



**Appendix B:
Public Meeting Summaries**

APPENDIX B. PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARIES

PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN KICK-OFF

In May 2008, the planning team commenced the Parks & Recreation Master Plan process for the City of Sheridan by touring the parks and trails system, conducting a series of stakeholder interviews, and holding a public open house and community intercept events. On the following pages is an overall summary of the stakeholder interviews, as well as key findings from the public open house and intercept events.

KEY FINDINGS

During the stakeholder interviews and throughout the public input events some recurring outcomes, opportunities, and challenges surfaced. These are outlined below, organized into two categories: challenges and desired outcomes. Please let us know if you have any additions or changes.

CHALLENGES

- **Education.** All groups indicated that education and outreach is needed, to increase awareness of the parks, trails and recreation resources already available in Sheridan. In addition, community outreach is needed for new residents.
- **Coordination.** Better coordination is needed between the Recreation District, the School District, City, and the County. There is no clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities.
- **Funding.** The funding system for parks and recreation is complex with multiple channels for the flow of funding for parks and recreation. In general there is a lack of money for maintenance and equipment replacement. Navigating the fragmented funding sources for parks and recreation is a challenge.
- **Development.** Development is happening at a rapid rate, and housing prices are skyrocketing. Housing is becoming too costly for long-term residents. The standards for new development result in marginal land dedications to the park system, or the use of an option to pay \$500 per single family lot in lieu of park land dedication. The compensation is not enough to develop and acquire park land at the market rate.
- **Demographics.** Sheridan has experienced rapid growth and demographic change in the past ten years. There has been an increase of user conflicts for park facilities between the more active and passive users of park facilities. While Sheridan has a large retirement age community, younger people are attracted to Sheridan for the energy jobs and the outdoors, and the City wants to continue to attract these young professionals.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- **Education.** The planning process is an opportunity to educate the community about the role of parks, recreation, open space, and trails in the stewardship of the natural environment and stream and watershed health. It is also an opportunity to engage new members of the community.
- **Coordination.** This planning effort should clarify roles and responsibilities with regard to the provision of parks and recreation services. There appears to be overall consensus that the process should include exploration of alternatives, followed by clear identification of roles and an organizational structure. The Plan should also coordinate with Sheridan County's planning efforts.
- **Park Development.** The Plan should identify where new parks will be needed as Sheridan grows, include design guidelines for park development, and connect the park system with a system of trails and pathways.
- **Funding.** Develop a plan for funding capital projects, including identification of additional funding alternatives and development of criteria to rank and prioritize projects.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

STAKEHOLDERS (listed in last name alphabetical order):

Scott Badley, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer – Sheridan Clerk/Treasurer Department
 Nic Bateson, City Engineer – Sheridan Public Works
 Sandy Birkholtz, President – Sheridan Recreation District Board
 Susan Brayton, Rotary Club of Sheridan
 Michael Cole, Utilities Manager – City of Sheridan
 Dave Kinskey, Mayor – City of Sheridan
 Donna Kinskey, Board Directors – Wyoming Business Council
 Rod Liesinger, Public Works Director – City of Sheridan
 Jay McGinnis, Executive Director – YMCA
 Tom O’Leary, Engineering Project Manager – Sheridan Public Works
 Renee Obermueller, Administrative Director – Sheridan County Business Office

SUMMARY

In May 2008, the planning team conducted a group interview as well as a series of five individual interviews. Key findings that surfaced during the stakeholder meetings are highlighted below:

- Create an outreach strategy that includes the participation and buy-in of the community;
 - We want input from the broadest range of individuals; and
 - We need to sell the idea of parks, open space and trails for the future of Sheridan.
- Sheridan needs better City, Recreation District, County coordination and communication;
 - This process should include identifying roles, developing an organizational structure and exploring the potential to unify service; and
 - Where are the organizational crossovers?
- The lack of a parks plan is a problem for a community growing as fast as Sheridan;
 - Need to look at Sheridan’s role in the region.
- Unravel funding and legalities associated with the current fiscal structure. Funding and insurance liability is a factor in use of school facilities.
- The need for additional gym space. Some stakeholders felt that the City needed more gym space but others did not view it as an issue.
- Long-term stewardship and sustainability is an issue – Should you build it if you can’t maintain it?
- Create a database of existing resources.

