classes offered by other organizations in the area?" In this context, the challenge is to identify features that give the program unique or distinctive appeal and differentiate it from those of competitors.

AXIOMS OF POSITIONING

There are four fundamental axioms of positioning: (i) formulate a position statement; (ii) agencies do not position services, stakeholders do; (iii) position is a relative rather than an absolute concept; and (iv) focus. Each of these is discussed in the following pages.

Axiom #1: Formulate a position statement

There has to be consensus among residents, elected officials, and agency personnel on a position statement that articulates the agency's desired position. The selected desired position(s) will sit at the heart of the agency, driving its strategy and its direction. It represents the agency's core "truth" or purpose; its "personality"; its future raison d' être; how the agency is going to be identified in the public eye. And it reflects its future desired reputation in the community. It should be expressed in a single line or slogan that is intended to define the agency in the minds of its stakeholders. Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication and an agency must have sufficient confidence in the position to articulate it clearly, emphatically, and without qualification. The position statement should:

- describe the problem/issue that will be ameliorated;
- be worded in terms of benefits to community residents;
- be very simple, instantly understandable, and resonate with stakeholders;
- be supported by staff within the agency because they will be implementing it; and
- be honest in that its claims are scientifically sustainable and the agency has the capacity to deliver the promised benefits.

Identifying and establishing a strong desired position is the most important strategic decision that park and recreation managers make. It is likely to determine the agency's future. Once it has been made, all subsequent actions should be geared to implementing it. The goal should be to reinforce the desired position by integrating as many of the agency's actions as possible, so each component action fulfills a role in helping to establish the position in the minds of stakeholders. An established position that reflects responsiveness to a community's central concerns is key to an agency developing and nurturing a broader constituency, securing additional resources, guiding programmatic and facility priorities made by staff and stakeholders, and improving the morale of staff by raising their perceived status in the community.

Effective positioning requires an understanding of which benefits are important to stakeholders, followed by a focus on delivering those benefits and communicating the effectiveness of their impacts to stakeholders. This is consistent with the political aphorism that the politics of seduction (via repositioning) are more effective than the politics of confrontation (constituent groups lobbying or harassing elected officials). It has been emphasized that "you have to select the material that has the best chance of getting through [and] concentrate on the perceptions of the prospect" (p. 8).[5]

A position statement is a long-term objective of what the agency is striving to become in (say) 5 or 10 years time. It articulates what makes the agency's contributions valuable and answers the questions: "What is our business?" and "What should it be?" That is, "What business do our residents and elected officials want us to be in?" It should be sufficiently specific to give guidance to the agency in determining what strategies and actions need to be taken to achieve the desired position. It becomes a powerful organizing principle for the agency. In effect, it becomes the agency's brand. It has to provide a compelling vision of a desired position to which all stakeholders, residents, elected of-

ficials, and employees can commit to and get excited about.

Generic position statements such as "The Benefits Are Endless," "Discover the Benefits," "We are the fun experts," or "We provide the good things in life" may sound terrific, but they are not likely to be effective in repositioning parks and recreation because (i) the benefits and their role in alleviating a community's problems are not specified; and (ii) if they were all specified, there would be no focus and focus is needed to create the "mental fix" of what the contribution is in the minds of residents and elected officials. "The Benefits Are Endless," for example, could equally well be adopted by those advocating transportation, education, health, or public works.

"The Benefits Are Endless" and "Discover the Benefits" position statements were developed to promote the field nationally, which explains why they had to be so vague and generic. While the intent is laudatory, the rationale undergirding such an effort is muddled. It is widely recognized that in the United States, "All politics are local." The primary concerns of communities are different. Thus, any position which the field attempts to launch nationally that is specific enough to be useful is likely to be irrelevant to a large number of communities.

Compare those generic position statements to these more specific ones:

- Economic Prosperity
- Lifelong Learning
- Investing in Youth: Our Greatest Asset
- Step Up to Health: Healthy Communities Start in Parks
- Healthy by Nature

Exhibit 4-2 The Parks Victoria Position Statement

"Healthy Parks, Healthy People" is the position statement developed by Parks Victoria in Australia. The state park agency's starting point was: "A sustainable future for Parks Victoria is dependent on the organization's relevance to community needs and expectations." The position statement's intent was to establish a link between a healthy park system and a healthy community, and by so doing heighten people's sense of the value of parks.

The position communicates two principal health themes:

- The role of Parks Victoria in keeping the environment healthy by addressing such core public concerns as enhancing air quality, enhancing water quality, and alleviating flooding.

- The physical and mental health benefits accruing to state residents using the parks. To strengthen the position, the agency's "associative strategy" has resulted in partnerships with respected health organizations in the state including:
  - Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
  - Asthma Victoria
  - Arthritis Victoria
  - National Heart Foundation

The endorsement, active involvement, and cooperation of these organizations have enhanced the health linkage in people's minds. The "Healthy Parks, Healthy People" position appears on all the agency's literature, notepaper, signs, vehicles, etc.

Source: John Senior and Mardie Townsend (2004). "Healthy Parks, Healthy People" and other social capital initiatives of Parks Victoria, Australia. In The Urban Imperative, ed., Ted Trzyna. California Institute of Public Affairs, Sacramento, California.

- Greener, Cleaner, Safer, Stronger
- Healthy Lifestyles, Liveable Communities: It Starts in Parks

Consider the position established by the State of Victoria parks agency in Australia: "Healthy Parks, Healthy People." Their position statement is described in Exhibit 4-2. It clearly communicates and connects two principal health themes: environmental health and residents' physical and mental health. The message is obvious. The position statement embraces a variety of constituencies who all can identify with the slogan and say "yes, that's me" (e.g., dog owners, joggers/walkers, biophiliacs and advocates of stress relief, tree and environmental protection advocates, those concerned with air and water quality, community garden supporters).

The position statement is used on all Parks Victoria literature, a sample of which is shown in Exhibits 4-3A and 4-3B. The position statement is a cognitive message that relies on verbal logic to illustrate how an agency is addressing a community issue. However, the cognitive message is reinforced if it is complemented by visual images, such as those shown in Exhibits 4-3A and 4-3B, which introduce emotions and feelings associated with the position. An emotional connection is stronger than a cognitive connection. This is why, for example, benefits relating to clean water and clean air resonate so effectively.

In Chapter 3 and Appendix 2, multiple community issues with which parks and recreation could align were discussed. Even if elected officials care about, and are impressed by, park and recreation's potential to address (say) six of them, they won't prioritize budget decisions based on all six. Hence, the challenge is to identify those issues that are *determinate* in a community (i.e., those which determine elected officials' and residents' decisions when prioritizing public expenditures). The selected positions should be the optimum "selling ideas" for motivating residents and elected officials to allocate resources to parks and recreation.

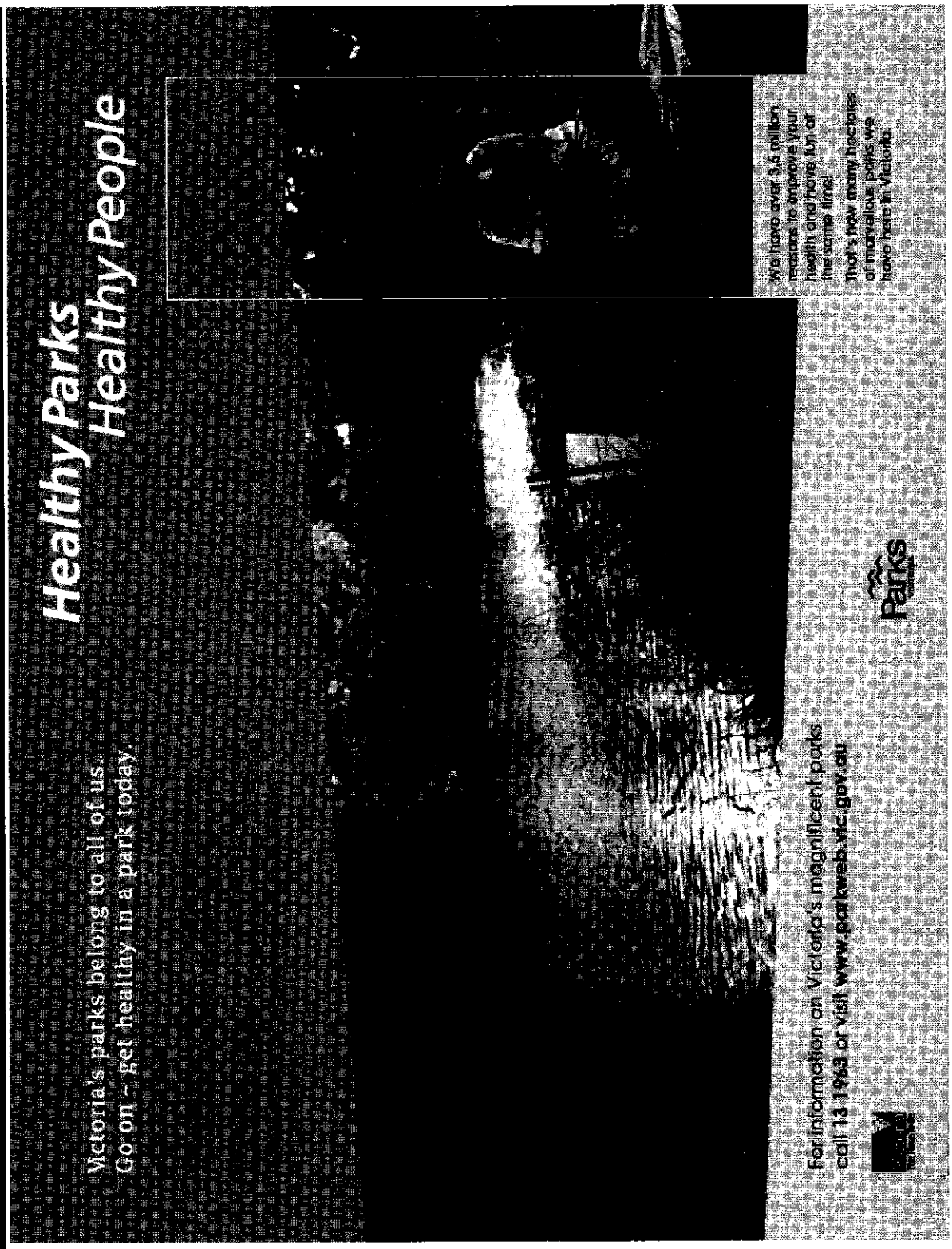
In addition to aligning with determinate community issues, an agency has to be confident it can develop the capacity to deliver the benefits it promises, and that the benefits resonate and connect with stakeholders. It is futile to waste time and energy developing a position that the agency cannot realistically deliver to the community.

Be realistic from the outset as to what can and cannot be changed. If a position is superficial and not reasonable or credible in the eyes of employees or stakeholders, it will not survive and will adversely, rather than positively, impact the agency. To test the robustness of a potential position statement before it is officially adopted, invite agency staff to play the role of taxpayers and elected officials who are skeptical and cynical about claims implied by the position. Encourage them to attack its vulnerabilities, identify weaknesses, and try to ridicule it. This may provide insights into how to strengthen it and enable the agency to develop thoughtful rebuttals to future skeptics.

The average mind is likely to reject benefits and positions with which it is not familiar or which are counterintuitive. Thus, it is often obvious or long-standing beliefs that resonate with stakeholders. If a selected position leads some to exclaim, "Why didn't we think of that sooner?" or "It is obvious," then it is likely to connect with stakeholders and be a viable position. In such cases, because stakeholders already believe in it, the challenge is to reinforce those dormant beliefs. This is much easier than having to establish a belief to which stakeholders do not have any positive predisposition.

Many of the community benefits de-

Exhibit 4-3A Parks Victoria Literature Featuring Its Position Statement



HEALTHY PARKS HEALTHY PEOPLE

Exhibit 4-3B Parks Victoria Literature Featuring Its Position Statement

GOOD HEALTH NATURALLY

Healthy Hearts

Thirty minutes or more of moderate intensity physical activity, such as brisk walking, on most days, or even better, every day, is all that is needed to gain health benefits.

You can accumulate the 30 minutes in shorter bouts, such as three 10-minute walks. Why do it indoors when you can excite all of your senses by choosing one of the hundreds of parks across Victoria.

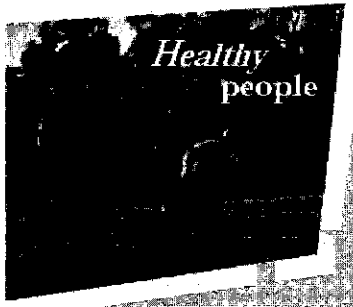
There are many scenic walks and bike rides all over Victoria and the Heart Foundation and Parks Victoria are working together to make parks even more heart friendly.

A heart condition need not stop you from enjoying our wonderful parks, so talk with your GP about a suitable management and physical activity plan.

Ask your GP about how to get healthy in parks.

Call the Heart Foundation's Heartline on 1800 24 27 87.

Heart Foundation



Healthy Lungs

Remember your mum sending you outside to fill your lungs with fresh air? What better place to do it than one of Victoria's magnificent parks.

Asthma Victoria has a range of information and resources to assist you. Your GP can teach you how to maximise your enjoyment of life with ways you can manage your medication and recognise how to keep your asthma under control. So check with your doctor.

While exercise is healthy, some people should seek guidance on how best to manage conditions like asthma. Although many people with asthma have exercise as a trigger, Exercise Induced Asthma (EIA) can be easily managed. EIA should be no barrier to a full, active and healthy lifestyle – including regular visits to one of our parks.

Call Asthma Victoria on 1800 645 130.

Healthy Parks
Healthy People

Healthy Joints

Move it or Lose it! Regular exercise is good for your joints particulary if you have arthritis. What better place to stroll than in a local park where you can take in the sights and sounds of our natural heritage while keeping fit?

Your GP can guide you on a management plan that will help keep your joints healthy. There is treatment that can maximise your potential and physical activities that you can do regularly that help keep your joints healthy.

Arthritis Victoria and Parks Victoria are working together to make our parks an accessible option for everyone. Plan a walk that suits you best – such as gradient of walks, location of seats and overall distance.

Call Arthritis Victoria on 1800 011 041.

arthritis victoria

Healthy People

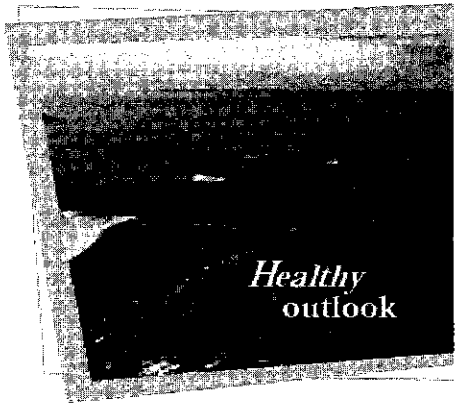
Why walk on a treadmill indoors when you can take in some of the best views our state has to offer?

Why ride your bike only on a road when there are some amazing trails with sounds and sights to exercise all your senses?

A healthy park system is a vital component of a healthy community – parks offer tranquil natural areas where you can release your stress. Beautiful venues to uplift your spirit and a myriad opportunities for healthy exercise. Parks Victoria is dedicated to protecting and improving the wonderful natural environment – and helping Victorians become healthier.

Call Parks Victoria Information Centre 13 1963.

Parks Victoria



Ask your GP about how to get healthy in parks.

scribed in Chapter 3 have long been accepted. Indeed, some of them were the basis for communities investing in park and recreation services in past decades. Resurrecting some of these in support of a new position adds the powerful force of precedent when establishing the position. "Look what people of vision achieved in the past. What will your legacy be to future generations? Will it match the legacy we have been bequeathed by previous generations?" These are powerful enhancers, which are likely to accelerate the timetable needed to reposition an agency.

Axiom #2: Agencies do not position services, stakeholders do

This axiom is consistent with the marketing aphorism, "To sell Jack Jones what Jack Jones buys, you have to see Jack Jones through Jack Jones' eyes." The agency cannot develop its position on its own terms, it has to construct it on its stakeholders' terms. Positions are not determined by the benefits or image that an agency seeks to convey, but rather by how this image is perceived in the minds of its stakeholders. In the terms of one of the field's leaders, it is "less important how we define ourselves and more important we begin allowing ourselves to be defined or redefined by the *community's* expectations of why we exist" (p. 62).[6] [Italics in original.] Repositioning is about parks and recreation reconnecting with the priorities of residents and elected officials. It means becoming "bilingual," which involves thinking, speaking, and dealing with constituents' perceptions and using *their* language to tell the agency's story. It means asking, "How can we help solve your problems?"

The authors who first introduced the concept of positioning in the late 1970s stated, "Positioning is not what you do to a product. Positioning is what you do to the mind of the prospect. That is, you position the product in the mind of the prospect" (p. 3).[5] This axiom follows from a realization that people make their decisions based on their individual perceptions of reality, rather than on an agency's definition of that reality. It means looking at parks and recreation from the outside in, rather than from the inside out.

Axiom #3: Positioning is a relative rather than an absolute concept

An agency is not viewed in isolation, but rather it is perceived within a framework that contains competitors. This comparative framework is the key difference between the concepts of image and positioning.

Most park and recreation agencies have a positive image in their communities. Surveys invariably report an overwhelming percentage of residents as being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with an agency's performance. However, such responses for the most part do not reflect a high level of affection for, care for, or identification with, the agency's services; rather they reflect a lack of dissatisfaction. Many residents do not use the services and are indifferent to them. It is only when something is conspicuously bad that negative satisfaction rankings are likely to emerge.

A strong positive image is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for having a strong position. Even if high image or satisfaction scores genuinely reflect widespread emotional attachment and commitment to parks and recreation, it is still unlikely this would suffice to attract resources. This is because image rankings say nothing about how *important* the agency's services are to residents in the community vis-à-vis other services. Relative importance reflects an agency's position. Image measures evaluate an agency in isolation without the context or compara-

tive framework necessary to relate its importance and performance to that of competing agencies. Thinking in terms of position rather than image is more useful because it embraces comparison with competitors. It compares elected officials' and taxpayers' perceptions of the park and recreation agency with those they hold of other public services in which they may invest.

This comparative framework may be conceptualized as a staircase or ladder such as that shown in Exhibit 4-4. (The arrows marked "Competitive Repositioning" and "Real, Associative, and Psychological Repositioning" are discussed later in the chapter.) The connotations associated with the ladder analogy indicate that the term "positioning" is a double entendre, meaning both a niche in a person's mind that reflects his or her perceptions of a service *and* its ranking vis-à-vis other public services. The other public services with which parks and recreation are in competition are represented on each rung of the ladder.

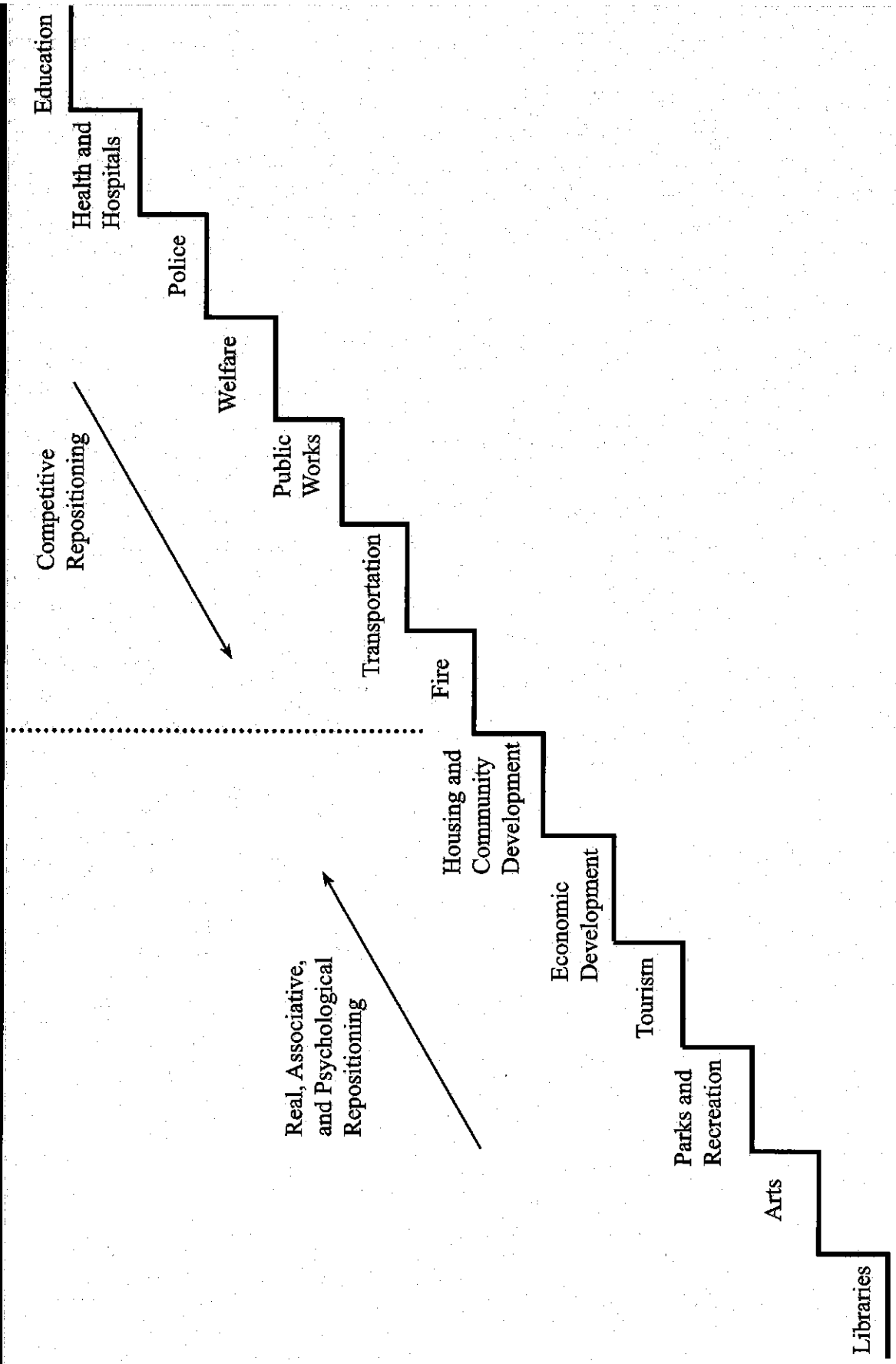
The positions shown in Exhibit 4-4 reflect the aggregate annual public expenditures on each by local jurisdictions in the United States. For example, education receives the largest investment of public funds while libraries receive the smallest. Those services shown above the vertical serrated line in Exhibit 4-4 are widely perceived to be "core" services, while those below it often are perceived to be relatively "discretionary."

When asked why he robbed banks for a living, the legendary bank robber Willie Sutton replied, "That's where the money is." The challenge for park and recreation advocates is to identify where the money is in their communities and then to align their services with the issues the money is intended to address. The exhibit suggests that at local government level the largest potential increases in park and recreation budgets are likely to come from addressing education, health, and crime issues. Exhibit 4-4 assumes that the aggregate expenditure rankings reflect the public's perceptions of the relative priority of these services but, obviously, this will vary among jurisdictions. An objective way for an agency to identify its contemporary position on the ladder is to check changes in the level of tax support it has received in the past 5 years vis-à-vis the community's other public service departments.

Focusing on position rather than image moves the field beyond seeking resources based on exhorting the "wonderfulness" of parks and recreation. It also forces advocates to address such questions as "What is the case for allocating resources to parks and recreation rather than putting more police officers on the streets, or providing more temporary residences for the homeless?"

Parks and recreation differs from most of the public services in Exhibit 4-4 in that their output is tangible and highly visible. People cannot touch, feel, smell, see, or hear many of the outputs associated with such services as education, health, police, and welfare, but these senses are exposed to parks, urban forestry, and public landscaping everyday. These services are a city's "canary in the coalmine." They are barometers that convey a visible impression of the city's economic and social health and viability. They are its signatures from which generalizable inferences are drawn. If the city's green infrastructure is "tired," dilapidated, dispirited, and run-down, then the inference is likely to be that these adjectives characterize the whole city or neighborhood. In contrast, if these amenities are beautiful, captivating, and vibrant, it is likely that many will express their impressions of the city in these terms. In short, parks have the potential to be a city's "wow" factor!

Exhibit 4-4 Residents' Perceptions of the Relative Importance of Alternate Public Services in Local Jurisdictions in the U.S.



Axiom #4: Focus

Focus has two manifestations: (i) the number of positions sought should be small; and (ii) communications describing them should be succinct and persistent. The goal is to ensure that stakeholders have a "mental fix" on the business the agency is in and how it contributes to accomplishing priority community goals.

The first manifestation of focus is that *only a small number of positions should be contemplated* - at the most three, and preferably one or two. It is tempting to adopt multiple positions because, as the discussions in Chapter 3 and Appendix 2 indicate, parks and recreation services have the potential to alleviate many different types of community problems. It may be frustrating to ignore some of these potential opportunities, but if many positions are adopted it is likely that the agency's message will be perceived as overpromising, unbelievable, and having connotations of hucksterism. Further, diversity and expansion lead to confusion so multiple positions would result in parks and recreation retaining its existing fuzzy, nebulous, amorphous status, rather than attaining the distinctive position it seeks. The key is not to tell the entire story, but rather to focus on one or two key positions and drive them into stakeholders' minds.

Those who are experienced in establishing positions for products and services in the private sector, frequently recommend that only a single position should be selected. However, the wide and eclectic array of services that park and recreation agencies offer suggest there is scope to develop more than one position. In some respects, park and recreation agencies are analogous to companies that adopt independent positions for each of their products, rather than a single position for all a company's offerings. A single position, such as enhancing economic development, may not resonate with all residents, nor will it be possible for some of an agency's services to align with it (e.g., those concerned with youth development). Selecting more than one position is, in essence, a segmentation approach. Indeed, positioning shares the microeconomic roots of segmentation in that after ascertaining which issues are important in a community, an agency has to select which of them to focus upon.

The second manifestation of focus after a small number of positions have been selected is to *communicate them with messages that are consistent, persistent, and tightly focused.* The major benefits or associations must be repeatedly emphasized and reiterated so they become salient in the minds of elected officials and residents. These audiences are only likely to grasp the headlines (i.e., the essence of the position, not the details). This is because in order to manage the cacophony of information to which they are exposed, individuals limit their intake to the minimum they need to get by. Hence, they tend to know a small amount about many things, but they don't know much about anything. This applies to the accomplishments of a park and recreation agency equally as well as it does to those of any other public agency, private organization, or commercial business.

To residents, perceptions are truth. Although perceptions may not be correct, especially those of nonusers who have little contact with a park and recreation agency, it is what residents know, and they have no reason to make an effort to know more. Thus, most taxpayers are unlikely to pay much attention to the details, subtleties, and complexities of a park and recreation agency's position. In the age of the soundbite, focus is everything. The message has to be pervasive. The best an agency can hope for is that an occasional

piece of information may penetrate to reinforce or amend residents' existing perceptions. Hence, the value of consistency in maintaining a position over time and in communicating messages cannot be overemphasized.

Without focusing and concentrating resources to support the selected position(s), repositioning will not succeed. Aligning with multiple issues and communicating multiple messages may be tempting, but such efforts are unlikely to be successful. The probable outcome of such diffusion is that no clear identity will be established, and a fuzzy, confused position similar to that which currently exists will persist.

TIME FRAME FOR REPOSITIONING

The need for focus stems from a recognition that a position reflects people's beliefs, attitudes, and value systems, which are resistant to change. Thus, repositioning is difficult to accomplish because it involves shifting widely held, long-established, entrenched perceptions about the field. This means it may take years before a strong position is solidified in stakeholders' minds. Repositioning is the proverbial supertanker which takes 5 miles to slow down and 10 miles to turn in another direction. Patience and persistence are needed.

The long time horizon likely to be required to establish a new position in stakeholders' minds is also a function of the pragmatic difficulties confronting agencies in shifting to this new position. The difficulties are of two types: resource reallocation and realigning staffing expertise.

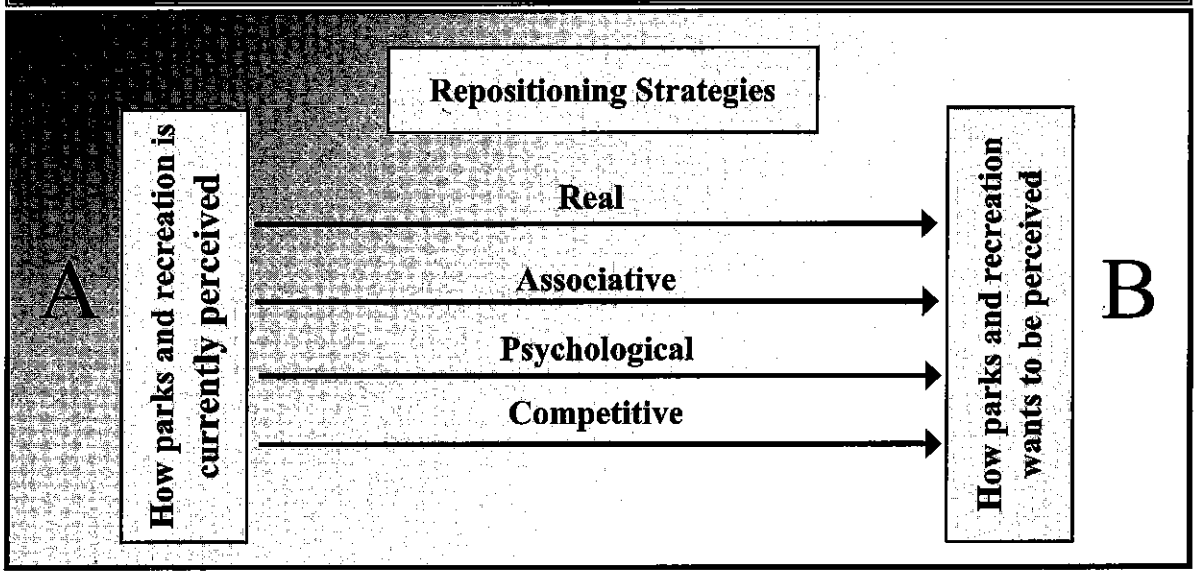
The first type of difficulty recognizes the need for focusing and implies that services and facilities that do not contribute to strengthening a selected position will be deemphasized. In a private sector context, products or services can be concentrated toward the most responsive and profitable target markets with minimal repercussions, so it is feasible to demarket or terminate services that don't fit the established position. In the short term, it is unlikely this strategy will be feasible for park and recreation agencies because they are required to consider the implications of their actions both on equity and on politically influential user groups. This means that repositioning actions must be careful not to preclude servicing certain citizen groups.

