



CITY OF MERRILL

Parks & Recreation Dept. - Smith Center

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MAY MEETING NOTICE

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission will have a meeting on **Wednesday, May 5, 2021 at 4:15 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall.** Phone info: Phone: 636-452-0269

PIN: 913 720 887 #

Voting members of Commission: Jean Ravn, Brian Artac, Kyle Gulke, Joan Tabor, John Vanlieshout, Amanda Groth and Dan Novitch

The following items will be included on the agenda:

1. Approve minutes from previous meeting.
2. Approve claims.
3. Public Comment
4. Re-visit T.B. Scott Tower location decision.
5. Continued discussion on Prairie Trails to River Bend connector trail (request road portions as Bike Route Designations)
6. Discuss designs from recent partnership with MHS Graphic Design Class for potential park merchandise sale.
7. Monthly reports.
8. Set date for next meeting.
9. Public comment
10. Adjournment

Submitted by

Dan Novitch
Dan Novitch, Chairperson *DNS*
Parks and Recreation Commission

The Merrill City Hall is accessible to the physical disadvantaged. If special accommodations are required, please contact City Hall at 536-5594.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

April 7, 2021

The Merrill Parks and Recreation Commission met on Wednesday, April 7, 2021 at 4:15 p.m., at Merrill City Hall.

Members Present: Dan Novitch, Kyle Gulke, Jean Ravn, Brian Artac, Joan Tabor, and John Van Lieshout.

Members Excused Absent:

Department Staff Present: Dan Wendorf and Dawn Smith

***Motion by Ravn, seconded by Artac to approve the minutes from the March meeting.

***Carried unanimously.

***Motion by Tabor, seconded by Gulke, to approve the claims from March.

***Carried unanimously.

Public Comment:

Jon Krohn, 1851 Center Ave, Merrill. Krohn stated that on March 10 and also the April 5 at the River Bend Trail meeting it was voted on to approve the Blue route for the new section of the Riverbend Trail bike route. Krohn stated that it would be the safest route and if people wanted to use the Red route it would be their decision. Krohn stated for out of town visitors it would be nice to make them aware of a safe route. Krohn said the RBT committee stated that they could do a sign at the start and the finish of the trail, so there are not signs all over.

Christine Vorpapel, N2227 Oak Ridge Ave., Merrill. Vorpapel stated that she was amazed that there was not an Amended Agenda including the TB Scott Library Tower. Vorpapel stated that she was surprised that she did not see a Thank You in last month's meeting minutes thanking all the places that have donated to the tower. Vorpapel believes that this item should be kept on the agenda and the public should be informed on what is happening.

Sharon Anderson, 1200 A Johnson Street, Merrill. Anderson stated that she has concerns on where the Park and Recreation commission has voted to put the TB Scott Tower. Anderson doesn't believe that the location will do the tower justice and displayed some pictures of some areas that she thought would work out much nicer. Anderson stated that the Bankers Square would be a great spot and vandalism would be less in that area. Anderson stated that she would like to have the Park and Recreation Commission reconsider the location of the tower.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss and recommend River Bend Trail route through the MARC to connect with Council Grounds. Wendorf stated there was really no bad route, no wrong answer and either way there will be two routes. Wendorf stated the Blue Route was safer and a little longer and the Red Route was shorter. Wendorf would recommend the Red Route because a majority of people already use it daily. Wendorf stated that the poles for signs would already be in place on the Red Route, the Blue Route would need to have poles put in for signage. Vanlieshout questioned if trails would be paved. Wendorf stated they would not. Tabor stated that the Red Route would be shorter but the parking lot could be very busy and not sure

about safety, would bike lanes need to be put in. Wendorf stated you would have to put in a strip for bikers, similar to how we do it on roads with shared use.

***Motion made by Gulke, seconded by Ravn to approve the Blue Route option for the extension of the River bend bike trail.

***Carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was to discuss

The next item on the agenda was monthly reports. Wendorf asked if anyone had any questions. Wendorf stated that with the early spring the crew has been getting a good start on ball fields and hooking bathrooms to get ready for spring sports. Wendorf stated ice removal went good and was very happy to report that there were no problems with the chiller this year. Wendorf stated that he is working on capital improvements including the pit toilets and rain gutters. Wendorf stated that the Park and Recreation has been put in a difficult position regarding to the TB Scott Tower. Wendorf stated it came up quickly with not a lot of time to put thought into the project. Wendorf stated that no matter what decision the commission decides on, someone will not be happy about it. Wendorf stated that too many people are using social media to stir things up and in the end it really doesn't benefit anyone. Wendorf stated that if someone wanted to talk about ideas the Park and Recreation office is open every day or call or email, please feel free to contact me instead of posting everything on social media. The Parks and Rec office received zero direct correspondence related to the tower or its location.

