



NEW BERN

PARKS & RECREATION

Family, fitness and fun come together here.

Strategic Plan

2022 - 2025

Standard: 2.5 – Strategic Plan
Maintained By: Director of Parks & Recreation
Signature: <i>Kari Warren</i>
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Reviewed and Updated:

New Bern Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan

The strategic plan is a guide to implementation of the department’s comprehensive master plan’s strategies, goals, and objectives. This strategic plan serves a four-year period from 2022 – 2025. It is reviewed annually, updated as needed, and approved by the Director of Parks and Recreation. Changes made to the comprehensive master plan are reflected in the strategic plan. Ultimately, the strategic plan should support all of the organization’s priorities and initiatives.

Strategy I: Provide safe, well maintained facilities and parks.

Goal 1: Update existing facilities and parks.

- Routine cleaning and maintenance of facilities, parks, and amenities. (Continuous)
- Replaced water fountains with combo bottle filing station. (In progress)
- Aquatic Center pool replastering (Work to be completed 2022)
- Repair/replace worn out benches, picnic tables, grills, trash cans and sports nets. (Continuous)

Goal 2: Expand facilities, park system, and recreational amenities offered.

- Acquire additional land to accommodate future growth.
 - Parks are prevalent except in Wards 3 and 6.
 - Gauge interest with elected officials for additional parks. (2022)
 - Future Community Park as part of the “Duffyfield Community Stormwater Enhancements & Park Project”. (Public Comment Stage 2022)
 - Partner with Tryon Palace on new park.
 - Partner with Craven County Parks and Recreation on Skate Park development.
- Develop new recreation centers/community buildings.
 - Pleasant Hill Park Community Center. (In Progress – Complete 2022)
 - Stanley White Recreation Center Rebuild. (Change in Scope approved 2021, Architectural Firm selected February 2022, Bid Process October 2022, Groundbreaking January 2023)
- Addition of walking trails.
 - Martin Marietta Park Phase 1, added 7 miles of new trails to the park system. (Completed March 2022)
 - Martin Marietta Park Phase 2, once completed will add 7 more miles of trails for a total of 14(+) miles of trails. (Planned 2023)
- Expand the New Bern Riverwalk Greenway by 500’. (Estimated completion 2024)
- The Martin Marietta Park Master Plan calls for a dog park in phase 2. (Estimated 2023)
- Lawson Creek Park Marshwalk Extension. Estimated completion 2023. (In progress)

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Goal 3: Ensure facilities and parks are safe.

- Maintain outside lighting at facilities, parks, and ball fields. (Continuous)
- Install security cameras in high-risk areas.
 - Union Point Park (2022)
 - Lawson Creek Park (2023)
 - Martin Marietta Park (2023)
 - Pleasant Hill Park (2024)
 - Cedar Grove Cemetery (2025)
- Install signage for things that are not allowed in parks. (Continuous)
- Certified Playground Safety Inspector maintenance through continuing education and recertification. (Continuous)

Goal 4: Improve the quality and efficiency of facilities, grounds, and park maintenance.

- Maintained qualified staff to maintain parks, landscaping, trees, and sports fields. (Continuous)
- Maintain qualified staff to complete in house repairs and construction projects, perform carpentry, architectural design, and construction documents. (Continuous)
- Add an additional Certified Arborist on staff for a total of 2 Certified Arborist. (2023)
- Implement a five-year program to replace or acquire new grounds maintenance equipment, to meet increasing maintenance needs, decrease downtime due to breakdowns and increase operating efficiency.
 - Purchase new mowers (2024, 2025)
 - Trimmers, Edgers, Blowers purchased. (2022, 2023, 2024, 2025)
 - Purchase 1 new vehicle. (2022, 2023, 2024, 2025)
 - Replacement trailers. (2023, 2024, 2025)
- Implement a four-year program to replace/upgrade aging playground equipment.
 - Henderson Park Playground footprint extended with additional features. (2023)
 - Union Point Park expand existing swings and add concrete cornhole boards. (Estimated 2022-23)
 - Monk Mallard Park swing structure replacement. (Estimated 2022)
 - Tryon Village Park replace existing slide structure. (Estimated 2023)
 - Leander Morgan Park swing structure replacement. (Estimated 2023)
 - Martin Marietta Park add play features to the adventure playground completed in 2021. (Estimated 2024)
 - Pierce Park playground replacement (Estimated 2025)
 - Wood Fiber installed to standards (Annually)

Strategy II: Provide diverse and enjoyable recreation opportunities to promote active, healthy lifestyles for people of all ages and abilities.

