



Photo by Robin Moyer

## COUNTIES □ □ □

# In Parks & Recreation

By Dr. Richard Kraus

The major responsibility for providing recreation services and facilities to the mass of the population belongs to local government in the United States on two levels of operation: (1) the county, township, or park-district level and (2) the local political subdivision, consisting of the city, town, village, or school district.

### RECREATION AND PARKS PROGRAMS

In 1963, the National Association of Counties presented a series of guides to assist county governments in promoting more effective recreation and park facilities and programs. Based in part on the recommendations made by the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission in the previous year, the guide stated:

The special role of the county is to acquire, develop, and maintain parks and to administer public recreation programs that will serve the needs of communities broader than the local neighborhood or municipality, but less than statewide or national in scope. In addition, the county should plan and coordinate local neighborhood and community facilities with the cooperation of the cities, townships, and other intra-county units, and should itself cooperate in state and federal planning and coordinative activities. Where there is no existing unit of local government except the county to provide needed local neighborhood or municipal facilities and programs, the county should provide such facilities and programs, utilizing county service districts, local assessments, and other methods by which those benefited will pay the cost.

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## guideline

A PUBLICATION OF THE PARK PRACTICE PROGRAM

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The county park and recreation department today represents an intermediate stage between the state and local governments. County governments today are expected to provide large-scale or regional facilities and resources to meet outdoor recreation needs which cannot be readily met by other units of local government. With a larger population and covering wider geographical areas, county governments are more capable of providing such facilities.

The rapid expansion of suburban communities surrounding the major cities of the country has given many county governments new influence and power. As a consequence, since World War II, county airports, hospitals and health service, utility systems, highways systems and law enforcement agencies, and park and recreation operations have all expanded significantly.

Today, of the 3,080 counties in the nation, ranging widely in size and population, 358 operate park and recreation systems, with a total of 4,149 separate park areas including 691,042 acres. The recent rate of growth in county departments may be seen in Table 1.

TABLE 1 County Recreation and Park Operations

	1960	1966	1971
Number of county park and recreation agencies	290	358	
Number of park and recreation areas	2,610	4,149	figures
Total number of employed professionals	7,990	11,912	absent
Total acreage	430,707	691,042	
Total expenditure	\$95.5 million	\$195.7 million	

SOURCE: Recreation and Park Yearbook, 1961, 1966, 1971 (Washington, D.C.: National Recreation and Park Association)

The county's role in recreation and parks is growing at a faster rate than that of municipalities, particularly in terms of land acquisition. In part, this is because there is such a pressing need for large open spaces near urban centers. While local municipalities tend to lack adequate space for park expansion, counties, because of their larger geographical area and broader tax base, are able to finance major land acquisitions and the development of specialized facilities. The greatly increased interest in outdoor recreation following World War II and the increased mobility of the public have also stimulated county activity in providing day-use outdoor recreation sites at comparatively short distances from masses of the population.

### CURRENT EXAMPLES OF COUNTY EXPANSION

The King County, Washington, Park and Recreation Department is an excellent example of how such departments have expanded to meet growing urban and suburban needs during the 1950's and 1960's. This extensive system, which includes Seattle, was established in 1949. At that time, it included 20 parks on 236 acres. By 1968, it had expanded to 55 parks with a total of 2,365 acres with plans to expand to a total of 190 parks on 5,965 acres by 1974. Attendance climbed from 644,000 in 1949 to 3,200,000 in 1967. Like a number of major county and municipal recreation departments, King County has a cooperative arrangement with twelve large school districts, under which the schools install major sports areas and outdoor recreation facilities and the

county maintains them. In addition to operating varied facilities, the King County Park and Recreation Department provides specialized programs, including extensive cultural activities, and services to specialized population groups.

While this is an outstanding example, other county departments throughout the country have shown similar patterns of growth.

Nassau County, adjacent to New York City on Long Island, was a comparative late-comer in park development; it was only in 1945 that the first Nassau County park, Salisbury Park, was established. For a number of years, this huge facility, including three golf courses, many ballfields, and other types of recreation areas, was the only real county park. But, like other suburban areas, Nassau's population grew rapidly: in 1940, it was 406,748; in 1950 it was 672,765; and by 1960, over 1.3 million. The number of single-family homes in the county multiplied over five times during this period. In the early 1960's, progress was accelerated in the development of new park sites, boat-launching ramps, historical restorations, and natural history museums. A major new harbor area was developed, along with several ice skating rinks and other specialized facilities and programs. Within the five years prior to 1966, park holdings of the Nassau County park and recreation system were doubled, and funds set aside for park development during the six years following 1966 totaled \$73 million.

