

POLICY STATEMENT—OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

This policy statement was recently adopted by the Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission in Michigan.

Since this Commission has only recently been established, GUIDELINE publishes this statement in an attempt to give other new organizations guides for establishing policy which is both up-to-date and effective.

I.

Comprehensive Park, Recreation and Open Space Land Use Plan

It is a primary objective of the Commission, as provided for in Act Number 261, Public Acts of Michigan, 1965 to have prepared by and in cooperation with the Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission, a comprehensive land use plan of parkway, recreation, scenic, scientific, archaeological, historic, wildlife, and conservation areas, and preserves, playgrounds, open space, trails, and other lands, waters and facilities which are deemed necessary to preserve and enhance the quality of the environment and to provide adequate leisure time opportunities for the present and future residents, visitors and tourist within Genesee County.

GOALS:

1. To define within said plan, in cooperation with municipal, township, village, school district and other intra-county governmental bodies; and agencies of Genesee County, State of Michigan, and United States of America, the current and projected responsibilities of the said governmental bodies and agencies.
2. To formally adopt said plan, upon its completion, to serve as a guide in the planning, acquisition, development, maintenance and operation of park, recreation, conservation and related lands, waters, facilities, and programs for the benefit of the agencies of Genesee County and the other public bodies and agencies enumerated above.
3. To provide for the continuous evaluation of the plan by establishing a systematic and continuous procedure to ascertain preferences and suggestions by the citizenry and to establish a formal procedure whereby additions, deletions, and other changes in the plan may be made when and as deemed necessary.
4. To provide financial and other types of assistance to the Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission and other agencies involved in the preparation of the comprehensive land use plan.
5. To insure that the parks, recreation and open space elements are an integral part of all county comprehensive land use planning and zoning.
6. To make certain that every effort is made to obtain proper zoning of lands and waters adjacent to property owned by the Commission or in any area where future acquisition has been planned.

II.

Definition of The County Regional Recreation Area and Park System

It is a primary objective of the Commission to provide a comprehensive Regional Recreation Area and Park System which may include parkways, recreation, scenic, scientific, archaeological, historic, wild-life, and conservation areas, preserves, open space, trails and related lands, waters and facilities, to service the residents, visitors and tourists within Genesee County. For the purpose of definition:

A county regional park is defined as a land and/or water site, scenic in character and large enough to serve at the inter-city, county, or inter-county level. The regional park conserves a large natural open space for the use and enjoyment of people. Developments are concentrated so as not to destroy the character of the land. The park is used by persons residing or working in a radius of 30 to 40 miles or by those who reach it in an hour's automobile drive from or within a metropolitan center. Users may come from several regions, an entire county, or from several counties.

A county regional recreation area is defined as a large land and/or water site reserved for special recreation activities. It may be located within the boundaries of a county regional park or as a separate site. It supplements special recreation purpose facilities available in urban centers or supplies space for outdoor recreation activities unsuited to urban centers. It is primarily used by persons residing or working in a radius of 30 to 40 miles or by those who can reach it within an hour's automobile drive from or within a metropolitan center. Users may come from several regions, an entire county, or from several counties.

In keeping with the above stated objective, the Commission does, within its statutory authority and financial limitations, hereby pledge—

GOALS:

1. To establish and maintain an equitable method of financing the planning, acquisition, development, maintenance and operation of Regional Recreation and Park Areas.
2. To provide continuous evaluation of Regional Recreation Area and Park needs and implement standards through amendments to the comprehensive land use plan.
3. To develop and maintain regional facilities designed to meet the specialized needs of the citizenry consistent with functional criteria and service standards established by the comprehensive land use plan.
4. To eliminate existing pollution of all waters crossing or located within the Commission properties and in all other recreation and conservation areas by cooperating with the Michigan Water Resource Commission, the Genesee County Health Department, the Genesee County Drain Commissioner, and other appropriate agencies.
5. To encourage proper landscaping of private property adjacent to areas and facilities administered by the Commission.