Thus, an agency cannot immediately abandon many of its current tasks and switch those resources to strengthen its repositioning efforts. If this was done, there would probably be a loud outcry from those existing clienteles whose services were being retrenched. Such shifts can only be implemented over time. A rule of thumb adopted by some agencies is that it is practical to think in terms of moving approximately 20 percent of an agency's resources to support new strategic positions over a 5 year period.

A second internal difficulty confronting agencies when they reposition is the challenge of realigning employee expertise. For example, if an agency traditionally had a strong focus on youth development and has decided to reposition to align with economic development, a period of years will be needed to change the prevailing culture; reorganize its service offerings; retrain or replace personnel so they have the skills, aptitude, and interest needed to attain the new position; and to plan the repositioning strategy.

A change of this nature induces anxiety within the organization. The "comfort zone" of an agency usually reflects a knowledge base of what it has done in the past. Future actions tend to incrementally build on what has gone before. A commitment to repositioning means surmounting the inertia associated with an entrenched logic and mind-set. This

Exhibit 4-5 How to Move from Position A to Position B



is likely to be a slow process accomplished only if a sense of urgency is engendered, possibly by the threat of budget retrenchments. There will need to be substantial investment in educating employees as to what business the agency is moving toward, how it is going to get there, and each person's role in accomplishing the new position.

Given these factors, agencies should think in terms of a 10-year, rather than a 1-year, time horizon to accomplish repositioning. By way of comparison, this is probably the minimum time period for which stakeholders have held their existing position of park and recreation as a peripheral, discretionary service.

THE SET OF REPOSITIONING STRATEGIES

There are four strategies agencies can pursue to attain a revised position. They are summarized in Exhibit 4-5.

- **Real repositioning**. Development of new services or restructuring existing services so they better contribute to addressing the issue expressed in the desired position.
- **Associative repositioning**. Aligning with other organizations that already possess the desired position, and acquiring some of this position from the association.
- **Psychological repositioning**. Changing stakeholders' beliefs about the outcomes that emanate from the services an agency offers, so they better align with the desired position.
- **Competitive repositioning**. Altering stakeholders' beliefs about what an agency's competitors do.

These four strategies are complementary, not mutually exclusive. To accomplish a revised position, all four of them should be considered and it is likely that some combination of them will be pursued simultaneously.

Real Repositioning

Real repositioning means an agency makes changes in the services that it offers. This requires starting with the desired position and identifying existing services that could be restructured or new services that could be developed and would contribute to accomplishing the position. Thus, if the position is "Enhancing Community Prosperity" or "Reducing Crime and Disorder Among Young People," the real repositioning task is to offer a set of programs specifically designed to contribute to these goals.

The extent to which a proposed new service will contribute to accomplishing an agency's desired position should be the primary criterion in evaluating whether agency resources should be invested in it. Real services are the bedrock upon which all repositioning actions rest. The position must exemplify and amplify what is actually offered and not be a hollow fabrication. There must be substance so the communicated benefits are rooted in reality and the promised outcomes are delivered. To fabricate a false promise and pretend that a service delivers something that it doesn't simply defeats the goal of establishing credibility for the field among a wider spectrum of the community.

Sometimes there is a tendency to ignore real repositioning and to focus exclusively on psychological repositioning (discussed later) because the latter can be interpreted to mean only that existing services be communicated differently, which is much easier than changing the existing set of services being offered. However, such an approach is generally too limiting to be effective and invariably there needs to be some real repositioning.

Associative Repositioning

This strategy recognizes that by associating with organizations that are highly regarded as leaders in addressing a given community issue, it may be possible to "transfer" that positive position to the agency. Associating with this established position, may provide an agency with an explicit or implicit frame of reference, which can be used to frame its own contribution to an issue. It can serve as a bridging point whereby, at some cognitive level, stakeholders believe the agency also contributes to that issue. In essence, an agency is seeking to enhance the believability, trust, and credibility of its role in delivering a given benefit by acquiring some of the associative organization's established position in that context.

Exhibits 4-2 and 4-3 illustrated Parks Victoria's approach to repositioning. The credibility of their position statement, "Healthy Parks, Healthy People," was enhanced by partnering with respected health organizations in the state: Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, Asthma Victoria, Arthritis Victoria, and National Heart Foundation. The endorsement, active involvement, and cooperation of these organizations are likely to enhance the health contributions of parks in people's minds. The inference is that if these organizations are prepared to endorse and partner with parks, then parks must be part of the solution to physical and mental health issues.

The following examples further illustrate associative repositioning:

- Alleviating juvenile crime was a primary community issue. Instead of developing its own set of programs to address this, the park and recreation agency contracted with the community's Boys and Girls

Club to deliver programs in the city's recreation centers. The Club had a high profile in the community; its board was comprised of respected business, philanthropic, and civic leaders; and it was perceived to be effective in addressing this issue. Because the programs were funded by the park and recreation agency and took place in its facilities, it is likely that in many people's minds the agency was positioned as contributing to alleviating the problem.

- If economic prosperity is a primary community issue, then linking with the community tourism organization may help a park and recreation agency establish a position relating to this issue. This may be done by partnering with the tourism organization to create new events designed to attract outside visitors to stay in the jurisdiction for multiple days. Such linkages make pragmatic sense because the two organizations often have complementary assets. Tourism agencies typically have funds available for promotion but rarely become involved in directly producing programs and services. Thus, for example, a parks and recreation agency may join with a tourism organization to jointly fund special-event coordinators who are responsible for organizing and soliciting sponsorship for special events in the community. In doing this, the tourism organization recognizes that park and recreation agencies have the expertise and a mandate to organize special events but lack the funds to launch and promote them.

This associative strategy is likely to be most effective when there is no obvious linkage between an agency and its desired position in stakeholders' minds when the repositioning effort is launched. For example, if the desired position is "Contributes to Economic Development," the link between it and parks and recreation may not be intuitively apparent to many. Partnerships with the community's economic development or tourism agency may expedite establishment of the connection. If there is already a strong connection, then the goal of the associative strategy is to reinforce it.

In addition to associating directly with organizations, credibility and trust can be enhanced indirectly by associating with "best practice," "benchmark measures," or reference to scientific evidence relating to the benefit being delivered. It is intended that the executive summaries of community benefits presented in Appendix 2 will be used for this purpose. This indirect associative strategy offers an alternative approach for repositioning the impact of community benefits to stakeholders, which can be used by the majority of park and recreation agencies that do not have the resources to develop their own sophisticated analysis.

Once a park and recreation agency commits to repositioning to address selected community issues, there will be a quick realization that these issues can only be resolved by working with others. Partnerships have become the foundation stones upon which park and recreation agencies build and develop their services. A holistic approach is inherent in addressing neighborhood rejuvenation, economic prosperity, lifelong learning, juvenile crime, or whatever other issue with which an agency seeks to align. The "joined-up thinking" this requires is likely to expedite repositioning because elected officials increasingly seek to encourage holistic solutions that transcend departmental boundaries.

The ultimate exemplar of associative repositioning and "joined-up thinking" would

be for a parks and recreation agency to merge with another agency so a central issue could be addressed more holistically. This strategy has been adopted widely in other countries, such as England. Indeed, an independent leisure department (the nearest equivalent in England to a U.S. parks and recreation department) is now the exception in England. Most local government entities have changed their department structure in the past decade to reduce the number of departments and to restructure around multiservice departments which facilitate, joined-up, strategic thinking. Thus, leisure services typically are now located within much larger departments, which provides them with the opportunity to exercise influence upon other services. Exhibit 4-6 gives a sampling of department names with which parks and recreation have merged, suggesting the issues to which leisure services are perceived to contribute, including: lifelong learning, education, tourism, industrial and economic development, healthy neighborhoods, community services, urban renewal, and the environment.

The downside of integrating parks and recreation into a more holistic department is that the field may lose its identity and its potential contributions may be lost if the department's leaders and elected officials are insensitive to them. There is a danger that its resources will be redirected to other facets of the department. For example, if it is part of an "Education and Leisure Services" agency, and mainstream school programs are underfunded, there will be pressure to redirect funds from leisure services to those programs. Over time the potential contributions of park and recreation services may be marginalized. The following example illustrates this danger:

> The outdoor recreation activities counseling program for youth on probation had been effective in substantially reducing recidivism. After eight years of development, it had evolved from a pilot scheme in one neighborhood to a citywide program based at five different centers. Its

Exhibit 4-6 Illustrative Departments in England into which Leisure Services Has Been Merged in Order to Offer a More Holistic Approach to Addressing a Central Community Issue

City	Name of Department
Leeds	Learning and Leisure Dept.
Oldham	Education and Cultural Services Dept.
Manchester	Education and Leisure Services Dept.
Fylde	Tourism and Leisure Services Dept.
Warrington	Community Services Dept.
Blackpool	Leisure, Culture, and Community Learning Dept.
Rossendale	Leisure and Industrial Development Dept.
Bury	Competitive (i.e., Contracted Out) Services Dept.
Rochdale	Neighborhood Services Dept.
Lewes	Leisure and Economic Development Dept.
Liverpool	Regeneration Dept. (includes parks) Education, Library, and Sports Services (includes recreation)
Preston	Regeneration, Community, and Leisure Services Dept.
Trafford	Environment and Leisure Dept.
Barking & Dagenhem	Regeneration and Environment Dept.

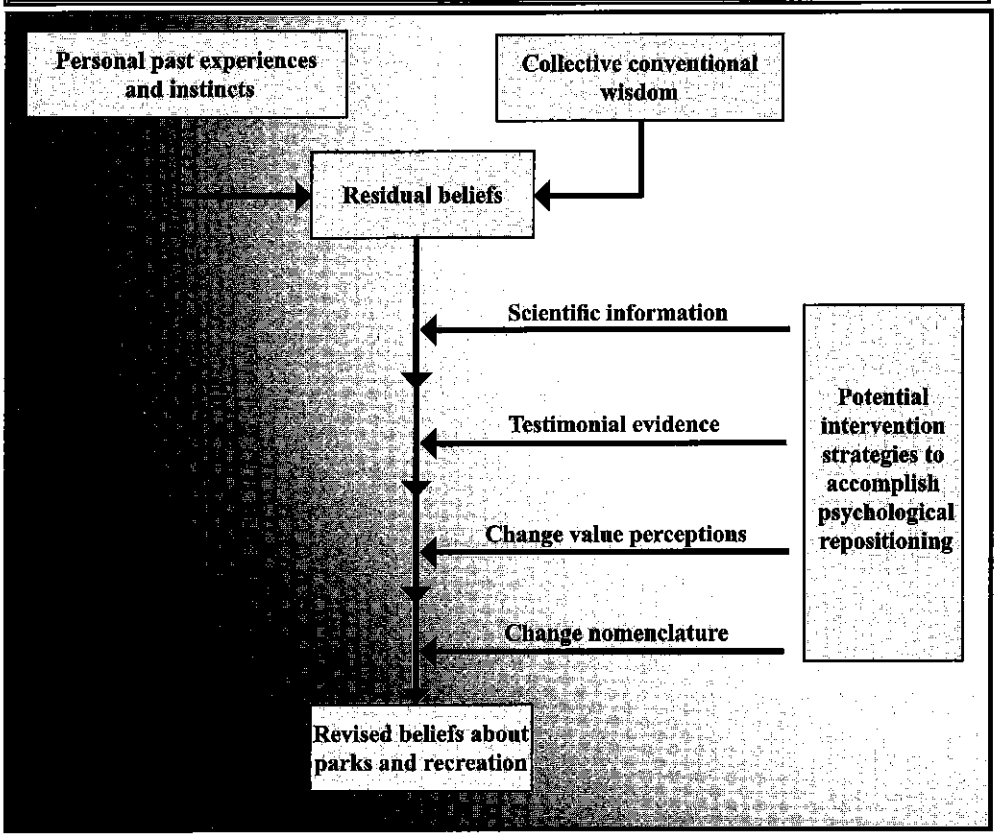
demonstrated effectiveness resulted in it being transferred and taken over by the juvenile probation service. Over time it lost its "champions" and visible advocates who had nurtured its development, with the result that after a few years it disappeared. It was a nontraditional approach for those trained in the probation service. When budget cuts were required it was quickly cut because senior managers were not familiar and comfortable with it.

Psychological Repositioning

This strategy is intended to alter stakeholders' beliefs about what an agency currently does. It has been suggested that park and recreation agencies have a labeling problem[7] in that agencies are evaluated based on the means used (i.e., parks and recreation services) rather than on the ends that they aspire to achieve (i.e., the benefits espoused in their desired position). Psychological repositioning focuses on bringing the desired end outcomes to the forefront.

The methods for accomplishing psychological repositioning are summarized in Exhibit 4-7. The exhibit suggests that people's perceptions of an issue are molded by their personal past experiences and instincts and by their exposure to the collective conventional wisdom of others. These two sources of information establish an individual's residual beliefs about parks and recreation. There are four potential intervention strategies that can be used to change those residual beliefs: (i) provide scientific information that demonstrates the beliefs are ill-considered; (ii) offer testimonial evidence by individuals who are viewed as credible experts or opinion leaders in the field; (iii) offer evidence of value in benefit/cost terms that the individual has not previously considered; (iv) and change the nomenclature and semantic context used to frame the issue.

Exhibit 4-7 The Process of Psychological Repositioning



It was noted earlier in this chapter that residual beliefs are resistant to change and that repositioning them is likely to take a relatively long pe-

riod of time. The effectiveness of these four strategies in changing residual beliefs will be a function of: (i) the susceptibility of individuals to be influenced by them, (ii) the power of each strategy, and (iii) how many of the four strategies can be implemented.

Provide Scientific Evidence

The primary strategy for changing residual beliefs is offering scientific evidence that is sufficiently convincing to individuals that they are prepared to amend these entrenched beliefs. Accordingly, park and recreation agencies have demonstrated a willingness to engage in such evaluative activities as undertaking economic impact studies,[8] measuring the positive impact of parks on the property tax base,[9] assessing the impact of recreation programs on alleviating undesirable youth behavior,[10] and calculating the economic value of trees in alleviating pollution[11] and reducing energy costs.[12]

Results of these evaluative efforts are summarized in Chapter 3 and discussed in Appendix 2, and it is this body of evaluation research on which the credibility of psychological repositioning is dependent. The effectiveness of these research findings is enhanced in communities where there is widespread general support for the field so the community is predisposed to be receptive to the findings.

In addition to changing residual beliefs, credible scientific evidence also serves to reassure stakeholders that the outcomes expressed in a position are not merely "spin," that is, twisted and misleading claims. This is why they have to be *measured and documented.* Even in situations where elected officials intuitively and emotionally believe in park and recreation's contributions, these officials need credible supportive data and evidence to protect them from political attacks by skeptics.

Offer Testimonial Evidence

Repositioning is expedited if there is an emotional as well as a rational dimension to it. Elected officials and taxpayers respond to passion, excitement, and enthusiasm. They value commitment, intensity, and conviction. This emotional dimension emerges from testimonial evidence. This is different from scientific evidence in that it is anecdotal and not necessarily science based.

Testimonials may emanate from three sources. First, they may be offered by influential opinion leaders from within the community. Their influence may stem from a formal position they hold or from their widely respected reputation. But these individuals may also be those who are passionate about a particular issue and the strength of their conviction is sufficient to influence the views of others.

A second source is leaders from other communities relating their experiences. These direct testimonials may be given in the community by those individuals, or they may be vicariously delivered by the media through news stories, interviews, and so on. Testimony regarding the effectiveness of parks and recreation services elsewhere in addressing an issue may resonate with decision-makers.

Independent experts are a third source of testimonials. They resemble expert witnesses in a court case in that their views are solicted based on perceived expertise and insight. Such consultants may, or may not, use good science in their testimony. Independent experts are valued because they are perceived to offer a knowledgeable and impartial perspective.

Change Value Perceptions

The third strategy for psychological repositioning is to change perceptions of value by using benefit/cost frameworks the individual had not previously considered. By changing the context and conceptualizing the notion of value differently, then it may lead to the issue being perceived differently.

The framing in Exhibits 4-8, 4-9, 4-10, and 4-11 illustrate ways of changing the context in which budget information is presented. It is intended to reduce perspectives of the cost of park and recreation services and, thus, to enhance the position that they are good value for money.

Exhibit 4-8 uses the frameworks of "net budget," "per resident investment," and "per week" to change value perceptions. The data used in the exhibit to calculate the ratio of capital, operating and self-generated revenues, and the net per resident investment are average proportions for local park and recreation agencies in the United States.[13] The term *net budget* focuses on the primary concern of elected officials in that it refers to the proportion of the budget subsidized by local taxpayers and omits self-generated revenue (which typically approximates one-third of an agency's operating budget).[13] A net operating budget of $9.975 million may be perceived as being substantially smaller than a budget of $20.989 million. However, once the principle of net budget has been successfully positioned as the central budget issue, the real payoff may be in future self-generated revenue being disregarded in the political decision calculus. Thus, if revenue in the following year increases by $1 million and the budget request is for $21.989 million ($1 million more than last year), the agency director is able to declare the department "is seeking no increase in the net budget."

The intent of reframing the budget in terms of *per resident* investment and *per week investment* is to position the expenditure as a nominal, relatively inconsequential amount. Thus, it is anticipated that a position of "68 cents per resident, per week" will be perceived more favorably than a budget of $20.989 million per year.

The per capita framework is used again in Exhibit 4-9, but it is augmented with a framework that compares the costs and benefits of the park district with those of a local club. In this illustration, all the opportunities created by the $2.00 per week investment are listed. Most residents will not be aware of many of the opportunities listed. Their perception of value for money presumably is based on their existing knowledge of available opportunities. Expanding this awareness may change the context in which residents make judg-

Exhibit 4-8 Psychologically Repositioning the Budget by Changing the Perceived Cost

Total annual budget for parks and recreation	$20.989 million
Capital budget	5.872
Operating budget	15.117
Self-generated revenue	5.142
Annual **net** operating budget	9.975 million
Number of residents in the community	281.382
Net **per resident** investment	$35.45
OR **68 cents per week**	

Exhibit 4-9 A High Return on Your Park District Tax Dollar Investment!

What would you do if for less than $2 per week you could get a membership to a local club that makes available to its members the following recreation facilities and activities?

- Over 300 acres of well-designed open space for both organized and spontaneous recreational pursuits.
- Two Olympic-size swimming facilities, including bathhouse, sundeck areas, and snack areas.
- 24 outdoor tennis courts, located throughout the community. For your convenience, 12 courts are supervised and operated on a reservation system with the remaining 12 courts available on the rack-up system.
- An 18-hole championship golf course, driving range, putting green, and pro shop.
- A recreation center housing recreation activities in art, performing arts, crafts, and a variety of programs for preschoolers through adults.
- A Senior Citizens Center designed to meet the specialized leisure and social needs for those 55 years and older.
- Sports Center including two major indoor artificial ice surfaces, pro shop, dressing areas, snack shops, instructional staff, and recreation programs for the entire family.
- Opportunity to participate in over 200 recreation figure skating lessons, hockey, speed skating, and over 170 recreation programs operated under professional leadership.
- A variety of playground equipment available to youngsters located in neighborhood parks throughout the community.
- Lighted softball, baseball, football, and soccer fields, 23 unlighted baseball/softball diamonds, 14 soccer fields, and 3 football fields for organized play.
- A 30-acre lake available for fishing, paddle craft, sailboats, and canoes.
- Two natural ice rinks, two sled hills, and two natural outdoor hockey rinks available for free use.
- 15 miles of hike and bike trails.
- 12 outdoor basketball courts.

And what if this membership would increase the value and marketability of your home? And what if the $2.00 paid in membership fees was deductible from your federal income tax?

WOULD YOU JOIN?

The Park District offers you all this and much more for the dollars you invest in it.

ments on value for money and lead to a more favorable position.

Any local club is unlikely to have the capacity to offer more than (say) 10 percent of the opportunities listed by the park district in Exhibit 4-9, but it is likely to be much more expensive than $2.00 per week. Again, framing the agency's offerings in this context is

Exhibit 4-10 Psychologically Repositioning a Bond Proposal for a New Natatorium

The median home value in the community is	$150,000	
Construction cost of the natatorium	$2 million	
Annual property tax payment by an average home owner:		$12
Annual operation and maintenance cost	$100,000	
Annual property tax payment by an average home owner:		$6
Total annual property tax payment by an average homeowner		$18
which is **$1.50 per month**		

In most years, there are heartbreaking stories in the local news media of children from this community who have drowned in area lakes. An agreement with the ISD means that every fourth grader in the community will be taught to swim, so lives will be saved.

Invest $1.50 a month and save a child's life!

Exhibit 4-11 Seeking EnhancedFinancial Support for Texas State Parks by Psychological Repositioning

- Texans' per capita annual investment in state parks was $2.43, which ranked Texas 49th among the 50 states. The comparitive figures for Texas' neighbors were: Arkansas $11.00, Louisiana $3.40, New Mexico $10.59, and Oklahoma $11.89.

- In 1990, Texas' investment in state parks was 0.31% of the state's total budget; in 2002 it was 0.08%. The percentage declined every year from 1990 to 2002.

- If the 0.31% share of the budget in FY 1990 had been retained in FY 2002, then the state's investment in parks and recreation would have been $217.85 million, rather than its actual budget of $53.2 million.

- In FY 2002, Texas state parks generated $32.6 million from their operations. This represented 61.25% of total operating expenses and ranked Texas #6 among all states on this ratio.

- If the self-generating revenue is deducted from the total operating expenses then the state's **net investment** in operating its park and recreation facilities is 0.03% (three hundredths of one percent) of the state's total annual budget and **less than $1 per state resident per year**.

likely to result in a more favorable position.

The framework in Exhibit 4-10 uses "annual investment for an average homeowner" and an affective appeal aimed at emotions (but based on reality) to position the cost of a new natatorium to be a sound community investment. It seems likely that there will be a better community response when the proposal is positioned as "Invest $1.50 a month and save a child's life," than if it is baldly presented as a request to support a new natatorium at a capital cost of $2 million and an annual operating subsidy of $100,000.

There is a substantial body of scientific evidence suggesting that people are more likely to respond positively to communications framed to emphasize that an investment will prevent loss and a lowering of existing service expectations, than those suggesting the investment will create additional increments of benefits.[14,15] Thus, in addition to using per capita and net budget, Exhibit 4-11 frames the funding issue in terms of the budget losses sustained by the Texas state parks system from 1990 to 2002 and the state's low ranking among all the other states. The data are intended to communicate the message that Texas state parks are grossly underfunded and the associated implication that they are being allowed to deteriorate. Data reporting expenditures on parks and recreation and all other public services by all local and state governmental jurisdictions in the United States are published annually by the Census Bureau, so the types of contexts or frameworks exemplified in Exhibit 4-11 are relatively easy for park and recreation agencies to construct.[16]

Parks 2001 was a coalition of parks advocates from over 700 community organizations and groups in New York City whose goal it was to arrest the long-term and on-going decline in the budget of the city's Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). The DPR budget had declined from 0.8 percent to 0.4 percent of the city's budget between 1986 and 2000. Its status vis-à-vis the budgets of other city departments over the past three decades is shown in Exhibit 4-12. Parks 2001's goal was for DPR to receive 1 percent of the city's budget.

Instead of focusing on the budget numbers per se, which are arcane and boring to most people, the parks' losses were framed in terms of specific consequences emanating from the reduced budget. A series of graph-

Exhibit 4-12 Decline in the NYC Parks and Recreation Budget Relative to Budget Changes in Other Departments

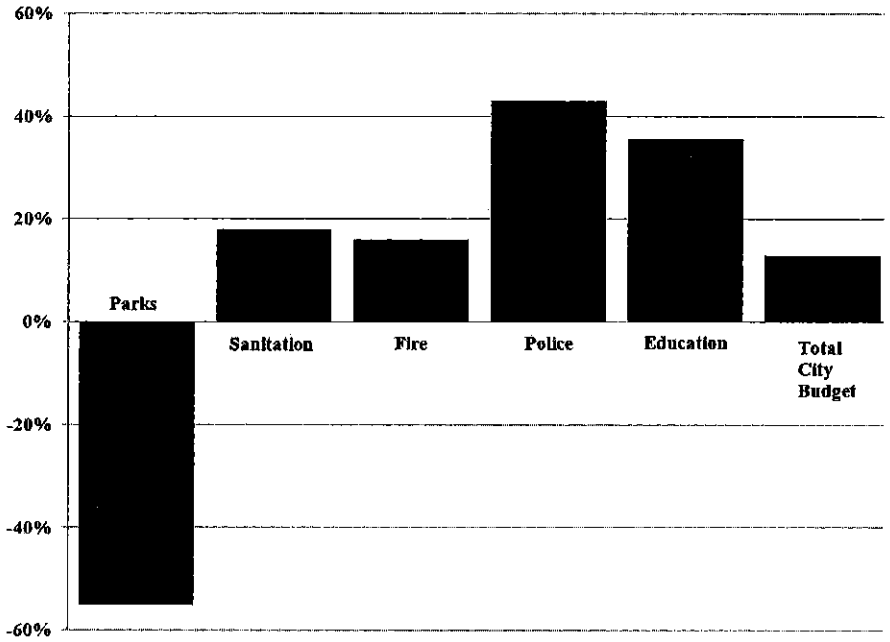
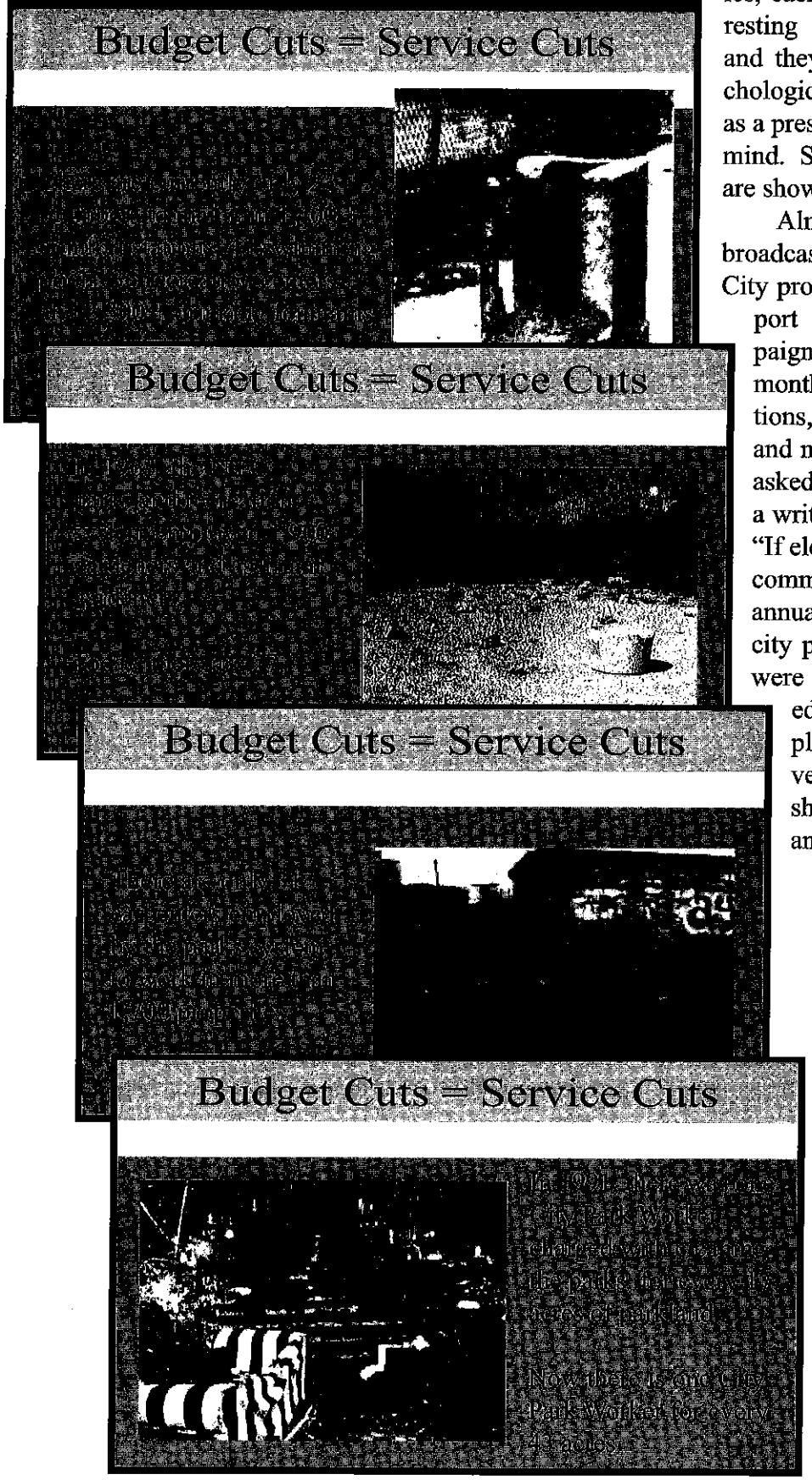


Exhibit 4-13 Using Specific Consequences of Budget Cuts to Psychologically Reposition the Parks Budget



ics, each accompanied by an arresting statistic, was developed and they were effective in psychologically repositioning parks as a pressing issue in the public's mind. Samples of these graphics are shown in Exhibit 4-13.