Such vigorous programs of land acquisition as those described for King County and Nassau County, are essential to obtain and protect land while it is still available and before prices have skyrocketed to even higher levels. Land acquisition programs should be carried on as part of regional master-planning, with assistance from state and Federal funding programs. In a number of cases, counties have enacted laws requiring home developers to set aside community recreation areas.

One such example is Anne Arundel County, Maryland, which since 1957 has required all developers to set aside park areas amounting to 5 percent of the land to be developed. In a number of cases, the developer, seeing the value of such improvements, has also taken on responsibility for fully developing park and recreation areas for use by those who purchase his homes. Some county governments are establishing permanently protected green belts to halt the tide of construction. Strengthened zoning policies and more flexible building codes to permit cluster zoning of homes with larger and more concentrated open spaces are also helpful.

The migration of middle-class whites out of our cities into suburban communities has resulted in the population of the central cities becoming increasingly black and Spanish-speaking. What should be a pattern of cooperation and joint planning between the city and its surrounding counties, both to meet immediate needs and to promote effective long-term planning, tends not to be the case. Indeed, many suburban counties have enacted regulations that prevent the residents of adjacent cities from using their facilities—even when such policies are not justified on a financial basis or because of overcrowding. This problem, plus the burgeoning number of municipalities and townships that overlap each other and cause either gaps or in some cases overlapping in service, poses a serious problem for the county form of government.

Municipal government is the term generally used to describe the local political unit of government, such as the village, town, or city, that has responsibility for providing the bulk of direct community service, such as street maintenance, police and fire protection, and education. In the area of recreation and parks, most people are dependent on municipal governments for day-by-day recreation opportunities (apart from those provided by commercial, private or voluntary agencies).

### PARK AREA GROWTH

The following reasons are suggested for the marked growth of municipal recreation and park programs:

(1) municipal government offers many individuals their primary or only opportunity for wholesome recreational involvement, particularly among poorer people in large cities;

(2) only through government can adequate lands be acquired for playgrounds, parks, and other outdoor recreation areas;

(3) municipal recreation is "democratic and inclusive"; it serves all ages, races, and creeds and places the burden of support upon the entire community;

(4) municipal recreation is comparatively inexpensive, when compared with private expenditure for recreation; yet, by spreading the cost of development over many families, it can provide major facilities needed;

(5) the local government gives permanency to recreation, assuring both continuity and the ability to respond to the changing needs of the population;

(6) the job is too large for a private agency, whereas the city, with its powers of land acquisition and taxation, can provide inexpensive citywide nonprofit services to meet total community needs;

(7) recreation plays an important role in the local economy, helping to stabilize property values and reduce social pathology, thus making communities more attractive for industries seeking new location and families seeking new homes; and

(8) the people demand it and are willing to be taxed for it, as evidenced by steady growth of programs, passage of referendums and bond issues, and overall support of recreation.

The overall growth of local recreation and park programs is illustrated in Table 2, including both municipal and county agencies.

TABLE 2 Growth of Local Recreation and Park Agencies

	1946	1950	1960	1965	1970
Total number of park and recreation agencies reported	1,743	2,277	2,968	3,142	figures absent
Personnel:					
Total full- and part-time paid leadership	41,159	58,029	99,696	119,515	
Full-time year-round	5,147	6,784	9,216	19,208	
Volunteer	---	104,589	277,072	494,407	
Total acreage in parks and recreation areas	---	644,000	1,015,461	1,496,378	
Playgrounds under leadership	---	14,747	20,107	24,298	
Buildings of all types	---	9,617	16,970	22,527	
Total expenditures (in millions)	\$51.7	\$269	\$567	\$905	

SOURCE: Recreation and Park Yearbook, 1961, 1966, 1971 (Washington, D.C.: National Recreation and Park Association)

Photos by M-NCPPC



Ceramic classes at the Senior Citizen Center.



Bingo is popular at the community centers.



Bridge classes are also held at the Senior Citizen Center.

These are some of the activities offered to senior citizens by the county.

### FUNCTIONS OF MUNICIPAL RECREATION AND PARK AGENCIES

The responsibilities of municipal recreation and park departments fall under several headings:

1. Direct Provision of Recreation Service. They acquire, develop, and maintain facilities (land and water areas and structures) needed for recreational participation and provide skilled leadership to meet the needs of various age groups and individuals within the community.

2. Coordination of Other Programs. They provide in-service training and advisory services for other groups in the municipality involved in leisure programs and help them coordinate their services to avoid duplication and overlap.

