

IMPLEMENTATION

Chapter 6

This chapter addresses information on funding sources for parks and recreation programs and facilities, arts programs and facilities, trails development, and open space preservation. The funds vary in their application – some can be used for planning and design, as well as actual construction. It is important to become familiar with the various sources, the management agencies, the application process and timing, and the specific requirements for each funding agency or organization.

Funding Opportunities

Funding parks, recreation, arts, and trails projects is the most challenging aspect of the plan. A great deal of the feasibility of funding is the willingness of taxpayers to influence the allocation of tax monies toward that kind of priority, or their willingness to pay additional taxes in one form or another.

Aside from raising taxes or some sort of special assessment, there are a range of funding options and opportunities to be explored. Public funding is much more difficult to obtain in 2006, and many programs are either not being funded or have been substantially reduced by either Federal or State agencies. Money from foundations and other philanthropic organizations and groups is also difficult to acquire, in part because available funds are highly sought-after and very competitive. Nevertheless, there are sources and they should be explored to the fullest.

PRIVATE FUNDS

Private and Public Partnerships

The Parks and Recreation Department and a private developer may often cooperate on a facility that services the public, yet is also attractive to an entrepreneur. These partnerships can be effective funding methods for special use sports facilities like baseball complexes or soccer complexes; however, they generally are not feasible when the objective is to develop neighborhood and community parks that provide facilities such as playgrounds, informal playing fields, and other recreational opportunities that are generally available to the public free of charge. A recreation or swimming/water park is also potentially attractive as a private or public partnership.



Private Fundraising

While not addressed as a specific strategy for individual recreation facilities, it is not uncommon that public monies be leveraged with private donations. Private funds will most likely be attracted to high-profile facilities such as a swimming complex or a cultural facility, and generally require aggressive promotion and management on behalf of the park and recreation department or city administration.

Service Organization Partners

Many service organizations and corporations have funds available for park and recreation facilities. The City of St. George and local Rotary Clubs combined resources to develop information kiosks along some of its trails. Other organizations such as Home Depot are often willing to partner with local communities in the development of playground and other park and recreation equipment and facilities.

Joint Development Partnerships

Joint development opportunities may also occur between municipalities and among agencies or departments within a municipality. In other chapters, the potential advantages of cooperative relationships between the City of St. George and Washington County have been discussed. There may be other opportunities as well which should be explored whenever possible in order to maximize recreation opportunities and minimize costs. In order to make these kinds of opportunities happen, there must be on-going and constant communication between people, governments, business interests, and others.

LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES

ZAP or RAP Taxes

Many communities have initiated Zoo, Arts, and Parks or Recreation, Arts, and Parks taxes which have been very effective in raising funds to complete parks, recreation, trails, and arts projects. They are generally administered by a municipality or county.

Park and Recreation Impact Fees

The City of St. George has an impact fee program for park and recreation projects. In 2006, that impact fee program is undergoing review and will likely be modified. Impact fees can be used by communities to offset the cost of public parks and facilities needed to serve future residents and new development.

Impact fees are especially useful in areas of rapid growth, such as Washington County and the City of St. George. They help the community to maintain a specified level of service as new development puts strain on existing facilities. It assures that new development pays its fair share to maintain quality of life expectations for its residents.



Dedications

The dedication of land for parks has long been an accepted development requirement and is another valuable tool for implementing parks. The City can require the dedication of park land and/or park development. The City of St. George is in the process of evaluating its dedication process, as well as other development requirements, and will likely make policy and ordinance changes in the near future that will assure another means of acquiring parks to maintain a level of service that currently exists.

City Funding - General Fund or Bonding

The City can fund parks directly from its general fund or can bond for park development and spread the cost over many years. Bonding is a very common approach, where repayment of the bonds comes from general City revenue sources such as property and sales tax, or other earmarked tax revenue. Bonding associated with plan implementation should be kept as low as possible; however, for large developments such as sports complexes, swimming/water park complexes, or large land acquisition priorities, bonding is likely to be the best option.

Special Taxes

Tax revenue collected for special purposes may be earmarked for park development. In Sandy City, for instance, the room tax applied to hotel and motel rooms in the city is earmarked for parks, recreation, and trails development.

Community Development Block Grants

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) can be used for park development in areas of the City that qualify as low and moderate income areas. CDBG funds may be used to upgrade parks, purchase new park equipment, and improve accessibility (Americans With Disabilities Act). Additionally, CDBG funds may be used for projects that remove barriers to access for the elderly and for persons with severe disabilities.

User Fees

The City of St. George currently charges fees for reserved rental on park pavilions and for recreation programs. These fees should be evaluated to determine whether or not they are appropriate, and some consideration should be made to changing the fee structure to address non-residents and residents separately. A feasibility study may be needed to acquire the appropriate information before making decisions and changes.