Almost every print and broadcast medium in New York City provided editorial support for the 1 percent campaign. It culminated in the months preceding city elections, with all city council and mayoral candidates being asked in public forums to sign a written pledge, which asked "If elected would you work to commit 1 percent of the city's annual budget to maintaining city parks?" Their responses were then widely disseminated by Parks 2001. Samples of the political advertisements produced are shown in Exhibits 4-14A and 4-14B.

Change Nomenclature

A fourth psychological repositioning strategy, which complements the strategies of using scientific evidence to document the benefits, soliciting testimonial evidence, and changing perceptions of value, is to change stakeholders' contexts and, hence, their perceptions by using different terminology and nomenclature.

Exhibit 4-14A Political Advertisement

COUNCIL DISTRICT 21

Corona, Flushing Meadows, Corona Park, Elmhurst, East Elmhurst, Jackson Heights

In your district, there are more than 2,660 children per park/playground.

Queens has only: ◆ 1 full-time gardener for every 2,900 acres of parkland ◆ 1 recreation director for every 139,620 children ◆ 6 plumbers for more than 395 bathrooms and 690 drinking fountains.

Here's how City Council candidates say they will improve parks in your neighborhood:

ANGEL DEL VILLAR	AIDA GONZALEZ-JARRIN
"The public parks have always played an important role to me and my family. If elected, I would help to improve park conditions in my community."	"As former Director of Cultural Affairs of Queens, I had the opportunity to work for 15 years in events in our parks. I deeply appreciate the role of parks in our urban environment and I will work very hard to bring about improvements."
HIRAM MONSERRATE	**LUIS ROSERO**
"We need to ensure the servicability of park facilities and ensure that safety is maintained."	"I have worked with the Department of Parks in Queens. I have helped plant trees in my neighborhoods. Green adds beauty, peace, and stress release."

PARKS 2001 asked the City Council and Mayoral candidates: "If elected, would you work to commit 1% of the city's annual budget to maintaining city parks?

CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES

Angel Del Villar	Aida Gonazlez-Jarrin	Hiram Monserrate	Luis Rosero
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

MAYORAL CANDIDATES

Herman Badillo	Michael Bloomberg	Fernando Ferrer	Mark Green	Alan Hevesi	Peter Vallone
No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

PARKS 2001 goal: For all candidates to say YES to PARKS.
Better parks = better neighborhoods and a better life for you and your family.

VOTE PARKS ☑

Exhibit 4-14B Political Advertisement

NEW YORK CITY PARKS ARE IN CRISIS

- NYC ranks 21st out of the largest 25 U.S. cities in terms of parks spending;
- Maintenance budget cut by 40% over the last 15 years;
- Staff cut by 70% over the last 30 years;

Deplorable conditions! Unacceptable for our children and families!

Say NO to locked bathrooms, dusty ballfields, broken water fountains and benches.

PARKS 2001 wants 1% of NYC's budget to maintain our parks.

Say YES to 1%. Say YES to PARKS.

PARKS 2001 Endorsed By:

The New York Times, Daily News, Queens Tribune, Bronx Times, Riverdale Press and *Staten Island Advance;*

Over 1 million gardeners, runners, little leaguers, businesspeople, parents, teachers, bird-watchers;

Over 1,000 community, civic and environmental organizations;

and 85% of all candidates for City Council.

Tell your City Council candidates that you want cleaner, safer and better parks in your neighborhood.

Tell them to pledge 1%.

PARKS 2001

A citywide campaign to restore, reform and revitalize parks and recreation services in New York City

Visit www.parks2001.org or call 212-490-0010 to learn what the candidates will do for your neighborhood parks.

This strategy recognizes that names are important because they are the hooks that position an idea in stakeholders' minds. The originators of the positioning concept stated:

> The name is the hook that hangs the brand on the product ladder in the prospects' minds...the single most important marketing decision you can make is what to name the product. Shakespeare was wrong. A rose by any other name would not smell as sweet. Not only do you see what you want to see, you also smell what you want to smell...And Hog Island in the Caribbean was going nowhere until they changed its name to Paradise Island (p. 66).[5]

For example, a key rule when seeking the support of business groups for park issues is to use their language. Examples include:

- Refer to "investments" in park and recreation amenities, not to "tax subsidies"
- Do not refer to "greenways" or "trails," but to "dual purpose (or "green") infrastructure." The implications of using the term "green infrastructure" are elaborated upon in Exhibit 4-15.
- Refer to "amenities that will be attractive to knowledge workers," not to "park and recreation facilities."
- Do not refer to encouraging "natural areas," but to "low maintenance areas."
- Do not use "environmentalism," but do use "creating a sustainable economy," so the message resonates with the need to have a viable economy.

When you fish, you use the bait the fish are biting on. The business mind is familiar and comfortable with phrases such as "investment," "infrastructure," "knowledge worker amenities." and "low maintenance," and park and recreation advocates have to fit their case within that existing schemata to be effective in repositioning.

One of the prevention programs targeted at youth-at-risk in the early 1990s was Midnight Basketball which was designed to keep youth off the streets. Most of these programs incorporated an educational/tutorial component as well as basketball games scheduled on weekend evenings. However, the position created by the name was unfortunate since it implied that recreation agencies were acting irresponsibly in encouraging youth to stay up and be out of the home so late. This resulted in some political criticism from uninformed elected officials. This probably could have been avoided if they had been termed "Youth Enrichment" programs, in recognition of their educational component.

The author in the Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences at Texas A&M University (RPTS). Alternate "humorous" interpretations of the RPTS acronym by uninformed students in other fields (e.g., rather play/party than study) become tiresome, irritating, and psychologically demoralizing to our own students. Indeed, the labelling problem occasionally extends to some uninformed faculty colleagues from other departments who assume that this is a "fun and games" department that attracts students who are academically weak. They are skeptical that a major research-oriented land-grant university should be indulging such trivial pursuits. All members of the department attempt to address this directly by pointing out that recreation addresses youth and community development; parks is concerned with conservation and ecodiversity; while tourism is

Exhibit 4-15 The Use of "Green Infrastructure" in Psychological Positioning

Some people think of parks and open space as an amenity, something nice to have but cannot be afforded in difficult economic times. However, often the same people understand that infrastructure is a necessity, not an amenity (i.e., something that communities must have, not just something that is nice to have). They view infrastructure as a primary public investment, not something they pay for with leftover money. Likewise, public officials understand that infrastructure must be constantly upgraded and maintained. It is not something they just buy and forget. Finally, they all know that infrastructure must be developed as a system, not as isolated parts.

One way to change this perception of open space as an amenity is to change the nomenclature. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines infrastructure as "the substructure or underlying foundation, especially the basic installations or facilities upon which the continuance and growth of a community depends." People understand the need to invest in infrastructure - even in an era of deficits. Next to national defense, funding for roads, bridges, sewers, airports, and other forms of capital infrastructure are always at the top of the list. However, just as we must carefully plan for and invest in our capital infrastructure, so too must we invest in our environmental or green infrastructure.

Green infrastructure is the ecological framework needed for environmental, social, and economic sustainability. It is our nation's natural life support system. Green infrastructure is an interconnected network of green space that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions and provides a wide array of benefits to people, wildlife, and communities. For example, green infrastructure reduces a community's susceptibility to floods, fires, and other natural disasters. Documenting these public benefits is a key step toward securing adequate funding.

Words matter. A shift in nomenclature from talking about open space to talking about green infrastructure will help communities understand that green space is a basic necessity that should be planned and developed as an integrated system. A popular bumper sticker says "If you think education is expensive, try ignorance." Well, if you think green space is expensive, just imagine the future costs for clean air, clean water, and healthy natural systems if we don't invest in green infrastructure today.

Source: Edward McMahon, vice president for land use programs at The Conservation Fund. *Common Ground* 14(i) 2003, p. 2.

involved with sustainable economic development. It then becomes apparent to uninformed colleagues that a department that deals with these sets of issues is doing important work, and is repositioned in their minds.

Those responsible for providing resources don't "get it" the way that recreation and park advocates "get it." They don't think in the social merit frame of reference, which frequently reflects the values system of those in parks and recreation; rather they think exclusively in their frame of reference, which invariably is economic. To acquire resources the field has to adapt to their frame of reference; they are unlikely to adapt to the park and recreation advocates' frame of reference.

Exhibit 4-16 demonstrates the key role of nomenclature in the development of a large 150-acre complex of youth athletic fields. The council's primary concern was economic development. Given this frame of reference, "youth soccer fields" were not an important priority in their minds, but "outdoor special events center" resonated well with that issue.

Exhibit 4-16 Repositioning an Athletic Complex by Framing It to Fit with an Existing Successful Position

The city had plenty of money for economic development, but the council could not be persuaded to commit $15 million for a 150-acre youth athletic field complex for which there was a clearly demonstrated need. The proposed site was adjacent to two major highways and would be well suited for tournaments in such sports as soccer, rugby, baseball, softball, tennis, and lacrosse. Hence, after an initial rejection by the council, the project's supporters regrouped and repositioned the project as an "outdoor special-events center." This terminology resonated with the council and taxpayers because the city had an existing indoor special-events center, which was recognized widely to be a good investment in economic development because of the nonresident visitors it attracted.

Representatives of the hotel-motel association, restaurant association, convention and visitors bureau, and chamber of commerce came to a council meeting to lobby for the athletic complex because its supporters pointed out that the city could hold tournaments bringing 300 to 1000 people to the community each weekend from out of town. Once it was repositioned into this economic development context and viewed as an outdoor special-events center, the council approved resources to acquire the site and initiate development of the athletic field complex.

Thus, the project came to fruition only when it was presented using terminology that made it compatible with an existing economic development framework.

A similar example illustrating the role of names in psychological repositioning occurred in St. Charles Parish, near New Orleans:

- The recreation and parks department had long identified the need for a new gym, but no funds were available for such a discretionary activity. The agency repositioned its request as a hurricane shelter, which was designed to accommodate three full-size basketball courts or serve as an indoor football arena. Since two hurricanes had hit the area in the previous year, the facility was funded.

Exhibit 4-17 summarizes the findings of research commissioned to identify words that established a positive position for conservation among the general public. These may be regarded as "rules for communication." The researchers noted, "While there can certainly be unique circumstances, we found few exceptions to these broad rules in terms of geography or key demographic groups."[3]

Competitive Repositioning

Whenever resources are allocated to one service rather than another, there is an opportunity cost associated with that decision. This cost consists of the benefits that would have accrued from investing those resources in alternative service options. Hence, in this context, other public agencies, such as the police, health, transportation or economic development departments (Exhibit 4-4) are viewed as competitors. Many of them have much larger budgets, which dwarf those available to parks and recreation, and successful repositioning is likely to offer agencies access to these large pools of funds. Competitive repositioning means altering stakeholders' beliefs about what other public service agencies do, so elected officials recognize that resources

Exhibit 4-17 Psychological Positioning: The Language of Conservation

- DO talk about water; voters prioritize water as a critical reason to purchase and protect land, no matter how it is expressed. Voters closely link land conservation with protecting water.
- DO link land conservation to preservation of "working farms and ranches." "Working" is important. "Agricultural land" and "farmland and ranchland" are less effective.
- DO evoke protecting wildlife and wildlife habitat. "Wildlife" is interpreted to fit the locale-urbanites regard rabbits and birds on their lawn as "wildlife."
- DO NOT use "endangered species"; it is more polarizing than "wildlife" and has connotations of environmental regulations holding up important projects.
- DO NOT use "openspace"; it could mean empty land or abandoned lots. DO use "natural areas" instead; it brings to mind positive images of trees, mountains, and streams, and a pristine state.
- DO NOT simply say "trails" - say "hiking, biking and walking trails"; attach meaning to them.
- DO talk about "repair and maintenance of parks" or "preventing the closure of parks"; they resonate more than "creating new parks."
- DO NOT use "undeveloped land"; it has connotations that it may be developed in the future.
- DO use "poorly planned growth" rather than "unplanned growth" or "sprawl."
- DO use growth messages in local context with specific statistics (e.g., one million more people in the next 20 years).
- DO stress planning; voters want well-thought-out and responsible planning for growth (e.g., "We must plan carefully for growth and reduce its negative impacts by preserving clean air, clean water, and natural areas").
- DO talk about "conservationists" and NOT "environmentalists." The latter are viewed as more radical; it is a more polarizing term.
- DO NOT needlessly politicize an issue (e.g., talking about federal government cutbacks is polarizing to those who approve).
- DO NOT say "conservation easement." The word "easement" evokes connotations of being forced into doing (or not doing) something with part of a landowner's property. DO say "land preservation agreements" or "land protection agreements" instead.
- DO NOT say "purchase of development rights"; it implies someone wants to develop the land!
- DO stress the voluntary nature of land preservation agreements.

Source: Fairbank, Maslin, Maulin & Associates [3]

allocated to them would yield a superior contribution to alleviating a given community concern if they were invested in particular park and recreation services.

Competitive repositioning may be conceptualized as "depositioning" another agency because it is challenging the legitimacy or authenticity of that agency's positioning claims and trying to demote them. An irony of this strategy is that if it is successful, it is likely that associative repositioning will follow because addressing a given problem holistically probably means that park and recreation's contributions will complement those of the other agency. Thus the park and recreation agency will be required to associate with the agency from which resources have been reassigned. Thus, competitive reposi-

tioning has to be undertaken with caution, sensitivity, and subtlety to avoid a backlash of resentment from those in other agencies. For this reason, challenging the position claims of others is usually undertaken by advocates from outside the parks and recreation agency, so the personal chemistry and relationships of managers in the two agencies is not poisoned.

After a park and recreation agency has selected its preferred position(s), other public services that contribute to that issue should be identified with the intent of pursuing associative and/or competitive repositioning strategies. This involves asking two questions: (i) To what niche(s) can parks and recreation contribute that complements what other services are doing (associative repositioning)? and (ii) what contributions made by others can parks and recreation deliver more effectively and/or more efficiently (competitive repositioning)?

The following paragraphs offer examples as to how positions claimed by others may be challenged by advocates making the case that resources would yield a better return if they were reallocated to parks and recreation.

In the context of at-risk youth programs, Exhibit 4-18 illustrates the cost efficiency of prevention strategies compared to the costs of incarceration. There are multiple other ways to reinforce the competitive repositioning effort in this context. Consider the following.

- During the past decade, the clearance rates reported annually by law enforcement agencies nationwide for major offenses by juveniles who were less than 18 years of age have been remarkably stable at 20 percent to 21 percent. An offense is declared cleared or solved when at least one person is arrested and charged with its commission. The major crimes to which these statistics relate are murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. However, the 20 percent to 21 percent clearance rate overestimates the proportion of crimes cleared because data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation indicate that many major crimes are not reported to the police. The level of underreporting includes 50 percent of all violent crimes, 30 percent of personal thefts, 41 percent of household crimes, and 75 percent of motor vehicle thefts. Hence, for the purposes of this discussion, it has been assumed that 14 percent rather than 20 percent to 21 percent of youth crimes are solved. Of these, approximately one-third are acquitted or dismissed. Of the 9 percent to 10 percent of juveniles who are convicted, approximately one-half receive sentences that do not involve incarceration.

Obviously, incarceration is an essential component in alleviating juvenile crime. However, from a competitive repositioning perspective the point to be made is that if only 5 percent of the juveniles commiting crimes are incarcerated and 95 percent of them remain available to engage in more crime, then a strategy focused predominantly on incarceration cannot solve the problem.

While the police provide crime *resolution* services, these have to be supplemented with effective *preventive* services, which the police are not equipped to provide. If this is pointed out and repeatedly reiterated to stakeholders, especially elected officials, then there is likely to be a realization that for major progress to be made, resources have to be allocated to prevention programs that target the overwhelming majority who are not arrested and incarcerated. Further, the evi-

dence clearly indicates that early and consistent prevention efforts have the best chance of diminishing the need for more costly measures later.

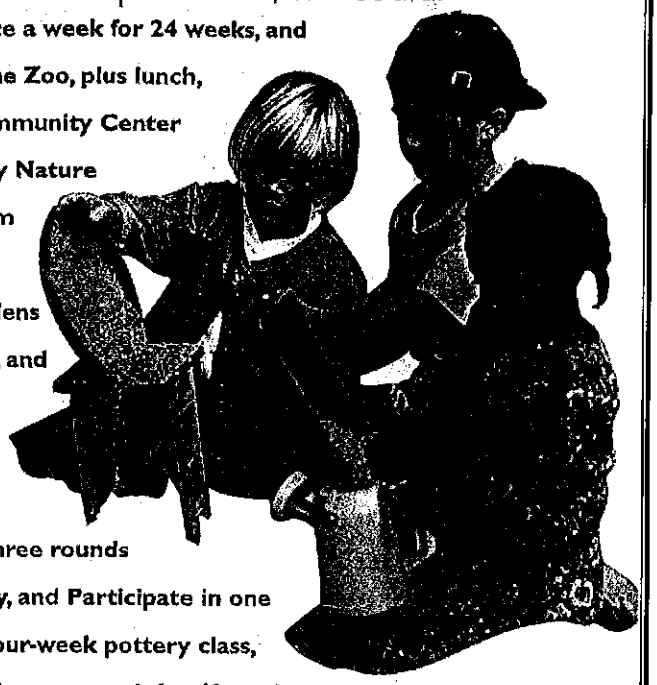
Exhibit 4-19 illustrates the complementary role of recreation prevention programs. The city of Fort Worth used a holistic approach involving coordinated action from a number of city departments to address the problem of serious gang-related crime. The Fort Worth Parks and Community Services Department (which includes recreation) played a central role in the effort. Exhibit 4-19 shows data comparing the number of serious offenses the year before the program was launched with the second year after the initiative was implemented.

The 22 percent improvement, reflecting 152 fewer offenses, was dramatic. If they had been committed by 100 young people, for example, and if all of these individuals had been arrested and incarcerated, then using Texas Youth Commission's data, which report the annual cost of incarcerating a youth is $43,000 per year, the cost of incarcerating all 100 of them for one year would have been more than $4.3 million. Given the gravity of the offenses, it appears reasonable to hypothesize that each of the individuals could have been incarcerated for an average of 10 years. With this assumption, the costs then escalate to $43 million (ignoring the time value of money). The total investment of city funds in this at-risk youth initiative was $430,000 and $678,000 in years 1 and 2 of the program, respectively. This was supplemented with $156,000 and $278,000 in the respective years from private sources. Thus, the return on each dollar invested by the city was $39 ($43 million ÷ $1.108 million). These calculations do not take into account cost savings that are also likely to have accrued from at-risk youth not engaging in other less serious

Exhibit 4-18 Positioning investments in Youth Development Programs as viable alternatives to incarceration

"It costs approximately $30,000 to incarcerate a juvenile offender for one year. If that money were available to the Park Department, we could:

Take him swimming twice a week for 24 weeks, and Give him four tours of the Zoo, plus lunch, and Enroll him in 50 Community Center programs, and Visit Oxley Nature Center twice, and Let him play league softball for a season, and Tour the gardens at Woodward Park twice, and Give him two weeks of tennis lessons, and Enroll him in two weeks of day camp, and Let him play three rounds of golf, and Act in one play, and Participate in one fishing clinic, and Take a four-week pottery class, and Play basketball eight hours a week for 40 weeks



after which we could return to you: $29, 125 and one much happier kid"

Exhibit 4-19 Change in the Number of Serious Gang-Related Offenses Committed in Fort Worth in One Year

[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Murder	37	29	-22
Aggravated Sexual Assault	3	10	+233
Robbery	116	83	-28
Aggravated Assault	421	319	-26
Burglary	43	27	-37
Theft	35	35	---
Auto Theft	25	25	---
TOTALS	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

crimes not considered in Exhibit 4-19. This level of return made the investment unbeatable! Certainly the level of return makes it easy for elected officials to justify to their constituents the use of tax money to retain and expand their investment in this program.

From a competitive repositioning perspective, exactness of the numbers is not important. It does not matter if in some jurisdictions juvenile incarceration costs are lower, if city investment is greater, or if the magnitude of crime reduction is lower. The magnitude of the return on investment is so large that even quite major changes in the variables are unlikely to affect the principle.

If park and recreation's desired position relates to economic prosperity, then the competitive resources targeted are likely to be those allocated to tourism or economic development agencies. Tourism agencies have been effective in positioning themselves in the minds of stakeholders as important contributors to economic prosperity, and they receive resources commensurate with that favorable position.

However, when they undertake economic impact studies that show the spending of tourists in the community, this substantially overstates their contribution because many visitors would come even if there was no tourism agency, while others are there because of the park and recreation department's efforts rather than those of the tourism agency. If the discrepancies between the established position of the tourism agency and reality are subtly pointed out, then resources that would otherwise be appropriated to it may instead be allocated to parks and recreation to develop additional events or facilities that will attract visitors.

Responsibility for business recruitment in most communities has been assigned to an economic development agency. Competitive repositioning could involve subtly challenging the myth that these organizations have created about their high level of influence on company location decisions. Frequently, they claim credit for bringing XYZ company to town. The reality is that they rarely influence the company's initial decisions that result in it narrowing its list of prospective communities to a small set of between two and five communities. Narrowing the list usually occurs before community economic development organizations are contacted or have any awareness that a particular company may be

planning to relocate.

Typically, they become involved only in the final stage of a company's decision process. At that stage, their role is to serve as a conduit through which companies conveniently can request specific information from those communities they are considering; to host and coordinate visits to the community by company officials; to coordinate company requests for easements and planning permissions; and to coordinate the negotiation of incentive packages that their community is prepared to offer.[17] If this more limited role becomes recognized as the real function of economic development organizations, then the scope of their operations may be scaled back and more funds may be released for providing amenities that companies seek.

The challenge for parks and recreation is to convince stakeholders to adopt a market-oriented rather than a product-oriented approach to business relocation. The common product-oriented approach focuses on selling the community as it is, whereas a market orientation adapts a community to meet the changing needs of relocating companies, which means "If small business constitutes the engine of the job generation process, then places should promote things that facilitate small business growth" (p. 12).[18] One of these things is likely to be investment in improved park and recreation amenities.[19]

THE IMPACT OF REPOSITIONING STRATEGIES

The newness of the concept of repositioning in the parks and recreation field, and the relatively long period of time needed for repositioning strategies to be effective means that no field studies have been reported that evaluate the effectiveness of repositioning strategies. However, results of an experiment designed to measure this are summarized in Exhibit 4-20.[20]

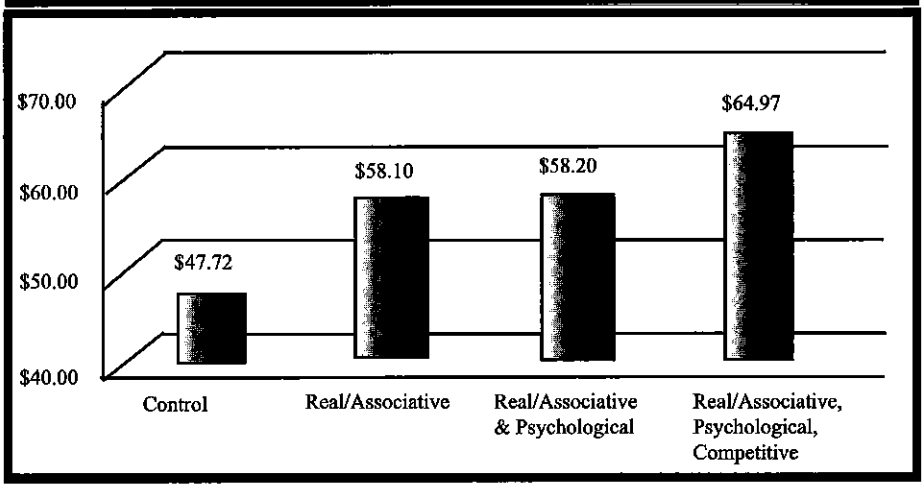
A sample of people in a community were given an article to read that was related to youth crime. The article was designed to appear as it had been published in a local newspaper. Four different versions of the article were produced. Each of them added information that included in the previous version:

- A control version containing no repositioning information.
- A real/associative repositioning version reported a large number of youth programs offered by the agency and a large number of qualified staff to run them. It also incorporated associative information relating to other organizations with which the agency partnered.
- A real/associative and psychological version referenced positive outcomes to youth and the community that emanated from the programs.
- A real/associative, psychological, and competitive version added information on how funds allocated to the police department could be better used by the park and recreation agency.

After reading their version of the article, respondents were asked to divide $100 between the police department and the park and recreation agency. The control group allocated an average of $47.72 to the parks and recreation agency. When the real/associative repositioning information was added, this increased by 22 percent to $58.10. Adding psychological outcome information increased this only marginally to $58.20, but when competitive information was added, there was another

quantum leap to $64.97, which represented a 36 percent increase compared to using no repositioning strategy at all. This equates to $1.8 million on a $5 million operating budget for youth development programs. This study demonstrated both the effectiveness of repositioning strategies and that they are most effective when the four repositioning strategies are used cumulatively rather than if only one or two of them are used.

Exhibit 4-20 Results of an Experiment Showing the Impact of Repositioning Strategies



Source: Kaczynski et al [20]

USING A SURVEY TO SELECT A DESIRED POSITION(S)

Earlier in the chapter it was suggested that a desired position could be ascertained by reviewing issues that are paramount in election campaigns. An alternative or complementary approach is to solicit views from a probability sample of residents by surveying them. This section describes a questionnaire that has been developed for this purpose and suggests how it should be used.[21]

Nine positions that park and recreation agencies may elect to adopt are shown in bold type in Exhibit 4-21. Under each position, two or three features are offered to describe different dimensions of the position. For example, three ways in which real estate values of homes may be enhanced are to require developers to provide park space in their developments; ensure that parks are easily accessible from residents' homes; and keep neighborhood parks wellmaintained.

These items are randomly distributed in a questionnaire. A sample questionnaire is shown in Appendix 1. The sample questionnaire was used in the city of Grapevine, Texas. At the head of the set of features is the phrase "In Grapevine." The features are listed below that heading, and residents are requested to rate to each on a 7-point scale ranging from "not at all important" to "very important." No mention is made of the park and recreation department's role at this point. The focus is exclusively on how important the issues are to community residents.

Next residents are being asked to respond to the same set of features, but the heading at the top of this set is "The Grapevine Park and Recreation Department's contribution:" Again 7-point scales are used ranging from "very small" to "very large."

The two or three features for each of the potential nine positions are averaged on each set of features to obtain a mean importance and a mean department performance rating for each community issue. These means are plotted on a two-dimensional grid, which is comprised of four quadrants that guide selec-

Exhibit 4-21 A Survey to IdentifyPotential Desired Positions for Park and Recreation Agencies

[illegible]
educating residents on the benefits of physical activity
helping people build healthy lifestyles
supporting and working with community health organizations
[illegible]
improving air quality
reducing the amount of energy consumed by residents
protecting environmentally sensitive areas
[illegible]
developing attractions that draw people from other cities
getting tourists to spend money in the community
hosting events that bring tourism revenue to local businesses
[illegible]
revitalizing the community's downtown area
ensuring that the heart of the city is prosperous
developing new facilities in the core of the city
[illegible]
encouraging executives and professionals to live in this community
convincing businesses to locate in this community
[illegible]
requiring that developers provide park space for people in their developments
ensuring that parks are easily accessible to residents from their homes
keeping neighborhood parks well maintained
[illegible]
providing programs at which retired people can socialize together
designing programs specifically for older adults
encouraging senior citizens to become involved with the community
[illegible]
providing positive role models for adolescents
helping youth to develop into productive citizens
providing youth with positive ways to fill their free time
[illegible]
offering programs that meet the needs of people who are unemployed
supporting and working with community welfare and employment agencies
helping adults build skills that can be used in the workforce

Source: Kaczynski & Crompton. [22]

tion of desired positions. It is much easier for taxpayers, elected officials, and managers to grasp the results if they are graphed in this form as a perceptual map, rather than presented as tables of quantitative data or paragraphs of prose. The format shows how the agency's performance meets residents' aspirations. An illustration of how these results are presented is shown in Exhibit 4-22.[22]

The quadrant with high-importance and high-performance ratings, labeled "retain the existing level of resource investment," suggests resource levels allocated to address community issues in this section should be maintained. For those issues that fall in the low-importance, high-performance quadrant, titled "reduce resource allocations," resources may be retrenched. Community concerns in the low-importance, low-performance quadrant also are designated "reduce resource allocations" and merit little attention. Finally, when an issue is perceived as being high in importance but an agency's performance in addressing it is substandard, the suggested management strategy is to "invest more resources."

Exhibit 4-22 suggests that in the community where this study was undertaken, the issues of preventing youth crime, addressing environmental stewardship, and enhancing real estate values were all rated high in importance, while addressing underemployment, attracting tourists, stimulating urban rejuvenation, and attracting retirees fell distinctly into the low-importance quadrants. The grid graphically displays residents' perceptions of the agency's existing positions and its potential "should be" positions.