3. Cooperate with Other Governmental Agencies. They work closely with other branches of government (housing, police, education, highways) and with Federal, state, and county authorities to develop innovative programs, long-range planning, and effective programs of land acquisition.

Obviously, the first area of responsibility is the most important one. Municipal agencies must (1) provide a total network of facilities, such as parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, sports areas, and indoor centers, to meet the needs of all citizens for recreation places in which to enjoy their leisure; (2) provide leadership and organized program services to serve all persons (children and youth particularly, but also adults and aging persons) with leisure opportunities; (3) recognize and meet the specialized needs of disadvantaged populations, such as physically or mentally disabled individuals, or dependent aging persons; and (4) generally promote recreation as an important area of public

service, taking the leadership for promoting leisure needs, problems, and programs among civic-minded people in the community.

### ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

During the early years of development of public recreation services in American communities, several different types of administrative structures were found. Such factors as the nature of state enabling laws, the ability to obtain necessary funding, the availability of areas and facilities, freedom from political controls, and the development of a positive public image, were all factors considered by communities that chose one pattern or another. In general, the favored pattern through the period preceding the 1950's was to establish recreation as an independent department.

Gradually, following World War II, park administrators became increasingly concerned with recreation functions, and recreation departments moved steadily in the direction of providing outdoor play facilities, such as golf courses, tennis courts, sports fields, swimming pools, and skating rinks. By the late 1950's the two fields became involved on a large-scale merger: (1) many existing separate park and recreation agencies joined forces in single departments; (2) the majority of the new ones which came into being during this period were joint park and recreation departments; and (3) the national organization in this field merged into a single umbrella organization, the National Recreation and Park Association. This development is illustrated in Table 3.



A county senior citizen center.

Photo by M-NCPPC

TABLE 3 Types of Recreation and Park Agencies Reported in 1966

Combined park and recreation	1,304
Separate recreation	818
Separate park	428
School Department	142
Other public agencies (combined grouping)	425
Private*	25
Municipal agencies	2,784
County agencies	358
Total number of agencies	3,142

SOURCE: *Recreation and Park Yearbook, 1961, 1966, 1971* (Washington, D.C.: National Recreation and Park Association)

\*Since these are reported in a listing of local public agencies, the assumption is that they are voluntary agencies which receive public support and have quasi-official responsibility for meeting community recreation needs.

In many of the largest cities throughout the United States, it is common for more than one major public agency to have recreation and park functions. In Los Angeles, the Park and Recreation Department, and the Youth Services Section of the Board of Education, share major responsibilities. In Chicago, the City Park District and the Board of Education, through its Division of Recreation and Playgrounds and its Division of Social Centers, share these functions. In Philadelphia, the Department of Recreation, the Fairmount Park Commission, and the Division of Health and Physical Education of the Board of Education all cooperate closely.

No single agency can be expected to administer all of the public parks and recreation facilities in the metropolitan city. Inevitably there will be a park or recreation department of the municipal government, usually one with consolidated park and recreation functions. Such an agency will of necessity be limited by city charter or by legal interpretation to the operation of properties of which the city has title. Additionally, the school district or districts will permit school buildings and grounds to be used for recreational purposes with much, if not all, of this program directly under school administration and financed from school funds or conducted on permit by community-serving agencies.

The provision of neighborhood playgrounds cannot be complete according to any reasonable standard in any large metropolitan city unless the school grounds complement the municipal park and recreation centers. *Parks and recreation centers will always be fewer than schools within a city.*<sup>1</sup>

When several such agencies exist side by side within large metropolitan areas, it is essential that they cooperate closely with each other in terms of planning and organization of services and programs. This should include (1) joint use of facilities, (2) exchange and joint training of personnel, (3) efforts to determine community needs and plan for total recreation development, (4) promotion and public relations efforts, and (5) joint projects and research.

<sup>1</sup> George Hjelte, Washington, D.C., *Leisure and the Schools*, 1961.

In addition to agencies that have the provision of recreation facilities and services as a primary function, many large cities also have other departments that offer it as a secondary responsibility. They include such areas of service as:

**Police Department.** In many larger cities, the police operate youth service bureaus or precinct councils which have direct programs of recreational activity such as recreation centers, play streets, and sports leagues for youth. They may also assign detached workers to contact and work with unaffiliated youth.

**Welfare Department.** Such departments are generally concerned with the needs of disadvantaged and dependent children, families and aging persons. They may operate day-care centers for children of working mothers, after-school recreation-and-study centers for children of school age, multiservice family centers, or programs for aging persons. In such settings, recreation represents an important program area.