Redevelopment Agency Funds

Generally, Redevelopment Agency (RDA) Funds are available for use in redevelopment areas. As new RDA areas are identified and developed, tax increment funds generated can, at the discretion of the city, be used to fund park acquisition and development.

STATE AND FEDERAL PROGRAMS

The availability of these funds may change annually depending on budget allocations at the state or federal level. It is important to check with local representatives and



administering agencies to find out the current status of funding. Many of these programs are funded by the Federal government and administered by local State agencies.

Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR)

This program, administered by the National Park Service, provides grants for the rehabilitation and enhancement of existing parks and recreation areas in communities. The program provides matching funds and technical assistance to economically distressed urban communities for the rehabilitation of critically needed recreation facilities. It also encourages local funding and commitment to the operations and maintenance of recreation programs, sites, and facilities. Three types of programs are available. Rehabilitation Grants are used for remodeling, rebuilding, or expanding existing outdoor or indoor recreation areas. Innovation Grants are for projects that demonstrate innovative and cost-effective ways to enhance park and recreation opportunities. Planning Grants provide funds for the development of a Recovery Action Plan, which must be on file with the National Park Service in order to receive funds.

Although St. George is not listed as an eligible jurisdiction – only Ogden and Provo are eligible in Utah, the program does allocate up to 15 percent of program funds annually to local governments that do not meet eligibility criteria. Salt Lake City for instance, which is not an eligible jurisdiction, has received \$435,000 in federal funds (not including city match) for park improvements.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

This Federal money is made available to States, and in Utah is administered by the Utah State Division of Parks and Recreation. Funds are matched with local funds for acquisition of park and recreation lands, redevelopment of older recreation facilities, trails, improvements to accessibility, and other recreation programs and facilities that provide close-to-home recreation opportunities for youth, adults, senior citizens, and persons with physical and mental disabilities.

SAFETEA-LU

In 2005, Congress passed and the President signed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). SAFETEA-LU establishes federal transportation policy and funding for the next five years. It continues programs, including transportation enhancements and recreation trails, and creates new ones, such as Safe Routes to Schools.

- Recreation Trails are funded at \$70 million in 2006, rising to \$85 million in 2009.
- Transportation Enhancements are funded at 3.5 billion over five years beginning in 2005. Three eligible activities include bicycle, pedestrian or shared use physical facilities; conversion of abandoned railroad corridors for trails;

and safety and education programs for pedestrians and bicyclists. A local match is required to use Utah's TE funds

- Safe Routes To School is funded at \$100 million in 2006, rising to \$183 million in 2009. These funds are available for planning, design, and construction of



infrastructure related to project that improve bicycle and pedestrian safety. Funds may also be used for public education programs, bicycle safety classes, and other programs that encourage bicycling and walking to middle and elementary schools.

Federal Recreational Trails Program

The Utah Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation Division administers these Federal funds. The funds are available for motorized and non-motorized trail development and maintenance projects, educational programs to promote trail safety, and trail related environmental protection projects. The match is 50 percent, and grants may range from \$10,000 to \$200,000. Projects are awarded in August. Funds are currently available for 2006.

Utah Trails and Pathways / Non-Motorized Trails Program

Funds are available for planning, acquisition, and development of recreational trails. The program is administered by the Board of Utah State Parks and Recreation, who awards grants at their fall meeting based on recommendations of the Recreation Trails Advisory Council and Utah State Parks and Recreation. The match is 50 percent, and grants may range from \$5,000 to \$100,000. Funds are available in 2006.

LeRay McAllister Critical Land Conservation Fund

The fund is administered by the Utah Quality Growth Commission and provides funds each year to preserve or restore critical open or agricultural lands in Utah, and targets lands deemed important to the community such as agricultural lands, wildlife habitat, watershed protection, and other culturally or historically unique landscapes. Money from the fund must be used to preserve or restore agricultural lands. Applicants must provide matching funds equal to or greater than the amount of money received from the fund. Funds must be spent within one year from the date of the grant award. The size of parcels for a purchase is limited to 20 acres or less. Purchases of conservation easements or restoration projects are exempt from this restriction. Funds are available for 2006.

Utah Arts Council

The Utah Arts Council offers grants to non-profit organization and entities for arts education programs and program grants. The funding is limited and requires a match, and may be useful in developing a program or event within the community; however, these funds are not designed to develop arts facilities or enhance building programs.



IN-KIND AND DONATED SERVICES OR FUNDS

Several options for local initiatives are possible to further the implementation of the parks, recreation, and trails plan. These kinds of programs would require the City to implement a proactive recruiting initiative to generate interest and sponsorship, and may include:

- Adopt a park or trail, whereby a service organization or group either raises funds or constructs a given facility with in-kind services;
- Corporate sponsorships, whereby businesses or large corporations provide funding for a particular facility, similar to adopt-a-trail or adopt-a-park;
- Public trail and park facility construction programs, in which local citizens donate their time and effort to trail and park facility construction and/or maintenance.