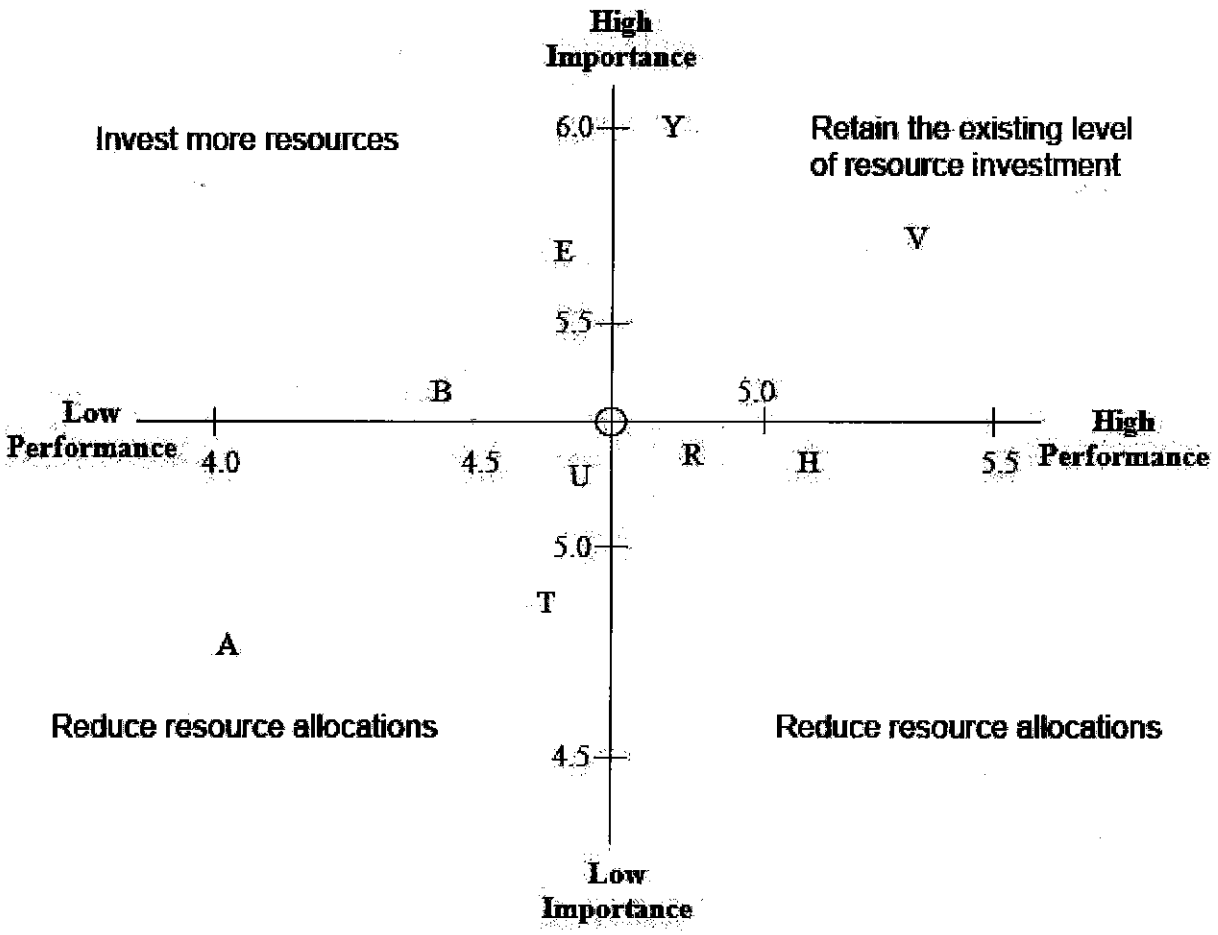
These results suggest that a repositioning strategy should be structured around the important issues of preventing youth crime, addressing environmental stewardship, and/or enhancing real estate values. On the issue of enhancing real estate values, the agency is already perceived as making a fairly strong contribution. Thus, this should be retained as a preferred position, while repositioning around the issue of either preventing youth crime or addressing environmental stewardship, or both, is likely to be a productive strategy. These dimensions are located quite close together on the grid. Both have high-importance ratings and relatively low agency performance ratings. The use of the four repositioning strategies could improve perceptions of the agency's performance on both of these high-priority issues.

It was noted earlier that an agency may usefully adopt more than one important issue, and position different services to address one of the selected issues. In this case, the department's recreation programs could be focused around the issue of youth crime, while its park operations could be positioned as contributing to environmental stewardship. However, before any repositioning decisions are made or actions undertaken, the performance of relevant competitors must be considered.

To illustrate this process, Exhibit 4-23 compares the performance of recreation and parks with the police department on the issue of preventing youth crime. The police department received a mean performance rating of 5.01 whereas park and recreation's mean performance rating was 4.78. This suggests that the police department's contribution to preventing youth crime was perceived to be significantly greater than that of parks and recreation.

The individual items were also plotted to provide more information about each element in the preventing youth crime position. On the most important item, "helping youth to develop into productive citizens," the contributions of parks and recreation and the police department were rated equally. The police department was perceived to be bet-

Exhibit 4-22 Establishing the Park and Recreation Agency's Repositioning and Associated Resource Allocation Options

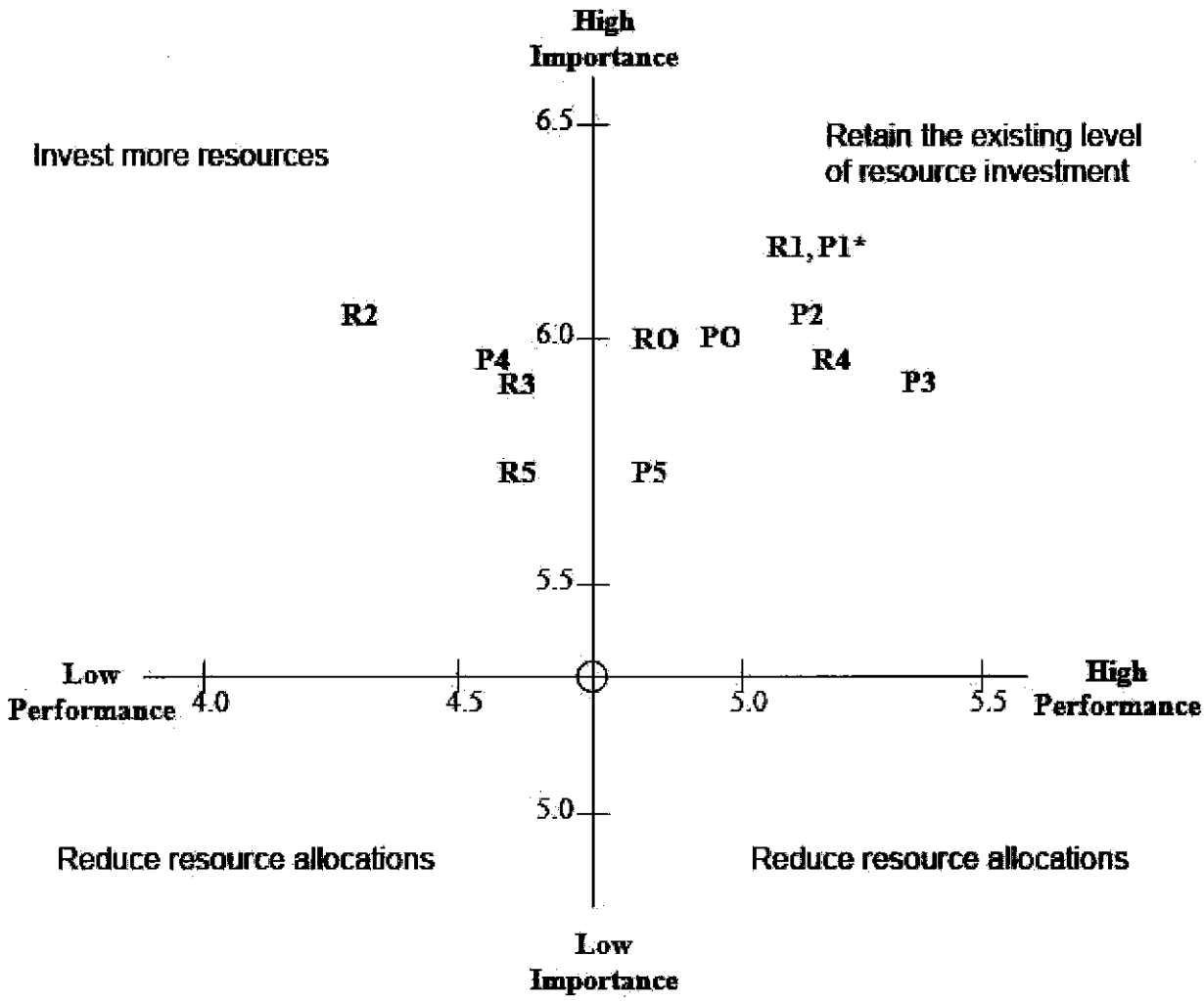


Legend

O – crosshairs intersect at 4.73 performance, 5.33 importance

A = addressing the needs of people who are underemployed
B = attracting businesses
E = environmental stewardship
H = improving community health
R = attracting retirees
T = attracting tourists
U = stimulating urban rejuvenation
V = enhancing real estate values
Y = preventing youth crime

Exhibit 4-23 Park and Recreation Department's Performance Relative to that of the Police Department on Various Features of Preventing Youth Crime



Legend

O – crosshairs intersect at 4.73 performance, 5.33 importance

R = Parks and Recreation Department's overall performance in preventing youth crime
P = Police Department's overall performance in preventing youth crime

1 = helping youth to develop into productive citizens
2 = reducing the rate of repeat offenses by young offenders
3 = providing positive role models for adolescents
4 = providing youth with positive ways to fill their free time
5 = increasing the self-esteem of teenagers in the community

* performance of Parks and Recreation Department and Police rated equally

ter at "reducing the rate of repeat offences by young offenders," "providing positive role models for adolescents," and "increasing the self-esteem of teenagers in the community." Conversely, the contributions of the park and recreation agency were perceived to be greater for "providing youth with positive ways to fill their free time."

The placement of individual items on the grid for the two departments offers suggestions to the park and recreation agency for applying repositioning strategies. With regard to real repositioning, attention could be focused on the issues for which the PARD received lower performance ratings than the police department. The lowest rated item for the PARD was "reducing the rate of repeat offences by young offenders," for which the police department's perceived performance was markedly higher. Developing and distributing programs directly aimed at young offenders could increase perceptions of the PARD's contributions to reducing recidivism. In contrast, the PARD was already perceived as "providing youth with positive ways to fill their free time" and "helping youth to develop into productive citizens." For these issues, competitive repositioning showing PARD's contributions relative to those of the police department may be most rewarding.

An associative repositioning strategy could involve developing some joint programs with the police department. It could also reference the scientific literature, which reports the effectiveness of prevention programs. Psychological repositioning may be most appropriate for those items on which the agency is performing close to average, specifically "providing positive role models for adolescents" and "increasing the self-esteem of teenagers in the community." To close the gap between the PARD and the police department on these two items, the challenge may be to change stakeholders' perceptions of what the PARD is currently doing by communicating the functions of their personnel and programs in these terms.

This approach enabled the agency to ascertain which community issues should be given priority. Many of the items included in the scale were issues not traditionally associated with parks and recreation, so it was anticipated that stakeholders' ratings of the agency's performance on certain items would be fairly low. This provides a lucid depiction of the importance citizens and elected officials attribute to various community issues, without requiring them to understand how parks and recreation fit into the equation. The burden is then on the agency to communicate to these stakeholders its potential for effectively addressing the important issues, using real, psychological, and competitive repositioning.

In summary, using this survey approach for arriving at, and implementing, a desired position(s) involves six stages:

1. Determine the primary concerns in a community. Optimally, this would be done by surveying residents, but a review of both the platforms of those who are running for elected office and the objectives of the existing legislative body would be a less expensive way of deriving this list.
2. Identify which of the concerns listed in stage 1 the parks and recreation agency could *potentially* contribute to addressing.
3. By means of a survey, identify residents' perceptions of the extent to which the park and recreation agency currently contributes to alleviating each of the concerns identified in stage 2.
4. By means of the same survey used in stage 3, identify residents' perceptions

of the extent to which "competitor" organizations or agencies contribute to alleviating each of the concerns identified in stage 2.

5. Develop a preferred position(s) for the park and recreation agency by using the data assembled in stages 2, 3, and 4 to select one, two, or a maximum of three concerns with which the park and recreation agency will align over the next 5-to-10-year period.
6. Develop a strategy involving real, associative, psychological, and competitive repositioning to implement the preferred position(s) identified in stage 5.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Example of a Parks and Recreation Repositioning Survey

Appendix 2: Executive Summaries of the Evidence Relating to the Field's Potential to Deliver 19 Communitywide Benefits

APPENDIX I

EXAMPLE OF A PARKS AND RECREATION REPOSITIONING SURVEY

CITY OF GRAPEVINE

Parks and Recreation Survey

1

Section A

On this first page, we are interested in how **important** you feel various community issues are. Please indicate how **important** each of the following issues is to you by circling a number below.

In Grapevine,	Not at all Important			Neutral			Extremely Important
1. enhancing home real-estate values is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. attracting tourists to the community is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. addressing the needs of people who are unemployed is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. attracting and retaining retirees is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. preventing youth crime is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. attracting and retaining businesses is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. protecting the environment is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. improving community health is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. rejuvenating the city's downtown is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section B

Assume that you have 100 points to divide among the following three categories of community issues. Please allocate these 100 points based on how **important** you perceive each category of concerns to be. For example, if you consider environmental concerns to be twice as important as the other two concerns, you would assign it 50 points and give the other two concerns 25 points each.

1. Economic concerns _____ points

2. Environmental concerns _____ points

3. Social concerns _____ points

Total: 100

Section C

Now we are interested in your perceptions of the **Grapevine Parks and Recreation Department's contribution** to each of the issues.

The Grapevine Parks and Recreation Department's contribution to:	**Very Small**			**Neutral**			**Very Large**
1. enhancing home real-estate values is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. attracting tourists to the community is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. addressing the needs of people who are unemployed is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. attracting and retaining retirees is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. preventing youth crime is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. attracting and retaining businesses is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. protecting the environment is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. improving community health is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. rejuvenating the city's downtown is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section D

Again, assume that you have 100 points to divide among the three categories. This time, however, divide up the 100 points based on your perceptions of the Grapevine Parks and Recreation Department's **current contribution** to each category of concerns.

1. Economic concerns _____ points

2. Environmental concerns _____ points

3. Social concerns _____ points

Total: 100

3

Section E

In this section, the concerns you considered in the previous questions are specified in much more detail. Again, we are interested in your perceptions of how **important** the following community issues are. Please indicate how **important** you feel each issue is by circling a number below.

In Grapevine,	Not at all Important			Neutral			Extremely Important
1. providing opportunities for residents to increase their physical fitness is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. improving air quality is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. keeping neighborhood parks well-maintained is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. helping youth to develop into productive citizens is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. developing attractions that draw people from other cities is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. redeveloping facilities in run-down areas is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. ensuring there is open green space near every home is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. reducing the rate of repeat offenses by young offenders is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. preventing erosion and flooding is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. educating residents on the benefits of physical activity is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. hosting events that bring tourism revenue to local businesses is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. providing trails so that people can walk or bike to work is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. providing programs at which retired people can socialize together is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. reducing the amount of energy consumed by residents is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4

In Grapevine,	Not at all Important			Neutral			Extremely Important
15. providing positive role models for adolescents is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. supporting and working with community health organizations is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. ensuring that the heart of the city is prosperous is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. using landscaping to beautify public areas is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. encouraging executives and professionals to live in this community is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. providing programs to lower income people at a reduced or no charge is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. protecting environmentally sensitive areas is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. increasing the self-esteem of teenagers in the community is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. improving the quality of groundwater is ...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. providing amenities in the community that older adults want is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. developing new facilities in the core of the city is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. helping adults build skills that can be used in the workforce is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. encouraging senior citizens to become involved with the community is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. convincing businesses to locate in this community is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. reducing the amount of money that the city must spend on controlling pollution is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5

In Grapevine,	Not at all Important			Neutral			Extremely Important
30. providing youth with positive ways to fill their free time is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. ensuring that parks are easily accessible to residents from their homes is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. developing travel packages for visitors to the city is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. designing programs specifically for older adults is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. revitalizing the community's downtown area is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. maintaining park areas within business districts is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. supporting and working with community welfare and employment agencies is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. helping people build healthy lifestyles is ...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. encouraging wealthy retirees to settle in this community to improve the tax base is ..	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39. offering programs that meet the needs of people who are unemployed is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40. requiring that developers provide park space for people in their developments is ...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41. getting tourists to spend money in the community is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section F

In this section, we are interested in your perceptions of the **Grapevine Parks and Recreation Department's contribution** to each of the items.

The Grapevine Parks and Recreation Department's contribution to:	**Very Small**			**Neutral**			**Very Large**
1. providing opportunities for residents to increase their physical fitness is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. improving air quality is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. keeping neighborhood parks well-maintained is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. helping youth to develop into productive citizens is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. developing attractions that draw people from other cities is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. redeveloping facilities in run-down areas is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. ensuring there is open green space near every home is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. reducing the rate of repeat offenses by young offenders is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. preventing erosion and flooding is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. educating residents on the benefits of physical activity is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. hosting events that bring tourism revenue to local businesses is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. providing trails so that people can walk or bike to work is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. providing programs at which retired people can socialize together is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. reducing the amount of energy consumed by residents is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7

The Grapevine Parks and Recreation Department's contribution to:	Very Small			Neutral			Very Large
15. providing positive role models for adolescents is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. supporting and working with community health organizations is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. ensuring that the heart of the city is prosperous is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. using landscaping to beautify public areas is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. encouraging executives and professionals to live in this community is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. providing programs to lower income people at a reduced or no charge is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. protecting environmentally sensitive areas is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. increasing the self-esteem of teenagers in the community is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. improving the quality of groundwater is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. providing amenities in the community that older adults want is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. developing new facilities in the core of the city is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. helping adults build skills that can be used in the workforce is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. encouraging senior citizens to become involved with the community is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. convincing businesses to locate in this community is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. reducing the amount of money that the city must spend on controlling pollution is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8

The Grapevine Parks and Recreation Department's contribution to:	Very Small			Neutral			Very Large
30. providing youth with positive ways to fill their free time is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. ensuring that parks are easily accessible to residents from their homes is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. developing travel packages for visitors to the city is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. designing programs specifically for older adults is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. revitalizing the community's downtown area is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. supporting and working with community welfare and employment agencies is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. helping people build healthy lifestyles is ...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. reducing summer temperatures in urban areas is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. encouraging wealthy retirees to settle in this community to improve the tax base is ..	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39. offering programs that meet the needs of people who are unemployed is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40. requiring that developers provide park space for people in their developments is ...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41. getting tourists to spend money in the community is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9

Section G

In this section, we are interested in your perceptions of the contributions of the Grapevine **Convention and Visitors Bureau** to each of the items.

The Grapevine Convention and Visitors Bureau's contribution to:	**Very Small**			**Neutral**			**Very Large**
1. getting tourists to spend money in the community is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. developing attractions that draw people from other cities is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. hosting events that bring tourism revenue to local businesses is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. ensuring that the heart of the city is prosperous is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. developing travel packages for visitors to the city is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. attracting tourists to the community is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section H

In this final section, we are interested in your perceptions of the contributions of the Grapevine **Police Department** to each of the items.

The Grapevine Police Department's contribution to:	**Very Small**			**Neutral**			**Very Large**
1. helping youth to develop into productive citizens is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. reducing the rate of repeat offenses by young offenders is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. providing positive role models for adolescents is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. increasing the self-esteem of teenagers in the community is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. providing youth with positive ways to fill their free time is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. preventing youth crime is	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Section I

We are collecting the following information in order to better understand the characteristics of our study participants. All of the information will be kept completely confidential and will only be reported at the group level.

1. What is your gender?

   ❑ Male
   ❑ Female

2. What is your year of birth? (please fill in a year on the line below)

   _____

3. How many years have you lived in Grapevine? (please fill in a number on the line below)

   _____ years

4. Would you like to receive a summary of the results of this survey? ____ Yes ____ No

5. Do you have any other comments about Grapevine Parks and Recreation?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your participation is greatly appreciated! Please return the questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope today to the following address (pre-printed on the envelope):

Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences
Texas A&M University
2261 TAMU
College Station, Texas 77843-2261

APPENDIX 2

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES OF THE EVIDENCE RELATING TO THE FIELD'S POTENTIAL TO DELIVER 19 COMMUNITYWIDE BENEFITS

INTRODUCTION

BENEFITS RELATED TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

1. *Attracting Tourists*
2. *Attracting Businesses*
3. *Attracting Retirees*
4. *Enhancing Real Estate Values*
5. *Reducing Taxes*
6. *Stimulation of Equipment Sales*

BENEFITS RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

7. *Protecting Drinking Water*
8. *Controlling Flooding*
9. *Cleaning Air*
10. *Reducing Traffic Congestion*
11. *Reducing Energy Costs*
12. *Preserving Biological Diversity*

BENEFITS RELATED TO ALLEVIATING SOCIAL PROBLEMS

13. *Reducing Environmental Stress*
14. *Community Regeneration*
15. *Cultural and Historical Preservation*
16. *Facilitating Healthy Lifestyles*
17. *Alleviating Deviant Behavior Among Youth*
18. *Raising Levels of Educational Attainment*
19. *Alleviating Unemployment Distress*

This Appendix elaborates upon the overview of the 19 communitywide benefits (given in Exhibit 3-5) that park and recreation agencies could potentially deliver. The 19 benefits are classified into three categories: economic prosperity, environmental sustainability, and alleviating social problems. The intent is to provide a relatively concise executive summary of the rationale and empirical evidence documenting the field's potential effectiveness for delivering each of these benefits.

BENEFITS RELATED TO ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

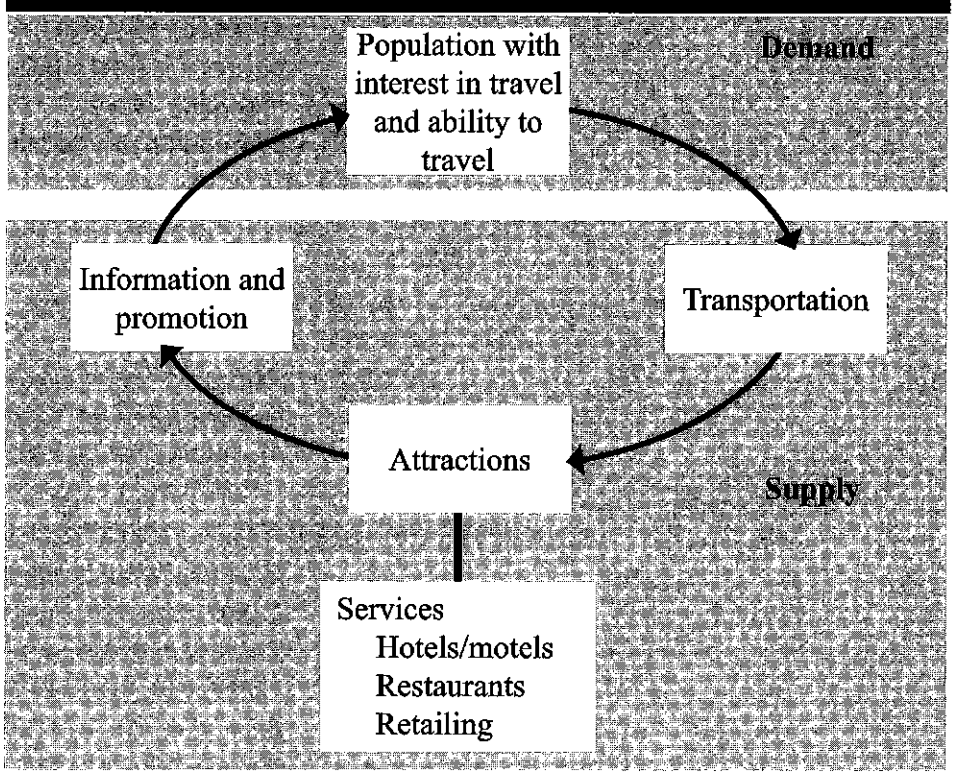
Economic development is widely viewed as being central to a community's economic prosperity because it is viewed as a means of enhancing the tax base. The enhancement is perceived to provide additional tax revenues which governments can use either to improve the community's infrastructure, facilities and services, or to reduce the level of taxes that existing residents pay. It is seen also as a source of jobs that provide income which enables residents to improve their quality of life. Park and recreation services can be a central contributor to economic development.

The most widely recognized contribution of the field to economic prosperity is its ability to attract visitors who spend money in a community. However, the attraction of large numbers of temporary visitors in a short time period also may inflict costs on a community. In some cases, the economic contributions made by the other five benefits reviewed in this section (attracting businesses, attracting retirees, enhancing real estate values, reducing taxes, and stimulation of equipment sales) may offer more permanent gains without the same magnitude of adverse costs.

1. Attracting Tourists

Exhibit A-1 shows a simplified model of the tourism system. This model indicates that tourists use some mode of transportation to travel to attractions, which are supported by various kinds of services. The attractions and

Exhibit A-1 A Simplified Model of the Tourism System



Source: Adapted from Clare A. *Gunn. Tourism Planning*. 2nd edition. Taylor & Francis: New York. 1988.

support services provide information about their offerings to target groups whom they have identified as potential tourists.

This tourism system is activated by attractions. Only in rare cases do people leave their home milieu and travel some distance by automobile, airplane, or ship because they want to stay in a particular hotel or dine at a particular restaurant in a different locale. Most of the time, the desire to go to a destination on a pleasure trip is stimulated by its attractions.

A taxonomy of attractions likely to activate pleasure travel is shown in Exhibit A-2. Almost all of these attractions are developed and, in most cases, are operated by the public sector or by nonprofit organizations. A large proportion of them are likely to be the responsibility of park and recreation agencies. This leads to the conclusion that *in most communities, pleasure travel is a business that the public sector drives, and park and recreation agencies are central to that business.*

This is the antithesis of the general public's, and the tourism field's, conventional wisdom. Most people appear to be under the misapprehension that tourism is the almost exclusive preserve of the commercial sector. The commercial sector offers essential transportation; support services, such as accommodations, restaurants, and retailing; and information and promotion dissemination (Exhibit A-1). However, the public sector primarily provides the attractions that activate pleasure travel. Disney World and Disneyland may attract more than 40 million visitors per year, but this number represents only 12 percent of the visitor days recorded in the national parks and fewer than 3 percent of visitor days at all federal recreational areas (including those operated by the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management). The annual number of visits to state parks is reported to be approximately 740 million, and this number, in turn, is minuscule when compared with the number of visitors to re-

Exhibit A-2 A Taxonomy of Tourist Attractions

Arts	Heritage Places	Parks	Recreation	Arenas	Other
• Theaters • Art galleries • Museums • Performing groups • Music concerts	• Ethnic cultural places • Shrines, churches • Historical sites and structures • Educational institutions • Industry factor tours	• National • State • Regional • Local • Beaches • Theme park	• Events and festivals • Aquatic and coastal areas • Outdoor recreations (e.g., camping, fishing, hunting) • Sports (e.g., golf, tennis, skiing, sailing, softball) • Fitness and wellness centers	• College sports • Professional franchises • Concerts and exhibitions	• Gambling places • Cruise ships

gional, county, and local parks and beaches.

From the beginning, park managers have recognized the centrality of parks to tourism. Some of the first federal park managers encouraged railroads to construct lines to the parks and to develop large, luxurious hotels in them. In his report to the secretary of the interior in 1918, the first National Park Service director, Stephen Mather, said: "It would seem that as soon as possible tourist travel not only should be sanctioned, but heartily encouraged" (p. 76).[1]

Very few communities have large-scale commercial tourist attractions. Despite their absence, most jurisdictions recognize the importance of tourism to economic development, and they establish convention and visitor bureaus or similar agencies whose primary mission is to attract visitors. They frequently rely on the park and recreation agency to create attractions that will persuade visitors to come to the community and spend money there.

The extent to which the park and recreation agency constitutes the engine of tourism in any particular community can be ascertained by listing all the programs, festivals, tournaments, competitions and facilities operated or cosponsored by the parks and recreation department that attract pleasure travelers to the community from out of town. A plethora of studies have been published reporting the economic impact of these types of amenities.[2] Similar lists should be developed for nonprofit organizations and for commercial attractions. In most communities, the commercial attractions list will be the shortest, demonstrating the relative insignificance of commercial enterprises in attracting visitors to the community when compared to the public sector attractions. The dissemination of such comparative lists is likely to make an effective contribution to repositioning parks and recreation as being central to tourism in the minds of stakeholders.

2. Attracting Businesses

With relatively few exceptions, such as the location of military, academic, religious, or political establishments, economic growth is widely believed to be fostered primarily by the presence of businesses. Company start-ups, expansions, and relocations are widely viewed as direct and effective means of enhancing a community's economic development through expanding its existing tax base. Many believe the multiplier effect ensures that the benefits from a new business spread throughout a community and extend far beyond the actual dollar value of a firm's initial investment and subsequent payroll.

Substantial shifts in American industry have occurred in recent decades with the change from traditional manufacturing to "smokeless" industries. Related to this has been a shift in emphasis from attracting new companies, toward accommodating the relocation and expansion needs of existing companies. This shift reflects "the mounting evidence that the vast majority of new jobs generated in the United States came from existing companies and new business start-ups" (p. 247).[3]

Many of the smokeless industries may be characterized as "footloose" because they are likely to be less constrained and more flexible in their choice of location than traditional manufacturing companies. They are not tied to raw materials, natural resources, or energy supplies, meaning that cities seeking ways to expand their tax base see them as excellent prospects for relocation. Footloose companies are particularly attractive to communities because they infuse money into a local economy without the adverse effects (e.g., pollution) often associated with traditional manufacturing industries. Their emerging

dominance has created a highly competitive environment among communities seeking to expand their tax base.

Research has consistently shown that the elements that are important in location decisions for footloose companies are different from those considered to be important by those in manufacturing and distribution firms. The success of these businesses frequently is dependent on the caliber of their workforce. This is particularly true of those businesses in the intensely recruited high-technology, research and development, and company headquarters categories. Their principal assets are ideas and a skilled workforce, rather than product inventories and capital equipment. These types of people-intensive businesses are information factories whose viability relies on their ability to attract and retain highly educated professional employees.

Today, many such individuals make their decisions on where to work based on "the pursuit of happiness." This phrase of Jefferson's, enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, is now expressed as "quality of life." The deciding factor for many individuals in choosing where to work is often the quality of life in the geographic vicinity of the business. A vice president of Dell Corporation in Austin, Texas, the country's largest computer supplier, observed:

> People working in high-tech companies are used to there being a high quality of life in the metropolitan areas in which they live. When we at Dell go and recruit in those areas, we have to be able to demonstrate to them that the quality of life in Austin is at least comparable or they won't come. It's about what's the community like where I'm going to live (p. 8).[4]

The importance of quality of life in business location decisions has been repeatedly verified in the literature.[5-11] It is widely cited as being especially important for high-technology firms or businesses employing highly skilled workers in information- or knowledge-based services.[12] Twenty years ago, a review of the company relocation literature concluded that the continued shift to more advanced technologies will lead to an increase in the importance of quality-of-life factors and a relative decrease in the significance of more traditional determinants.[13] This trend continues to gather momentum.