- How does Sheridan compare to other communities?
- Find places to access waterways and support non-motorized water activities.
- Establish a connected trail system between parks, schools, and jobs. A trail system could serve both the local community and could be marketed to tourists.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE AND INTERCEPT EVENTS

In August 2008, the planning team held a public open house, and staged two community intercept events. The following provides an overall summary of the key findings of these events.

SUMMARY

The main purpose of the open house and intercept events was to generate interest in the parks and recreation questionnaire, and to stimulate community interest in the planning process. Through informal discussions and use of interactive poster boards, MIG identified and provided opportunities for public comment on issues and interests related to park use and need.

- When asked “Where do you play?” participants identified Kendrick Park, Whitney Commons, and Marshall Park as the most popular and used parks in Sheridan.
- When asked “What park type is most needed in Sheridan?”, large multi-use parks were most favored.
 - *Large multi-use parks.* ‘Parks that serve the whole community’ was the most popular choice. Participants identified Kendrick Park as an example of this type of facility.
 - *Trails corridors and natural areas.* Trails and natural areas came in as the second and third most popular selection for park facility type.
- When asked “What park facility is most needed in Sheridan?” participants favored two types of facilities:
 - *Trails and pathways.* Participants noted that trails and pathways are desired and that while existing trails are well used, additional connections may be needed.
 - *Creek and river access.* Access to Sheridan’s waterways for swimming and boating was the second most popular selection. Current access is limited and there is an interest in creating more opportunities.
- When asked “What benefits of parks and recreation are most important to you? Participants favored opportunities to enjoy nature and the outdoors.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE AND INTERCEPT EVENTS

One of the primary objectives of these events was to promote the Sheridan park planning questionnaire and stimulate interest in the park planning process. The planning team provided paper copies of the questionnaire so participants could give feedback at the events, including informational fliers with the on-line questionnaire location.

The other objective of the open house and intercept events was to gain additional information regarding park interests and needs. The format of these events was informal and included a series of poster boards that posed questions related to park system interests and needs. Participants placed dots on corresponding topics to signify their interest. Topics are arranged by the questions posed on the poster boards. The results of these activities are summarized on the following pages.

BOARD #1: WHERE DO YOU – WORK? LIVE? PLAY?

The directions indicated that yellow dots signify where residents live, blue dots signify where residents work, and red dots signify where they play or use parks. The dots showed that Kendrick Park, Whitney Commons and Marshall Park are some of the most popular parks. Interestingly, a majority of the “play” dots were generally near the major “work” dots.

- Live. There was no clustering of yellow dots. These dots were scattered all over the map.
- Work. Blue dots were clustered in four major areas: northwest near the fairgrounds, central near downtown, east near Oatts Memorial Park, and south by Colony Open Space.
- Play. Most red dots were clustered at Kendrick Park, Whitney Commons and Marshall Park. Others were located at parks such as Thorne-Rider Park, Mavrakis Pond, the Fairgrounds, Sheltered Acres Park, and Washington Park.

