DESIGNING PARK PROJECTS THAT IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH

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cityparksalliance.org/join
DESIGNING PARK PROJECTS THAT IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH
Lessons from the Last Frontier

Steve Rafuse
Superintendent
Municipality of Anchorage Parks and Recreation
April 28, 2022
ABOUT ANCHORAGE

Quick Facts:

• Area: 1,961 sq miles
  • Chugach State Park: 495,000 acres
• Population: 291,247
  • 40% of State Pop.
  • Younger and more Diverse
• Median Household Income: $84,813
ABOUT ANCHORAGE PARKS

Anchorage Parks

- 11,000 Acres
- 225 Parks
- 250 Miles of Trails
- 2 Indoor Recreation Centers
- 2 Outdoor Recreation Centers
ANCHORAGE PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

What we do...

• Planning and Development
• Maintenance and Operations
• Horticulture and Beautification
• Natural Resource Management
• Recreation Programming and Events
Federal Grants - ORLP/LWCF
State - Grants and Programs
Local - Park Bonds
Philanthropic - Grants + Project Match

O&M Budget: $22 MILLION/YEAR
Capital Budget: $5-10 MILLION/YEAR
Enjoy Nature
Explore a Trail
Eat Healthy Foods
Celebrate
Anchorage Parks & Recreation and COVID-19

Parks and trails are essential infrastructure
Anchorage Parks and Recreation conducted an online survey in February 2021 to understand how COVID-19 is changing how Anchorage residents use parks, trails, and recreation facilities. 1,469 people responded to the survey and the results overwhelmingly show that access to nature is a major part of quality of life in Anchorage. A majority of respondents also reported using parks and trails more often than they did before the pandemic.

90% strongly agree that Anchorage parks, trails, and recreation facilities improve their quality of life.

55% said they visit Anchorage parks or trails more often than they did before COVID-19.

Local parks and trails are essential to maintaining health during COVID-19.
Anchorage residents use local parks and trails to exercise (67%) and improve mental health (66%).

62% value Anchorage parks, trails, and recreation facilities more than they did before COVID-19.

“[Parks and trails] stayed open during the lockdowns, allowing my family to continue participating in the activities we have always done.”

Based on 1,469 survey responses
www.Muni.org/Parks

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Passing Park Bonds

1. Right size the Bond
2. Spread the word
3. Demonstrate success
4. Equitable approach
CHANSHTNU MULDOON PARK
Mixed Use Development
Chugach Mountains
JBER - Military
Chanshtnu Muldoon Park
Residential
Muldoon Rd
Debar Rd
History of the park

- Dena’ina lands (10,000+ years)
- Anchorage Tent City (1915)
- Homesteading -> Urban Development (1940-1970)
- Land Speculation and Community Advocacy (1990-2015)
- Park Dedicated (2015)
- Park Development
  - Master Plan (2015-16)
  - Phase 1 (2016-18)
  - Phase 2 (2019-present)

* 1950 Aerial Imagery
Land Use

- Residential
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Park
Community Profile

- Demographics
- Population Growth Trends
- Household Income
- Language
- Housing Tenure
- Transportation Modes

![Community Profile Diagram]

**Ethnicity: Percent Population**

- **Muldoon Elementary School**
  - Data: Anchorage School District Oct. 2015
  - 38% Asian or Pacific Islander
  - 20% White or Caucasian
  - 16% Alaska Native or American Indian
  - 13% African American or Black
  - 7% Other
  - 6% Two or More Races

- **Begich Middle School**
  - Data: Anchorage School District Oct. 2015
  - 27% Asian or Pacific Islander
  - 25% White or Caucasian
  - 18% Alaska Native or American Indian
  - 12% African American or Black
  - 9% Other
  - 7% Two or More Races

- **Census Tracts 7.02, 7.03, 17.31**
  - Data: U.S. Census Bureau 2010
  - 51% Asian or Pacific Islander
  - 11% White or Caucasian
  - 11% Alaska Native or American Indian
  - 11% African American or Black
  - 11% Other
  - 14% Two or More Races

**Snapshot**

- **Census Tract 7.02**
  - Population: 5,107
  - Households: 1,853
  - Median Income: $72,883

- **Census Tract 7.03**
  - Population: 5,706
  - Households: 2,051
  - Median Income: $44,567

- **Census Tract 17.31**
  - Population: 5,823
  - Households: 2,064
  - Median Income: $63,404