Richard Florida's discussion of this issue in his book *The Rise of the Creative Class* captures the essence of contemporary thinking in how communities should approach economic development.[14] He reported that whereas economic growth often used to come at the expense of environmental quality, in the "new economy" environmental quality is a prerequisite for attracting talented workers. Florida reported that environmental quality ranked as the most important amenity in high-technology workers' choices of location, above housing, cost of living, and good schools. He classified all the important factors in "creative class" individuals' location decisions into a category he termed "quality of place," which refers to the unique set of characteristics that define a place and make it attractive. He suggested this has three dimensions. The first was "what's there: the combination of the built environment and the natural environment, a proper setting for the pursuit of creative lives." The other two dimensions were "who's there" and "what's going on" (p. 232).

There is substantial economic literature reporting the need for "disamenity compensation," whereby companies in jurisdictions with a less favorable quality of life have to

pay higher salaries in order to attract the same quality worker, and vice versa.[12, 15] The overall implication is that firms can reduce the salary levels needed to secure adequate labor (or secure more and better workers at the same price) if they locate in an area whose quality of life is attractive to workers.[12] Quality of life is not only important in relocation, expansion, or initiation decisions, it is also important in employee retention, which has an economic bottom line because it is expensive to go through the recruitment process, particularly for key personnel.

No matter how quality of life is defined, park and recreational opportunities are likely to be a major component of it. *There are no great cities in North America or elsewhere in the world that do not have great park, recreation, and cultural amenities.* Great is defined not in terms of size but in terms of people's desire to live there. Great park, recreation, and cultural amenities are synonymous with great cities.

The importance of park, recreation, and open space amenities was reported in a study of key decision makers from 174 businesses that had relocated, expanded, or been launched in Colorado in the previous 5 years.[16] Small-business decision-makers were influenced particularly strongly because they reported that quality of life was their main reason for locating there. Among six elements that were used to measure quality of life, these small-business decision-makers ranked the element of park, recreation, and open space amenities as being most important. They located their businesses where they could enjoy a preferred lifestyle. This finding is especially salient because analysts constantly reiterate that future growth in the United States' economy is likely to come primarily from small businesses.

It has been noted that many small companies set profit goals for themselves that are not optimum but are merely "good enough."[16] They could perhaps earn higher profits if they located elsewhere, but this would involve adverse trade-offs for employees and owners in their quality of life. Hence, they satisfice (i.e., they accept a somewhat lower level of remuneration). One observer has commented: "The new breed of entrepreneur is less like the swashbuckler out for the quick hit and more like the pilgrim looking for a better life" (p. B2).[17]

The profound influence that park and recreation amenities have on people's preferred living locations can be illustrated by a simple exercise that the author has undertaken with literally hundreds of different groups. First, all members of the group are asked to write down the place that they would like to live given their druthers (that is, their preferred place, ignoring pragmatic concerns, such as job, family, language, and heritage). After this task has been completed, each of them is asked to write in one sentence why they picked that place. When responses to this second task are analyzed, results are invariably similar. More than 80 percent of participants will cite some dimension of park, recreational, or environmental ambiance in their responses.

For many people, once they attain a threshold level of income, improvements in quality of lifestyle become more important than increases in salary. For example, a $15,000 raise in salary may not be sufficient to persuade a professional who has strong social networks in Place A, where he or she earns $70,000 with a company, to move to a similar company in Place B if the location offers similar lifestyle opportunities. However, the same individual may be enticed to move from the company in Place A to a similar job in Place C for a $5,000 salary increase if Place C offers superior lifestyle opportunities. Because park and recreation amenities are important lifestyle elements to many, it is

not surprising that many company representatives recognize them as being important in attracting and retaining professional and executive employees.

Strategic economic development involves "designing a community to satisfy the needs of its stakeholders. If small business constitutes the engine of the job generation process, then localities should promote those things that facilitate small business growth" (p. 12).[3] Historically, most jurisdictions have been custodially driven rather than benefit driven in their efforts to persuade companies to locate in their communities; they have focused on selling their community as it is, rather than on adapting the community to meet the changing benefits that relocating companies seek. This approach markedly contrasts with how most viable organizations now operate. In communities seeking to attract footloose companies, especially small businesses, part of a benefits-driven approach is likely to involve investing in park and recreation amenities.

Exhibit A-3 Iowa Strategic Planners Have an Opportunity to Make People the Priority

The Governor's Strategic Planning Council took to the airwaves Monday evening for a statewide town meeting to gather ideas about what Iowans want their state to be like in 2010. It was a valuable exercise that was as interesting for what participants didn't say as what they did. Generally, the comments focused on the need for better education, for keeping more young people in the state, for making Iowa more welcoming to newcomers, for a cleaner environment, and for more cultural and recreational opportunities. Most of the comments could be lumped under a general category of improving the quality of life in Iowa.

Notably missing from the comments - at least from those that made it onto the air - was significant mention of "improving the business climate." Perhaps that's because we've been down that road before, and it led nowhere.

For the last couple of decades, Iowa policy making has been fixated on improving the business climate. The focus was on incentives to businesses, selective tax cuts for industry, and boasting about Iowa's modest wages and mostly nonunion work force. The thinking was that if businesses could be induced to bring jobs to Iowa, everything else would fall into place.

But it didn't. In almost every measure of economic gain, Iowa is near the bottom among the 50 states. Even among our Midwestern neighbors, Iowa has been bringing up the rear in income and population growth.

Meanwhile, a stagnant Iowa could look around and take note that growth occurring elsewhere wasn't necessarily happening in the states with the most favorable business climates. It was in states that are perceived to have the highest quality of life. Jobs are flowing to regions in which people find it desirable to live.

Iowa bet on the wrong strategy, and lost.

The comments heard by the Governor's Strategic Planning Council might be an indication that Iowans sense the need to change strategies. Things such as parks, recreation, cultural attractions, scenic preservation, strengthening community, cleaner water and air, and other enhancements to the quality of life no longer can be assigned a secondary priority in Iowa. The quality of life must be the first priority. Iowa must be an inviting state not just to business, but to people. Especially to people.

Source: Lead Editorial in the *Des Moines Register*, October 27, 1999.

Reliance on substantial tax and cash incentives to attract businesses is risky because these incentives are transient. If a community is not an engaging place in which to live, companies are likely to continue looking for the next set of cash and tax incentives, and will move on when they are offered. If a community's amenities are of a high standard, it is less susceptible to such "abandonment."

Thus, a strong case can be made that reliance on incentives should be replaced by an alternative strategy that commits to designing a community so it satisfies the needs of its key constituents (see Exhibit A-3). Advocates of this approach suggest that communities succeed in becoming viable "when stakeholders such as citizens, workers, and business firms derive satisfaction from their community, and when visitors, new businesses, and investors find their expectations met" (p. 18).[3]

3. Attracting Retirees

It has been observed: "There is a new clean growth industry in America today - the industry is retirement migration" (p. 7).[18] The appeal of retirees to communities stems from their potential for stimulating local economies. If 100 retired households come to a community in a year, each with a retirement income of $40,000, their impact is similar to that of a new business spending $4 million annually in the community.

From the perspective of economic development investments, targeting resources at recruiting retirees rather than at corporations has at least two major advantages. First, retirees do not require the economic incentive packages, comprised of such elements as tax abatements, low-interest loans, subsidized worker training programs, and infrastructure improvements, which are often standard prerequisites to a corporate relocation. Second, capital improvements made as part of a retiree recruitment effort are likely to focus on such quality of life issues as recreational opportunities, beautification, ambiance, or support services, which will also benefit existing residents. Capital investments targeted at recruiting corporations involve large outlays for such things as developing industrial/business parks, access roads, and utilities. Local residents are likely to receive relatively little direct benefit from these facilities. Hence, the risk associated with recruiting corporations is higher because if the corporate strategy fails, the community receives a much poorer return on its investment than if the strategy of attracting retirees fails.

Many believe that retiree relocations may be more desirable than business relocations. Social security and pension benefits of retirees are stable so their incomes are steady and not subject to the vicissitudes of economic business cycles. This income comes from outside the community, but retirees spend it locally so it stimulates the economy and generates jobs. Retirees not only increase the tax base, they tend to be positive taxpayers; that is, they characteristically use fewer services than they pay for through taxes. For example, they pay taxes to school districts but do not send children there. Migrating retirees are not likely to strain social services, health care services, the local criminal justice system, or the natural environment, but they are likely to transfer significant assets into local investment and banking institutions. These assets expand the local deposit base that can be used for commercial and industrial financing. Retirees also provide the community with a pool of volunteers. They tend to be substantial contributors to and active in churches and local philanthropic and service organizations.

Most retirees age in place, or remain in the same area where they spent much of their lives. Between 1995 and 2000, however, almost 1.8 million Americans age 60 and over

Exhibit A-4 Interstate Migrants 60 and Over Receiving either Social Security or Retirement Income – 1995 → 2000

"WINNERS"			
	INMIGRANTS	**OUTMIGRANTS**	**NET INMIGRANTS**
1. Florida	354,104	141,831	212,273
2. Arizona	114,104	43,555	71,549
3. N. Carolina	64,540	33,733	30,807
4. Nevada	50,017	21,390	28,627
5. Texas	85,477	59,634	25,843
6. S. Carolina	38,718	20,036	18,682
7. Georgina	50,655	32,132	18,523
"LOSERS"			
1. New York	47,700	163,289	-115,547
2. Illinois	35,603	83,977	- 48,374
3. California	115,616	146,893	- 31,277
4. New Jersey	46,089	76,689	- 30,600
5. Michigan	31,776	57,157	- 25,381
6. Ohio	38,303	58,656	- 20,353

who were receiving either social security or retirement income changed their state of residence. The states that were the "winners" and "losers" in this movement are shown in Exhibit A-4.[19] These data reinforce the conventional wisdom that sunbelt states are the primary beneficiaries while northern states are the primary losers.

However, the cases of California, Florida, and Texas, all traditionally viewed as sunbelt states, indicate that more than climate is involved. California, despite attracting the second highest number of immigrants is a net loser. At least part of this may be attributable to the extraordinary cost of real estate in California, which encourages retirees to cash in their equity to purchase a much less expensive house elsewhere in the United States in order to raise the quality of their retirement lifestyle. Florida, while retaining its traditional position as the leading destination for retirees was ranked second to New York in the number of outmigrants. Similarly, Texas ranked sixth among the states in number of outmigrants.

Extensive empirical evidence has been reported regarding the propensity of younger, affluent retirees to migrate to areas rich in amenities, and recreational opportunities are prominent among the amenities sought. The central role of recreational opportunities in attracting them is consistently reiterated.[20] Among many who have recently retired, there is a desire to initiate a lifestyle change to a more recreation-oriented way of life. These retirees have an image of how they want to live in retirement and seek environments that facilitate that lifestyle. These sentiments are exemplified by the growing number of specialist retirement settlements, such as the Sun City and Leisure World communities, that have emerged in various parts of the coun-

try. These communities invariably emphasize in their promotion the array of opportunities they provide for engaging in recreational opportunities.

Members of this mobile retiree cohort have been termed GRAMPIES.[21] The acronym is derived from the first letter of key words in the following statement: There are *growing* numbers of *retirees* who are *active monied people in excellent shape.*

While park and recreation amenities are a key ingredient in enticing relatively affluent retirees to immigrate to a community, the converse of this is also likely to apply. That is, communities may lose their GRAMPIES if they fail to provide a comprehensive set of recreation opportunities comparable to those in other locations.

This finding was reported in a study of 270 individuals who retired and migrated to permanently reside in the Texas Lower Rio Grande Valley area within the previous year.[20] These respondents were presented with 26 items known to potentially "push" people into migrating to another location from their resident community upon retirement. The two items on the list that referred to recreation were ranked second (desire to live in a more recreationally enjoyable area) and third (desire to live in a place where recreation opportunities are plentiful) in importance, behind desire to get away from cold weather. This suggests that wealthy retirees are likely to consider moving away from communities that fail to provide a comprehensive set of recreation opportunities. Data from this study suggest that communities that fail to provide a high number of recreation opportunities for retirees are likely to have their tax base eroded by the loss of economic spending power resulting from some of their more affluent retirees leaving the community.

There is a strong social element in recreation. Indeed, a primary purpose of participating in recreation activities for many people is to facilitate socialization. Thus, encouraging retirees to stay in their home environment where there are extensive existing social networks should be easier for communities than recruiting to the area new retirees who face the formidable challenge of creating new social networks. If excellent recreation opportunities are available in the home environment, one of the primary reasons that retirees leave an area will disappear.

4. Enhancing Real Estate Values

The real estate market consistently demonstrates that many people are willing to pay a larger amount for property located close to parks and open space areas than for a home that does not offer this amenity.[22] The higher value of these residences means that their owners pay higher property taxes. In effect, this represents a "capitalization" of park land into increased property values of proximate land owners.

This process of capitalization is termed the "proximate principle."[22] In some instances, if the incremental amount of taxes paid by each property that is attributable to the presence of a nearby park is aggregated, it will be sufficient to pay the annual debt required to retire the bonds used to acquire and develop the park. In these circumstances, the park is obtained at no long-term cost to the jurisdiction.

The earliest empirical verification of the proximate principle capitalization in the United States was offered by the Commissioners of Central Park, New York City, in their early annual reports. Many other empirical studies appeared to confirm it in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. [22]

Thus, from the earliest days of urban park development in the United States in the 1850s, through the 1930s, there was an insis-

tent, almost inviolate conviction among park and open space advocates of the legitimacy of the proximate principle. It was conventional wisdom among them, but it was also espoused by city planners and elected officials. These early studies were fairly rudimentary and naïve, reflecting the underdeveloped nature of the statistical tools and research designs available at that time. However, when the emergence of computing made feasible more complex and sophisticated empirical analyses in the latter third of the twentieth century, the findings generally confirmed those reported in the early studies. A comprehensive review of all these empirical studies asked three questions. [22]

First, did parks and open space contribute to increasing proximate property values? Overwhelmingly, the empirical evidence was supportive. However, there were some situations in which there was either no premium or even a decline in value. These included proximity to active parks that generated noise, congestion, intrusive lighting, et al; poorly maintained parks; parks with lack of visibility from nearby streets, which provided opportunities for antisocial behavior; and properties adjacent to linear parks which compromised the privacy of the property.

The second question related to the magnitude of the proximate effect. The reviewer summarized his conclusion in the following terms:

> A definitive generalizable answer is not feasible given the substantial variation in the size, usage, and design of park lands in the studies and disparity in the residential areas around them, which were investigated. However, some point of departure based on the findings reported here is needed for decision-makers in communities who try to adapt these results to their local context. To meet this need, it is suggested that a positive impact of 20 percent on property values abutting or fronting a passive park area is a reasonable starting point guideline (p. 4). [22]

The third question that was addressed concerned the distance over which the proximate impact of park land and open space extends. There was consensus among the studies that it has substantial impact up to 500 to 600 feet (typically three blocks away from the park). In the case of community-sized parks (say upward of 40 acres), it tended to extend out to 1,500 to 2,000 feet, but even in those cases the premium was small after 500 to 600 feet. Studies have not tried to identify impacts beyond that distance because of the compounding complexity created by other potentially influencing variables, which increase as distance from a park increases. [22]

A series of studies done in New York City reported similar positive impacts emerged when substantial capital investment was made in renovating existing parks that had deteriorated. [23]

Like all other goods, the premiums that people are prepared to pay to be proximate to a park or open space is influenced by the available supply. If such amenities are relatively abundant, then the premiums will likely be relatively small or nonexistent. Thus, in rural areas where there is plentiful open space the incentive to pay a premium to be close to a park is likely to be lower than in densely populated urban areas where open space is rare. Similarly, if homes in an area have large private yards, then it is likely that premiums will be lower than in areas with little private space because privately owned yard space may act as a partial substitute for

public park space. Three additional points are worth noting:

1.) If state or federal grants are available to pay for part of a park's construction and development, the probability increases of the revenue stream from the incremental increases in taxes covering the local community's capital investment in the park.

2.) Incremental property tax income attributable to a park continues to accrue to a community after the debt is repaid, at which time the net return to the community will be substantially greater.

3.) The proximate principle only captures the "individual" benefit that accrues to proximate homeowners. It does not capture the economic value of:

   a. Other benefits that are received by the whole community, such as reduced soil erosion, wildlife habitat enhancement, and improved water quality; or

   b. Users of the park who live outside the proximate area whose home prices are, therefore, not influenced by the park.

Ipso facto evidence of the proximate principle is offered by the approximately 1,000 residential golf communities that have been developed in the United States in the last decade.[24] Design and construction of an 18-hole golf course is likely to cost between $3 million and $8 million but, in addition, a developer's investment includes lost revenues from lots that could have been sold on the 150 to 200 acres of land used for the golf course. If the average density of the development is three lots per acre, this means that the developer foregoes the revenue from 450 to 600 lots which at (say) $40,000 each amounts to between $18 million and $24 million. Thus, the developer's total investment may be in the range of $20 to $30 million.

Typically, in golf course communities, no more than 30 percent of households contain a member who plays golf on the course.[25] There may be many reasons accounting for why the other 70 percent purchase homes there, but a primary factor is likely to be the greenspace, ambiance, and aesthetic appeal the extensive green area of the course offers. Since developers are profit oriented, it is clear that premiums generated from properties in the subdivision exceed the cost of their substantial investment in open space. In this respect, the private market place offers further validation of the legitimacy of the proximate principle.

5. Reducing Taxes

It is often argued by developers and elected officials that in addition to acquisition and development costs, and operating and maintenance costs, there is a substantial opportunity cost associated with allocating land for public parks and open space. Because such land is publicly owned, it is exempt from property taxes. Hence, the opportunity cost is the loss of property tax income that jurisdictions would have received if the land had been developed for other purposes.

The conventional wisdom prevailing among many decision-makers and taxpayers is that development is the "highest and best use" of vacation land for increasing municipal revenues. This conventional wisdom is reinforced by developers who claim their projects "pay for themselves and then some." They exhort that their developments will increase a community's tax base and thereby lower each existing resident's property tax payments.

However, in the past two decades a

number of communities have commissioned a type of fiscal impact analysis, which has become known as a "cost of community services study." Findings from these analyses have challenged conventional wisdom. They have consistently shown that the public costs associated with new residential development exceed the public revenues that accrue from it. A review of 98 such studies showed that for every $1 million received in revenues from residential developments, the median amount the communities had to expend to service them was $1.16 million.[22] There was not a single instance among the 98 communities where taxes from residential development were sufficient to cover the costs of servicing them.

New houses mean more children have to be enrolled and bused to school, additional roads built and maintained, extension of police and fire protection, and so on. While supposed benefits of growth are loudly and widely proclaimed by a community's growth coalition, its associated costs are rarely discussed. The results from these studies refute the notion that development of land is invariably its "highest and best use," which is frequently used to thwart park and open space initiatives.

The evidence clearly indicates that preserving open space can be a less expensive alternative to development. Hence, a number of communities have elected to purchase park and open space land, rather than allow it to be used for residential development, because this reduces the tax burden on their residents which would occur if new homes were built on that land. The conclusion is that a strategy of conserving parks and open space is not contrary to a community's economic health, but rather it is an integral part of it.[22]

6. Stimulation of Equipment Sales

Central Park in New York City was the first major urban park to be developed in the United States. It was constructed over a 12-year period from 1858 to 1870. At the end of that period, its primary designer, Frederick Law Olmsted, observed, "Twelve years ago there was almost no pleasure-driving in New York. There are now, at least, ten thousand horses kept for pleasure-driving" (p. 200).[26] Some years later in 1886 when writing of the park's impact, Olmsted observed, "The dinner hour of thousands of families was permanently changed, the number of private carriages kept in the city was increased tenfold, the number of saddle horses a hundredfold, the business of livery stables more than doubled" (p. 513).[26] This was perhaps the earliest illustration of the role of public park and recreation facilities in stimulating equipment sales.

The single most influential factor in determining demand for park and recreation services is probably the availability of opportunities to access them.[27] Even though ice skating is a recreational activity that millions enjoy, relatively few of these skaters reside in Texas. Texans have a good reason for their lack of participation; Texas has no natural ice areas and few ice rinks. If ice rinks were constructed in every community in Texas, as they are in some northern states, then there would probably be a quantum increase in the number of Texas ice skaters. Once ice rinks were built, a demand would be created for equipment used in ice skating, ice hockey, and other ice activities. The facilities would stimulate production and retailing of these products.

This illustration is used to point out that the economic viability of equipment retailers in a community and of manufacturers of all

types of recreational equipment relies heavily on the availability of park and recreational facilities at which the equipment can be used. The National Sporting Goods Association's annual reports show that Americans now spend over $25 billion on the purchase of sports and recreation equipment.[28] If opportunities to use that equipment are curtailed, then sales of it will be restricted leading to negative economic consequences for those engaged in the sports and recreation equipment industry.

The pleasure boat industry in some parts of the country offers an illustration of these consequences. Many operators of small family-owned marinas are located on the coast, and their businesses provide a basic living but no more. They now find themselves owning prime waterfront property worth millions of dollars that could be sold to developers for residential projects. Thus, by some estimates, 200 marinas are closing each year and only 75 are opening. Without the public sector providing boat slips, the private sector finds it difficult to sell boats. In some parts of the country, there are not enough slips available to satisfy the number of people who want to moor a boat where it has access to salt water. For example, many harbors in the Northeast have waiting lists of several years.[29] The problem has been exacerbated by increased sensitivity to the environment. Historically, many marinas were built in wetland areas, which is no longer permissible. One result of this supply constraint is that small-boat owners do not trade up. An industry official commented: "People are not buying larger boats because they can't find a place to keep them. So they're using smaller boats they can launch from a boat ramp. That's all well and good, but it does have a retarding effect on the industry" (p. 27).[30]

BENEFITS RELATED TO ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

"Environmental sustainability" is synonymous with "human sustainability" and "future prosperity." Without environmental integrity, human life is not sustainable and increments of environmental degradation result in decrements in future prosperity.

Environmental and ecosystem resources are sometimes referred to as "natural capital." As with other forms of capital, the value of natural capital can be depreciated. When green resources are depreciated, the services they provided are depreciated. Six potential contributions of parks and open space to preserving those resources and enhancing environmental sustainability are reviewed in this section: protecting drinking water, controlling flooding, cleaning air, reducing traffic congestion, reducing energy costs, and preserving biological diversity.

The market value of "unused" land is likely to be relatively low and likely to increase substantially when it is converted for development, agriculture, or whatever. This leads to profits to individuals involved in expediting the conversions; increased jobs and incomes to those employed in such endeavors; and increased revenues from property and sales taxes to political jurisdictions responsible for authorizing such conversions. Thus, such conversions are encouraged by all the stakeholders involved.

The flaw in this calculus is that the substantial long-term economic value of parks and open space in preserving natural ecological systems typically is ignored because it is not expressed in market values and is difficult to measure. Nevertheless, these ecological systems are responsible for providing such fundamentally valuable services as protecting drinking water, cleaning air, preserving

biological diversity, regulating climate, controlling flooding, and sustaining ecotourism. It is difficult to put a dollar value on, for example, clean air. The process of calculating the value of these ecological services is complex, but when it is done by economists, the values invariably exceed the values accruing from converting the land to more intensive uses. Ecological economists maintain that environmental services are capital assets that, if managed well, provide a stream of economic benefits just as any good investment does.

Most decisions about land use are made locally and are relatively small scale. Ostensibly, they are marginal, insignificant, and innocuous in affecting the major role of ecological services. However, it is the aggregation of these small decisions that leads to the overall negative impact, so ecosystem service values do need to be incorporated into them. The failure to measure the economic value of these services to society accounts for their deterioration and demise.

Each day, the United States loses more than 4,000 acres of open space to development; that is more than 3 acres per minute and the rate of conversion is accelerating every year. The benefits discussed in this section under separate headings are all interconnected and form part of a community's "green infrastructure." Park and recreation agencies should be in the vanguard of advocating that green infrastructure is considered in concert with development, planning and infrastructure decisions.[31] It has been observed that:

> Converting our natural landscapes may be economically inefficient in the long term. By destroying natural capital, we are forced to find substitutes for the services they once provided. The substitutes for natural capital can be much more expensive to duplicate and operate than those provided by nature. Also, there are many goods and services only natural capital can provide. There are no substitutes that humans can create (p.1).[32]

Thus, the creation of park lands, conservation areas, greenways, and open space has substantial economic value. Every society has three kinds of wealth: material, social and cultural, and biological. The first two are the substance of everyday life and so are highly visible. Biological and natural wealth tend to be underappreciated because they are not often central to our consciousness. [33]

7. Protecting Drinking Water

Water is in theory a quintessentially renewable resource. Most of the world's surface is covered in water, and over much of the country it falls with great regularity from the skies. Yet the carelessness and profligacy with which water resources have been used, the speed of population growth, and the increasing per capita demands for water together mean that provision of adequate, safe supplies of drinking water is now a major source of concern and expense.[32] There is a clear link between the quality of water coming out of a catchment area and the extent of parkland, forests, and conservation open land in that area. The relationship is widely recognized throughout the world and is exemplified by approximately one-third (33 out of 105) of the world's largest cities obtaining a significant proportion of their drinking water directly from protected areas.[34] Protecting for water and protecting for nature are synonymous. Hence, protecting drinking water can provide sustainable funding for park and conservation lands.

If water flows quickly over the surface of the land, most of the pollutants the runoff carries will reach the main body of water. If the water flows more slowly or infiltrates the ground, more of the pollutants will be filtered out, either by adhering to plants and soil, or by being absorbed through plants' root systems. As water seeps through soil, the soil traps small particles and organisms suspended in it. The slowness of the flow allows suspended particles to drop from the water into the soil.

In addition to these natural filtration processes, microorganisms in the soil break down pollutants in the water and purify it in the process.[35] The powerful influence of park and conservation lands in protecting drinking water is exemplified by the following conclusion:

> In a watershed with natural groundcover, about 50 percent of precipitation infiltrates the ground and only about 10 percent flows over the land surface as runoff. In a highly developed watershed, with its impervious surfaces and lack of vegetation, about 15 percent infiltrates and approximately 55 percent becomes surface runoff carrying sediment and pollutants to surface water bodies (p. 11).[36]

Parks and conservation lands reduce the problem of sedimentation: the carrying or deposition of soil particles in water courses. Suspended soil in water supplies greatly increases the cost of making it potable. Strips of conservation land along streams are especially valuable since these riparian zones are probably the most critical of all the areas needing protection in a water catchment. Such zones can filter and immobilize sediment and other water contaminants, such as fertilizer and pesticide runoff, reducing water pollution.

There is a long tradition of park land being acquired for the primary purpose of protecting water supplies. For example, when legislation was passed by New York State in 1885 declaring the Adirondack Forest Preserve be "kept forever as wild forest lands," the primary driving force was to ensure "a regulated water supply for New York's rivers and canals" (p. 108).[37] Thus, it has long been recognized that natural lands such as forests, parks, and wetlands can help slow and filter water before it gets to rivers, reservoirs, or aquifers, keeping those drinking water sources cleaner and making treatment cheaper. A study of 27 water suppliers found that water treatment costs for utilities using primarily surface water supplies varied depending on the amount of forest cover in the watershed. For every 10 percent increase in forest cover in the source area (up to about 60 percent forest cover), treatment and chemical costs decreased by approximately 20 percent. Approximately 50 to 55 percent of the variation in operating treatment costs can be explained by the percent of forest cover in the source area.[38]

Increasingly, there is a willingness to acquire land or easements protecting water courses because the cost of doing so is lower than paying for treatment plants to filter polluted water. A prime example was the decision of New York City in 1997 to invest between $1 billion and $1.5 billion in acquiring land and conservation easements in hydrologically sensitive areas (such as near reservoirs, wetlands, and watercourses) in the Catskill Mountains from which it derives some of its water supply. Increased development and intensity of dairy farming in the area had led to a deterioration in water quality. The alternative was to construct an additional filtration plant at a cost of $6 to $8 billion, plus an

Exhibit A-5 Protecting New York City's Drinking Water

The Catskill/Delaware Watershed, the heart of New York's purification and delivery system, is named after the two major rivers flowing from it. The rural landscape is famed as a scene of great beauty, with sun-struck slopes, glistening streams, and trees that explode in color each fall. Less well known is that it's also a highly efficient and valuable machine.

The cogs are 2,000 square miles of crop-filled valleys and mountains blanketed in forest, all connected by meandering streams feeding into an extensive system of 19 reservoirs. For nearly a century, the complex natural system has been delivering water of exceptional purity to the people of New York City and several upstate counties. In recent years, it has produced as much as 1.8 billion gallons per day, serving New Yorkers with a healthy drink whose taste and clarity have been the envy of mayors throughout the United States. Indeed, in the 1930s and 1940s it was bottled and sold in other cities, such was its reputation. It was the equivalent of Evian or Perrier today. And unlike the case in most other large U.S. cities, New York's tap water has never passed through a filtration plant.

Instead, the water, born as rain and melted snow on mountaintops as far as 125 miles away from those who will ultimately drink it, is naturally cleansed as it makes its way downhill toward the reservoirs. Beneath the forest floor, soil and fine roots filter the water and hidden microorganisms break down contaminants. In the streams, plants absorb as much as half of the surplus nutrients running into the waterway, such as nitrogen from automobile emissions and fertilizer and manure used on nearby farms. In open stretches, wetlands continue the filtering as cattails and other plants voraciously take up nutrients while trapping sediment and heavy metals. After reaching the reservoirs, the water is further cleansed as it sits and waits. Dead algae, floating branches and leaves, and remaining particles of grit slowly sink to the bottom. Some pathogens left in the water may bind to the grit and settle, too.