6. To sponsor a continuous program to enhance the natural beauty through the restoration of the native landscape and for the elimination of unnecessary roads, fences and buildings on land and/or waters acquired for regional park and/or recreation purposes.

7. To encourage citizens and civic, service, social and other groups and organizations both public and private, to participate in the planning, acquisition, development, maintenance, operation and financing of county administered regional park, recreation, conservation, and related lands, waters, facilities and programs.

8. To maintain high standards of planning, design, acquisition, development, maintenance and operational services consistent with specialized obligations.

9. To develop and maintain a continuous program of education with the public and profession emphasizing the social, economic and ecological values of comprehensive regional park and recreation area developments.

10. To develop and maintain a comprehensive Park and Recreation Research Program and to share derived information with other governmental bodies and agencies.

III.

Parks and Recreation Responsibilities of Intra-County Governmental Units as Related to Commission Responsibilities

It is a primary objective of the Commission to encourage municipalities, townships, villages, school districts and other intra-county governmental bodies to plan, acquire, develop, maintain and operate neighborhood, community, and other urban park and recreation lands, waters, facilities, and programs required to serve their respective populations, both existing and projected.

GOALS:

1. To stimulate these intra-county governments to step up their efforts to secure open space, park, and recreation areas and facilities, in and around urban centers.
2. To provide such technical and advisory services as may be available within Commission resources to townships, municipalities, villages, school districts and other intra-county governmental units for the planning, acquisition, development, maintenance, and operation of parks and recreation lands, waters, facilities and programs.
3. To assist municipalities, townships, villages, school districts and other intra-county governmental units by providing park and recreation services under contract at cost to such bodies when these services are available within Commission resources.

4. To provide specialized assistance in training and education to professional, volunteer, and lay groups in park and recreation techniques, as necessary to increase the level of service available to all people in the County of Genesee.

5. To serve as an information center for local parks and recreation commissions, and to aid in the coordination and establishment of programs of countywide interest.

6. To actively participate in the formation of public policy and programs at the local, state and federal level as pertains to park and recreation planning, natural resource protection and methods of financing affecting the leisure time opportunities of all residents, visitors and tourists within Genesee County.

7. To actively participate in professional societies and organizations dedicated to the improvement of all phases of the park and recreation field.

In order to protect, preserve and enhance in perpetuity, recreation areas and parks administered by the Commission for the present and future residents, visitors, and tourists within Genesee County, the following statements are recorded as attitudes and policies which the Commission will enforce in the exercise of its authority and responsibility.

IV.

Preparation and Adoption of Park Master Plans

Each park, (recreation area, conservation area or other site) shall have a professionally prepared master plan of development.

The views of citizens, civic and service clubs, government agencies and other groups, organizations and community interests shall be solicited prior to the preparation of the plan.

The master plan for each park, upon completion, shall be presented to the Commission, which shall set a time and place for a public hearing on said plan.

The members of the Commission shall within thirty (30) days after said hearing date approve or disapprove said plan as is or with modifications. Eight (8) votes (at least three-fourths of the total Commission membership) of approval shall be required for formal adoption of a plan. The master plan, once adopted, shall be the guide for development of the park, unless and until it is formally changed as hereinafter provided.

V.

Changing of Adopted Plans

Any suggested major change of an adopted master plan, shall be directed to the Commission by letter. The Chairman shall, if the letter is received within a reasonable time before the next regular meeting of the Commission, read the letter at said meeting of the Commission and shall request the petitioner to be present to answer questions regarding his comments on said plan. After consideration of the comments, suggestions or recommendations outlined in such letter and as expressed by the petitioner, the Chairman shall, if a majority of the Commission approves, set a public hearing of the Commission for those persons or organizations who are interested in said changes in not less than thirty (30) nor more than sixty (60) days at a time and place determined by the Commission.

A notice of such hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation within Genesee County not less than five (5) nor more than ten (10) days before said hearing.