Ravn questioned if the Aquatic Center was going to be open this year and when they would be selling passes. Wendorf stated it would be open but no passes will be sold this year due to the pandemic, and if we have to close we do not have to refund anything.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 5 at 4:15 p.m. at the Merrill City Hall.

Public Comment: Gulke stated that there has been some information posted on Facebook regarding the equipment at Stange Park. Gulke stated that the 10 year plan should be revisited to consider adding a new playground for next year.

***Motion by Vanlieshout, seconded by Ravn to adjourn at 5:00 p.m.

***Carried unanimously.

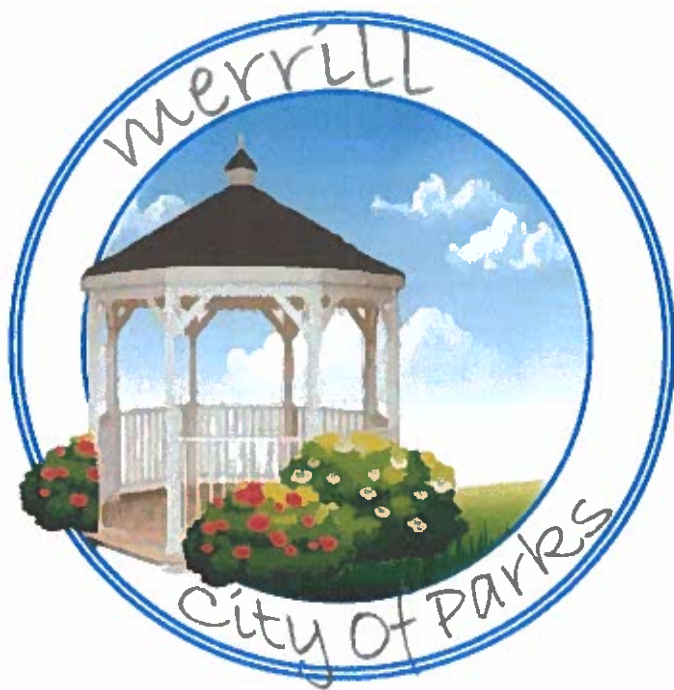
Dawn Smith
Recording Secretary

APRIL

JUMPLINE	BARLEYFEST WEBSITE	4/1/2021	125916	\$123.40	BARLEYFEST
WALMART	EASTER/SUMMER PLAYGROUND STUFF	3/26/2021		\$39.43	55300-03-41500
ACE HARDWARE	ANTI ODER BRUSH CADY	3/17/2021	20422071	\$22.97	55200-03-40000
RIVER COUNTRY	LAWN MIX	4/30/2021	266892	\$651.24	55200-08-91000
NAPA AUTO PARTS	FHP BELT	3/24/2021	889825	\$11.95	55200-03-50000
ACE HARDWARE	TRASH BAGS	3/24/2021	204407	\$8.99	55200-03-40000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM AND JOE	4/1/2021	4080323018	\$71.18	55200-03-46000
MACE KREED	SECURITY DEPOSIT	4/8/2021	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
BREANN HACKBARTH	SECURITY DEPOSIT	4/8/2021	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
THE LIFEGUARD STORE	UNIFORMS/WHISTLE/HIPPACKS	4/7/2021		\$963.30	55420-03-40000
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM AND JOE	3/25/2021	4079538888	\$71.18	55200-03-46000
PREMIER	BLACK BRASS BENCH PLATES	10/27/2020	1305	\$46.00	26-31-5395
WALMART	SUPPLIES EASTER EGG HUNT	3/31/2021		\$151.60	55300-03-41500
SUNRISE BROADCAST	ADVERTISING	4/1/2021		\$249.00	55400-03-41000
ETCO ELECTRIC SUPPLY	REPLACE LIGHTS	3/31/2021	20834	\$916.93	55200-08-91000
HORST DISTRIBUTING	WHEEL DECK, BUSHING AND SPACER WHEEL	3/23/2021	88981-000	\$147.69	55200-03-50000
MERRILL STREET DEPARTMENT	P-6/BATTERY	3/18/2021	17877	\$272.69	55200-03-50000
MERRILL STREET DEPARTMENT	P-4/THERMOSTAT/PLUGS	3/17/2021	17873	\$255.51	55200-03-50000
MERRILL STREET DEPARTMENT	P-12/LUBE FILTER/HYDRAULIC	3/22/2021	17881	\$443.46	55200-03-50000
FERGUSON	PARTS	3/25/2021	6018958	\$13.50	55200-03-50000
ATCO	POP UP SWIPES/QUICKES	4/8/2021	10575516	\$418.20	10-55200-05-50220
CINTAS	DUST MOP	4/9/2021	4080947903	\$189.90	55400-02-23250
CINTAS	UNIFORMS	4/8/2021	4080947861	\$71.13	55200-03-46000
WALMART	BIRTHDAY PARTY SUPPLIES/SP SUPPLIES	4/9/2021		\$105.38	55300-03-41500
RTL ELECTRIC	REPAIR CHARGING CORD FOR ZAMBONI	4/7/2021	4404	\$480.95	55400-03-51500
BAUMGART WASTE REMOVAL	HAULING GARBAGE	4/6/2021		\$148.00	55400-02-23600
GOLD MEDAL TRAILOR SALES	BOLTS/SOLID RECEIVER	4/8/2021	11043	\$152.00	55200-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	TRASH CAN	3/31/2021	204602	\$23.99	55200-03-40000
MERRILL ACE HARDWARE	ELECTRICAL SUPPLIES	4/8/2021	204784	\$260.48	55200-03-40000
ANNETTE FREDRICK	SECURITY DEPOSIT	4/12/2021	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
AMANDA WOLLER	SECURITY DEPOSIT	4/12/2021	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
ATCO INTERNATIONAL	POP UP SWIPES/QUICKES	4/8/2021	10575515	\$258.50	10-55200-05-50220
AMERICAN WELDING	CYLINDER RENTAL	3/31/2021	77216339	\$53.67	55200-02-15000