Goal 1: Continue to offer a robust list of special events throughout the year.

- Develop, implement, and promote annual special events.

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- Easter Egg Hunt
- Twilight Easter Egg Hunt
- Festival of Fun
- Water Safety Event (May 2023)
- Footloose on the Neuse Summer Concert Series
- Youth Fishing Derby
- Movies in the Park
- Drive-In Movies
- Touch a Truck (2022)
- Haunted House or Trail (2022)
- Witches Ride
- Astronomy Night (2022)
- Family Camping (2023)
- New Years' Eve Block Party
- Provide quality meeting, event and picnic venues for individuals, organizations, and corporations. (Continuous)
 - Routine maintenance and repairs on shelters. (Continuous)
 - Monk Mallard Park new shelter installation. (2022)
 - Fort Totten Park shelter replacement. (2022)
 - Glenburnie Park shelter replacement. (2024)
 - Jack's Island new shelter installation. (2025)
 - Union Point Park electrical infrastructure update and expansion. (In Progress)
 - Henderson Park 30x65 shelter installation to double as a farmers' market. (2023)
 - The Martin Marietta Park Master Plan calls for an amphitheater/event venue in phase 2. (2023)
- Partner with other agencies and non-profits to provide events and activities. (Continuous)

Goal 2: Expand recreation services for individuals with disabilities.

- Maintain a Licensed Recreation Therapist to provide expertise needed to develop specialized programs and coordinate ADA compliance. (Continuous)
- Promote inclusion by making all programs inclusive. (Continuous)
- Make all facilities and parks ADA compliant through renovations and additions. (In Progress)
- Maintain programs for individuals with visual impairment that have already been developed, such as "VIP Fishing Tournament". (Continuous)

Goal 3: Expand recreation services for active seniors as needed.

- Monitor program trends and needs for active seniors to provide quality programs. (Continuous)

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- Continue to offer current active seniors’ programs such as “Senior Fitness”, “Day Trips”, and “Senior Games”. (Continuous)

Goal 4: Keep citizens of New Bern informed of programs, special events, facilities, parks, and improvement projects.

- Utilize bulletin boards, community events, webpage, and social media to keep citizens informed. (Continuous)
- Develop social media and web pages. (Continuous)
- Engage citizens in public meetings, surveys and focus groups.
 - Program evaluations (continuous)
 - Stanley White Recreation Center Advisory Committee (Appointed Committee)
 - Duffyfield Community Stormwater Enhancements & Park Projects Community Meetings (2022)
 - City of New Bern Bike and Pedestrian Plan Community Meetings. (2022)
 - City of New Bern Resiliency and Hazard Mitigation Plan Public Input Meetings. (2022)
 - City of New Bern Parks and Recreation Master Plan Public Survey and Needs Assessment. (In Progress)

Goal 5: Embrace technology in Parks and Recreation and implement its use.

- Rec Desk Registration Software implemented use of point of sale (POS) and barcode fobs
- Adobe Software suite
- Survey Monkey
- Website upgrades
- Social Media emphasized
- Security cameras added
- Productive Parks Work Order system
- Eco Explorer Citizen Science
- Park Attendance Tracker

Strategy III: Adequately fund parks and recreation department needs to ensure quality service delivery.

Goal 1: Recognize the importance of parks and recreation in the City’s annual budget appropriations.

- Identify the importance of parks and recreation for the citizens of New Bern. (Continuous)
- Identify the importance of parks and recreation to attract new residents and businesses. (Continuous)
- Identify the importance of parks and recreation to the development of tourism in New Bern. (Continuous)

Goal 2: Secure additional funding to renovate and replace aging facilities and equipment.

- Request additional funding, during annual budget appropriations.
 - Funding received to build a community center, new vehicles, and equipment. (FY21-22)
 - Funding received for trail maintenance equipment, pool replastering, and vehicle replacement. (FY22-23)
- Aggressively seek grants.
 - CAMA Grant (2022, 2023, 2024, 2025)
 - PARTF Grant - \$500,000 (2023)
 - Urban & Community Forestry Grant (2024)
 - Recreation Trails Program Grant (2023)
 - NC Department of Commerce (2024)
- Establish a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan line item for parks and recreation facilities improvements, land acquisition, future facilities, and grant matching funds. The 5-year plan is ongoing, and updated during the annual budget process.
- Seek civic and business sponsors for specific facility improvement initiatives. Initiate public/private ventures.
 - Footloose on the Neuse Summer Concert Series
 - Festival of Fun
 - New Years Eve Block Party
 - Martin Marietta Park Phase 2

Strategy IV: Promote natural resource preservation, conservation, and sustainability practices.