**Youth Board.** Youth Boards, Commissions, or other service agencies tend to be generally concerned with reducing the school dropout rate, providing educational and vocational assistance, counseling "problem" youth, and working constructively with antisocial gangs and individuals. While they are often specifically concerned with such problems as delinquency and drug addiction, one of their common functions is to provide teen-age recreation and social programs.

**Department of Hospitals.** Many public hospitals provide therapeutic recreation services as part of the rehabilitation process, particularly in settings which deal with psychiatric patients, or through out-patient clinics, after-care centers and "halfway houses."

**Housing Departments.** Particularly in larger cities, many public housing agencies have a direct concern with recreation services. This may consist chiefly of providing playgrounds or indoor centers; the range of service may also include tenants' clubs, libraries, craft shops, centers for aging persons, and youth programs. In many cases, these programs are operated by outside agencies that come in under special contracts to provide recreation. In others they are carried on by the housing authority itself.

Thus, we see that the total picture of municipal recreation is a complex one. In addition to public departments with functions in this field, there are many voluntary agencies, some of which have substantial public funding. In most American cities today, however, the primary responsibility for providing and coordinating a total recreation program within a framework of social purpose is assigned to one major agency, for which this is the primary function. The program services offered by such departments tend to fall into several major categories of activity, grouped under the following headings: (1) games and sports, (2) outdoor activities, (3) water sports, (4) winter sports, (5) crafts, (6) fine arts, (7) performing arts, (8) and special services.

In addition, public recreation and park departments offer an extremely broad range of opportunities for self-directed activities, including the use of playgrounds, picnic areas, camping sites, lakes for fishing, park areas, bicycling and riding trails, and similar facilities. They also sponsor large-scale special programs, such as holiday celebrations, festival programs, art and hobby shows, and sports tournaments.

In addition to those programs which they sponsor directly, public recreation and park departments also provide assistance to many other community agencies. In some cases, they may provide help in organizing, publicizing, and scheduling activities. In other cases, they may cooperate with other organizations by providing facilities for them to use and coordinating their activities with other community recreation events. Frequently, sports programs for children and youth, such as Little League or Bidy Basketball, are affiliated with and nominally sponsored by public recreation departments but are actually run by associations of interested parents who provide the overall management of the activity, coaching, financing, and similar responsibilities. Similarly, many cultural programs, such as Civic Opera or Little Theater associations, are affiliated with public recreation departments. They are, however, basically independent organizations and provide the bulk of their own financing and organization control.

In order to provide a more meaningful picture of the variety and scope of municipal park and recreation departments, a series of brief profiles of municipal departments follows. They are based upon departmental reports and brochures. These profiles serve to illustrate varied types of administrative structures and budgetary approaches, the range of program emphasis and departmental functions, and other aspects relating to facilities development and personnel.

#### PROFILES OF MUNICIPAL DEPARTMENTS

The cities described here range in populations from less than 100,000 to over one million. Some are described very briefly, others in much fuller detail.

##### **MOUNTAIN VIEW CALIFORNIA (POPULATION 53,800)**

Many western communities, particularly those in California, are especially vigorous in their development of recreation and park facilities and services. Mountain View represents such a community, with an annual budget for recreation and parks of approximately \$770,000. The recreation staff includes seven full-time professionals and five clerical workers, and there is a total park staff of 29. The parks and recreation department has been expanding both facilities and programs at a dramatic rate. In 1967, it received final approval from the state, county, and Federal governments for a cooperative plan to develop a 500-acre shoreline park promising to become one of the finest regional parks in California, with a wide variety of recreational and cultural facilities.

Overall facilities include extensive use of public schools (gymnasiums, art rooms, auditoriums, pools, athletic fields, and tennis courts), and the department's own recreation centers and amphitheatres. Program activities fit under six major headings, including sports and games, hobbies and crafts, performing arts, social activities, outdoor recreation, playground, and Playground Olympics.

In each area, there is an exceptional amount of activity. Within a single sport such as softball, there are four regular men's and boys' leagues, plus girls' and women's leagues, exhibitions, industrial tournaments, and "slow-pitch" competition. Swimming activities include instructional, competitive, life-saving, water show, and synchronized swim-

ming. Social activities include charm courses for women and girls, fashion shows, game rooms for adults and teenagers, movie showings, teen-age evening programs, ladies' "slim-trim" classes, a special club for widows and widowers, and varied senior citizen activities. Attendance has climbed rapidly, as illustrated by annual reports of recreation participation:

Year	Attendance Totals,
1954-55	135,715
1958-59	609,850
1962-63	846,743
1966-67	966,446

The Mountain View recreation and parks staff offers a consulting service to community organizations regarding their recreation programs, makes facilities available on a rental or free reservation basis, lends athletic kits and provides game leadership for picnics; and has a speakers' bureau and similar services for other civic groups.