**Population: Age**

- Census Tracts 7.02, 7.03, 17.31
- Data: U.S. Census Bureau 2010

- Median Age: 31.4
TOP PRIORITIES

- Multi-use Pathways for year round use
- Children’s Play Area or Playground
- Farmer’s Market
- Picnic Areas
- Community Garden
- Off-leash Dog Park (Fenced)
- Library and/or Community Room
- Sledding Hill
- Parking lot
- Bouldering Climbing Area
- Open Recreation Fields
- Arborretum or Orchard
- Ice Skating Rink
- Skateboard Park
- Amphitheater
- Bicycle Pump Course
- Orienteering Activities and Geocache
- Basketball
- Basketball

Identify Community Priorities
From Priorities to Design

1. Design your park workshop
2. Illustrate, share and refine
3. Finalize into a preferred alternative
Chanshtnu Muldoon Park Master Plan
Phase 1
- Inclusive Playground
- Custom Picnic Shelter
- Ice Skating Ribbon
- Farmers Market and Event Space
- Trails and Creek Access

Phase 2
- Community Garden and Food Forest
- Off-leash Dog Park
- Bike Park
- Nature Play Area
- Trails and Creek Access
Project Funding

Federal: $750,000 ORLP Grant
State: $1.5 Million in State Legislative Grants
Local: $1.45 Million in Park Bonds
Philanthropic: $30,000 in private donations & $40,000 in matching grants
Slides highlighting the best of the park
Key Takeaways

Public Process and Community Engagement
- Know who the stakeholders are
- Build trust
- Record people’s ideas and share it back to them (validation)
- Work toward consensus
- Build broad support & deliver results
- Tell the story

Improving Health Outcomes
- Healthy Parks, Healthy People
- Ask yourself how this park improvement can improve health outcomes
- Understand the needs of the community
- Be inclusive… consider all ages, abilities, and populations
- Inventory deficiencies in facilities
- Outreach and education = public awareness
- Provide programming and support partners

Funding

Local Park Bonds
- Right size the bond – understand what the community’s appetite for spending is
- Spread the word – outreach is critical
- Demonstrate success – complete projects on time and on budget, share the success
- Equitable approach – spread the love… give neighborhoods some skin in the game

Grants
- Research grant opportunities
- Document planning process with grants in mind
- Leverage funding sources to do more
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Parks and Recreation
April 28, 2022
Mobile Greenway Initiative

Providing community access to the City of Mobile’s most beautiful natural assets

Jennifer Greene
Director, Programs and Project Management
City of Mobile

City Parks Alliance Webinar Series. April 28, 2022
Where in the world is Mobile, AL?

- Nestled on Mobile Bay and at the tip of Mobile-Tensaw River Delta
- 4th largest city in Alabama
- 185,000+ citizens
- 99% urban
- Median income $42,321
- Median property value $123,600
- Poverty rate 20.7%
PROGRAMS AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

✓ Executes transformative projects in the City of Mobile, as well as City capital (CIP) program.
✓ Projects include civil infrastructure, land acquisition, environmental, restoration, parks, vertical construction, demolition and planning projects.
✓ Current project load is $100M. Mostly federal grants.

Road Construction/Complete Streets
• Broad Street Redevelopment ($40M)
• St. Louis Street ($9M)

Major Parks Projects
• Brookley by the Bay ($45M+)
• Perch Creek Preserve ($10M+)

Environmental
• 12 Mile Creek Stream Stabilization ($6M+)
• Stormwater Mapping ($3M)
• Langan Lake Dredging/GI ($9M+)
• Three Mile Creek Natural Channel Dredge ($2M)

Vertical Construction
• Africatown Welcome Center ($4M+)
• Animal Shelter ($TBD)

Trails
• Three Mile Creek Greenway ($25M)
• Pedestrian Bridge over I-65 ($25M)
• Crepe Myrtle Trail ($10M)
• 12 Mile Creek (future)
MOBILE GREENWAY INITIATIVE

For over 35-years, citizens, non-profits and government agencies have been envisioning a pedestrian and biking trail through Mobile. The Greenway will link neighborhoods, parks, commercial districts, and provide access to unique natural areas.
BENEFITS OF OUR GREENWAY

Health. The Greenway would provide a recreational opportunity to the estimated 43% of Mobilians that currently do not meet recommended levels of physical activity. BCBS-AL stated every $1 spent on trails/paths can save $3 in medical expenses.

Economic. Successful greenway trails have been shown to increase the values of adjacent property, increase safety, and bring new development activity to the area. Shout out to Atlanta Beltline, Greenville’s Swamp Rabbit Trail, Chattanooga’s Riverwalk Greenway, and the Katy Trail in Dallas which demonstrate the return on investment to residents, businesses, and the city.

