

Section 6

Administration Policy Framework

A. The Context for Administrative, Coordinative and Fiscal Resources

Need for Better Coordination

There are 39 cities and townships in Todd County. Each year all of these local units of government invest in staff, equipment and facilities in order to provide a range of public services to meet the needs of their residents and businesses. In addition, there are 13 school districts in Todd County. Each year the school boards invest in their staff, new equipment and facilities, and in maintenance. Each year, municipalities and school districts in the County are investing in recreational opportunities whether staff, equipment or land.

Furthermore, there are two special purpose units of government working in Todd County that focus on protecting and improving natural resource features, the Todd County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the Sauk River Watershed District (SRWD). Their efforts both directly and indirectly benefit citizens by enhancing and protecting open space resources, which can greatly improve recreational opportunities. Most of their projects are constructed on privately owned lands. These two agencies work in close coordination with a number of state and federal agencies that also provide citizens of Todd County with recreational benefits.

Similar to counties, the above referenced units of government have been granted by the State of Minnesota, a wide range of administrative, coordinative, fiscal, and/or regulatory authorities to create, enhance and maintain parks, trails and open space facilities on public and private lands.

For example, cities have the authority to require parkland dedications when land developers are proposing to subdivide land. A new park dedication law passed by the state legislature in 2003, now provides counties with the same tool to help secure and fund park and recreation opportunities.

Yet, the complexities of the law make it very difficult to administer. The law will require that counties work closely with townships to properly coordinate the dedication requirements. While this new law may initially create roadblocks, there exists opportunities for counties and townships to work together more fully in a collaborative manner.

It is easy to overlook the efforts that we already commit to providing recreational opportunities on both public and private lands. It is even easier to take for granted, the amount of effort needed to coordinate efforts by the public sector to maximize benefits while minimizing costs. “Outside of the box” thinking will be required to increase coordination and develop improved intergovernmental relationships.

Enhancing both citizen and professional leadership capacity is also critical to successful coordination. In summary, coordinating the collective efforts of the various units of government with civic organizations is needed now more than ever to meet the changing needs of the public while ensuring the wise use of the limited public dollars.

Need for Better Administration

Over the past twenty to thirty years, counties in greater Minnesota have been creating boards or commissions for recreation. While Crow Wing County just recently established its parks board in 2002, other counties such as Douglas (1975) and Stearns (1974) have had parks boards for thirty years. Benton, Sherburne and Wright are some of the other counties that created parks boards over the years. Some counties have established their recreational boards and programs in response to public input gathered through a comprehensive planning process. A second force for the creation of parks boards have been local civic groups who advocate for increased recreation opportunities.

Typically, these park advisory bodies provide recommendations to county commissioners on parks and recreational matters. The parks boards are generally staffed by part time or full time coordinator or director level positions with varying numbers and types of support staff. Often times support staff members, from maintenance to administrative, are shared with other departments such as the highway or public works. Counties have been resourceful and creative in their efforts to provide recreational services to the public in cost conscious ways.

To further help coordinate more cost effective delivery of services to the public, counties are also starting to work more closely with cities and school districts. In addition, other cost saving approaches include working with local civic groups and organizations or sentence to serve persons to assist in a variety of programs and activities. Todd County has already utilized some of these approaches with recent maintenance actions at completed at Battle Point Park in the summer of 2004.

Outside Funding Opportunities and the Need for More Fiscal Guidance

The CAC recognized that there are numerous grant programs available from regional, state, federal and foundation organizations for recreational and open space projects. This Plan provides a framework to more effectively pursue these outside funding sources (Please see Section 2 in Volume 3.) Members of the CAC preferred to see the use of outside funds for projects as much as possible.

In addition to the cost saving measures described in the coordination narrative, there are several tools critical to sound fiscal management. One of the primary management tools is capital improvement programming.

Counties and local units of government that effectively use capital improvement programming as a fiscal management tool tend to be more effective at obtaining outside funding.

Need for Renewing the Community Spirit

The existing network of recreation and open space areas in Todd County was created and protected by previous generations of community leaders. At the beginning of each project, they recognized the need for more recreational opportunities and facilities.

While the times back then were simpler in that there were fewer people, less cars, fewer "toys" such as all terrain vehicles or jet skis, still there were challenges to face to building recreational facilities. Not all of these projects were easy. In fact, the countywide snowmobile system met numerous roadblocks throughout its history.

Over the next two to three decades, the largest transfer of intergenerational wealth in human history will occur in our nation and in our communities. Successful communities are those that can find workable solutions together in a sustained and ongoing manner.

The people of Todd County have found many good solutions to address recreational needs in the past. With changing needs and demands on the land and water resources, the County and its people will again need to work together.

Will this generation invest in its future?



B. Administrative Goals, Objectives and Actions

The following goals, objectives and action items outline the County’s policy framework regarding administrative aspects for recreational opportunities:

Goal 1 – Citizens Advisory Board. Encourage the formation and the sustained and ongoing support of the Todd County Citizens’ Advisory Board for Parks, Open Space and Trails. The Board should have broad representation from key stakeholder groups many of which have been identified in the recreation and open space planning process.