##### **KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI (POPULATION 617,000)**

Kansas City is an excellent example of a well-established mid-western city parks and recreation department, with an extensive program of activities and a strong network of varied indoor and outdoor facilities. The department operates under a board of park and recreation commissioners, consisting of three members appointed by the mayor to serve during the term for which he is elected.

Park and recreation facilities in Kansas City include the following: eight major recreation centers spaced throughout the city; the Kansas City Zoo, two municipal golf courses, a giant swimming-pool complex accommodating 3,000 swimmers, a Starlight Theater with nightly light opera performances during the summer, and varied other sports, picnic, and nature areas. Much of the city's leisure is spent in Swope Park, a 1,766-acre facility which was given to Kansas City by a public-spirited citizen in 1896 and has been fully developed since.

While the program includes the normal range of activity, it gives particularly strong emphasis to three areas: art and crafts, summer programming for inner-city youth, and services for disabled persons and other special groups.

**Arts and Crafts.** These include such varied activities as dressmaking, upholstery, ceramics, leathercrafts, decoupage, sculpture, puppetry, stained glass arts, lapidary, silver-smithing, and other crafts and hobbies.

**Summer Programs.** These include extensive Summer Olympics sports competition, summer dances and popular music entertainment, a teen-age summer-stock theater, and an "action wagon" which provides entertainment involving music, movies, and sports personalities in disadvantaged neighborhoods six nights a week, busing programs to five large municipal day camps, and similar activities. The Kansas City Park and Recreation Department operates a large resident camp on 350 woodland acres in Swope Park, serving 144 boys and girls at a time for 10-day sessions with a program heavily oriented toward nature activities.

**Services for Disabled Persons.** The department also operates special camping sessions for handicapped children in the following categories: diabetic, cardiac, cerebral palsy, retardation, and epilepsy. Each of these sessions runs for 7 to 10 days and is carried on in cooperation with voluntary

organizations in Kansas City that serve disabled children. During the regular year, special programs for the handicapped are carried on in nine community centers throughout the city, including a wide range of activities similar to those enjoyed by "normal" youngsters.

Older citizens in Kansas City are also served by a special program, with a summer camping program designed for them especially, and the Golden Age Clubs operated in thirteen different locations throughout the city. These clubs, which are operated by the department both in its own centers and in churches, provide many special events, trips, service projects, publications, and other activities for aging persons.

The Kansas City Park and Recreation Department's budget in a recent year was approximately \$6.4 million, including capital and maintenance expenditures. However, substantial sums amounting to almost \$2 million are returned to the department each year from licences, permit fees, and charges for current services. Similar administrative practices are found in many municipal park and recreation departments which institute fees and charges that either make certain activities or facilities self-sustaining or significantly reduce the cost of operation.

**OMAHA, NEBRASKA (POPULATION 301,598)**

Omaha has a well-established department of parks, recreation, and public property which operates a major auditorium and stadium complex, extensive boating facilities, and other unusual physical facilities. In the late 1960's, it underwent a major program of physical expansion, acquiring several large new parks. It operates one of the first large municipally owned and operated indoor-tennis centers in the country. A \$2.65-million bond issue was passed to finance a major three-year expansion program, including a 50-meter swimming pool, and artificial ice-skating rink, a garden center, lighted softball complex, and improvements in about 100 areas throughout the city.



Grandfather helps instruct youngster. Photo by M-NCPPC



Young and old - - together. Photo by M-NCPPC

As in other cities cited, much of this operation is conducted on a fees-and-charges basis, with substantial income derived from marinas, day-camp charges, golf courses, instructional sports programs, and auditorium and stadium receipts. Over all, departmental expenditures in 1967 were \$2,013,628, while total receipts were \$589,502. Within this picture of dramatic expansion, Omaha has suffered from racial disturbances by inner-city residents who protested—among other grievances—about the lack of adequate recreation and park facilities. With the assistance of Federal funds, Omaha has opened a number of "postage stamp parks" in poverty areas of the city and expanded other special recreation services. They have been particularly effective in terms of expanding city-school recreation programs and adding senior citizens activities, under a Federal grant to operate recreation centers in new senior-citizens' apartments. A new citywide senior citizens center was constructed in 1969, under a cooperative arrangement with the Public Housing Authority, to be operated by the recreation division of the overall department.