Goal 1: Providing opportunities for healthy activities in nature.

- Addition of walking and biking trails.
 - New Bern Riverwalk Greenway Extension (In Progress)
 - Development of walking trails at Martin Marietta Park Phase 2. (In Progress)
 - Marshwalk Extension at Lawson Creek Park. (In Progress)
 - Glenburnie Park trail improvements. (2023)
 - Lawson Creek Park trail improvements. (2024)
 - Accessible sidewalk installation at Union Point Park. (2022)
 - Henderson Park redevelopment to include a farmer’s market and new outdoor fitness equipment. (2023)
- Nature based program development.
 - Kids N Canoes
 - Youth Fishing Derby (Continuous)
 - Arbor Day Celebration (Continuous)
 - Community Garden
 - EcoExplorer

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- Little Beakers Science Lab
- Kayak/Canoe Rentals
- Astronomy
- Birding
- Family Camping
- High Adventure Camp

Goal 2: Protecting and managing wildlife and wildlife habitats.

- Consulting with North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality to protect, conserve, and manage coastal waters. (Continuous)
- Conducting fish species and habitat identification with North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission. (Annually)
- Development of Neuse River Riparian Buffer Restoration Plan with North Carolina Division of Water Quality.
- Conservation of the Jack Smith Creek wetlands through stormwater management development.
- Research data collection for the North Carolina King Tides Project to document extreme high tide events and their impact on local resources and community investments. (In Progress)
- Installation of a *Trash Trout Jr.* at Lawson Creek (Trent River Basin) in conjunction with Sound Rivers for the purpose of data collection. (2022-2024)
- Wildflower Program Development in parks, greenspaces, and right of ways to generate pollinator gardens. (2023)
- Wildlife rehabilitation through local wildlife shelters (Outerbanks Wildlife Shelter) and rescue groups.

Goal 3: Natural land management in city parks, property, and street right of ways.

- Planting trees, shrubs and plants that are native species to eastern North Carolina using an approved list of recommended trees and shrubs for the City. (Continuous)
- Urban Forestry planning and management to maintain and develop the City's tree canopy. (Continuous)
 - Planting 30 – 40 trees per year.
 - Regular tree trimming.
 - Regular evaluation of tree health.
 - Tree City USA recipient.
- Invasive plant management with less toxic means. (Continuous)
 - Remove weeds manually when applicable.
 - Wash mowers to prevent spread of invasive species to other sites.
 - Delay mowing of areas with invasive species during heavy seeding times.
 - Selecting herbicides with lower toxicity properties.

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- Disposal of clippings to reduce spread of invasive species.
- Selecting aggressive dense host turf that chokes out invasive species.
- Aerate turf to maximize healthy growth.
- Sustainable turf management practices. (Continuous)
 - Blanket pre-emergent applications to control germination of weeds in late winter/early spring and early fall.
 - Amend soil deficiencies to maximize turf growth.
 - Maintain healthy turf through a well-balanced fertility program.
 - Aerate turf accordingly to relieve compaction, incorporate new growth, and allow for proper gas exchange.
 - Post emergent applications made using selective herbicides when applicable.
 - Maintain proper mowing heights.
 - Scout turf on regular schedule for disease, insect, and weed management.
 - Irrigate sites where applicable.
- Following integrated pest management practices. (Continuous)
 - Target pest when damage is unacceptable.
 - Use pesticides that do not damage our eco system and destroy beneficial insects.
 - Monitor water management to prevent diseases caused by improper irrigation.
 - Apply mulch for weed management.
 - Use planting to invite beneficial insects/animals or deter non-beneficial insects/animals.
 - Apply pesticides in a manner that are not harmful to humans, non-target organisms, and environment.

Goal 4: Landfill waste reduction.

- Use of recycling bins at Administration and facilities. (Continuous)
- Natural waste shredding and composting. (Continuous)
- Use of recycled building materials such as composite. (Continuous)
- Use of hand dryers in public restrooms. (Continuous)

Goal 5: Following environmentally friendly building practices.

- Using water efficient plumbing fixtures, i.e. dual flush toilets, low flow lavatories and urinals. (Continuous)
- Using composite decking made from recycled plastic and wood waste. (Continuous)
- Using energy star equipment when available. (Continuous)
- Using low emissivity windows and doors when renovating and/or constructing new facilities. (Continuous)