Within the thirty (30) days following said hearing, the Commission shall publicly vote on the request for the major change of the master plan. Eight (8) votes (at least three-fourths of the total Commission membership) of approval shall be required before the master plan may be formally changed.

VI.

Standards for Regional Parks and Regional Recreation Areas

Outdoor recreation space standards represent goals which have proved to be desirable and practical. Therefore, the Commission adopts a minimum standard for regional recreation purposes of 20 acres per each 1,000 residents living within Genesee County or using facilities administered by said county. Such standards shall be updated as conditions may dictate.

VII.

Restrictions of Facilities in Regional Parks and Recreation Areas

Recreation facilities designed primarily for neighborhood and community purposes are not compatible with the purpose of concept of regional parks and recreation areas. The inclusion of these facilities would constitute encroachment on regional areas as surely as if the acreage were taken for a completely foreign use. Therefore, such facilities are prohibited on regional parks and regional recreation areas.

Lodges, motels and related facilities which can be more effectively provided by private enterprise shall not be included in the regional parks or recreation areas since these facilities would change the purpose of such parks and recreation areas from a day or week-end use facility to a longer period use facility.

VIII.

Acquisition of Park Lands

Land and waters for park, recreation, conservation, scenic, historic, archaeological, scientific and related purposes shall be acquired by direct negotiation whenever possible. Appraisals by competent appraisers shall be the basis for negotiations; where federal aid is involved, the federal procedures shall be followed. Title or rights to all lands shall be in the name of Genesee County.

IX.

Condemnation of Property Through Eminent Domain Proceedings

Condemnation of private property required for public park, recreation and conservation purposes will be exercised with control and restraint and only if other methods of acquiring such property prove unsuccessful.

X.

Acceptance of Gifts of Real Property, Bequests, Contributions and Appropriations

The Commission welcomes gifts of lands, waters, buildings and other real property in the name of the county, provided that such donations meet location, size, access, topographical, and other requirements consistent with the comprehensive park and recreation land use plan for Genesee County, and only if such gifts are devoid of unnecessary limiting conditions. Gifts, bequests, contributions and appropriations for park, recreation and conservation purposes may likewise be accepted by the Commission. The Commission, at its discretion, may extend formal recognition to the party or parties giving said gifts, bequests, contributions, appropriations or real property.

XI.

Naming of Parks, Recreation Areas and Facilities

The naming of all parks, recreation areas and facilities shall be a function of the Commission only.

Designation of such names shall be based upon geographical, historical, or ecological relationships indigenous to the region.

In cases where individuals have made exceptional contributions for a specific purpose or project, the Commission may, at its discretion, officially name a park, recreation area or facility after such individual. All maps, plats and other official records and instrumentalities of the Commission shall reflect the Commission's action.

XII.

Taking of Park, Recreation and Conservation Lands and Waters for Other Uses

The Commission shall zealously protect existing park, recreation and conservation areas against both public and private encroachment and shall yield such lands or waters for non-park and recreational purposes only if the adopted park master plan is amended by the Commission in accordance with prescribed procedures to permit such use; if lands or waters lost are fully compensated for or replaced by other of comparable value which serve the same population and if utilization of such land and/or waters for such purpose is proven to be in the best interests of the citizenry of Genesee County.

XIII.

Road and Utility Easements

Road and utility easements deface and despoil the natural landscape, result in unsightly construction, and detract from aesthetic values. Road easements remove traffic control from a park. Therefore, easements for other than park and recreational purposes shall not be granted unless the Park Master Plan is amended by the Commission in accordance with prescribed procedures to permit such easements, and if an equitable payment for damages to and use of such lands for the duration of the easement is made in advance to the Commission, or if equal benefits are derived by the Commission from the party receiving the easement, and if the granting of said easement is proven to be in the best interests of the citizenry of Genesee County.