Omaha demonstrates how a city can operate large-scale recreation and park facilities which meet important needs of the community (as an illustration, the municipal auditorium is almost completely booked during the course of the year with entertainment, conventions, sports events, and fairs that attract 1.25 million spectators and contribute to the city's economy). It also recognizes, however, that there is increasing need to provide special services for disadvantaged populations in its inner-city areas. This problem of meeting the needs of varied socioeconomic levels and developing varied policies and programs on each level is becoming an increasingly important challenge in municipal recreation today.

**GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA (POPULATION 150,000)**

Operating under the council-manager form of government through a charter enacted by the North Carolina General Assembly, Greensboro's parks and recreation

commission consists of members appointed by the council and the mayor. It is supported—unlike many cities in which recreation monies are drawn from general tax funds—by a special recreation tax which supplements other allocations and yields a total of \$1.27 per \$100 of assessed valuation. Greensboro has supported recreation and park development strongly; public funds are supplemented annually by contributions and program co-sponsorship involving various industries and businesses, civic clubs, foundations, and other interested groups. During the decade from 1956 to 1966, Greensboro's annual expenditures for parks and recreation rose from \$241,400 to \$677,000; by 1969-'70, it was over \$1 million. In 1967 there were 52 permanent and 125 temporary or seasonal employees in the parks and recreation department. Some 39,000 persons registered for over 500 different programs during the course of the year, and participation reached an all-time high of 1.5 million participation units.



A group of orphans get together with the chief naturalist for a day of outdoor activities.



Young campers enjoy the "Naturalist's Closet" as part of the program at Camp Dawana.



A cast of 16 actors, with average age of 83, present a rendition of "Hello Dolly". The actors are all members of the Stay Young Club.

In Greensboro, program activities are provided under several major headings, including a youth division, athletics, community centers and playgrounds, and ill and handicapped.

The youth division operates some 35 different programs for teen-agers, including weekly television and radio shows, talent shows, youth week, and a variety of projects and services such as youth recreation councils, youth employment services, and school beautification programs.

The ill and handicapped division provides 18 different programs for the mentally retarded, cerebral palsied, blind, orthopedically handicapped, emotionally disturbed, and other disabled individuals. Special programs are provided for nursing homes, and a six-week summer day camp serves a substantial number of disabled children with music, nature activities, games, sports, and crafts.

Recreation and park staff members also assist many local organizations and groups by providing leadership for conferences, workshops, and training institutes. They lend equipment to such groups, set up show wagons, move bleachers, and provide the use of facilities and leadership for recreational events of other organizations and for public functions.

**PORTLAND, OREGON (POPULATION 377,800)**

In Portland, recreation is operated as a division within the larger bureau of parks and public recreation. The recreation division directly sponsors many programs and also relies heavily on affiliated civic organizations to sustain and carry

on many recreation activities. In Portland these include many cultural and artistic organizations such as the Civic Contemporary Dance Theater, a Junior Museum, a Community Music Center, Portland Parks Art Center, Portland Actors Company, Little Loom House (weaving), Ballet Workshop, Teen-Age Theater Workshop, Portland Opera Association, and other performing groups and recreational dance and music activities.

Since 1940, the recreation division has had a close working relationship with the Portland public school system, involving a comprehensive exchange of school and park facilities. When, in May, 1967, the failure of a school bond issue compelled the school board to restrict use of school facilities and establish a fee system for their use, the question of having one city department paying another arose. It was found that the school administration used 32,000 hours per week of park bureau facilities for classes, playground activities, and competitive sports, while the bureau of parks and public recreation used 26,000 hours of school facilities, predominantly gymnasiums and auditoriums. Recognizing the mutual benefit of this arrangement, the park and recreation department and the schools continued to exchange facilities by means of a permit system, with fees being charged only for special uses at certain times.

Over the past several years, Portland, like other large cities, has experienced severe financial pressures. Recreation administrators have responded by obtaining increased funds from nontax sources such as fees, charges, and gifts. In 1969, the total budget for parks and recreation was \$5.5 million, with several hundred thousand dollars being returned to the department from fees and charges.



Day camp programs for children with "special learning disabilities". Here 7 year old Mary gets a little help from her friend David, age 12.

Photo by M-NCPPC

Photo by M-NCPPC



"Krazy Kats", all senior citizens, prepare for a preview performance as part of the county's "Dimensions in Music" program.

#### LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA (POPULATION 385,000)

Long Beach is described here in detail primarily because of its administrative structure. Founded in 1929, under what has been known as the Long Beach Coordinated Recreation Plan, the Long Beach Recreation Commission has the following working arrangement: (1) the city charter provisions which created it defined "public recreation" very broadly in terms of ages served, activities and settings; (2) the program is supervised by a recreation commission of nine members, including the city manager, superintendent of schools, a member of the city council, and a member of the board of education; (3) the director of health and physical education of the city school system is director of the total playground and public recreation department; (4) under him is an associate director with a major responsibility for recreation who is responsible also to the city manager; (5) the city manager is responsible for all hiring; and (6) funding is based on a special recreation tax of at least 5 cents per \$100 assessed value of all property in the city. The overall budget in 1968-69 was \$2.4 million, with the municipality contributing about three-quarters and the school district about one-quarter of this amount. A substantial portion of the money spent was returned to the commission in the form of fees and charges, as in other cities described.

The Long Beach recreation program is an extremely diversified one, under the following major headings: adult programs, aquatics, crafts, dance, drama, outdoor education, playgrounds, special events, sports, and youth clubs. Their variety may be illustrated by the specific activities offered under only two of these headings:

**Aquatics.** This includes instruction (recreational, competitive, and synchronized swimming), water safety, diving, building model boats, youth and adult sailing, life saving, water polo, boating, water skiing and canoeing. Long Beach operates a huge marine stadium which plays host to many aquatic shows and other special water events. In 1968 it also completed the new Belmont Plaza Olympic Pool, which was used as the site for Olympic tryouts and for

aquatic programs thereafter for the community. This huge building (five stories high, 240 feet long, and 150 feet wide) has a million-gallon eight-lane pool, fitted with an underwater television and sound system, with seating facilities for 2,700 spectators and the most modern electronic scoring and timing equipment, plus other facilities for community aquatic activities.

**Outdoor Education.** This program, carried on in close cooperation with the school system, involves such activities as conservation and nature study, nature crafts, safety, astronomy, animal study, exploration of natural sites, and programs concerned with healthful living. The outdoor education program makes intensive use of a new nature center building in El Dorado Park, an 860-acre regional park with extensive facilities for outdoor education.

The Long Beach Recreation Commission also places major emphasis on developing special programs for each age group. Teen-agers are served through four large youth clubs with a total membership of close to 5,000. Since 1944, the Long Beach Recreation Commission has provided facilities, equipment, and trained personnel for this youth club program. Senior citizens are served by programs in several recreation centers, involving cards, chess, checkers, shuffleboard, lawn bowling, horseshoes, and similar activities, as well as golden tours, a travel club for older persons in the community. In addition, Long Beach is one of the few municipal programs which operates a "singles" club, open to unmarried persons who are twenty-five years of age or older. It operates a "university by the sea," involving public forums and discussions, and has numerous other creative and experimental programs in all forms of recreation.

Over all, the Long Beach Recreation Commission is an excellent example of school-community cooperation. Unlike many other school-related programs, it serves all age groups fully and, rather than rely solely on school facilities, has constructed many other park, aquatic, and sports centers around the city for fully diversified leisure opportunities.

#### PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA (POPULATION 2,002,512)

Philadelphia serves as an excellent example of a large city faced by problems of urban blight, poverty, and racial conflicts which has moved ahead aggressively to provide intensified and imaginative new programs. It also demonstrates how the services of several major municipal governmental agencies can be coordinated to meet human and social needs most economically and efficiently.

In Philadelphia, recreation functions are filled by three tax-supported agencies, the Department of Recreation, the Board of Public Education, and the Fairmount Park Commission. When the Philadelphia City Charter was inaugurated in 1951, it made provision for a recreation coordination board to further full cooperation among these agencies. This board coordinates recreation programs administered by different bodies of the city government and also consults with and assists many voluntary organizations concerned with recreation.

Throughout Philadelphia, the recreation department works closely with the schools. Schools use recreation department sites to conduct programs, seven municipal swimming pools are used for physical education classes, and extensive school use is made of tennis courts, recreation centers, and other recreation-owned facilities for baseball, softball, soccer, and track and field. Similarly, the recreation department works closely with the schools, providing leadership for athletic and social activities at schools in neighborhoods that lack other recreation facilities. At a large number of school recreation centers, the board of education furnishes utilities and janitorial services, while the recreation department provides leadership for joint programs. Both agencies also work closely with the Fairmount Park Commission, using its various facilities throughout the city and participating in joint planning of capital construction projects. Similarly, the recreation department provides recreation leadership at a number of different housing projects throughout the city.

One of a series of 40 concerts which are offered in county parks using local talent.