AMERICAN WELDING	CYLINDER RENTAL	3/31/2021	8821810	\$72.58	55300-03-415000
MENDARDS	GREEN TREATED LUMBER	2/18/2021		\$1,917.93	55200-08-91500
CINTAS	UNIFORMS JIM AND JOE	4/15/2021	4081599597	\$128.93	10-55200-03-46000
ERICA MADDEN	SECURITY DEPOSIT	4/21/2021	VOUCHER	\$100.00	10-21-7200
DAVE'S COUNTY MARKET	SODA FOR BIRTHDAY PARTY	4/18/2021		\$5.00	55300-03-41500
MERRILL FOTO NEWS	SILENT SPORTS	4/21/2021		\$233.00	BLACK SQUIRREL SCURRAY
MERRILL FOTO NEWS	MERRILL MINI BOOK	4/21/2021		\$395.00	55400-03-41000











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Prairie Trails to River Bend Connector Trail Bike Route Designation Request

As part of the new connector trail that we have been discussing, we do not own contiguous properties from the River Bend Trail all the way to Prairie Trails. We are fortunate to have an easement through Weinbrenner's parking lot that gets us to the skate park. As we head north, we can utilize Stange Park, and a City right-of-way to get all the way to Logan St. From there we will need to follow the process to designate the remaining roadways we intend to use for this trail as a Bike Route. I laid these out on our maps from a few meetings ago but to summarize I am requesting the following roads be designated as bike routes for trail purposes:

Logan St – from E 5th St to E 6th St

E 6th St – from Logan St to Douglas St

Douglas St – from E 6th St to E 7th St

E 7th St – from Douglas St to Hendricks St

Hendricks St – from E 7th St to E 9th St

E 9th St – from Hendricks St to Spruce St

*From this location Spruce St extends north as a ROW to another ROW that we would use to the east to another ROW that extends to the north past the Sawmill and Lincoln Lanes to E 13th St

E 13th St – from ROW to Cedar St

Cedar St – from E 13th to Prairie Trails

**the end of this route still needs work (from the Spruce St ROW to Prairie Trails. The ROW's along here are still public ROW's but there are some obstacles in the way in a few locations (trees, vehicles, possibly structures) that we would have to work with adjacent property owners to clear up. The main objective this year is to get this established and started and continue to work on a solid plan to implement in the years to come.