This mostly natural process—supplemented by small doses of chlorine and fluoride at the end of the water's journey—worked beautifully for most of the twentieth century. But then signs appeared of some mechanical failures. The trouble was relentless new development: Roads, subdivisions, and second homes were popping up all over the watershed, most of which is privately owned. Failing septic systems were leaking raw sewage into streams. Farming and forestry were also taking a toll, with lawn chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides, and manure all being washed into the reservoirs at an unprecedented rate.

By 1989, these problems could no longer be ignored. Congress that year amended the Safe Drinking Water Act, putting into motion a major review of the country's drinking water systems. New York City was faced with the potentially enormous cost of an artificial water filtration plant, estimated to cost between $6 and $8 billion, plus yearly maintenance expenses amounting to $350 to $500 million. Given that pricetag, city officials engaged in vigorous lobbying and won agreement from federal regulators to try the alternative of a watershed protection program capable of guaranteeing water quality indefinitely. Rather than pay for the costly new filtration plant, the city would spend the much smaller amount of about $1.5 billion to protect the upstate watershed, including buying tracts of land as buffers and upgrading upstate sewage treatment plants. The EPA, in turn, would grant a 5-year reprieve of its order, with the possibility of renewal.

The scheme was seriously challenged as powerful developers filed suit, claiming that property values would plummet as the city imposed restrictions on new construction. Environmentalists, on the other hand, criticized the city's efforts as too weak. Nevertheless, the proposal was enacted and a major government entity invested in natural restoration, treating it as a precious piece of infrastructure. The labor of an ecosystem, which had been previously regarded as "free," was shown to have a substantial quantifiable economic value.

(*continued on next page*)

Exhibit A-5 Protecting New York City's Drinking Water (*Continued*)

In 1997 the city floated an environmental bond issue using the proceeds to restore the functioning of the Catskills watershed. Restoration actions to date have been of several types. They include improving sewage treatment in the watershed by installing new systems and improving old ones. They also include buying some 100,000 acres of land in and around the watershed to prevent development and to control agricultural use. In addition, the city used some of the money to purchase conservation easements from existing landowners whose land it did not buy outright.

Some of the measures have contributed additional income to farmers. One of these involves paying farmers not to grow crops or graze cattle along the banks of streams feeding the watershed. Payments are in the range of $100 to $150 per acre. The intention is to prevent a significant source of pollution—runoff of fertilizers, weed killers, and pesticides. Keeping animals out of the streams also reduces the risk of cryptosporidium. Neither filtration nor chlorination can remove the organisms that cause this disease. One of the participants in the negotiations commented that society has to arrange that farmers in the region are paid to produce environmental benefits as well as food.

New York City owns less than 8 percent of the land in the 2,000-square-mile watershed. An important aspect of the New York story is that by improving sewage systems in the Catskills, by initiating other measures to reduce pollution there, and by buying conservation easements, New York City has improved the Catskills community's quality of life and injected a considerable amount of income into the region. The Catskills ecosystem has value for its beauty, as wildlife habitat and for recreation, particularly trout fishing. Restored habitat for trout and other game fish attracts fisherman. These are powerful economic engines for the area. Thus, in adopting this strategy, New York City has provided some financial compensation to area residents and given them a direct financial stake in the conservation, as well as safeguarding New York City's water supply.

Sources: Daly and Ellison[39]; Heal.[35]

annual operating cost of $300 to $500 million. This case has widespread implications because when the costs and benefits of constructing a filtration plant or maintaining and repairing the natural filtration systems that had been purifying the city's water all along were weighed, nature won. A more detailed description of the case is given in Exhibit A-5.

It should be noted that while the natural area's role in protecting New York City's drinking water supply is shown to be a financially significant contribution of these Catskill lands, it is only one of their contributions. The expenditure saved on the filtration plant is only one of a series of ecosystem values that could be included in measuring the total economic contributions of these lands.

A host of case studies documenting the key role of park and conservation lands in protecting drinking water have been published by conservation organizations in the past decade.[32-36, 40, 41] An increasing number of cities have created dedicated funds for this purpose. For example, Dade County, Florida, imposes a 3 percent surcharge on water bills; in Spokane, Washington, residents pay $15 a year specifically for aquifer protection; Providence, Rhode Island, collects a 1 cent/100 gallon water usage tax specifically to fund watershed acquisitions.[35]It has been observed that:

> About 700 of the nation's surface-water systems in the United States are unfiltered, with about 130 legally avoiding filtration through ownership of the source. The remainder are under pressure from the EPA to install filtration plants. Many of these could benefit economically from watershed protection. It has been calculated that within the continental 48 states, an extension of economically justified watershed protection could lead to protection of 10 percent of their land area (p. 57).[35]

As long ago as 1991, the American Water Works Association pointed out that for watershed protection "the most effective way to ensure the long-term protection of water supplies is through land ownership by the water supplier and its cooperative public jurisdictions" (p. 11).[41] Contemporary investment in this approach suggests that many elected officials and increasing numbers of the public recognize the superiority of this approach over paying for increased filtration and treatment plants.

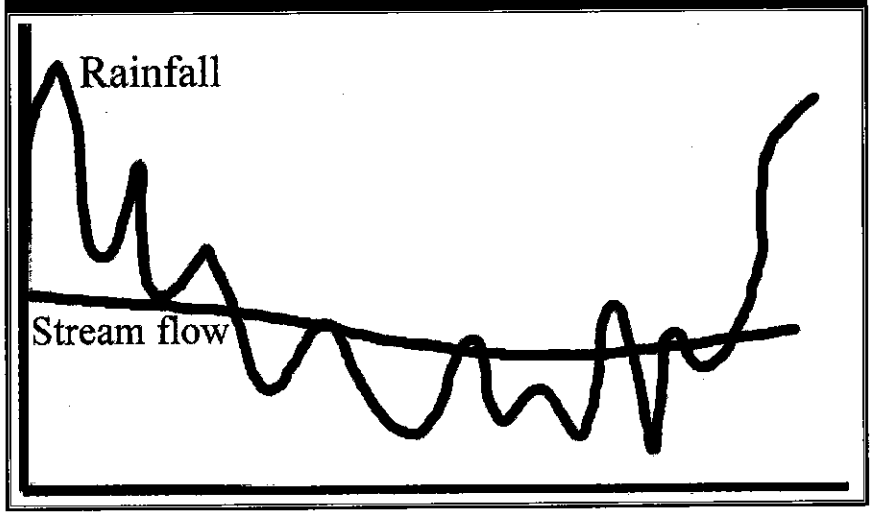
8. Controlling Flooding

When heavy rainfalls occur and flooding results, it is testimony that the efficient and effective drainage system created by nature has been abused. The abuse takes two forms: (i) the overdevelopment of watersheds; and (ii) the infilling of floodplains for development. The creation of substantial park or conservation areas in the watersheds and the preservation of the floodplains as greenways can contribute substantially to preventing the occurrence of such flooding.

Rain tends to fall in short, heavy bursts ,which generate an uneven flow of water. Natural areas are absorbent and soak up the water as rain falls, acting like a huge sponge. These areas then release the water slowly over time, thereby stabilizing the pattern of stream flow.[35] This stabilization role is shown in Exhibit A-6. Increased runoff creates higher peaks. A decrease in the elapsed time between the onset of a storm and when the peaks occur are costly to a city, since the capacity of drainage systems must be designed for peak runoff conditions, which also is likely to increase downstream flooding.[42]

When natural areas on watersheds are replaced by development, the natural sponge is removed and has to be replaced with a substantial built infrastructure to accommodate stormwater runoff, which is both more expensive and less effective than the natural

Exhibit A-6 The Role of Natural Areas on Stabilizing Rainwater Flows



Source: Heal.[33]

mechanisms. The traditional approach is to collect stormwater runoff by curbs and gutters that direct it to an inlet. Once at the inlet, the water flows underground inside a pipe until discharged into a channel. Without the absorption role of natural areas, the volume of water entering a channel after a storm is greatly increased while the time it takes to get there is greatly decreased. Further, concreting, piping, levees, digging new channels and other "hard" engineering solutions in one location frequently create a problem in a downstream location.

Parks and protected open space areas with coverings of trees and vegetation make two specific contributions to controlling stormwater runoff. First, their roots hold the soil in place, which reduces soil erosion and, in turn, enhances the flow-control function of the watershed. Second, they intercept and hold rainfall with their foliage, slowing the rate at which it reaches the ground and allowing some of it to evaporate.

The value of trees for stormwater management has been calculated based on avoided costs of handling stormwater runoff. Local costs are multiplied by the total volume of avoided storage to determine dollars saved by trees. Thus, for example, in the Houston area, the existing tree canopy reduces the stormwater capacity need by 2.4 billion cubic feet. The cost of creating stormwater capacity in Houston is 66 cents per cubic foot, so trees currently save the area $1.33 billion in one-time construction costs.[43]

There is really no effective substitute for the flow-control role of watersheds: "Complex and extensive engineering projects have been developed to replace the flow-control function of watersheds; however, in most cases these have proved inadequate and indeed in some cases counterproductive" (p. 48).[35] The economic value of natural areas in this role (and in their role of purifying waters) is immense, often exceeding any value they may have as agricultural land or residential developments. However, this economic value is often unnoticed.

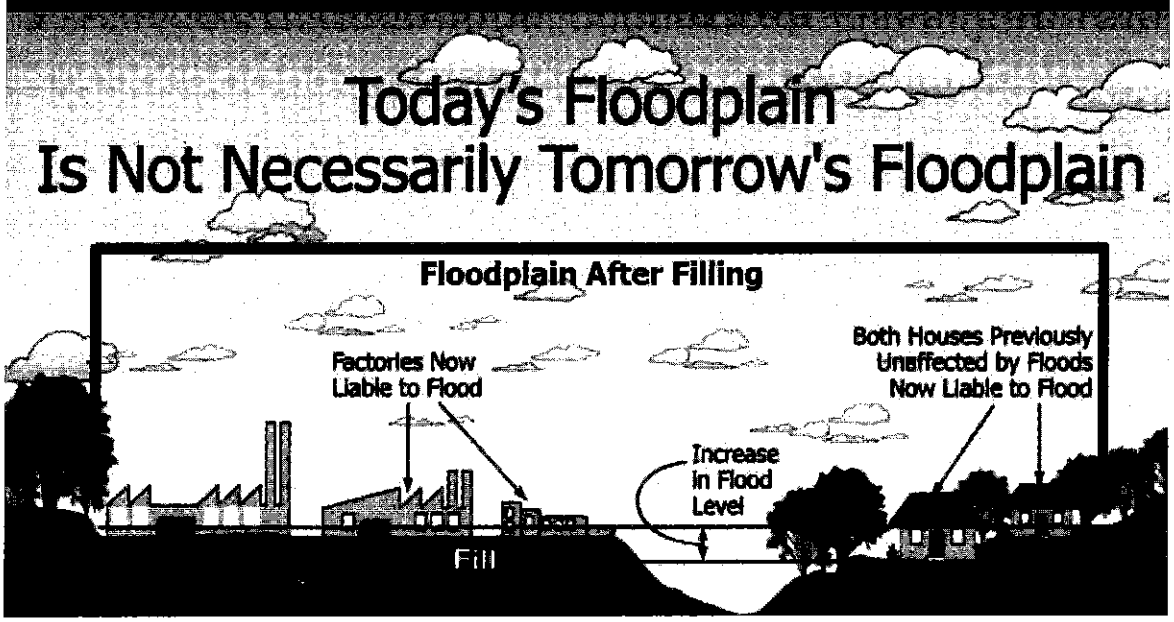
The second primary source of flooding is the infilling of floodplains. If these are protected in full as natural park/greenway areas, substantial cost savings are likely to accrue to a community. Floodplains are defined as the lowlands adjoining the channels of rivers, streams, or other watercourses, or the shorelines of oceans, lakes, or other bodies of standing water. In his pioneering book in the 1960s, Whyte observed:

> A flood plain is a great sponge. When the rains and floods come, it soaks up an enormous amount of water, returns a good part of it to the underlying water table, and then over a period of days and weeks slowly releases the rest. Building on flood plains hurts people. It is not only a question of what happens to the unfortunates who live in the houses that will be inundated but to the people downstream (p. 40).[44]

In short, floodplains provide natural floodwater storage areas. Despite this warning, large areas of floodplains continue to be filled to facilitate development.

Exhibit A-7 illustrates the consequence of these actions. It shows that if large areas of the floodplain are filled, then structures that were previously outside the natural floodplain will be flooded unless remedial action is taken.[45] Consequently, major investments are made in structural measures such as dredging, channeling, concreting, and building dikes and levies. This is expensive; tends to deflect the flooding to downstream areas rather than resolve it; and periodically fails in

Exhibit A-7 The Consequences of Filling in Floodplains



Source: Association of State Floodplain Managers.[45]

times of atypical storms, with disastrous consequences. The public pays the large bills for these infrastructure "improvements" and, thus, retrospectively provides a subsidy to developers for building where they shouldn't. Despite 75 years of large investments in federal flood control embracing these man-made "solutions" and over 30 years of the National Flood Insurance Program, the annual cost of losses from flooding has inexorably risen every year.

The harm that has been caused by the wholesale alteration of one of nature's essential ecosystems has now belatedly been recognized. Serving their natural functions, floodplains are vast absorptive reservoirs of floodwaters; they are the earth's primary filter and dissolver of waterborne contaminants; their coastal marshes and riverine wetlands provide the creative essentials for countless forms of life; and left to themselves, floodplains and the life they generate offer enjoyment and recreation.[45]

The Corps of Engineers historically viewed dams and levees as the solution for flooding problems, but in the 1980s and 1990s, spurred by a slew of environmental regulations designed to save wetlands and endangered species, the Corps began to recognize that natural restoration was often a superior solution to flooding. For example, in the 1980s instead of damming the Charles River around Boston, the Corps purchased 8,500 acres of floodplain wetlands to prevent construction on them. The engineers calculated that letting the floodplain "store" the water would be just as effective as the proposed dam. The land cost was $10 million, a tenth of the $100 million the Corps estimated it would take to build the dam and levees that were originally proposed. After the Mississippi flooded in 1993, despite the Corps' tall levees and deep dredging, the federal government invested hundreds of millions of dollars to buy and demolish thousands of riverbank homes and businesses, restoring the natural floodplain and tacitly conceding that flood control was a losing proposition.[46]

The economic value of natural floodplains can be estimated by comparing it to the alternative cost of engineered storage space. For example, a research study conducted for the Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Illinois, found that the average cost of constructing engineered storage for floodwaters was $13,085 per acre-foot.[46] This study showed that each acre of floodplain owned by the District provided an average of 4 acre-feet of storage. Thus, the natural value of floodplain storage in this urbanized regional setting was estimated to be $52,340 per acre (4 acre-feet x $13,085 per acre-foot). These values were based on the present worth of the benefits accrued over 20 years.

Government agencies responsible for calculating benefits of floodplain management tend to primarily focus on flood-loss reduction and fail to include the benefits of managing floodplains as assets. Each acre of well-managed floodplain produces natural values, which can be expressed in monetary terms. For example, a study of the multipurpose Salt Creek Greenway applied this method of evaluating floodplain benefits to the nearly 3,500 acres of floodplain land in Cook and DuPage Counties, Illinois.[46]

The sum of the natural values of floodplain land was found in this case study to be $8,177 per acre (Exhibit A-8). In this example of wise use, flood losses were estimated to be reduced by $630 per acre. Thus, in the Salt Creek Greenway example, the natural values associated with the wise use of the floodplain were more than 10 times the narrow, single-purpose flood-loss-reduction benefit. These results suggest that an adequate assessment of benefits should include the natural and regional values as well as the flood-loss-reduction benefits. The value of natural floodplain storage of $52,340 per acre in the Forest Preserve District of Cook County can be applied to the Salt Creek Greenway. When this value is added to the $8,177 calculated for natural values (filtration, aquifer recharge, recreational areas, etc.), the total value of wise use of floodplain land in the expanding metropolitan area of Cook County is $60,517 per acre (Exhibit A-8).

Exhibit A-8 Examples of Quantified Natural Values of Floodplain Land

Benefit Category	($/acre)
Wastewater reclamation and reuse (nutrient recycling and irrigation to eliminate the discharge of pollutants)	3,177
Pollution abatement	
Nonpoint source (filtration, erosion control)	1,165
Infiltration and inflow reduction	610
Subtotal, pollution abatement	1,775
Aquifer recharge	504
Recreation	2,721
Total natural value of multipurpose greenway	8,177
Regional floodwater storage	52,340
Total natural and regional value	60,517

Source: The Forest Preserve District of Cook County, Illinois, *An Evaluation of Floodwater Storage*, February 1998, and Illinois Department of Conservation, *The Salt Creek Greenway Plan*, 1993.

The Katrina hurricane in 2005 dramatically reinforced public awareness of the limitations of man-made structures in protecting against coastal flooding when the levees protecting New Orleans failed. Natural systems such as wetlands, marshes, and barrier beaches provide a level of protection against coastal storm events. The Gulf Coast is rapidly losing both the barrier islands and the coastal wetlands that buffer the impact of hurricanes and flooding of the Gulf Coast and southeast Louisiana. These demonstrations of the failure of expensive man-made structures presumably will consolidate support for ensuring development will be undertaken in a manner that respects natural process and the critical contributions of wetlands, greenways, and protected open space.

9. Cleaning Air

Trees, other vegetation, and soils enhance air quality by removing from the atmosphere: (i) ozone and other gaseous pollutants and toxic chemicals, such as nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, formaldehyde, benzene, and hydrogen fluoride; (ii) particulate pollutants; and (iii) carbon dioxide.

Soils have considerable capacity to remove gases from the atmosphere and to transform them through microbial, physical ,and chemical processes. Vegetation can aid the process by effectively cleaning the soil in its root zones of many toxic man-made chemicals.

Vegetation removes gaseous pollution primarily through its leaves. Pollutants such as ozone, hydrogen fluoride, sulphur dioxide, and nitrogen dioxide, which are soluble in water, are most easily absorbed by leaf surfaces. When vegetative surfaces are wet and damp, the pollutant removal rate may increase up to tenfold. Under damp conditions, the entire plant surface - leaves, twigs, branches, and stems - is available for uptake.[47]

In the 1980s when atmospheric chemists began measuring emissions from trees, prominence was given to the contention that trees were a creator of pollution rather than an alleviator of it. Unfortunately, this widely publicized conclusion resulted from a distortion and misuse of the data. Like all living things, trees emit certain substances as by-products of their metabolism. Some of these substances are classified as volatile organic compounds (VOCs), so called because they evaporate easily into the air and react readily with other molecules.

Ground-level ozone pollution is produced by a series of complex chemical reactions primarily involving VOCs, nitrogen oxides, and sunlight. The presence alone of VOCs does not lead to ozone formation. In order for ozone to form, nitrogen oxides must be present. Nitrogen oxide is a man-made pollutant produced by cars, trucks, power companies, industry, gasoline-powered lawn equipment, fireplaces, gas furnaces, gas stoves, and so on. The cooling effect of vegetation, which is discussed later in this appendix (Reducing Energy Costs), inhibits this chemical process because: (i) the rate of vaporization of VOCs increases with temperature; and (ii) the formation of ozone itself is heat dependent. That is, VOCs and nitrogen dioxide mix in sunlight at higher temperatures to form ozone. Lower temperatures mean lower ozone levels:[47]

> Is it fair then to say that trees pollute? The best and most accurate answer is no. Trees do have emissions, but "pollution" and "emission" are not synonymous terms. Embedded in the word pollution is the concept of harm - whether to health or property or ecosystems. By themselves, the chemicals emitted by plants

> not only do no harm but appear to play a vital role in creating healthy environments - for plants and for people (p. 8).[47]

To calculate the value of the pollution removed by trees, economists multiply the number of tons of pollutants removed times the costs that society would have paid, in areas such as health care, if trees did not remove these pollutants. In a study of their impact on the Houston area, for example, it was found that the area's existing tree canopy removed 83 million pounds of pollutants, valued at $208 million, annually. Specifically the tree cover removed 35.4 million pounds of ozone (valued at $109 million), 6.55 million pounds of sulphur dioxide (valued at $5 million), 12.2 million pounds of nitrogen dioxide (valued at $37 million), and 1.7 million pounds of carbon monoxide (valued at $1.7 million).[43]

Trees and soils also help to remove particulates from the air. Increased levels of tiny particulates (10 microns or smaller in diameter) in the air as a result of combustion (cars, lawn mowers, industrial processes) have been correlated in numerous studies with increased respiratory disease, asthma, and cardiovascular and respiratory mortality.[47] Some particles can be absorbed into the tree, but most intercepted particles are retained on the plant surface. Thus, vegetation may be only a temporary retention site for some of the atmospheric particles as they may be resuspended to the atmosphere, washed off by rain, or dropped to the ground with leaf and twig fall.[48]

Carbon dioxide is one of the "greenhouse" gases, and its increased levels are thought to be the primary cause of global warming. They are attributable almost entirely to increased fossil fuel combustion and to deforestation.[49] Trees reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide in two ways: (i) they directly sequester it as woody and folian biomass while they grow; and (ii) trees around buildings reduce heating and cooling demand, thereby reducing emissions from power generating plants. This latter role of trees is discussed later in this appendix (Section 11, Reducing Energy Costs).

On average each person in the United States generates 2.3 tons of carbon dioxide every year, almost half of which comes from driving an automobile. An acre of trees absorbs enough carbon dioxide over a year's time to equal the amount produced by driving a car 26,000 miles.[47] In the Chicago area, the U.S. Forest Service calculated that a single tree with a trunk circumference of 30 inches removed 200 pounds of carbon dioxide, 1.1 pounds of ozone, and 2 pounds each of sulphur dioxide, particulates, and nitrogen dioxide-every year. The study calculated that Chicago-area trees store a total of 6.1 million tons of carbon. Large trees were found to store up to 1,000 times more carbon than small trees, and the rate of storage by large trees was approximately 90 times greater than the rate of storage by small trees.[49]

It has been calculated that planting trees is the least expensive way to reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide. Tree planting removes 1 pound of carbon dioxide for about 1 cent, whereas driving more efficient cars costs about 10 cents per pound. If every American family planted just one tree, the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere would be reduced by one billion pounds annually. This is almost 5 percent of the amount that human activity worldwide pumps into the atmosphere each year.[50]

Utility companies that emit large amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere are now investing in reforestation projects to mitigate their pollution. This approach is known as *carbon sequestration.*

Exhibit A-9 Strategies to Help Improve Air Quality through the Use of Trees

- Increase the number of healthy trees (increases pollution removal).
- Sustain existing tree cover (maintains pollution removal levels).
- Minimize use of high-VOC-emitting trees (reduces ozone and carbon monoxide formation).
- Sustain healthy, large, low-VOC-emitting trees (large trees have greatest per tree effects).
- Use long-lived trees (reduces long-term pollutants emissions from planting and removal activities.
- Use low-maintenance trees (reduces pollutants emissions from maintenance activities).
- Reduce fossil fuel use in maintaining vegetation (reduces pollutant emissions).
- Plant trees in energy conserving locations (reduces pollutant emissions from power plants).
- Plant trees to shade parked cars (reduces vehicular VOC emissions).
- Supply ample water to vegetation (enhances pollution removal and temperature reduction).
- Plant trees in polluted areas or heavily populated areas (maximizes tree air quality benefits).
- Avoid pollutant-sensitive species (increases tree health).
- Utilize evergreen trees for particulate matter reduction (year-round removal of particles).

Source: Nowak, D.J.[52]

For example, American Electric Power completed the nation's first large-scale carbon sequestration through a reforestation project by acquiring 10,000 acres and reforesting 18,000 acres, and then transferring the land so it became part of the Catahoula National Wildlife Refuge in Louisiana. It was a relatively inexpensive way to offset their carbon dioxide emissions, costing less than $10 per ton sequestered.[51]

There are two conditions that could at least partially nullify potential air quality gains. First, the gains could be affected by pollution associated with tree maintenance activities. Various types of equipment are used to plant, maintain, and remove vegetation in cities. This equipment includes various vehicles for transport or maintenance, chain saws, back hoes, leaf blowers, chippers, and shredders. The use and combustion of fossil fuels to power this equipment leads to the emission of carbon dioxide and other chemicals such as carbon monoxide, nitrogen and sulfur oxides, and particulate matter.[52]

The second condition that could nullify gains is the failure to sustain a tree planting program over the long term. Nearly all the carbon sequestered by trees eventually will be converted back to carbon dioxide due to decomposition after the tree dies. Hence, the benefits of carbon sequestration will be relatively short lived if the vegetation structure is not sustained. The goal should be to reach an equilibrium with sequestration by offsetting decomposition from dead trees with replacement plantings.

A summary of the strategies that can be used by park and recreation agencies to improve air quality through the medium of trees is given in Exhibit A-9.

Beyond their role in aiding air quality, the economic value of trees in the ecological system includes alleviating flooding (Section 12) and reducing energy costs (Section 11). The U.S. Forest Service has developed its Urban Forest Effects (UFORE) model to enable planners and managers in local communities to measure the contribution of their trees.[53] Similarly, a conservation organization, American Forests, has built its user-friendly Urban Forest Ecosystems (UFE) model to enable local communities to estimate the economic value attributable to their trees.[54]

10. Reducing Traffic Congestion

This category focuses on the benefits accruing from the creation of trails for biking and hiking. It could be viewed as a dimension of park and recreation's contribution to alleviating air pollution. However, it is classified separately because it also contributes to reducing the time and quality-of-life costs inflicted by traffic congestion, and encourages exercise, which contributes to facilitating healthy lifestyles (This latter benefit is discussed in Section 16).

The adverse impact of fine particle air pollution was quantified in a study of 66,000 women reported in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.[55] It found that women in the most polluted cities had a 76 percent greater chance of dying from heart ailments than those in the least polluted cities. Fine particles, often appearing as smoke or haze, are emitted by a variety of sources, from power plants, industrial factories, fires, as well as automobile exhaust. Because they are so small, they can bore deep into the lungs and bloodstream, and trigger heart attacks.

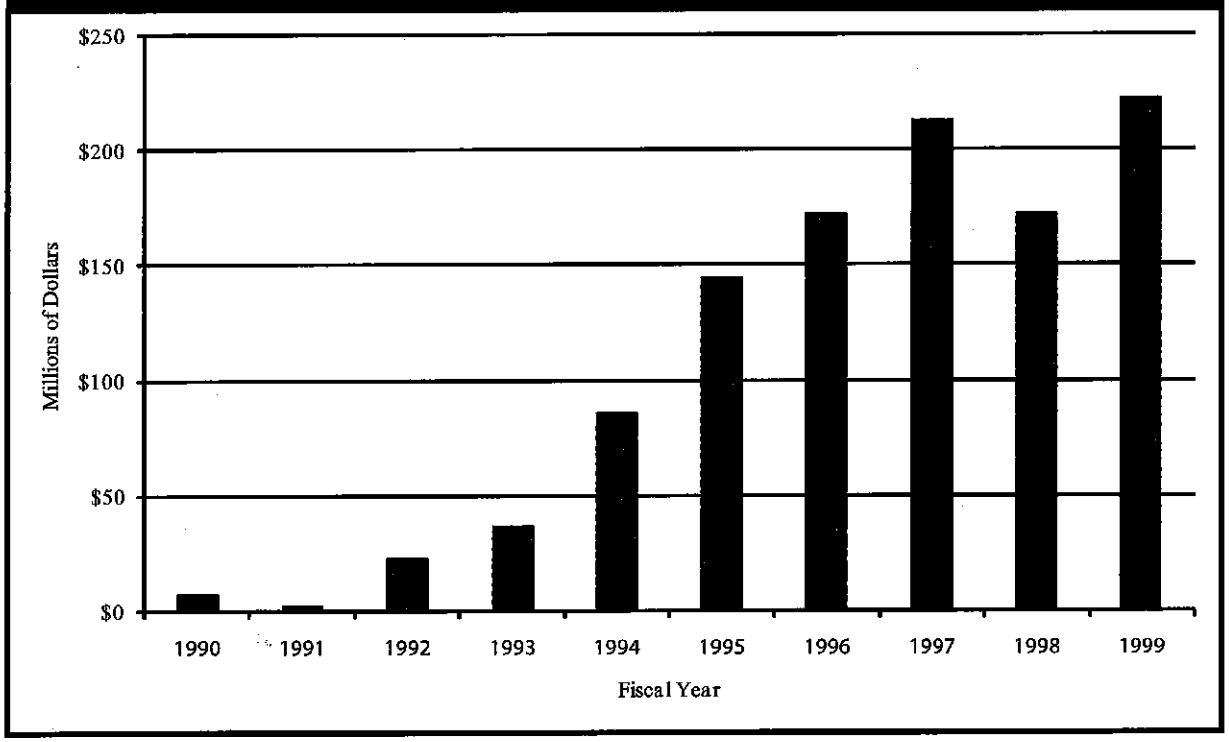
Traffic's role in generating air pollution is well documented. For example, as much as 50 percent of ground-level ozone pollution is a result of motor vehicle exhaust. This both triggers asthma attacks and causes asthma which is the number one reason children visit the emergency room and miss school. A study in Atlanta during the 1996 Olympic Games documented a significant drop in children's asthma attacks when single-occupancy vehicle use decreased due to the Games.[56]

Vehicles are now equipped with high efficiency catalytic converters, which eliminate 95 percent of the pollution produced during normal driving. Most pollution is now emitted in the first few minutes of driving, before the catalytic converter has warmed up. This means that the most effective strategy to reduce pollution is to reduce the number of trips taken by car.[57]

The United States is served by a comprehensive network of roads, but a primary challenge is how to alleviate the traffic congestion clogging those roads. A part of the solution is to provide people with options to avoid it entirely, and hike and bike trails are one of those options. Those who choose not to avoid congestion, or who are unable to do so, also benefit from hike and bike trail users because the reduced number of cars on the road network means that it is less congested.