Construction permits for public sewer and water lines may be granted by the Commission without charge, subject to the appropriate agencies agreeing to perform such construction with a minimum of damage to the aesthetic and physical characteristics of the lands, and waters involved; to rehabilitate and restore the terrain to a condition acceptable to the Commission, and to such other conditions as the Commission may impose.

All power lines, water lines, sewers and other utilities shall be placed underground at such depth and of such design and construction as development of a park shall require unless specifically excepted by the Commission.

XIV.

Construction

The Commission as a matter of policy welcomes construction proposals in keeping with the adopted master plan of a park. All such proposals shall be received and acknowledged at a duly constituted meeting of the Commission, and the acceptance and implementation thereof must be endorsed and approved by formal action of the Commission before construction may commence.

All permanent construction financed by donations or with public monies must be in keeping with detailed construction plans prepared in strict accordance with the respective adopted master plan.

Temporary facilities may be constructed, other than according to said plans, only when the facility is deemed necessary for use prior to construction of permanent facilities; if the construction is of safe design and will not detract from or damage the natural landscape and if the facility can be completely removed leaving no evidence of existence.

XV.

Proposals for Park Facilities by Groups

1. The Commission shall be guided by the following policies when considering proposals for a park facility.
 - a. No facility for the exclusive use of any group shall be allowed.
 - b. The Commission shall have absolute authority and control over all lands and facilities in the park and shall not delegate such authority and control to any individual, group, or organization, either public or private.
2. Upon receiving a written request from a group interested in presenting a proposal for a facility within a park, the Commission shall advise said group at least two weeks in advance as to when it can make its formal presentation to the Commission.
3. The Commission, after the presentation, may authorize such a facility if:
 - a. It is in keeping with the master plan of the park.
 - b. Plans, specifications, and construction of the facility comply with Commission standards.
 - c. Funding for the partial or total cost of the facility, as is agreed to by the Commission, is pledged by the sponsoring group.
 - d. It is recognized and thoroughly understood by the sponsoring that all structures constructed in whole or in part are the sole property of the Commission.
 - e. Operating procedures are in strict accordance with Commission policy.
4. Use of Facility:

The Commission shall in its discretion provide that:

 - a. The public will have general access to the facility at all times except for special occasions when the facility has been reserved for specific groups.

- b. The donor will have priority in the use of the facility for special occasions, provided the need is made known before another group reserves the facility.

XVI.

Acceptance of Federal, State, and Private Assistance

Consistent with its obligations and responsibilities, the Commission may accept available federal, state and private assistance when deemed advisable.

XVII.

Revenue Producing Facilities

Revenue producing facilities will be included in parks. The number and types of facilities, however, must be gauged cautiously lest a park acquire a commercial rather than a recreational image. The purpose of the facilities—to provide a necessary and desirable service to park patrons—shall be the gauge. It is recognized that revenues derived from concessions will augment public monies available for park and recreation projects. Control of revenue producing facilities and structures in a park can best be exercised if they are constructed and maintained with public funds. The operation of concessions can be effectively carried on by lease agreements with private agents.

XVIII.

User Fees

Users of special kinds of public park and recreation facilities and programs should pay fees for such specialized use. Revenue from this source shall be applied toward the acquisition, development, maintenance and administration of parks and recreation lands, waters, facilities and programs.

Fees shall be regulated so as to assure that persons with low incomes will not be denied the privilege and benefits of public park and recreation programs or facilities.

At no time will the residents of Genesee County be charged an admission fee to enter a public park or recreation area administered by the Commission.

XIX.

Relationships with County Boards and Departments

Since county park and recreation responsibilities involve many facets of county government, the Genesee County Board of Supervisors, Metro-

politan Planning Commission, Drain Commissioner, Board of Road Commissioners and other county departments should be kept fully informed and requested to cooperate in the planning and development of these programs, and should share mutual responsibilities and interests.

XX.