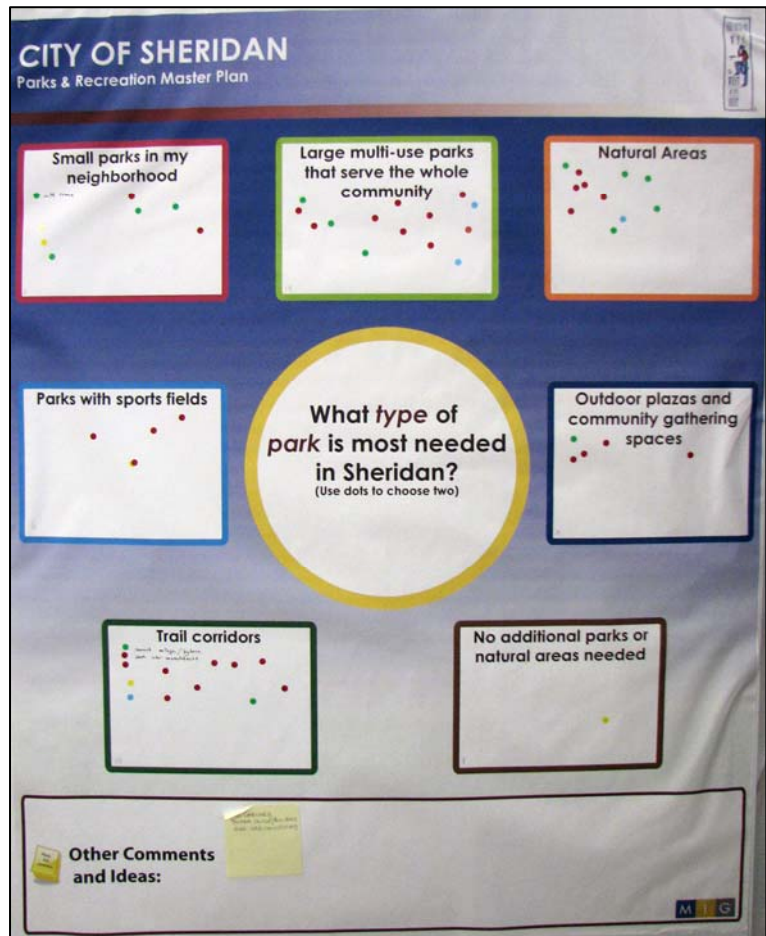


Community intercept event poster from August 2008

BOARD #2: WHAT TYPE OF PARK TYPE IS MOST NEEDED IN SHERIDAN? CHOOSE TWO.

Large multi-use parks that serve the whole community	14
Trail corridors	13
Natural areas	11
Small parks in my neighborhood	8
Parks with sports fields	6
Outdoor plazas and community gathering spaces	5
No additional parks or natural areas needed	1

Additional comments and ideas: Trail corridors towards college/Big Horn, more interconnections.



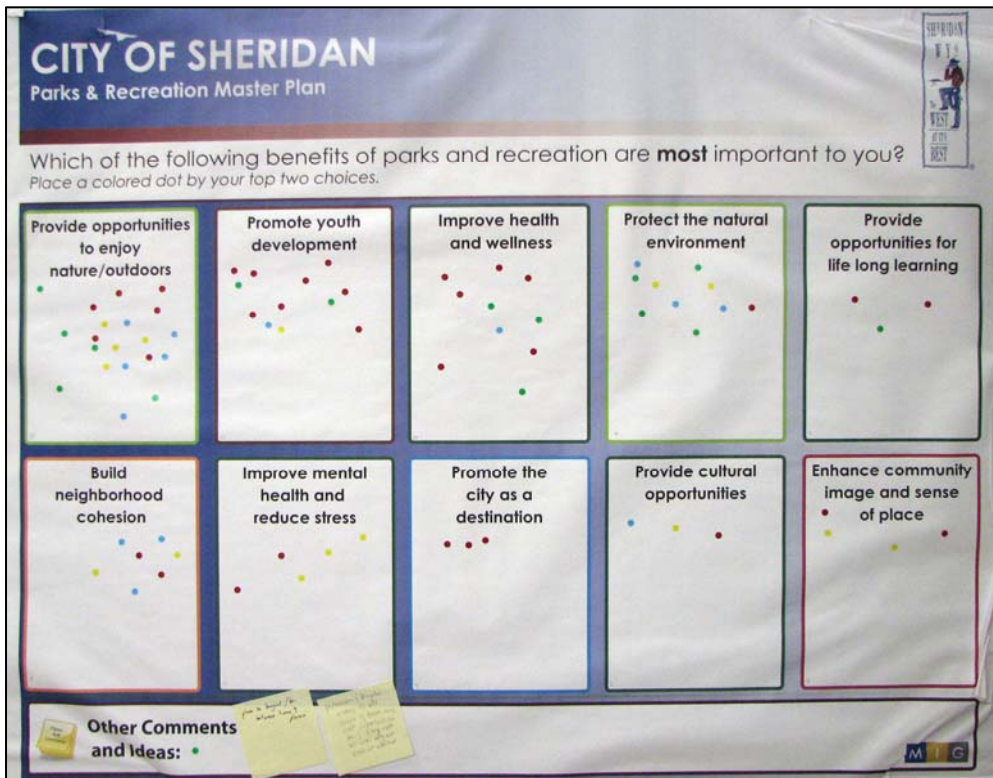
Community intercept event poster from August 2008

BOARD #3: WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS OF PARKS AND RECREATION ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU? CHOOSE TWO.