Regards,

Dan Wendorf, Parks & Recreation Director

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Perimeter: 97.4 Feet

Perimeter: 96 Feet

Perimeter: 91.1 Feet

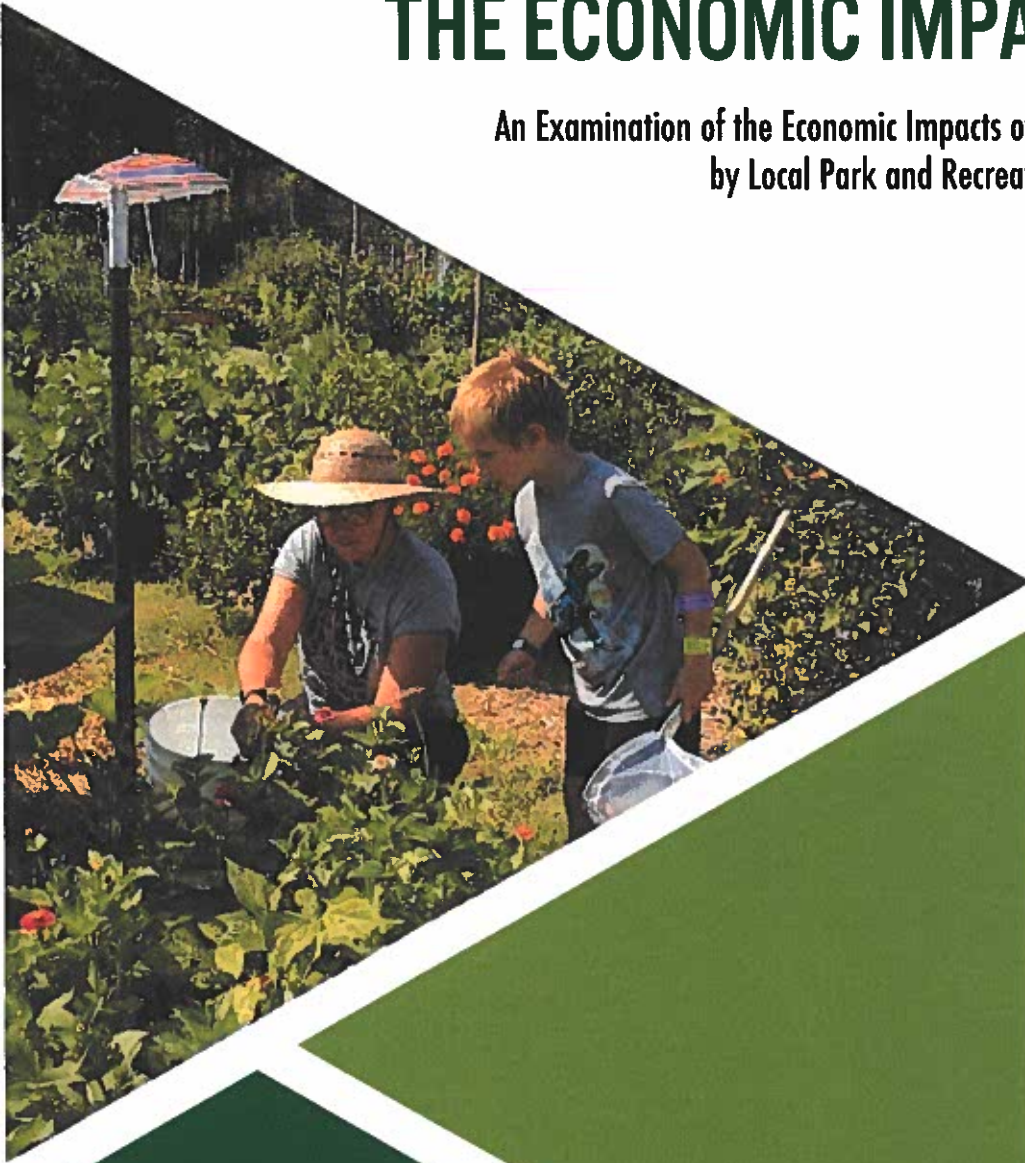
ROW

T31N R6E

WATER

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF PARKS

An Examination of the Economic Impacts of Operations and Capital Spending
by Local Park and Recreation Agencies on the U.S. Economy



NRPA National Recreation
and Park Association

Because everyone deserves a great park

IMPACT OF LOCAL PARK AND RECREATION AGENCIES ON THE U.S. ECONOMY—2017

Economic activity -
\$166.4 billion



Employment -
1,125,640 jobs

KEY FINDINGS

Parks and recreation is an essential feature of a healthy, vibrant and resilient community. Through the tireless efforts of hundreds of thousands full- and part-time and seasonal workers and supported by countless volunteers and advocates, local park and recreation agencies have a positive impact on the lives of millions of people. Park and recreation amenities and programming are diverse, spanning from no or low-cost fitness opportunities (such as a walk along a trail or a fitness class at a community center) and access to nutritious meals at out-of-school programs for youth to providing our cities, towns and counties with cleaner air and water thanks to preserved open spaces.

Park and recreation professionals and their agencies make critical contributions to their communities, as highlighted by the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) Three Pillars:

- **Conservation** — Local park and recreation agencies play a vital role in the protection of our environment through green infrastructure, maintenance of public lands, preserving wildlife habitats and more. In addition to helping connect people to nature, local parks create essential environmental stewards that advocate for and protect our most precious public resources — our land, water, trees, open spaces and wildlife.
- **Health and Wellness** — Local park and recreation agencies provide crucial health and wellness opportunities for all populations in communities across the country. As many people in the United States continue to face serious health issues — including rising rates of chronic disease, an increased prevalence of sedentary lifestyles and poor nutrition habits — parks and recreation offers an affordable and accessible solution.
- **Social Equity** — True to the very philosophy of public parks and recreation is the idea that all people — regardless of race, ethnicity, age, income level or physical ability — have access to programs, facilities, places and spaces that make their lives and communities great. Parks and recreation truly builds communities — communities for all.

Park and recreation professionals and their agencies make another valuable contribution: **promoting economic activity that makes our cities, towns and counties more prosperous**. So, how significant is the impact of local park and recreation agencies on the U.S. economy?