In 1987, the President's Commission

Exhibit A-10 Federal Spending on Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects



on Americans Outdoors reported there was a clamor for outdoor recreational facilities close to home. Their response was to articulate a vision of a system of recreational corridors: "fingers of green that reach out from and around and through communities all across America" (p. 142). They called for a "prairie fire of local action" (p. 73) to implement the vision.[58] The fire was ignited by the availability of substantial funds for this purpose in successive federal transportation acts since 1992 (ISTEA, TEA21, and SAFETEA-LU). As a result, the most popular outdoor recreational activities are now those associated with urban trails - walking, jogging, biking, roller blading, and so on.

These federal funds are allocated for "transportation enhancements," but approximately 60 percent of them go to funding bicycle and pedestrian and trail related facilities. Because these federal funds require only a 20 percent local match, they have been a major stimulus to trail creation in local communities: The increase in spending has been dramatic (Exhibit A-10). For example, it grew from $7 million in 1990 to over $220 million in 1999. These figures probably understate spending because many improvements are made as part of building or widening roads and may not be recorded as bicycle/pedestrian projects in the official data.

11. Reducing Energy Costs

The contributions of trees to reducing energy costs occur at both the micro level of shading individual structures from solar heat and/or winter winds, and at the community level of mitigating the "urban heat island" effect. A substantial amount of empirical research on these contributions has been reported in the past decade. This effort has been led by researchers from the U.S. Forest Service, but supplemented by many others. The

process by which shade trees contribute to reducing energy costs is described in the following paragraph.

> Shade trees reduce solar heat gain by transferring the active heat-absorbing surface from an inert building envelope to living foliage. Because the heat capacity of leaves is low, most of this energy is transferred to the surrounding air. If ample soil moisture is present and environmental conditions are suitable, water in the leaves evaporates in a process known as evapotranspiration and the air is cooled (p. 12).[59]

Although the main source of solar heating is usually through windows, radiant energy absorbed by walls and roofs is conducted into buildings and also significantly affects heating and cooling costs.

Planting deciduous trees on the sides of a house that shade it from the summer sun and around its air conditioners saves homeowners the cost of artificially cooling their house by an equivalent amount. Typically, two or three shade trees are sufficient to generate the potential energy savings for a house if they are carefully located. When trees are optimally located to shade a house, the data typically show annual energy cost reductions for cooling between 10 percent and 50 percent.[60]

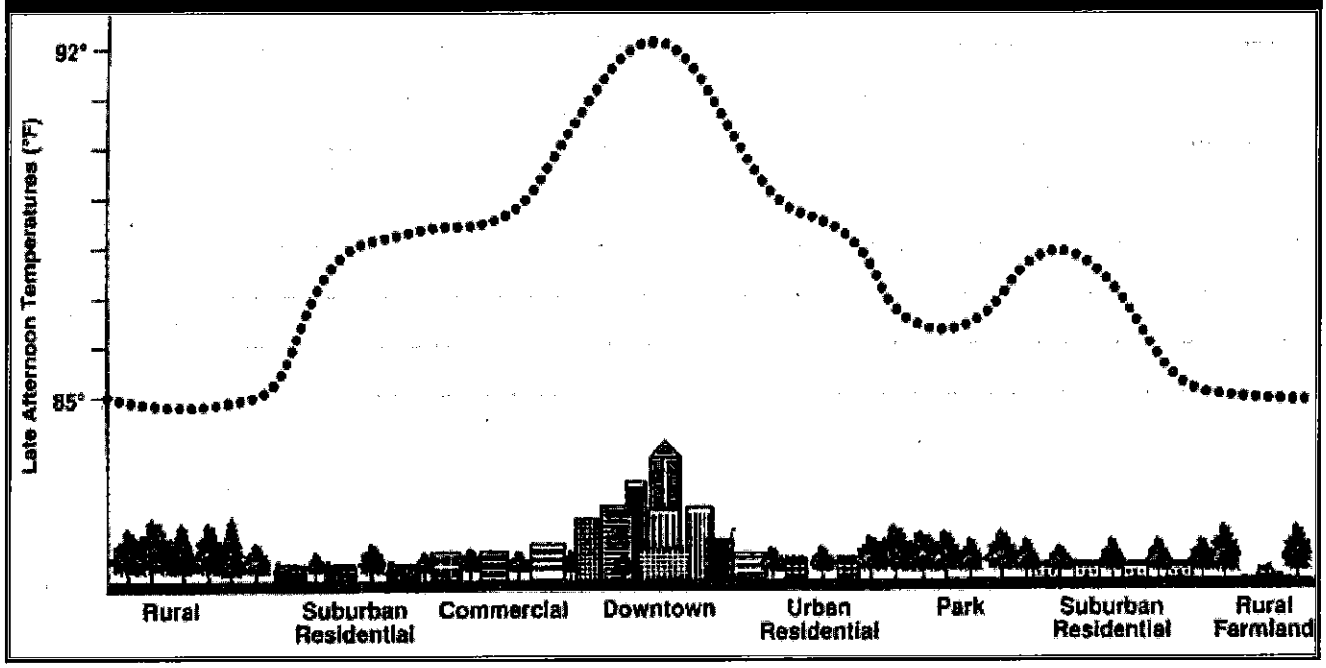
The positive impact of tree shade varies with species, direction, and distance of trees relative to buildings, climate, time of the year, occupant behavior, and/or orientation of the building surface. Most potential energy savings will occur in areas with relatively long cooling seasons; large numbers of air-conditioned small buildings, such as single-family homes, duplexes, and mobile homes; and ample space for new tree planting.

Wind contributes to the infiltration of outside air into buildings and may account for one-third of the heat loss from a house in winter.[61] Thus, the planting of trees to act as a windbreak can reduce the costs of heating a home.

There are three potential negative consequences on energy costs associated with shade trees. First, surfaces heated by the sun become warmer when wind speed is low. Thus, reduction in energy costs accruing from the effectiveness of trees as a wind break in winter, may be partially offset by increases in costs resulting from less wind in the summer. Second, while trees offer shade in the summer, their presence may block solar heat from reaching a house in the winter, which adversely counters some of the savings from cooling load reduction. Planting deciduous trees will reduce this negative consequence, but even their bare limbs are likely to result in some blockage. Finally, trees that overhang roofs can reduce heat loss to the cool summer sky at night. However, the aggregate impact of these negative consequences is likely to be far exceeded by the positive energy cost savings resulting from shade trees.

On average, developed areas of cities are 5° to 9°F warmer than the rural areas that surround them. This is termed "the urban heat island effect" (Exhibit A-11). Three factors contribute to this. First, taller buildings prevent the concrete surfaces from losing heat because they act as a shield against the colder night air. Second, concrete and asphalt have a high heat capacity and thermal conductivity level. Because these surfaces retain heat, they stay hotter longer. Thus, after the sun sets, these hot surfaces continue to release their stored heat. Third, and most importantly, the lack of vegetation prevents cooling by evapotranspiration and does not create shade. Through their evapotransporta-

Exhibit A-11 Urban Heat-Island Profile



tion process, trees act as natural "evaporative coolers," thus lowering the ambient temperature.[62] A single large tree can transpire up to 100 gallons of water a day, producing a cooling effect similar to that of five average air conditioners running for 20 hours.[62]

Increases in urban trees means buildings in these environments require less cooling power and energy from fossil fuel powerplants (thus, also reducing the carbon dioxide pollution and unhealthy ozone levels produced by these plants). It has been observed that:

> Rapid urbanization in the United States during the past 50 years has been associated with a steady increase in downtown temperature of about 1°F (0.8°C) per decade. The demand for electricity in U.S. cities increases about 2 percent for every degree F (3 to 4% per °C) rise in temperature, and approximately 3 to 8 percent of the electricity used for cooling is needed to compensate for this urban heat island effect (p. 151).[63]

A review of the empirical findings concluded: "Large parks or residential neighborhoods with extensive vegetation can produce air temperature reductions as great as 10°F compared to nearby areas with little vegetation" (p. 12).[59]

Numerous studies have reported the magnitude of savings associated with tree cover. For example, in Houston, residents spent approximately $714 per home on air-conditioning. The existing tree canopy in the city saved an average homeowner $72 per year. Thus, the aggregate annual savings to the city's homeowners was approximately $26 million per year.[43]

Despite the multiple economic advantages associated with trees and their aesthetic

popularity with the general public, acquiring funding for large scale urban forestry improvements has been difficult for park and recreation agencies. In the past decade, however, electric utilities have emerged as viable partners to fill this financial vacuum in some communities.

From the perspective of utilities, tree-planting programs are a form of demand-side management with a tangible economic value to the utility, which can be quantified based on avoided supply costs, or the decrease in supply costs to the utility due to reduced building electrical loads. Partnering with communities offers utilities an opportunity to assert a proactive civic leadership role and to reposition themselves from being sources of pollution to being environmentally sensitive.

The first such program was initiated by the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) in 1991:

> The primary objective of this program [was and] is to plant 500,000 trees that will directly shade residential buildings and thereby reduce summer air conditioning loads. A secondary objective of the Shade Tree program is to create an urban forest that will help mitigate the urban heat island effect, or the increase in summer outdoor temperatures typically caused by urban development. Additional indirect energy benefits of the program may result from the effects of trees as wind breaks, which may reduce infiltration of unconditional outside air into homes (p. 1).[64]

The SMUD's investment in the program is approximately $2 million per year. Individual home owners who want to participate attend a training session to learn about proper planting and maintenance of the trees. They receive trees in 5-gallon containers free of charge and are then responsible for planting and caring for the trees received. The SMUD program offers 38 different species and distributes an average of 3.5 trees per residence.

The pioneering SMUD program provided a model that other utilities subsequently adopted, and by 1994 almost 70 utilities across the country had done so. Perhaps the most ambitious program was launched in 2002 by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. Their long-term goal was to plant one million trees throughout the city of Los Angeles during the next 10-year period. The program was launched after a benefit-cost analysis undertaken by the USDA Forest Service, Center for Urban Forest Research, estimated that the benefit-to-cost ratio would be 1.4 to 1 for energy savings alone, and this extended to 17.5 to 1 for all benefits. Details of their analysis are reported in Exhibit A-12.

12. Preserving Biological Diversity

Biological diversity refers to the number of species of plants, animals, and microorganisms present in a given area, but it also describes genetic diversity within a species and ecosystem diversity.[32] It includes all life forms from bacteria to birds and mammals, which may number 30 million species worldwide, although only 1.4 million of these have been named. Thus, it is concerned with the movement of organisms across landscapes and the movement of genes within and among populations of organisms.

Two decades ago, the word "biodiversity" did not exist. Today it has become a household word used as a synonym for the "variety of life." This extraordinary rise to prominence stems from a realization that it

Exhibit A-12 Benefit Cost Analysis Summary of the Trees for Green LA Program

The analysis was based on 200,000 5-gallon trees being planted in the first 2 years at a unit cost of $40 (i.e., a total budget of $8 million). A 30-year stream of benefits was projected assuming:

- 70% of the trees planted survive after 30 years,
- 95% are planted in single-family residential yards and 5% in parks and open space where trees do not shade buildings,
- 60% are planted in inland areas. Cooling loads and air conditioner saturations are greater in coastal areas, where the remaining 40% are assumed to be planted,
- and residential plantings are evenly distributed to shade the east, south, and west sides of homes.

Given these assumptions, the following monetary estimates were derived:

Summary of Program Costs

Type	Number	Avg $/Tree	Total Cost
Yard Trees	190,000	$40	$7,600,000
Park Trees	10,000	$40	$400,000
Total Trees	200,000	$40	$8,000,000

Summary of Program Benefits

Type	*PV Benefits Yard Trees	*PV Benefits Park Trees	*PV Benefits All Trees
Energy	$11,160,935	$211,383	$11,372,318
CO^2	$984,710	$42,467	$1,027,178
Air Pollution	$87,108,236	$4,584,644	$91,692,880
Stormwater	$8,154,515	$429,185	$8,583,700
Aesthetics	$25,936,474	$1,365,078	$27,301,551
TOTAL	$133,344,870	$6,632,757	$139,977,627

Net Present Value (Benefits-Costs):

Yard Trees: $125,744,870
Park Trees: $ 6,232,757
Total Trees: $131,977,627

Benefit to Cost Ratio (Benefits/Costs): 17.5
Benefit to Cost Ratio (Energy Only): 1.4
*PV = Net Present Value

Source: McPherson, E.G. & Simpson, J.R. (2001). *Benefit-cost analysis of LAPWD's "Trees for a green LA" shade tree program.* California: USDA Forest Service, Center for Urban Forest Research, Davis.

is disappearing, and that unlike pollution its losses cannot be reversed. Species extinction is now occurring at an unprecedented rate, resulting in decreasing levels of diversity. There are two main reasons for this. First, the destruction and fragmentation of habitats. The first 90 percent reduction in an area of habitat lowers the species number by one-half. The final 10 percent eliminates the second half.[65] Second, the reductionism of modern agriculture has resulted in the use of approximately 20 species of plants to produce most of the food for society, whereas historically 7,000 plant species were used for food.[33]

The natural diversity of living things has great value in providing food, clothing, shelter, industrial products, and medicine. Consider the following illustrative examples:

- One in four medicines and pharmaceuticals has its origin in the tissues of plants, and another one in four is derived from animals and microorganisms. If half of the new drugs being developed are produced from these sources, then loss of biodiversity represents a substantial loss in life chances for future generations. The story of taxol is salutory in illustrating what may be lost when species are exterminated:

  > Taxol is a compound in the bark of the Pacific yew tree. In the Pacific Northwest, loggers cleared it as a "trash tree." Researchers found that taxol damaged cancer cells that were unaffected by other drugs; it can help 100,000 Americans fight breast, lung and ovarian cancer, not as a cure, but by enabling patients to live longer with less pain. Taxol may soon no longer require the Pacific yew's bark because drug companies are trying to synthesize the active ingredient (p. 103).[33]

- Many plants, marine invertebrates, fungi, microorganisms, reptiles, and amphibians have evolved chemical defenses to protect them from their natural enemies or to subdue their prey. These compounds are effective because they are biologically active, with properties that disrupt the physiology of their target organisms. Those same properties often prove useful in medicine, either as defenses against human pathogens and parasites, or to influence human physiology towards some desired objective. Ultimately, these medicinal compounds may be produced synthetically in laboratories, "but we do not yet understand the biochemistry of life well enough to design drugs for our needs from first principles - we need to rely on the accumulated experimentation and experience of millions of species that share the planet with us to recommend solutions" (p. 291).[66]

- Wild relatives of crops used as society's primary food source continue to be used to maintain resistance to disease, enhance the crops' vigor, and contribute in other ways to improving crop efficiency. This applies similarly to trees that are also crops. As genetic technology progresses, practically any organism with a novel arsenal of chemical defenses or weapons could become a genetic resource of potentially great agricultural value.

- More than 218,000 of the world's 250,000 flowering plants, including 70 percent of all species of food plants, rely on pollinators for reproduction. More than 100,000 of these pollinators are invertebrates, including bees, moths, butterflies, beetles,

and flies. Another 1,000 or so vertebrate species including birds, mammals, and reptiles also pollinate plants. Pollination by honey bees and other species, for example, is essential for about $30 billion of U.S. crops in addition to pollinating natural plant species. Humans have found no technology to substitute for this natural service.[33]

- A species of bacteria discovered in the sediments of the Potomac River is capable of breaking down chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in anaerobic conditions. There are many organisms in nature with unusual metabolisms and appetites that could prove to be beneficial in cleaning up some pollution problems and could be of great significance in the rapidly developing field of industrial ecology.[67]

- The venoms of snakes, frogs, and toads have yielded a variety of nerve and muscle drugs. For example, a South American pit viper might seem of little relevance to someone living in Washington, D.C., or Chicago, yet studies on the venom of one species of these vipers led to the discovery of the angiotensin system that regulates blood pressure in human beings. Once that system was known, it became possible to devise a molecule that alters blood pressure and is the preferred prescription drug for hypertension. This compound brings the Squibb Company $1.3 billion a year in sales and contributes to the well-being and longevity of millions of people.[67]

- Ecotourism is perhaps the fastest growing segment of tourism and it rests on a foundation of biodiversity.

The diversity of existing species is an irreplaceable product of an eons-long evolutionary process that provides indispensable ecological services as well as food, industrial products, and medicinal benefits. Those services include recycling waste, maintaining the chemical composition of the atmosphere, and influencing the world's climate. Further, because only a small fraction of the planet's species have been identified and an even smaller fraction studied in any depth, the potential economic value far exceeds the known value. The extinction or genetic impoverishment of species forecloses the options and associated economic benefits of future generations:

> If global nuclear war does not occur, then the worst catastrophe confronting the world - and it is already well underway - is not energy depletion, economic collapse, conventional war, or even the expansion of totalitarian governments. As tragic as these catastrophes would be for us, they can be repaired within a few generations. The one process now going on that will take millions of years to correct is the loss of genetic and species diversity by the destruction of natural habitats. This is the folly our descendants are least likely to forgive us (p. 121).[67]

Two high-profile efforts in the United States have been made at the federal level to arrest the loss of biological diversity. First, the Endangered Species Act was passed in 1972. It has had a positive impact in retarding the process but has not stopped it. Second, in the late 1980s President George H.W. Bush announced a national policy of "no net loss of wetlands." This gave wetlands protection and

in the few extraordinary cases where they had to be destroyed, it required that mitigation be instigated in the form of creating new wetlands to replace those that were lost.

Park and recreation agencies can contribute to the preservation of biological diversity in two ways. First, by creating park areas. The larger the area, the more likely it is to be able to sustain biological diversity. While the largest and most effective sites are likely to be located in rural areas, urban parks can also contribute on a smaller scale to preserving diversity. Urban forests are particularly valuable. For example, 20 threatened or endangered faunal species and 130 plant species are listed in Cook County, the most populated county in the Chicago Metropolitan Area.[68] However, for most species, isolated park sites are too fragmented to sustain them over the long term. The fragmentation means that there are likely to be too few individuals to be self-sustaining and that inbreeding is inevitable.

The field's second contribution is the creation of conservation corridors to link park and open space areas and facilitate the biologically effective movement of animals between them. The corridors increase the likelihood of sustainability by enabling fresh individuals to access a site. They are transitional habitats providing sufficient resources for individuals to move between sites. Poorly conceived corridors can do more harm than good because they can be a death trap for dispersing individuals, draining off healthy animals from a source area but failing to deliver them to the destination area. In urban and suburban contexts, riparian corridors often can most easily be preserved to perform this function. The challenge for park and recreation agencies is to establish the corridors in advance of development because retrofitting the landscape with corridors is both politically difficult and expensive.[69]

BENEFITS RELATED TO ALLEVIATING SOCIAL PROBLEMS

From a societal perspective, all of the issues discussed in this section may be effectively characterized by the mantra, "pay now or pay later." A failure to invest resources in delivering services that will preempt these potential social problems is likely to result in society paying a much higher cost at a later date to resolve the problems when they have escalated to a crisis level.

The cumulative and holistic impact of these issues on individuals leads to social exclusion. Social exclusion is a shorthand term used to describe what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, unfair discrimination, poor housing, bad health, and family breakdown.[70] These issues are often linked and mutually reinforcing. However, many people may be exposed to one or two of these social problems, and the impact of them may not be sufficiently great to reach the chronic problem level described by the term "social exclusion." The potential of the park and recreation field to alleviate social exclusion was summarized in a policy document in the following terms:

> Arts, sport, and leisure activities have a role to play in countering social exclusion. They can help to increase the self-esteem of individuals; build community spirit; increase social interactions; improve health and fitness; create employment and give young people a purposive activity, reducing the temptation to antisocial behavior (p. 8).[71]

During the past decade many in the U.S. population have experienced enhanced health and prosperity, but these advances have not been equally distributed. There has been a growing polarization between those with the skills and qualifications to participate in a knowledge-based economy and those without. This has profound consequences for the distribution of wealth and opportunity.

The challenge for public entities is to assist vulnerable groups in becoming employable and to engage in civic life and civil society. It involves bringing marginalized residents into the mainstream to strengthen community cohesion. Parks and recreation is potentially a strong vehicle for facilitating enhanced connectedness and alleviating alienation. These marginalized residents have to feel empowered, which means going beyond participation, to engagement in co-creation of programs through being involved in their production.

13. Reducing Environmental Stress

Environmental stress is a condition experienced daily by many who live or commute in urban or blighted areas. The stress may involve both psychological emotions, such as frustration, anger, fear, and coping responses, and associated physiological responses that use energy and contribute to fatigue. Its detrimental impact to health and well-being may be manifested in characteristics such as headaches, tension, short temper, aggressive behavior, low morale, and an increase in number of sick days away from work.

Surroundings influence individuals' outlooks on life, their sense of well-being, and ultimately their attitude and behavior toward others. Different outdoor environments can have quite different influences on inflicting or ameliorating stress, and parks and natural vegetation have long been known to have a restorative effect by fostering psychological well-being. In 1865 Frederick Law Olmsted wrote insightfully about stresses associated with cities and job demands and argued that viewing nature was effective in inducing recovery from such stresses. He asserted that such an environment, "employs the mind without fatigue and yet exercises it; tranquilizes it and yet enlivens it; and thus, through the influence of the mind over the body, gives the effect of refreshing rest and reinvigoration to the whole system" (p. 21).[72] Olmsted's strong belief that natural landscapes had a restorative effect bringing "tranquility and rest to the mind" formed an important part of his influential justification for providing parks in American cities.

In the penultimate decade of the twentieth century, Olmsted's intuitions received scientific credibility when E.O. Wilson hypothesized the existence of biophilia, "the innately emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms" (p. 31).[65] It proposes that there is an inherent need to affiliate with life and lifelike processes. It suggests that human identity and personal fulfillment somehow depend on a relationship with nature, and that the natural world exerts an influence on emotional, cognitive, aesthetic, and even spiritual development.[65]

Building on this hypothesis, others have postulated an affinity for nature that goes beyond living things to include streams, ocean waves, and wind. The principles of biophilia can be transposed into urban contexts and embraced in "restorative environmental design" to ameliorate the impact of environmental stress. Empirical research in recent years has consistently produced evidence to support the contention that nature enhances health. Evidence is available from four aspects of the natural world - animals, plants, landscapes, and wilderness experiences.[73]

A consistent finding reported in more than 100 studies of recreational experiences in urban nature areas is that stress reduction, often expressed in terms such as "relaxation" and "peacefulness," is one of the most important verbally expressed perceived benefits associated with park and recreation services. Urban settings that prominently include vegetation are less stressful than settings that lack a natural component. Such settings for urbanites may include, for example, viewing trees or flowers through a window in a workplace or residence, lunching in a park, or driving on a tree-lined boulevard or on roads with landscaped vegetation medians.

> Stress managers will tell you that one of their most successful techniques for reducing stress is visualization. If you ask them what people visualize when they wish to relax, they never say parking lots or freeways or baseball stadiums. What do they mention?...forests and mountains and sea coasts. So, if this is what reduces stress and gives people a sense of emotional stability, why not take it seriously? Maybe what we need in every city are more parks and gardens and more places where people can physically connect with what is natural and peaceful rather than with purely imaginary landscapes or some form of virtual reality (p. 24).[74]

Conclusions demonstrating the therapeutic value of natural settings have been derived not only from psychological studies but also from physiological measurements of cardiovascular activity, including heart rate; skin conductance, which the autonomic nervous system controls; muscle tension, which the central nervous system controls; and pulse transit time (a measure that correlates highly with systolic blood pressure).

In an early classic study of this genre of using physiological measures completed in 1984, the author found that hospital patients recovering from surgery had shorter postoperative hospital stays, lower intakes of potent narcotic pain drugs, and far fewer negative comments in nurses' notes, if their windows overlooked a small stand of deciduous trees rather than a brown brick wall.[75]

Authors of studies researching patient anxiety in a dental clinic who used self-analysis and heart-rate data reported that patients felt less stressed on days when a large mural depicting a natural scene was hung on a wall of the waiting room than on days when the wall was blank.[76]

Findings like these from studies of health care facilities are paralleled by results from prisons suggesting that cell-window views of nature are associated with lower frequencies of prisoner stress symptoms, such as digestive illness and headaches, and with fewer sick calls.[76] In aggregate, these physiological studies strongly suggest that recuperation from stress occurs much faster and more completely when individuals are exposed to natural rather than urban environments. A leading research team in this field concluded "that even short-duration leisure contact with nature might be important to many urbanites in fostering restoration from mild stressors such as daily hassles or annoyances" (p. 224).[76]

Parks aptly have been described as "still eyes in the hurricane" of the city; as safety valves for the release of the tensions of modern life; and as the city's lungs, which enable people to breathe in relaxation and escape pressure. When overcrowded, harassed, or surrounded by a harsh, callous, and perhaps

deteriorating physical environment, human beings frequently show traits of aggression. This has led to the following suggestion:

> It is time to consider the environmental conditions that may promote hostility and antisocial behavior. This is not meant to minimize the negative impacts of chronic unemployment, drug addiction, broken homes, and the general feeling of hopelessness that pervade many inner-city communities. Nevertheless, many urban problems may come down to a simple question: Are our attitudes and behaviors a result of being influenced by the physical environment in which we live and work?...It is surprising that programs that permit residents to introduce nature into inner-city neighborhoods are rarely listed among priority approaches for addressing urban problems (p. 52).[77]

The cost of environmental stress in terms of work days lost and medical care required is likely to be substantially greater than the cost of providing and maintaining parks, urban forestry programs, and oases of flowers and shrubs. The harshness of the physical environment in many urban areas may contribute to the sense of social deprivation, anger, and aggressive temper that lead to antisocial behavior.

14. Community Regeneration

It is not possible to breathe new life into run-down areas without parks and recreation. In some cases, facilities such as parks, aquariums, marinas, sports complexes, museums, cultural centers, and tree plantings and landscaping are the driving force that stimulates regeneration of an area. In other cases, these facilities are components in the mix of amenities that are needed to revitalize an area.

Over 80 percent of Americans live in metropolitan areas, many of which are engaging in regeneration efforts. Most people don't want to leave the place they are living, rather they want it to be upgraded so their quality of life is improved. Most recreation activity takes place close to home, so facilities and services that facilitate it are an integral component of successful regeneration efforts. The key requirement for sustainable communities is that they have a sense of place, and parks and recreation contributes to this through its roles in facilitating socialization and restoration, and the creation of physically vibrant and attractively designed park and open space areas.

Many prominent regeneration efforts have focused on the reclamation of rivers in urban areas. America's great cities grew up on rivers, but they subsequently abused them so by the 1960s many urban rivers were heavily polluted while factories or train tracks claimed the riverbanks.[78] As a consequence, many urban river neighborhoods were abandoned to the poor and powerless. In 1964 the Cuyahoga River in Cleveland notoriously burst into flames when sparks from a passing train ignited the polluted water. Many other rivers were abandoned. These became dumping grounds for household trash and garbage, and a city's sewers.[78]

The Clean Water Act of 1972 stimulated a renaissance. The iconic San Antonio River Walk became a model, which inspired other cities to act, but much of the stimulus was powered by a groundswell of grassroots support. Today, for example, it is estimated there are 500 local river groups working on reclaiming metropolitan rivers. Greenways and

trails along rivers capitalize on local restoration efforts and on improved water quality. They symbolize the renaissance of neighborhoods.

Because of their high visibility, parks may be viewed as the "coal mine canary" communicating both a neighborhood's level of vibrancy and safety, and the ability and interest of its governing body to create neighborhoods offering a high quality of life. The status of parks is a signature statement of the status of a neighborhood. If the parks are dilapidated, desolate, and empty, then these adjectives probably characterize the community and the potency of its governing entity. Similarly, if they are appealing, well-maintained, and occupied, then the community and council are likely to be perceived as being vibrant and effective. Renovation of a park can be an effective catalyst for regeneration because it is a highly visible, relatively fast way of demonstrating concern and commitment to improvement.

15. Cultural and Historical Preservation

It has been suggested that those who are unaware of their history forever remain children. Children have no context, no road map, and no parameters to guide their actions, because they have no institutional memory. As a result, their actions typically are characterized by trial and error, inefficiency, and a relatively long learning curve. "History is a road map. It tells us who we are, how we got where we are, and where we ought to be going" (p. 47).[79]

The social merit rationale for investing in cultural and historical preservation (CHP) was articulated in 1966 in the landmark National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), which declared that "the historic and cultural foundations of the Nation should be preserved as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people." CHP tells the story of a community's, or of the nation's, cultural and historical evolution. CHP is a tangible manifestation of the past that molded the present. As such, it offers a community's residents a context for evaluation and appreciation of their contemporary environment and lifestyles. For example, the benchmarks that CHP sites offer provide the context for the following evaluation of contemporary urban development:

> Regretfully, we must recognize the essential tawdriness of much contemporary design and construction. Much of it is junk. It assaults our senses. Thus, we seek to preserve the past, not only because it is unique, exceptional, architecturally significant, or historically important, but also because in many cases what replaces it is inhuman and grotesque" (p. xiv).[80]

In recent years, the concept of CHP has expanded from a focus on individual structures to protection and interpretation of the larger culture that produced them. This was exemplified by the initiation of the National Heritage Area (NHA) program by the National Park Service in the 1980s. The Park Service defines an NHA as:

> A place where natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography.

By 2006, over 40 NHAs had been established. The NHAs provide a vehicle for managing

regional resources in a holistic, organic, cooperative way.

The NHAs also exemplified the convergence of interests between CHP and land conservation. Land has shaped much of human culture, and people have shaped the land. All of America's landscapes hold the imprints of human occupation. Consequently, preserving natural landscapes and ecological resources ipso facto protects parts of the cultural heritage.[80] It is unlikely that there is a single "natural area" in North America that has not been subject to human culture and human imprints. Thus, it is appropriate that CHP is increasingly conceptualized as a component of the larger movement supporting environmental protection and sustainability.

The purpose of sustainable development is to retain that which is important, valuable, and significant: Its definition is: "the ability to meet our own needs without prejudging the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (p. 38).[81] Almost by definition, CHP is sustainable development, and development without CHP is not sustainable.[81]

Initially, CHP was promoted primarily as an effective counter to the destruction of central cities, but as cultural homogeneity has increased, CHP has been recognized as a vehicle for maintaining difference, distinctiveness, individuality, and personal identity. In recent decades, diversity has become a CHP imperative and it has become much more inclusive, going beyond the traditional Eurocentric view of preservation.