Photo by M-NCPPC



The recreation department recognizes that while it is its responsibility to provide basic facilities and programs (there are over 425 different playgrounds, parks, and centers throughout the city), in many cases private agencies, voluntary organizations and community groups and clubs can meet specialized community needs. Thus, it works closely with such groups as the Philadelphia Society for Crippled Children and Adults, the Cerebral Palsy Association, the Retarded Children's Association, the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind, and the Health and Welfare Council. It coordinates services with the Crime Prevention Association, the Youth Services Board, and the Police Athletic League in an effort to reduce juvenile crime in disadvantaged sections of the city. In order to insure the fullest use of all programs, the recreation coordination board has prepared an extensive directory of all recreational activities and agencies in the Philadelphia metropolitan area to help educators and recreation and social workers in replying to inquiries from the general public and in making referrals more efficiently.

The Philadelphia recreation department has a substantial group of leaders working with "youth-in-conflict" groups, attempting to reduce problems such as antisocial gangs, teen-age drinking and narcotics use, and vandalism. These youth workers have close contact with such agencies as the Juvenile Aid Division, the Gang Control branch of the Narcotics Squad of the Police Department, and the Youth Conservation Services Division of the Welfare Department. Sixteen leaders have major portions of their time assigned to working on detached duty in problem neighborhoods. They not only cooperate with the agencies mentioned earlier but also receive training through special courses offered by the state department of welfare. In a recent year, forty-four staff members of the recreation department received training given by state experts in such areas as law, social work, sociology, psychology, and youth services. In addition, close contact is maintained with local communities through advisory councils dispersed throughout the city.

The Philadelphia recreation department has been heavily involved in the city's antipoverty program. For example, a "new careers" program funded by the U.S. Labor Department, titled "Project Human Renewal," has given training in recreation leadership, including on-the-job involvement, to over 1,000 persons in twelve poverty areas, many of them teen-agers.

Many other special services have been developed to serve disadvantaged areas, particularly in ghetto neighborhoods. These have included summer job programs, expanded play-street programs, family camping programs, officiating clinics, neighborhood teen canteens, college-based "motivation" programs, educational field trips for youth, summer science projects and art classes in junior and senior high schools, Afro-American dance groups, dramatic groups, "gospelramas" (rock-and-roll spirituals), bookmobiles and touring branch libraries, coffee houses and creative writing programs—all under the recreation department's direction.

In terms of physical facilities, the Philadelphia recreation department has expanded steadily. During 1967, new or improved facilities were put into operation on the average of one every two weeks, including new modern community playgrounds and centers, pedestrian malls, sports centers, covered sitting pavilions, spray pools, and new swimming sites and ballfields. A six-year capital program for the period from 1968 to 1973 totaled \$20.9 million, including

both open space programs and development of physical facilities for recreation.

This article has outlined some of the major characteristics and trends in county and municipal recreation departments. It has shown a partial range of services provided, and such developments as growing services to age groups other than children and youth, rapid expansion of physical facilities, increased reliance on fees and charges, and linkage with other community agencies and social programs. Typically, within larger cities, there has been a growth of services for special populations, including the physically and mentally handicapped or the socially disadvantaged.

The overall expansion of municipal recreation is demonstrated by statistics of expenditures over the past decade, gathered by the National League of Cities (Table 4). These figures show, however, that while a number of cities have shown an uninterrupted rise in park and recreation expenditure, others have either slackened off or have declined as a result of severe financial pressures stemming from today's urban crisis.

TABLE 4 Per Capita Operating Expenditures for Parks and Recreation in Fifteen Selected Cities\*

City	Expenditures 1960	Expenditures 1965	Budget 1968	Estimate 1973
New York	\$4.22	\$ 6.48	\$ 6.19	\$10.81
Chicago	7.57	8.97	11.72	14.45
Los Angeles	4.78	5.67	4.77	---
Baltimore	5.31	8.67	12.32	16.64
San Antonio	1.72	2.56	2.83	---
Saint Louis	4.82	5.57	5.85	6.90
Pittsburgh	5.71	7.73	9.13	---
Atlanta	3.67	4.76	9.11	---
Minneapolis	7.14	6.17	9.09	---
Nashville	5.09	4.50	4.52	7.81
Oakland	8.59	9.87	13.21	15.56
Tampa	2.30	5.82	7.33	---
Dayton	5.70	7.15	8.90	11.12
Peoria	8.63	10.63	14.69	---
Portland	4.44	9.12	8.76	9.21

SOURCE: *Recreation in the Nation's Cities: Problems and Approaches* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Urban Studies, National League of Cities, December, 1968)

\*Derived by dividing financial data obtained from recreation personnel by actual or estimated population figures.

This extremely varied pattern of support raises questions about the fundamental role of recreation and park departments in our urban areas. Obviously, in many municipalities it is regarded as an important area of social service that must be supported generously. In others under financial pressure, budgetary support has been inadequate. The basic question is whether municipal administrators regard this area of service chiefly as a form of diversion or as a social necessity.

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