Provide opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors	20
Promote youth development	12
Improve health and wellness	10
Protect the natural environment	10
Build neighborhood cohesion	7
Improve mental health and reduce stress	5
Enhance community image and sense of place	4
Provide opportunities for life long learning	3
Promote the city as a destination	3
Provide cultural opportunities	3

Additional comments and ideas: Place to hang out/be between times and places.

Pedestrian and bicycle access in all areas of town.

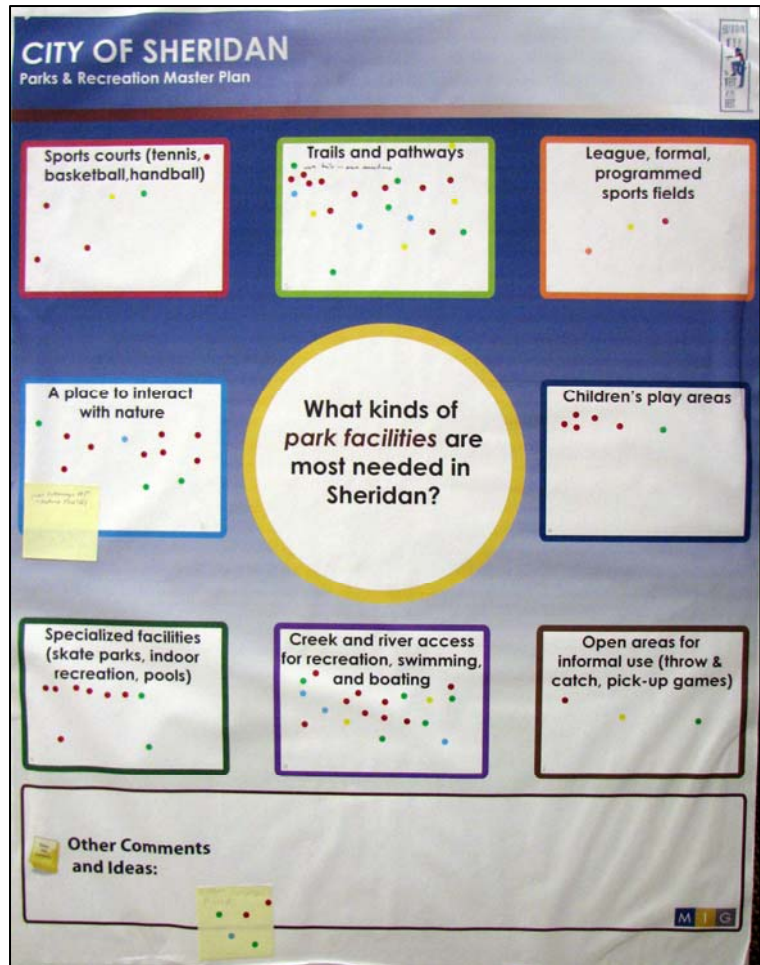


Community intercept event poster from August 2008

BOARD #4: WHAT KINDS OF PARK FACILITIES ARE MOST NEEDED IN SHERIDAN?

Trails and pathways	22
Creek and river access for recreation, swimming, and boating	19
A place to interact with nature	12
Specialized facilities (skate parks, indoor recreation, pools)	9
Children’s play areas	6
Sports courts (tennis, basketball, handball)	6
Open areas for informal use (throw & catch, pick-up games)	3
League, formal, programmed sports fields	3

Additional comments and ideas: Indoor hockey rink (5)



Community intercept event poster from August 2008