Objective A – Organizational Development. Support active public participation in the creating, organizing, and maintaining of the Todd County Citizens’ Advisory Board for Parks, Open Space and Trails.

Actions:

1. Public Participation and Steering Committee. Work with the County commissioners to form a committee to guide the organization of the County’s recreation board. Create a steering committee to assist and advise the County Board on the organization of the Todd County Citizens’ Advisory Board for Parks, Open Space and Trails. (See page III – 1 for more discussion on the formation and composition of the recreation board.)
2. Public Relations. Develop informational materials for distribution to the public and interested stakeholder groups that summarizes the organizational efforts for creating the Todd County Citizens’ Advisory Board for Parks, Open Space and Trails and invites people to get involved.
3. Locally Based Partnerships. Communicate directly with leaders from cities and townships, school districts, recreation groups, landowner associations, and other interested groups and invite their participation in the organizational development in the administrative, coordinative, regulatory and fiscal aspects of the County’s recreational and open space initiatives.
4. Optional Commission Approaches. Develop optional approaches to the composition and tenure of membership on the Todd County Citizens’ Advisory Board for Parks, Open Space and Trails for review and refinement by the Steering Committee and County Board.

Objective B – Ordinances and/or Bylaws. Support the development and adoption of the appropriate ordinances and/or bylaws to create and guide the Todd County Parks, Open Space and Trails Commission.

Actions:

1. Research. Gather ordinances and bylaws from counties in the state that have been developed to guide the organization and operations of recreation boards.

2. Draft Documents. Develop draft ordinances and bylaws for the County’s recreational board that fit the needs of Todd County and its local partners.
3. Steering Committee Review. Review the draft documents with the Steering Committee and refine as appropriate.
4. Public Review. Provide opportunities for the public to review the draft documents and encourage citizens to visit with their Steering Committee members.
5. County Board Review and Adoption. Forward the revised documents and Steering Committee’s recommendation to the County Board of Commissioners for their review, approval and adoption.

Objective C – Establish and Sustain the Commission. Support the establishing and maintaining of the Todd County Parks, Open Space and Trails Commission.

Actions:

1. Public Relations. Distribute information about the role and responsibilities of the Todd County Parks, Open Space and Trails Commission.
2. Membership Development. County and community leaders should continuously seek citizens to serve on the Commission and other recreational opportunities.
3. Application Process. Develop an application form and timelines for submittal for membership to the Commission.
4. Appointment. The County Board shall appoint members to serve on the Todd County Parks, Open Space and Trails Commission.

Objective D – Staffing. Support the appropriate staffing of the Todd County Parks, Open Space and Trails Commission and the implementation of the Todd County Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan.

Actions:

1. Staff Needs Assessment. Develop a brief study that outlines the needs for staffing to assist the Commission and the implementation of the Todd County Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan. Develop the staffing needs for a short (1 – 2 years), mid (3 – 5 years) and long term (5 – 10 years) perspectives. Include in the study an inventory of existing recreation programs maintained by local units of government in the County as well as other organizations and agencies. There are many options and partnerships that exist to properly staff the County program.
2. Study Review. Review the staff needs assessment study with the Todd County Parks, Open Space and Trails Commission and the County Board at a joint meeting.
3. Staffing. Hire the appropriate staff as needed to implement the plan and as the economic conditions provide.

Goal 2 – Friends of Todd County. Encourage the formation and the sustained and ongoing support of a locally based volunteer non-profit organization, “Friends of Todd County”. The organization should have broad representation from local groups in the County only, many of which have been partners in this recreational planning process. This organization’s main roles would be threefold: 1) to provide the County with greater opportunities to leverage outside funding resources for both public and private recreational opportunities, 2) to support information sharing and education efforts on recreation and open space topics, and 3) to encourage more involvement by individuals and local organizations in the County in implementing this Plan.

Objective A – Organizational Development. Support active locally based participation in the creating, organizing, and maintaining of the Friends of Todd County.

Actions:

1. Public Participation and Steering Committee. Use the same steering committee from the parks board process to assist on the organization of the Todd County Citizens’ Advisory Board for Parks, Open Space and Trails.
2. Public Relations. Develop informational materials to distribute to the public and interested stakeholder groups. The materials should summarize the organizational efforts for creating the Recreation Friends of Todd County and invite people to get involved in ways that they can readily provide.
3. Locally Based Partners. Communicate directly with leaders from the townships, cities, local recreation organizations and landowners associations and invite their participation in the organizational development of the Friends organization.
4. Agency Directory. Develop a contact list (with names, phone numbers, addresses) of the appropriate agency personnel who can provide technical and financial assistance as requested by local groups in the County.
5. Optional Commission Approaches. Develop optional approaches to the composition and tenure of membership on the Friends of Todd County for review and refinement by the Steering Committee and County Board.

Objective B – Bylaws. Support the development and adoption of the appropriate bylaws and other documents to create and guide the Friends of Todd County.