To answer this question, NRPA joined forces with the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University in 2015 to conduct the first nationwide study on the economic impact of local park and recreation agencies' operations and capital spending. NRPA and the Center for Regional Analysis have partnered twice more to update that landmark 2015 research — in 2018 and 2020. Each of the studies focuses exclusively on the direct, indirect and induced effects local park and recreation agencies' spending has on economic activity, using U.S. Census Bureau data compiled for the analysis. This report summarizes the key findings of the 2020 research. A more detailed description, including a discussion of the methodology and implications, is available at nrpa.com/Parkeconreport.

U.S. ECONOMIC IMPACT

Local park and recreation agencies employed nearly 380,000 full-time and part-time employees in 2017, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The combined operations and capital spending of these more than 10,000 park and recreation agencies ripples through the national, regional and local economies as park and recreation employees spend their paychecks, park and recreation agency vendors hire workers and both agencies and their vendors purchase products and services to serve their clients.

The result of park and recreation expenditures on the nation's economy is immense. The shared impact of operations and capital spending by U.S. local park and recreation agencies in 2017 resulted in more than \$166 billion in economic activity, \$87 billion in added GDP and more than 1.1 million jobs that paid salaries, wages and benefits totaling \$50.8 billion.



Local park and recreation agencies generated more than \$166 billion in economic activity and supported more than 1.1 million jobs in 2017.

Impacts of Local Park and Recreation Agency Spending on the U.S. Economy — 2017

Total Impact of Local Park and Recreation Agencies' Spending	
Economic Activity (transactions)	\$166.37 billion
Value Added (GDP)	\$87.03 billion
Labor Income (salaries, wages, benefits)	\$50.78 billion
Employment (jobs)	1,125,640 jobs

STATE-LEVEL ANALYSIS

This study also examined the economic impact of local park and recreation agencies' spending in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The methodology of the state-level analysis mirrored that of the national study. The estimates of total economic impacts include the direct, indirect and induced effects of operations and capital spending by local park and recreation agencies in each state and the District of Columbia.

Impacts of Local Park and Recreation Agency Spending on the U.S. Economy — 2017

State	Economic Activity (transactions)	Employment (jobs)	Labor Income
Alabama	\$1,503,147,254	12,705	\$399,005,006
Alaska	303,390,757	2,133	98,633,863
Arizona	1,648,215,426	13,938	501,762,409
Arkansas	682,233,962	5,686	168,837,796
California	16,036,598,747	109,665	5,176,100,922
Colorado	4,358,843,200	34,046	1,384,958,813
Connecticut	494,556,583	5,425	190,825,280
Delaware	113,284,101	887	35,563,676
District of Columbia	661,978,074	3,233	217,026,044
Florida	10,082,946,211	71,466	2,585,692,228
Georgia	5,448,738,404	37,469	1,574,843,900
Hawaii	1,015,390,500	8,033	347,537,924
Idaho	465,672,789	4,186	128,032,145
Illinois	10,044,757,210	78,772	3,500,248,927
Indiana	1,084,801,753	10,169	331,540,900
Iowa	794,049,585	7,364	232,516,251
Kansas	1,011,252,780	8,877	325,218,500
Kentucky	678,908,245	5,735	159,931,685
Louisiana	1,238,007,175	11,032	335,868,614
Maine	234,820,271	2,381	67,449,639
Maryland	2,361,648,085	17,931	827,208,357
Massachusetts	1,025,078,289	8,604	432,230,371
Michigan	1,898,096,633	14,080	469,348,842
Minnesota	4,074,433,210	28,312	1,330,618,132
Mississippi	474,375,086	4,053	85,410,909

STATE-LEVEL ANALYSIS

Impacts of Local Park and Recreation Agency Spending on the U.S. Economy — 2017 (cont.)

Missouri	2,128,899,915	18,365	643,225,374
Montana	304,183,088	2,394	86,448,679
Nebraska	683,532,116	5,536	212,816,750
Nevada	1,321,280,720	10,784	86,882,201
New Hampshire	205,512,906	1,847	80,026,999
New Jersey	1,641,054,862	15,800	577,659,695
New Mexico	787,081,162	6,121	238,594,202
New York	9,167,329,779	56,479	3,121,526,974
North Carolina	3,244,130,440	27,568	951,514,017
North Dakota	946,766,748	6,806	255,756,065
Ohio	4,339,345,388	34,546	1,580,660,242
Oklahoma	1,967,654,589	12,941	556,168,656
Oregon	1,819,950,687	15,617	570,448,263
Pennsylvania	2,285,494,182	14,840	694,941,655
Rhode Island	112,139,819	1,030	39,691,153
South Carolina	1,159,358,994	11,064	309,520,294
South Dakota	381,448,042	3,378	92,581,322
Tennessee	1,680,968,640	14,078	552,269,925
Texas	8,703,708,284	62,519	2,854,359,898
Utah	1,245,717,307	14,838	355,287,553
Vermont	94,179,086	791	23,991,358
Virginia	2,715,585,026	24,738	853,552,334
Washington	3,769,241,437	24,825	1,212,367,004
West Virginia	422,994,270	2,977	109,881,094
Wisconsin	2,038,922,648	14,534	573,538,792
Wyoming	290,795,912	2,926	77,420,654