Relationships with Other Governmental Bodies and Agencies

The development of effective intergovernmental relationships between the Commission and municipalities, townships, villages, school districts, and other public bodies and agencies at the local, state and federal levels are necessary in order to help insure the success of Commission goals and objectives.

Accordingly, the Commission pledges, wherever possible, to inform said public bodies and agencies of the Commission's present and projected plans and programs, and to seek from or give assistance to such units of government within the financial and statutory limits of the Commission's authority when it is deemed to be in the best interests of the citizenry and agreeable to the parties concerned.

XXI.

Appointment of Advisory Committees

The Commission, at its discretion, may appoint temporary or permanent advisory committees for such purposes and for such periods of time as it deems advisable and necessary.

XXII.

Promulgation and Enforcement of Rules and Regulations

All rules and regulations governing use of roads, highways, buildings, structures, facilities, equipment, lands and waters located upon or within boundaries of Commission property and such rules and regulations as are necessary to preserve, protect and enhance property, animals, birds, fish, flora, fauna and the scenic beauties thereof, shall be established, proclaimed and effected as follows:

1. A tentative draft of each proposed rule or regulation shall be read in total at a regular or special meeting of the Commission.
2. The draft, as approved, in whole or as amended, by the Commission shall then be advertised in a newspaper of general circulation in Genesee County once weekly for a period of two weeks.
3. After such advertisement said rule or regulation shall become effective and enforceable immediately upon signature of the Commission Chairman, and Secretary at the next regular or at any special meeting of the Commission.

XXIII.

Recreation Activities, Code of Behavior

Recreation uses and activities within the boundaries of property under the jurisdiction of the Commission must be of a wholesome character, conventional and not offensive to accepted mores and concepts of moral decency, prevalent in Genesee County at any given period of time.

XXIV.

Employment Standards

Persons employed in any administrative, supervisory, technical, professional or other position under the jurisdiction of the Commission shall meet the minimum educational, experience, and other requirements established for the position. Equal opportunity for employment shall be given to all applicants regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin.

XXV.

Involvement of Commission Employees in Political Activities

No employee of the Commission shall participate in any form of political activity other than may be appropriate to the exercise of the individual's rights, duties and privileges, or shall use or permit the use of his official position for any political purposes. Any employee of the Commission violating this provision shall be subject to discharge or such other disciplinary action as may be provided by the rules and regulations of the Commission or applicable statutory provisions.

XXXVI.

Corporate Seal or Commission Symbol

The Commission may design and adopt an official Commission corporate seal or symbol.

XXVII.

Annual Reports

The Commission shall on or before the first day of March of each year, submit a written report to the Board of Supervisors of the County of Genesee which shall contain a financial statement and a statement of the doings of the Commission during the preceding calendar year. Copies of the report shall be distributed to appropriate public and private agencies and to individual citizens upon request. A summary of the financial statement shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation within Genesee County.

XXVIII.

Public Relations

The public shall be kept informed regarding the plans and accomplishments of the Commission through newspapers, radio, television, by addressing service, civic, social, special interest and citizens groups and by any other possible means.

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It is understood and agreed to by the members of the Commission that the foregoing policy statement constitutes the general policy framework and criteria guide lines under which the Commission will operate.

It is further understood and agreed to by the members of the Commission that said statement will be a guide for future decisions of this Commission and future Commissions, and that any deviations from the policies and guide lines expressed herein be made only with the full realization that a change of policy is being made and not a mere exception to existing policy.

After deliberate consideration, additions, deletions, or other changes to this statement may be made by and at such time and place as the Commission determines to be advisable and necessary, in conformance with its charter and bylaws, upon a affirmative vote of eight (8) members (at least three-fourths of the total Commission membership) of said Commission.

This policy statement shall become effective on the first day of January, 1968.

Approved and adopted by the Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission on this 14th day of December, 1967, in the City of Flint, County of Genesee, State of Michigan:

Approved and adopted by the Genesee County Board of Supervisors on the 8th day of January, 1968.