Actions:

1. Research. Gather ordinances and bylaws from counties in the state that have been developed to guide the organization and operations of recreation boards.
2. Draft Documents. Develop draft ordinances and bylaws for the County’s recreational board.
3. Steering Committee Review. Review the draft documents with the Steering Committee and refine as appropriate.

4. Public Review. Provide opportunities for the public to review the draft documents and encourage citizens to visit with their Steering Committee members.
5. County Board Review and Adoption. Forward the revised documents and Steering Committee’s recommendation to the County Board of Commissioners for their review, approval and adoption.

Objective C – Establish and Sustain the Organization. Support the establishing and maintaining of the Friends of Todd County organization.

Actions:

1. Public Relations. Support the distribution of information about Recreation Friends of Todd County.
2. Membership Development. County and community leaders should continuously seek citizens to be members of the non profit organization and serve on the board of directors.
3. Annual Meeting. Coordinate an annual meeting between the Todd County Parks, Open Space and Trails Commission and the Recreation Friends of Todd County to review the projects and programs to be worked on in the upcoming year for each group.
4. Funding Drives. Support efforts to raise funding from a variety of public and private sector sources through the Recreation Friends organization.
5. Donation Opportunities. Support efforts by the Recreation Friends of Todd County to administer a donations program for recreation opportunities.

C. Coordination Goals, Objectives and Actions

The following goals, objectives and action items outline the County’s policy framework regarding coordinative aspects for recreational opportunities:

Goal 1 – Collaboration. Encourage the active and ongoing participation and partnership on the planning and implementation of public and private recreation opportunities with all local units of government in the County as outlined in this Plan.

Objective A – Annual Summit Meeting. Coordinate and facilitate an annual meeting between the townships, cities, school districts, and other organizations with the County to review the status of implementation of the Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan.

Actions:

1. Progress Report. Prepare a report that summarizes accomplishments completed over the previous year.

2. Work Program. Prepare an outline that summarizes projects and programs proposed for the upcoming year.
3. Summit Meeting. Coordinate and facilitate the annual summit meeting. Review the progress report and the work program.

Goal 2 – Volunteerism. Encourage the active and ongoing participation and volunteerism by individuals and local organizations on implementation of public and private recreation opportunities outlined in this Plan.

Objective A – Individual Volunteer Program. Develop a program that makes it easy for citizens to volunteer time, talents, equipment, etc. that benefit recreation and open space opportunities in the County.

Actions:

1. Web Site – Volunteer Opportunities List. Maintain a list of projects that anyone can volunteer to work on.
2. Volunteer Time tracker. Inventory the amount of time and equipment volunteered on projects completed by individuals.

Objective B – Organization Volunteer Program. Develop a program that makes it easy for recreation clubs, local civic groups, neighborhood organizations and other to volunteer time, talents, equipment, etc. that benefit recreation and open space opportunities in the County.

Actions:

1. Web Site – Volunteer Opportunities List. Maintain a list of projects that organizations can volunteer to work on. Typically, these projects will be larger and require the organizations to coordinate the event such as a park clean up with the County or community.
2. Volunteer Time tracker. Inventory the amount of time and equipment volunteered on projects completed by organizations.

D. Fiscal Management Goals, Objectives and Actions

Goal 1 – Capital Improvement Programming. Encourage the wise expenditure of public funds for recreation and open space projects through the County’s capital improvement program process.

Objective A – Public Participation. Support active public participation in the reviewing the investment of public resources for recreation and open space resources in the County.

Actions:

1. General Public. Periodically gather input from the public for the recreation and open space projects they would like to see be developed in the County.
2. Local Officials. Periodically consult with officials from cities and townships for the recreation and open space projects they would like to see be developed in the County.

Objective B – Programming. Prepare and/or update the County’s capital improvement program (CIP) on an annual basis.

Actions:

1. Public Input Summary. Summarize suggested projects and programs from the general public and local officials.
2. Draft CIP. Prepare the draft CIP and review at the staff level.
3. Todd County Parks, Open Space and Trails Commission. Review the recreation portions of the draft CIP with the Commission. Forward recommendations onto the Planning Commission and County Board.
4. Planning Commission. Review the draft CIP with the Planning Commission.
5. County Board. Review and approve the CIP.

Goal 2 – Collaborative Park Dedication Requirements. Encourage a collaborative approach with the townships and the County to establish the park dedication process for subdivisions created in unincorporated areas.

Objective A – Research. Gather, collect and organize information relating to park dedication requirements.

Actions:

1. State Law Requirements. Review the state law requirements for park dedication.
2. County and Municipal Requirements. Inventory and assess the current regulatory framework adopted by the County and municipalities in the County relating to park dedication.
3. Other Counties. Research the approaches that other counties are taking on park dedication requirements.

Objective B – Collaboration. Coordinate and facilitate meetings with the townships and county officials to build a collaborative and coordinated approach to requiring park dedication requirements as well as the use of the fees or land obtained through the state authorized process.

Actions:

1. Joint Meeting. Coordinate and facilitate meetings to discuss and establish the park dedication requirements.
2. Ordinance Revisions. Update and amend subdivision ordinances as appropriate.