Sources: IMPLAN, Center for Regional Analysis — George Mason University for the National Recreation and Park Association, U.S. Census Bureau

One caution: The sum of the state-level impacts presented in this table does not equal the national-level economic impact estimates presented in the previous section. The difference reflects how the full economic impact of local park and recreation agency spending is not confined within state borders. For example, if the fertilizer used on sports fields located at an Oklahoma City park was produced by a manufacturer in Arkansas, the value of that product production would not count as an impact on the Oklahoma economy, nor does the study include such an impact in the estimates for Arkansas.

WHAT THE RESULTS MEAN

These estimates of the economic impact generated from park and recreation agency spending come from an input-output model that estimates direct, indirect and induced effects of those expenditures.

- **Direct effects** reflect the spending by local park and recreation agencies — whether for operations or capital programs — and include wages and benefits for agency employees and spending on equipment, utilities, goods and services.
- **Indirect effects** capture the spending associated with local park and recreation agencies' vendors. An example is an agency contracting with a local landscaping company to mow ball fields. The landscaping company will need to hire employees, purchase mowers and contract with a bookkeeping service. The bookkeeping service leases office space, employs workers, purchases office supplies and so forth.
- **Induced effects** track the impact of consumer spending (from wages) by park and recreation agency employees and employees working for the agency's vendors.

The model estimates the total effects on output, employment, labor income and value added resulting from park and recreation agencies' operations and capital spending:

- **Output** measures the value of the resulting transactions
- **Employment** is the number of headcount jobs, both full- and part-time
- **Labor income** includes salaries, wages and fringe benefits
- **Value added** is the measure most equivalent to GDP and includes property income, dividends, corporate profits and other measures



Your Local Park and Recreation Agency Generates Additional Economic Benefits

While the figures presented in this report are significant, they represent only one aspect of the economic benefits of public parks. Instead, the conclusions of this report are conservative estimates of parks and recreation's full economic benefits.

Beyond the impact of local park and recreation agency spending, other critical economic impacts from public parks include:

- *Health and wellness:* Parks and recreation promotes improved physical and mental health. This not only helps people feel better, but also can help lower medical and insurance costs for those people taking advantage of those facilities and activities. Three in five respondents to a November 2017 *NRPA Park Pulse poll* indicated they would take up walking or jogging in local parks, trails or around their neighborhoods if advised by their doctors to be more physically active. A similar percentage of adults responding to a March 2019 *NRPA Park Pulse poll* reported that they visit their local parks or picnic areas to experience the health benefits of nature. Further, an *Oregon State University* study found that Oregon residents' engagement in one of 30 outdoor recreation activities in 2018 resulted in \$735 million to \$1.416 billion in cost of illness savings accrued to health insurers, providers and participants.
- *Conservation and resiliency:* Park and recreation agencies' protection of land, water, trees, open spaces and wildlife improves air and water quality in communities. Through effective land management methods and green infrastructure investments, parks and recreation makes communities more resilient to natural disasters, reducing disaster recovery and insurance costs. Ninety-three percent of respondents to NRPA's *2019 Engagement with Parks* survey believe it is essential that their local government acquire, construct and maintain local parks, trails and green spaces near bodies of water to protect natural resources in their community.
- *Property values:* Economic research has demonstrated consistently that homes and properties located near parklands have higher values than those located farther away. Higher home values not only benefit the owners of these properties, but also add to the tax base of local governments. Eighty-five percent of respondents to the *2019 Engagement with Parks* survey indicate that they seek high-quality parks and recreation amenities when choosing a place to live.
- *Economic development:* Parks and recreation improves the quality of life in communities and benefits the local economic development of a region. More than 80 percent of corporate executives responding to a *2019 Area Development* survey rated quality-of-life features as an important factor when choosing a location for a headquarters, factory or other company facility. Further, 94 percent of adults responding to the March 2020 *NRPA Park Pulse poll* support their local government investing in infrastructure improvements that promote economic activity in their community.
- *Visitor spending:* Many local park and recreation agency amenities spur tourism to their respective locales, generating significant economic activity, including (but not limited to) increased sales at local restaurants/bars and hotels. An August 2017 *NRPA Park Pulse poll* found that people seek out park and recreation amenities — such as beaches, parks, trails and secluded and relaxing places — when choosing a vacation destination.



KEY CONCLUSIONS

Park and recreation professionals at the more than 10,000 agencies across the United States advance their communities in many different ways. Not only are parks leading the way in terms of conservation, health and wellness, and social equity, they also drive significant economic activity.