Environmental. The Greenway Trail is part of a larger strategy to improve the watershed of Three Mile Creek. The City is coordinating with a variety of environmental and utility partners to reduce pollutants in the waterway, restore natural stream channels, and maintain flood protection.

Three Mile Creek is the first major piece of the Mobile Greenway Initiative. When complete, the Greenway will be within 1-mile of 70,000 residents, within 10 miles of 200,000+ residents and with 35 miles or less of 400,000+ residents.
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Source: US NEWS AND WORLD REPORT 2021 Healthiest Communities Report
PARTNERSHIPS ARE KEY

- Citizens of Mobile
- Mobile Bay National Estuary Reserve
- Mobile United/Natural Resources Committee
- Alabama Coastal Foundation
- Downtown Mobile Alliance
- The Peninsula Group
- Dog River Clearwater Revival
- Alabama Dept. Conservation and Natural Resources
- Mobile Area Water and Sewer System (MAWSS)
- Three Mile Creek Partnership (“friends” group)
- City of Mobile Departments
  - Mayor Sandy Stimpson
  - Parks and Rec (ultimate owner)
  - Grants Management and Compliance
  - Procurement
  - Diversity Office
  - Engineering
  - Real Estate Asset Management
  - Finance/Accounting

https://mapformobile.org/3mctrail/
FUNDING IS IMPORTANT

• ORLP/LWCF kicked project off in 2015 with first mile
• RESTORE Act funding
  • $12M for 5 miles of the Greenway to connect three well-used parks and reconnect communities
• Transportation Alternative Grants (TAP) –$920K (2)
• TIGER Grant (connection to downtown)
• National Fish and Wildlife Foundation GEBF (land acquisition)
• Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act (GOMESA)
• City Capital funds
  • Penny tax
  • Surplus funds
• New Opportunities
  • RAISE Grant
  • Second pulse – RESTORE Act
• Always looking for more!
EXECUTION IN MOTION

- Segment 6N waiting for RESTORE approval to bid construction (Now)
- Preparing Construction Documents for Segments 5 and 7N for RESTORE approval (Aug. 2022)
- The next construction phases begin with 6N, then 5 and 7N.
- Segment 1 and 2 at 60% design
- Segment 4 - RAISE Grant application for pedestrian bridge and new trailhead
SOUTHERN ROUTE @ BROOKLEY BY THE BAY

- Unprecedented access to nature and the bay for the City of Mobile
- 100 acres - old golf course (orange)
- 50 acres – wetlands in conservation easement (purple)
- RFQ for design and engineering to be awarded early May
- Intensive and inclusive community engagement
- Crepe Myrtle Trail start
MOBILE GREENWAY INITIATIVE
It’s all about connections!

- Three Mile Creek Greenway
  - Langan Park to I-65
  - Pedestrian Bridge
  - Bush Park to MLK
- Broad Street Redevelopment Project
  - MLK to Broad
  - Broad to Downtown Loop
  - Roundabout to Arlington Park
- Brookley by the Bay
  - Crepe Myrtle Trail (off and on-road)
- Park Hopping
  - Doyle Park
  - McNally Park
- Perch Creek Preserve
  - Ziebach transformation
  - New park/water access across DIP
- Helen Wood Park
  - Restoration and reinforcement
SAFETY PLAN

• #1 community concern – we hear you!
• Working with MPD, MFRD and Parks and Rec to develop a guidance document regarding safety and security
• Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) – developed in 1960s
  ✓ Natural Surveillance – minimizing hidden/isolated areas, views of surroundings, lighting, Wi-Fi, landscape design leaves border at trail edge, tree limbing to increase visibility
  ✓ Natural Access Control – visibly lighted park facilities close to active areas/roads, space between wooded areas/trails, clearly marked open hours
  ✓ Territoriality – encourage feeling of ownership, areas designed for specific uses like families, encourage design elements to reflect area culture,
• Upcoming Bid – Greenway Lighting
  ✓ Solar Lighting
  ✓ Cameras (real-time monitoring capability)
  ✓ Integration into the City’s fiber grid
  ✓ Wi-Fi Connectivity
CHALLENGES

1. Calming community concerns
2. Real estate in a historic urban and ecologically sensitive environment
3. Finding enough funding
4. Keeping project moving with delays tied to funding
Questions or Comments?

Information and interactive map: https://mapformobile.org/3mctrail/

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Thank you for joining us!

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