The proliferation of nationally franchised restaurants, hotels, shopping malls, and box superstores has resulted in there being little differentiation among places. CHP enhances the richness, diversity, distinctive character, and authenticity of places. Indeed, it is likely to be central to creating the "sense of place" that attracts people, businesses, and visitors to an area.

There is a burgeoning interest in heritage tourism and, because these visitors typically spend more than most other categories of visitors, they are especially targeted by tourism agencies. However, CHP usually only translates into heritage tourism when a community preserves entire districts not just isolated structures.

In the past, few accepted the idea that preserving historic buildings could be profitable. Today few question it. In addition to heritage tourism, there are five other types of potential economic benefits that may be associated with CHP. First, it is likely to be a central feature of community preservation. Consider the following testimony:

> I visit 100 downtowns a year of every size, in every part of the country. But I cannot identify a single example of a sustained success in downtown revitalization where historic preservation wasn't a key component of that strategy. Not one. Conversely, the examples of very expensive failures in downtown revitalization have nearly all had the destruction of historic buildings as a major element" (p. 31).[81]

Second, much of the growth in new jobs comes from small businesses and, typically, rents in CHP-area buildings are lower than in new buildings so they are disproportionately influential on the incubation of new businesses. Third, for the same reasons, CHP neighborhoods often provide much of a community's affordable housing. Fourth, CHP is consistent with the "smart growth" agenda, which emphasizes the costs and diseconomies associated with sprawl and the economic benefits of leveraging existing infrastructure.

A final economic benefit emanates from

the concept of "embodied energy." This identifies the total expenditure of energy involved in the extraction, manufacture, distribution, disposal, and possible reuse of products involved in the creation of a building. When historic structures are destroyed, the embodied energy incorporated within them is wasted. The embodied energy required for products obtained from distant or remotely manufactured and transported sources tends to be much higher than that involved in locally or regionally derived products and materials. The World Bank notes, "the key economic reason for the cultural patrimony case is that a vast body of valuable assets, for which sunk costs have already been paid by prior generations, is available. It is a waste to overlook such assets" (p. 30).[81] The issue has been summarized in the following terms:

> Razing historic buildings results in a triple hit on scarce resources. First, we are throwing away thousands of dollars of embodied energy. Second, we are replacing it with materials vastly more consumptive of energy. What are most historic houses built from? Brick, plaster, concrete, and timber - among the least energy consumptive of materials. What are major components of new buildings? Plastic, steel, vinyl, and aluminum - among the most energy consumptive of materials. Third, recurring embodied energy savings increase dramatically as a building's life stretches over 50 years. You're a fool or a fraud if you claim to be an environmentalist and yet you throw away historic buildings and their components (p. 31).[81]

16. Facilitating Healthy Lifestyles

The United States currently spends 14 percent of its gross national product on health care, which is more than any other nation. Since the highest expenditures are on people in the oldest age cohorts and the number of elderly is growing rapidly, health care costs are unlikely to decline. Indeed, the recent "epidemic" of obesity, with its associated illnesses, suggests these costs will increase substantially without proactive movement.

There are two alternate paths available to address this issue. The prevailing approach is to invest in increasing the supply base (i.e., more physicians, drugs, equipment, and hospitals). The alternative path is to reduce the demand for medical services by investing in prevention, as much of the demand results from poor lifestyle choices.

Health is not merely the presence or absence of disease but a continuum representing all levels of vitality from the utmost to the lowest endpoint (euphoria to death!).[82] Further, health refers not only to physical well-being but also to the status of a number of related processes. It involves a holistic integration of the physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions of people's lives. If any of them are unbalanced, then it can lead to individuals seeking help from the health care system. Frequently, the popular view of the contribution of park and recreation agencies to health is limited to their potential for improving physical fitness through exercise. This is a myopic perspective because their role in facilitating positive emotional, intellectual, and social experiences is well documented.

There has been growing recognition that the key to curtailing health care costs lies in prevention of illness, so it does not have to be treated by the expensive medical system. The

Exhibit A-13 Are Inadequate Residential Environments Contributing to Children's Obesity?

Obesity in children is not a disease, yet the government, doctors, drug companies, and many therapists are treating it as if it is. I believe that the poor environment in which our children are forced to grow up is causing obesity; most children no longer play outside as they have done for countless generations.

A parallel can be drawn with the filthy state of London in the mid-nineteenth century, when people were dying from dysentery and cholera. No doubt all sorts of potions, therapies, and cures were peddled, and I assume the government at the time would have listened to those appearing to have remedies (they were, after all, key stakeholders). They would have encouraged businesses to develop these remedies - perhaps they even gave grants to voluntary organizations - and they may well have encouraged people to eat more healthily.

However, the problem only began to be addressed when they got a man called Bazalgette to build sewers. A healthy environment was thereby created and there was a massive leap forward in health improvements and a significant reduction in disease.

Equally, we now need to create a healthy environment for our children. A medical model of drugs, surgery and therapies is as useful for the vast majority of children as the quack remedies offered in previous centuries.

There is no evidence that our calorific intake has risen. Fifty years ago children were encouraged to eat the fat on meat because it was "good for you" and sugar was not felt to be dangerous so copious amounts were sprinkled on breakfast cereals and stirred into drinks. A healthy diet is important but will not solve the obesity problem.

Children need and want to play outside; they are not couch potatoes but couch prisoners. Often they are confined at home because their local environment is not conducive to encouraging them to exercise.

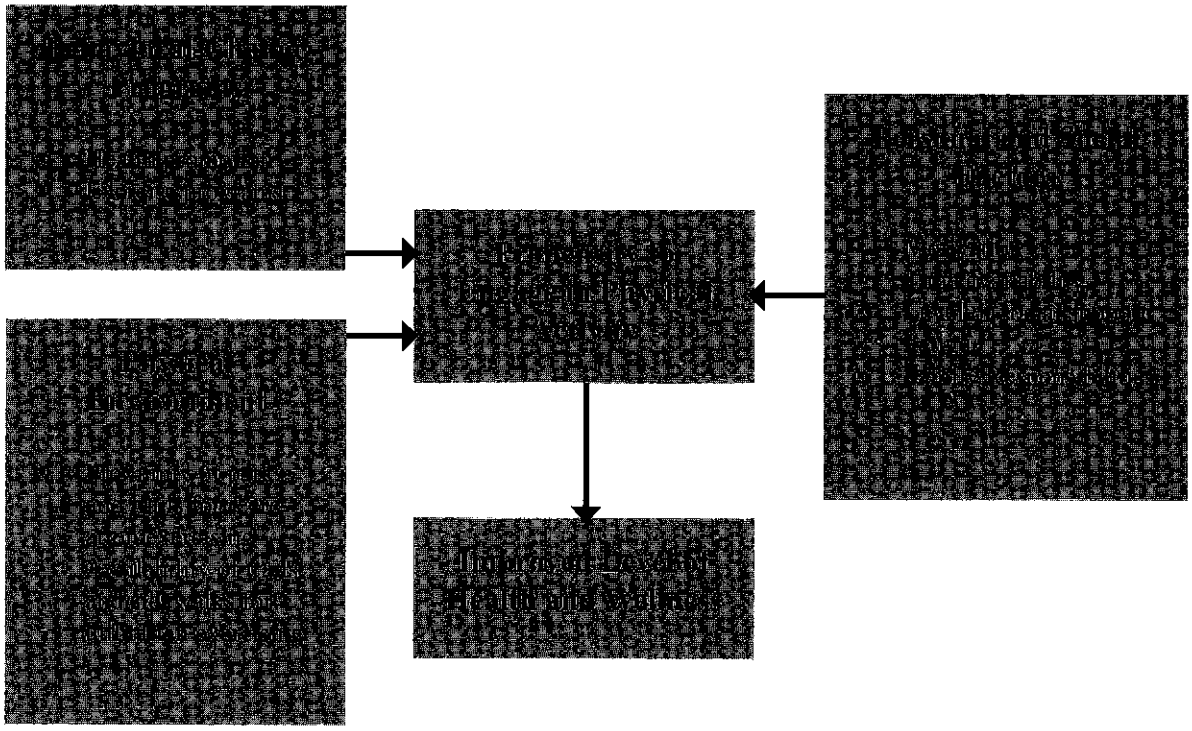
Source: Wheway, R. (2007). Couch prisoners. *Leisure Management*, February 25, p. 26.

case is articulated in Exhibit A-13. Other than having the right parents and genetic makeup, the most important determinants of health are daily behaviors and habits. Empirical evidence demonstrating the nexus between exercise and health has been established unequivocally. Thus, for example, the landmark report by the U.S. Surgeon General stated "Americans can substantially improve their health and quality of life by including moderate amounts of physical activity in their daily lives" (p. 3). It stated, "health benefits appear to be proportional to the amount of activity; thus, every increase in activity adds some benefits" (p. 2).[83]

Exhibit A-14 suggests that propensity to engage in physical exercise is a function of personal and social factors, behavioral change programs, and the physical environment. The personal and social factors have been documented and reviewed elsewhere.[84,85] For the most part, these are not subject to influence by park and recreation agencies so they are not discussed in this section. However, these agencies do have substantial opportunities for enhancing health and wellness through behavioral-change programs and the provision of proximate parks, trails, and open spaces to facilitate recreational exercise.

The model in Exhibit A-14 refocuses the common implicit assumption that physical activity is a conscious, discretionary lifestyle

Exhibit A-14 Factors Influencing Propensity to Exercise



choice, by suggesting park and recreation agencies can have a deterministic influence on that choice. The model recognizes that while being physically active ultimately is a matter of personal choice, this choice is likely to be influenced by health promotion campaigns and the availability of structured exercise programs. Similarly, a growing number of studies show that people who reside or work in activity-friendly environments are more likely to be active. Thus, the challenge for park and recreation agencies is to create environments that make it easier for individuals to elect to exercise.

Almost all agencies offer an array of structured exercise programs in recreation centers, aquatic facilities, gymnasia, or parks, and a range of athletic facilities and programs. Increasingly, these are being offered in partnership or association with other organizations in a community whose missions are complementary. These partnerships recognize that such programs are likely to be more effective in facilitating health and wellness if the exercise program is linked with other components such as nutrition and education to address the issue holistically.

If people's main motivation for engaging in activities is a belief that it will be good for them, they are likely to quit after a short time period irrespective of whether the activity is dieting to lose weight, joining exercise classes to become fit, or eating only foods that are good for them. The only enduring lifestyle changes are likely to be those in which activities are undertaken for the intrinsic enjoyment and satisfaction that they yield. Such intrinsic values are a central goal of park and recreation services.

While health and physical activity have

been traditional goals of park and recreation agencies, frequently they have not been positioned in those terms. There is a need to reposition them:

> Citizens will be much more likely to willingly pay for such services if they understand that paying more for such services means paying less (saving) for health care. While documenting specific health benefits is important, it is more important that the public and political decision-makers first understand the concept - public recreation, park and leisure services are health services. These services provide sustained opportunities by which citizens can increase their physical fitness, reduce stress, reduce substance abuse, meditate, learn new skills [that] lead to higher self esteem, lessen social isolation and depression and do many other things [that] improve health (p. 74).[86]

This perspective subsequently was validated by a national survey, which reported that the most frequently cited benefit associated with visiting local parks was related to exercise; "In terms of types of benefits, exercise and health-related benefits are overwhelmingly first" (p. 111). This led the researchers to conclude, "While local recreation and park agencies are sometimes only beginning to think of themselves as health or wellness organizations, perhaps the public already does so" (p. 111).[87]

The traditional behavioral-change programs of health promotion and structured physical activity offerings will continue to play a role in encouraging healthy lifestyles, but the rising obesity levels demonstrate they are insufficient. Indeed, the greatest increase in childhood/adolescent obesity has occurred in the past two decades coinciding with the greatest ever increase in organized youth sports. This has led to increasing attention being directed to an ecological perspective of health, which suggests that the local physical environment is an influential determinant of physical activity.

The local physical environment may exert a deterministic influence on both recreational and utilitarian exercise. Whereas recreational exercise relates to leisure time decisions, utilitarian exercise is undertaken incidentally while pursuing other tasks such as traveling to work or to the stores. The focus here is on recreational exercise, but utilitarian exercise may be at least as important in enhancing health since it is integrated into other activities and so circumvents the issue of limited time, which surveys report is a major barrier to engaging in physical activity programs.

Conceptually, it seems likely that environmental influences such as the proximity of parks, trails, and exercise facilities to people's residences or work places will have a direct role in changing habitual behavior patterns and will influence their propensity to engage in recreational exercise. If people don't have access to such public amenities and cannot afford private memberships, then it seems likely they will have a higher probability of going without exercise.

Proximity to parks is a key determinant of park use. For example, a major study in Los Angeles reported, "Most park users (81 percent live within one mile of the parks, and only 19 percent of park users live more than 1 mile from the park. Proximity to parks matters" (p. 116).[88] However, use also is influenced by quality of a park in terms of its safety, level of maintenance, lighting, shaded

walkways, and aesthetics. Thus, the Los Angeles study concluded, "Perception of environmental aesthetics and convenience are associated with increased level of walking for exercise" (p. 116).[88]

Most people who use parks engage in at least moderate levels of physical activity. Walking is the most commonly reported physical activity and, thus, likely to be the most influential in changing physical activity levels. Making parks an inviting place for walking should be a high priority.

The following examples of results from individual studies are indicative of the findings that have emerged:

- Based on objective accelerometer data, 37 percent of residents of the most walkable neighborhoods in Atlanta met physical activity recommendations, compared to just 18 percent of those living in low-walkability neighborhoods.[89]

- 20,000 adolescents mapped their distance from homes to facilities for physical activities. The study concluded that teens who lived in areas with seven or more facilities were 32 percent less likely to be overweight and 26 percent more likely to be highly active than those who lived in areas with no facilities.[90]

- Older women who lived within walking distance of trails, parks, or stores recorded significantly higher pedometer readings than women who did not. The more destinations that were close by, the more they walked.[91]

The conclusions of four different teams of authors who reviewed and synthesized the research findings on the impact of the physical environment on exercise suggest there is an emerging consensus that routine physical activity is shaped by local environments:

- The studies provide evidence that creating activity-friendly communities will increase levels of recreational physical activity (p. 166).[92]

- The Centers for Disease Control determined that creating and improving places to be active can result in a 25 percent increase in the percentage of people who exercise at least three times a week.[93]

- There is strong evidence that "program/facility access, opportunities to be active, and time outdoors" is associated with physical activity for both children and adolescents (p. 969).[94]

- Clearly, the proximity of safe and well-maintained urban parks and trails has a relationship to active living in communities (p. 207).[95]

Although evidence of a direct link between proximity of park and recreation facilities and propensity to exercise is emerging, the research literature investigating this relationship is embryonic. Only since the start of the new millennium have researchers begun to investigate it. At this time, the research is not sufficiently advanced to draw an unequivocal direct connection flowing from physical environment, through physical activity, to level of obesity. Nevertheless, results from the pioneering studies are sufficiently robust for one research team to conclude:

> The built environment may be contributing to the obesity epidemic, because obesity is more prevalent in areas where land use makes it difficult to walk to destinations and where there are

> relatively few recreational resources. The built environment has emerged as a high priority for public health (p. 118).[96]

A major challenge for park and recreation agencies is to establish formal linkages between their mission, facilities, programs and expertise, and those of the medical community. Since the medical community generally recognizes the merits of physiotherapy and therapeutic recreation, extending the vehicles for rehabilitation to embrace physical activity does not require additional conceptual justification. Moving from offering related but unconnected services to address health problems, to a mode of "joined-up thinking" where these complementary services collaborate closely, would appear to be a logical evolutionary stage.

Such linkages have been operationalized elsewhere. In the United Kingdom, for example, linkages were initiated around 1990 and the National Health Service now requires its hospitals and physicians to collaborate with qualified fitness and leisure providers such as park and recreation agencies to address issues such as obesity and lack of exercise. There are approximately 1,200 exercise referral schemes whereby physicians refer patients to facilities such as recreation centers or gyms for supervised exercise programs. Reviews of these collaborations "found that exercise referral schemes in primary care can result in sustainable improvements in physical activity and indicators of health; that they play a part in wider physical activity promotion and can contribute to tackling social exclusion" (p. 4).[97] These referrals include provision of health insurance to cover the cost of at least the initial stages of the exercise program charged by the program provider.

It has been reported that in the context of alleviating depression, referrals to physical exercise programs have a success rate of 60 to 85 percent, while antidepressant drugs effectively treat only 20 to 40 percent of patients. Several reasons are suggested to explain this positive impact of exercise including an increase in the release of endorphins and encephalons, chemicals that may promote feelings of well-being and pain relief; and a diversion from preoccupation with negative thoughts that is characteristic of depression.[98]

The potential economic benefits accruing from investments in preventative actions by park and recreation agencies have been expressed in the following terms:

> The cost-to-benefit ratios are compelling. For an annual tax fee of $50 to $60 per person, a typical local park and recreation agency provides a wide array of health-enhancing services. The amount paid for a typical heart bypass operation ($60,000, for example) would fund local government park and recreation services for approximately 1,200 people for one year at $50 per person per year. Of those 1,200 people, 948 would use such services, based on national data relating to the use of public park and recreational facilities; the nonusers would also derive considerable benefits. If you were in charge of improving health and wellness services for the American public and had a shrinking pool of money to do so, who ya gonna call? (p. 105)[82]

17. Alleviating Deviant Behavior Among Youth

It was noted in Chapter 3 that the potential of recreation programs to contribute to alleviating juvenile delinquency was the primary rationale for establishing recreation as a public service in the field's formative years. Park and recreation agencies are positioned to be a primary community resource for addressing this issue for at least three reasons.

First, recreational centers and park areas (where many gangs and deviant youth congregate) are distributed widely across communities and, thus, can be used as service centers for addressing gang- and youth-related problems. Second, an agency's personnel are experienced in establishing empathetic relationships with their clients. Third, recreational activities are inherently appealing to large segments of youth in general, including at-risk youth and, thus, offer a vehicle for assessing and positively influencing social behavior.

A number of program evaluations suggest that participation can lead to increased engagement in learning, social skills development, decreased deviancy, and a range of other positive outcomes. For example, an experienced, roving leader who works with at-risk youth testified:

> I'm interested in the whole kid, in helping him do better in life. Recreation is just the hook to get into a relationship with them. It is what I use to collar them. If I organize a basketball game, they are there. You have to have some way to get them in. If I told them to meet me in church or school, I wouldn't get any of them, but ask them to play basketball and they will be there. However, slowly but surely I can then get them into different community organizations as our relationship strengthens (p. 90).[99]

The activity patterns of youth reveal that the peak hours for juvenile crime and experimentation with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes and sex are between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. Prevention efforts have two dimensions: (i) occupying youth in activities so time and opportunity are not available to engage in negative behavior; and (ii) using the activities as a medium through which to teach the skills necessary to avoid the negative behavior when they are not in the park and recreation setting.

The diversity of program formats, contexts and clientele groups characterizing preventive efforts with at-risk youth make it difficult to draw generalizable quantitative conclusions about their levels of effectiveness. Most of the empirical evaluations that have been published have been in the form of case studies.[100,101] The conclusions drawn from these studies are that preventative programs offered by park and recreation agencies are effective when they incorporate a preponderance of the following elements: positive interactions and relationships with adult leaders; leadership opportunities for youth; intensive and individualized attention to participants; a sense of group belonging; engagement in challenging tasks and activities; youth input into program decisions; and opportunities for community service.

The potential return to jurisdictions investing in prevention programs can be calculated by tracking reductions in crime and ascribing a financial value to them. Examples of how to do this were given in Chapter 4 in the discussion of competitive repositioning.

The exactness of the numbers is not im-

Exhibit A-15 The Monetary Value of Saving a High-Risk Youth

	Low Estimate	High Estimate
Career Criminal	$1,434,455	$1,655,140
Career Drug Abuser	$408,268	$1,070,324
High School Dropout	$268,133	$428,130

Source: Cohen (1998). Estimates adjusted to reflect 2001 dollar values.

portant. It does not matter if in some jurisdictions juvenile incarceration costs are lower, if city investment is greater, or if the magnitude of crime reduction is lower. The magnitude of the return on investment is so large that even quite major changes in the variables are unlikely to affect the principle.

An estimate of the costs imposed upon society (in 2001 dollars) by the average career criminal, the average heavy drug user, and the average high school dropout is shown in Exhibit A-15.[103] These numbers represent the lifetime costs of these behaviors. From society's perspective, any recreation and park intervention program that can prevent such behavior is likely to be cost effective.

The California After School and Education Act invests $433 million per year in after school programs that service 485,000 students in grades K through 9. This represents about 10 percent of the students enrolled in California public schools. With the local match, the cost per student was $1,350 per year and the costs are projected out over the 9 years for which students are eligible (costs and benefits are calculated in present values to correct for the time value of money).[105] A comprehensive analysis of the costs and benefits of the program reported the results shown in Exhibit A-16. The authors concluded:

> The net benefit of each participant is between $79,484 and $119,427. In other words, each dollar invested in an at-risk child brings a return of $8.92 to $12.90. Much of this remarkable benefit is derived from diverting a relatively small portion of at-risk youngsters from a future path of crime. An at-risk child who becomes a career criminal costs society anywhere from $1.4

Exhibit A-16 Estimated Costs and Benefits Associated with After School Programs

Estimated Effects	Total Benefits	
	Lower Estimates	Higher Estimates
1. Reduced Child Care Costs	$889	$1,777
2. Increased Schooling Costs	-$989	-$742
3. Improved School Performance	$447	$809
4. Increased Compensation	$29,415	$38,284
5. Reduced Crime Costs	$59,425	$88,835
6. Reduced Welfare Costs	$335	$502
TOTAL	**89,522**	**$129,465**
Cost of Program	**$10,038**	**$10,038**
Net Benefit	**$79,484**	**$119,427**

Source: Brown, et al. (2002).
All values are current dollar present values calculated using a discount rate of 4%.

> million to $1.7 million over his or her lifetime. Therefore diverting even less than one percent of participating at-risk youth from a life of crime saves several times the cost of the program (executive summary, n.p.).[105]

Parks and urban forestry also appear to have potential for contributing to alleviating deviant behavior among youth. There is evidence that the presence of urban vegetation is related to lower crime rates. In a study of 98 apartment buildings in Chicago, it was found that the greener the immediate surroundings of a building, the lower the crime rate.[106] Those buildings surrounded by open grassy areas and canopy trees had the lowest crime rates, suggesting that vegetation is likely to reduce crime most when it affords fewest opportunities for concealment. Green spaces are likely to decrease crime because they encourage residents to interact, whereas sterile, paved areas are often viewed as "no-man's lands" without a pedestrian presence and in which criminals feel safer.[107] It also has been found that the closer trees are to residential buildings the more people spend time outside.[108]

18. Raising Levels of Educational Attainment

In the past decade, there has been a movement to increase the amount of time that children are involved in educational activities beyond regular school hours in order to enhance their levels of educational achievement. The intent is to compensate for the lack of support for education in the homes of many youth. Recreation has proved to be an effective "hook" for persuading many to participate in these after school programs. They are permitted to engage in the recreation activities only after they have completed the "enrichment" part of the program, which may consist of completing their homework with or without assistance; receiving tutoring in academic and/or life skills; or engaging in activities designed to achieve developmental outcomes.

Often these programs are jointly offered by the school district and the parks and recreation agency, with school teachers being responsible for literacy, math, and other academic aspects, while the recreation agency offers the enhancement and recreation components. There is growing evidence that quality after school opportunities matter - that they complement environments created by schools and families and provide important "nutrients" that deter failures and promote success.[109] In all cases, the availability of caring adult leaders and the purposeful structure of programs to achieve the desired outcomes are critical to the success of these efforts.

The scientific literature evaluating the success of these programs has been reviewed elsewhere and its findings are encouraging. It includes a meta-analysis of 56 studies, which found that such programs had positive effects on the achievement of low-achieving or at-risk students in reading and mathematics; that the time frames at which these programs are held (i.e., after school or summer) do not influence their level of effectiveness; and that these programs need not focus solely on academic activities to have positive effects on student achievement.[110] Another review of 35 studies reported that the test scores of low-income, at-risk youth improved significantly in both reading and mathematics following their participation in after-school programs.[111]

There remains a profound gap between the knowledge and skills most students learn in school and the knowledge and skills they need for a successful career in the twenty-first century. Students need to learn academic content through real-world examples, appli-

cations, and experiences both inside and outside of school.[109] After school programs can serve as an entry point for many children and youth both to develop twenty-first century skills and to expand their exposure and increase their ability to navigate new forms of technology. After school computer clubs are often the most popular after school activities and can serve as an entry point to other academic learning experiences. Other research suggests that applications focused on multimedia projects, which are often highly attractive to teens, can lead to success in high-order thinking, problem solving, and synthesizing different points of view.[109]

The research literature demonstrates that improvements in academic performance are likely to be associated with three factors: (i) the quality and quantity of the academic elements in the program; (ii) the capacity of the recreational components in the after school program to improve students' attendance in regular school hours; and (iii) gains in personal and social skills, and in self-esteem, which encourage students to recognize the importance of good academic performance. This latter factor has been described in the following terms:

> After school programs may offer intangibles such as the opportunity to engage in activities that help young people realize they have something to contribute to the group; the opportunity to work with diverse peers and adults to create projects, performances and presentations that receive accolades from their families and the larger community; and the opportunity to develop a vision of life's possibilities that, with commitment and persistence, are attainable (p. 6).[109]

While research confirms academic performance is likely to improve given the presence of some combinations of these factors, "It seems unrealistic to expect large impacts on academic achievement. Unless time spent in an after school program is extraordinarily more beneficial than time spent in the classroom, dramatic impact is unlikely" (p. 4).[112]

19. Alleviating Unemployment Distress

Unemployment is usually an unpleasant, unwelcome experience that is personally devastating to individuals, often leads to a deterioration in their physical and mental health, and increases the likelihood that these disaffected people - especially the young unemployed - will engage in behavior that is disruptive to society. Park and recreation's contributions to alleviating unemployment distress may take the form of creating job opportunities *and* of creating recreational opportunities targeted at this group.

The field is extraordinarily well positioned to create meaningful construction, renovation, repair, and maintenance projects that can absorb relatively large numbers of people who are unemployed. Park and conservation work is relatively labor intensive. It offers many opportunities for unskilled people or those who need a new skills set to enter the workforce and subsequently to develop vocational skills, which will expand their employability options.

The model for these park programs that exemplified their potential value to society was the Civilian Conservation Corps, established in response to massive unemployment emanating from the Great Depression of the early 1930s. Between 1933 and 1942, more than 6 million young men were involved in the program. Their legacy is evident in many hundreds of parks today and often is denoted by a plaque recognizing their work.

In contemporary times, the Youth Conservation Corps, has provided similar opportunities, albeit on a smaller scale. The program's goal is to move young people from unemployment into full-time work. Young people aged 16 to 25 are organized into crews, with each crew working under the supervision of an adult leader. The corps members generally receive stipends of around the minimum wage, and are required to participate in classes in basic education, life skills, and job preparation. They undertake highly visible projects such as streambank stabilization, trail building, facility construction, tree planting, and community environmental education.

The field's other role in alleviating unemployment distress is to offer recreation programs targeted at this group:

> Participation in recreational programs cannot be a satisfactory substitute for a job. What work removes, leisure cannot replace. This is most obvious in the case of income, and indeed the poverty of the unemployed is a prime constraint on their leisure. Far from taking on new and varied leisure interests to absorb the time freed from work, financial restrictions mean that for most unemployed people, previous leisure patterns are curtailed (p. 158).[113]

Further, many of those who are most likely and frequently to be unemployed are not leisurely literate; that is, they do not have a repertoire of recreational skills or interests. Nevertheless, park and recreation services targeted at the unemployed can fulfill some of the functions traditionally supplied by employment for some individuals and, thus, contribute to alleviating this social problem:[113]

- At the simplest level, they can fill time. This may reduce the potential for societal disruption: "That 'the devil makes work for idle hands' has long been feared to be more than merely proverbial, and so 'idle hands' must be provided with things to do and reasons to get involved" (p. 131).[113]

- Everyone needs to feel needed. Many people derive this feeling from their jobs. Employment provides both a social setting and an identity to people in their broader social relationships. Thus, when people are introduced for the first time, one of the opening questions is likely to be, What do you do? Inability to offer a work-related response to the question often leads to problems of self-worth and identity. Park and recreational programs may partially alleviate this by fostering an interest and involvement in something the individual perceives to be worthwhile. This may incorporate the development of skills, achievement of results, and a sense of purpose.[113]

- Most people are accustomed to organizing their daily and weekly routines around externally imposed time constraints. Structure is regarded by many as a basic human need, and the loss of structure has been found by some to be the most psychologically destructive consequence of unemployment. Participation in regularly scheduled recreation programs may provide some semblance of this structure.[113]

- Becoming unemployed disrupts social networks in that social interaction with colleagues disappears and the perception of a stigma or embarrassment associated with unemployment may disrupt existing

social activities. Recreation and park activities offer an opportunity to foster and nurture new friendships and a sense of belonging.[114]

- Unemployment often leads to individuals engaging in fewer active, out-of-home. and social activities, and increasing their passive, solitary, and home-based activities. Recreation activities may counter some of this trend to passivity and facilitate proactive progression toward attaining personal goals.[114]

If financial barriers to participation can be removed, it seems likely that park and recreational programs can have some mitigating effect on the experience of unemployment because:

> The losses incurred in unemployment are closely matched in typical motivations for taking part in leisure activities. Quests for identity, purpose, activity, social contacts, self-confidence, self-esteem, relaxation, and physical and mental well-being - and even, at the most basic level, the search for something to do - are the established stock-in-trade of the psychology of leisure. If unemployment leaves these needs unmet, leisure ought partly at least to be able to fulfill them (p. 92).[113]

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