Local park and recreation agencies generated more than \$166 billion in U.S. economic activity and supported 1.1 million jobs from their operations and capital spending in 2017. These results, combined with studies on the [state](#) and [national](#) park systems, are proof that public parks are robust engines of economic activity.

Beyond the impact of their expenditures, park and recreation agencies generate even more economic value through their promotion of health and wellness, as well as conservation and resiliency that foster higher property values and increase tourism. Most critically, park and recreation amenities are the cornerstones to improving a region's quality of life, a significant factor in enticing employers and workers to an area.

When combined with the ability to deliver healthier and happier communities, the powerful impact parks and recreation has on economic activity highlights the fact that park and recreation agency offerings are not merely a “nice-to-have,” luxury government service. Instead, parks and recreation transforms our cities, towns and counties into vibrant and prosperous communities for all.

Policymakers and elected officials at all levels of government should take notice and support greater and more stable taxpayer funding of parks and recreation. Local park and recreation agencies not only help raise the standard of living in our neighborhoods, towns and cities, they also spark economic activity that can have ripple effects well beyond any initial expenditure in creating jobs and prosperity throughout our nation.



METHODOLOGY

This study uses data reported by the U.S. Census Bureau to estimate operational spending by local park systems. The *Survey of Public Employment & Payroll* offers estimates of agency employment and payrolls in 2017, while the *Annual Survey of State and Local Government Finances* provides agency operations spending data. Researchers at the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University derived its capital spending estimates from reports available from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and a review of budget records for dozens of park systems selected to reflect a diverse range of localities and park operating characteristics.

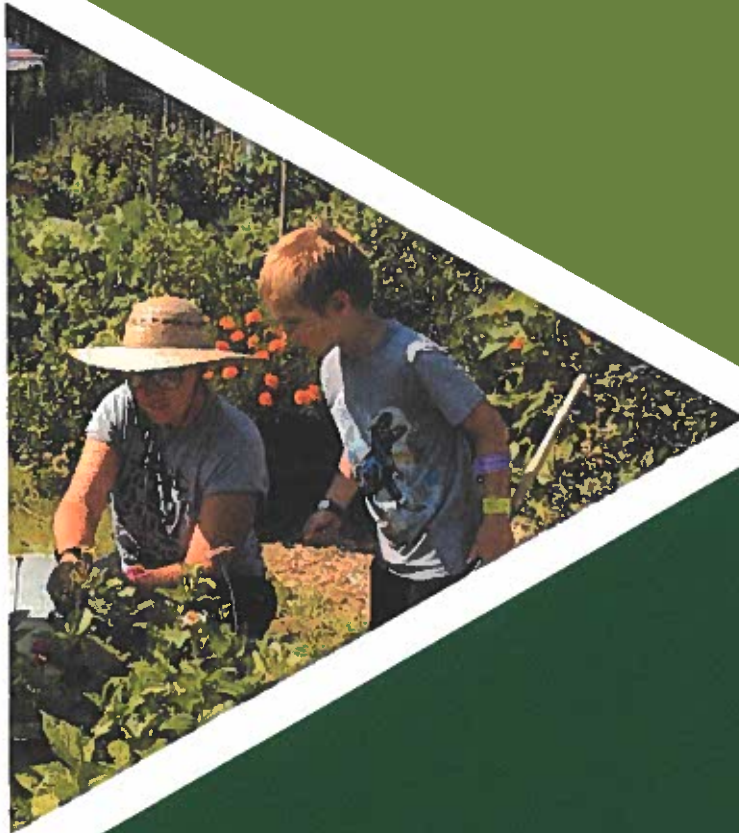
The GMU researchers used the IMPLAN economic input-output model to estimate the total economic impacts, often called “economic contributions,” generated by park system operations and capital spending. Consistent with previous studies prepared for NRPA, the researchers categorized park agency spending as if it were private-sector businesses operating parks, recreation and similar entertainment venues. In their judgment, this is more accurate than treating expenditures as general local government spending (i.e., park and recreation agency spending patterns are much more like a privately run entertainment venue than a local tax office).

The researchers adjusted the model inputs to reflect actual employee compensation paid to park system workers, which is often different than what private-sector firms pay their employees. The IMPLAN model is the most widely used tool for estimating economic impacts. This model is updated frequently to reflect shifts in the structure of the economy; therefore, the results reported here are not directly comparable to the findings of previous analyses.





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May 2021 Parks & Recreation Director's Report

Parks: Our parks officially opened on May 1st. By open we mean that our restrooms are open during the day for people to utilize and shelter reservations will be in full swing. We are pleased to announce that after going through a very thorough process for our new Park Maintenance position, we have selected Ryan Golisch to be our new employee. We had over 40 people apply for the position and had a very good pool of candidates to choose from. We are excited to get him started on June 1st and welcome in a new member to our Parks & Recreation team. Springs sports have begun, so we have been keeping athletic fields maintained and ready to go for games and practices for all of the MHS, PRMS, and area youth sports teams. Both boys and girls baseball, softball, and soccer leagues and tournaments are going to be taking place and playing this summer. It will be nice to get everyone active and outside again, as well as bringing visitors into our community. The Bierman Family Aquatic Center is being un-winterized and prepped for start-up on the week of May 17th. We will fill the pool that same week and turn all of the pumps, filters, heaters on for the season and begin to balance our water right away. This will give us enough time, hopefully, to troubleshoot anything that needs to be fixed (the pool hasn't run in 20 months). The City Administrator and I met with representatives from Ascension and the Samuels Group on April 9th at the River Bend Trail Trailhead near the Agra Pavilion to discuss the T.B. Scott Tower. Ascension has very generously agreed to fund the entire restoration of the tower and get it into whichever location we choose. They do want a decision from our May meeting so that they can get it finished and close their books on it before the sale to Aspirus. Obviously there are a few opinions on location floating around, but after the two I sent you after the last meeting, I haven't heard anything at all. As I stated at our last meeting, no matter where you choose, someone is not going to like it or will disagree with it. I still think the area we chose makes the most sense from a historical perspective, ease of access, and visibility for anyone looking to see it. We will continue this discussion during the meeting. Everyone has been working very hard to get things ready for a very busy season that lies ahead of us, but I think that everyone is excited to get back to what we do!! I have been working on our capital projects and getting them set up. It took a while but I recently was able to get our easement with Weinbrenner signed on their end and will have it signed by the City and returned to them so we can begin to work on our connector trail. Our new/larger water service was installed in Kitchenette Park and finished on the week of April 26th. Our new zero turn mower was ordered over a month ago and we are waiting for it to arrive. This is one thing that we are noticing is that we will have to be more patient with many things due to the effects of the pandemic in other areas throughout the country that we order things from or where they are manufactured.

Forestry: I have been keeping up with tree calls and inspections so far this spring. The Street Department has been doing a great job as always with tree pruning's and removals where necessary. We are very thankful for the \$250 donation again from American Transmission Company to go towards planting more trees in our community. They have contributed funds to our community for many years and helped us plant a good number of trees. We have been notified that, once again this year, it is not

necessary to host a physical tree planting event to qualify for Tree City USA. However, they are asking each community to participate in their social media campaigns to encourage people to plant trees and inform them on the importance of trees in our communities. I have been doing that on our Facebook page and it has had a good response. We will plant trees in honor of Arbor Day at some point this year but it might just be a very small gathering. I believe I passed along the information related to Emerald Ash Borer being confirmed in Langlade County a few weeks ago. The initial find was in a few isolated locations but was determined to have most likely been there for a few years. This confirmation means that we are surrounded on three of our four sides. Luckily we are in good shape to be able to handle EAB if/when it arrives. The only thing I am intending to do this summer is to inform our citizens of the importance of keeping an eye out for their ash trees, as well as potentially planning to remove their private ash trees as they decline in health. By planning ahead, this will hopefully help our citizen's budget for this as those trees are their responsibilities, not the City.

Recreation: The Children's Festival was a big success this year with over 300+ people through the door in a safe and orderly fashion. Thanks to Dawn for all of her efforts in making this happen and making it very successful. It is uplifting to be able to host this event and help people get planning for their summers, activities, and seasons again. People were very respectful of the single file, one directional flow through the building. Our programs have been on our website and Facebook page now for a few weeks and our physical programs just arrived and are being distributed. We have had really good numbers in some programs and are a bit slow in others. As I type this, we are a bit slow in our Summer Playground Program so hopefully those numbers pick up in the next few weeks. This entire year will be very interesting to see who is comfortable participating and who is not. We don't have a crystal ball to predict these things, but it is our job to plan and offer programs and opportunities. People will grow to be more comfortable at some point in the near future and our programs can hopefully be full beyond capacity along with it! I also still have quite a bit of confidence that all of our numbers will end up where we had hoped. The weather plays a big part in driving traffic and interest and the past few weeks have not helped motivate anyone.

Smith Center: As previously mentioned, it was very nice to start hosting events in the arena once again. We have had some birthday parties already this year, along with the Children's Festival that I mentioned earlier. We are noticing more interest over the past month or so in renting our arena and we are excited about that. We are looking at starting a very strong rebound year and building our way back to stronger than we were even before the pandemic. We are also going to host Barleyfest in October this year. It might be a toned down version of our last pre-pandemic event but it will be a good way to get that event back for everyone to enjoy. Our rain gutters have been installed already on the building and are going to make a tremendous difference with our water management around the building. We are scheduled to have our boards cleaned in June this year by the same contractor as last year to save us time as well as money.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dan Wendorf
Parks & Recreation Director
City of Merrill