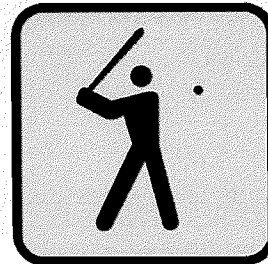
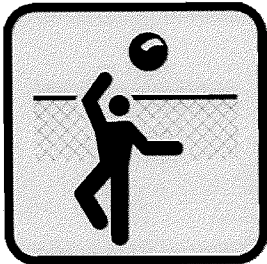




# Section 6

## Implementation Policies, Strategies and Opportunities



# Implementation Policies, Strategies and Opportunities

Interviews and meetings conducted during the Citywide Athletics Facilities Master Plan process identified many needs that the various partners have for improving their current offerings and services. Collaborations between these groups have presented opportunities that can provide highly beneficial results to the entire community.

In order to provide perspective into the terms of future joint partnerships, six projects, which are discussed in this master plan, have been identified with recommended strategies for implementation. Each project will require the development of committees to work through the details of the agreements however the following will provide a point of reference for committee members.

## Softball Field @ Oakhurst Park

<b>Property Ownership:</b>	City of Decatur
<b>Lead Agency:</b>	Decatur Recreation Department
<b>Partner Agencies:</b>	Decatur Recreation Department City Schools of Decatur Agnes Scott College

**Facility Renovation Requirement:** To accommodate collegiate level girls softball while simultaneously meeting the needs of recreation and high school teams compliant with Georgia High School Association rules.

Facilities to be renovated or constructed to meet needed requirements include:

- Field house
- Spectator seating
- Field fencing/dugouts
- Field lights
- Concession/restrooms
- Irrigation
- Turf
- Parking improvements

**Site Impacts:** There will be a permanent loss of a seasonal soccer field in addition to an increased need for parking. Modifications may be required for the second softball field in the park. There will be a temporary loss of play during construction. With modifications, Glenlake Park may serve as a temporary field for Decatur High School although it will not meet collegiate standards.

**Joint Use Evaluation:** The Decatur Recreation Department currently owns and operates the facility and will have the greatest potential impact during construction due to loss of use. Current investments will be lost because they do not meet new program needs. In addition, there will be increased demands with increased maintenance needs. The

college and high school lack land for development of softball facilities. The partners need to analyze scheduling needs/overlap (i.e. high school and college practice and game requirements.)

**Capital Development:**           40 percent college  
   40 percent high school  
   20 percent recreation department

The reduced cost for the Recreation Department is a reflection of existing property ownership, loss of use, and valuation of existing improvements. In addition, increased requirements for collegiate and high school softball over recreation leagues place greater financial responsibility on Agnes Scott College and the City Schools of Decatur.

**Operations Recommendations:** All facilities that are jointly used should be placed under a maintenance contract agreement and costs split equally. This would include turf care, irrigation maintenance, sports lighting, facility electrical costs, and custodial requirements. Custodial costs should be split three ways for facilities associated with the athletic fields. The balance of the park operation costs should be the responsibility of the city.

**Revenue Generation:** Admission fees charged at games shall go to the organization hosting the event. Concession revenues should be used for daily operations and maintenance of the sports facility. Concession management should be contracted to an outside vendor, or as a cost saving mechanism staffed by school booster clubs and recreation volunteers. If it is determined that the concessions will be managed internally by boosters and volunteers, then a portion of revenues should be paid to the recreation department to help offset operations and maintenance costs.

**Insurance:** All participants must carry their own insurance and all parties must agree to a hold harmless agreement in the event of injury.

**Long Term Capital Improvements:** Capital improvements including restriping and paving, building repairs and sports lighting repairs should be split equally among all parties of the agreement.

### **Indoor Swimming @ Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club**

**Property Ownership:**           Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club  
**Lead Agency:**                    Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club  
**Partner Agencies:**           Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club  
   City Schools of Decatur  
   Decatur Recreation Department

**Facility Renovation Requirement:** No renovations required at this time. Future renovations dependent on use of facility for competitive swimming.

**Site Impacts:** Potential need for additional parking.

**Joint Use Evaluation:** The Boys and Girls Club recently completed renovations to the swimming pool. Operation and maintenance staff is already in place to handle daily

pool responsibilities. The City Schools of Decatur and the Decatur Recreation Department should be charged an annual fee to cover costs for extended hours of operation. These costs should include but not be limited to pool chemicals, maintenance and utilities. The annual fee should be charged in lieu of memberships fees and costs should be split proportionally according to level of use by each agency.

**Capital Development:** None required at this time.

**Operations Recommendations:** Increased operation costs should be reflected in the annual user fee. The cost should be split proportionally according to level of use by each agency. Staff required to run recreation programs would be at the expense of the Decatur Recreation Department.

**Revenue Generation:** None expected at this time.

**Insurance:** Each agency should maintain, at its own cost and expense, liability insurance for all participants.

**Long Term Capital Improvements:** Long-term capital improvements should be reflected in the user fees charged at the beginning of the respective season. Improvements to enhance specific programs should be the responsibility of the agency desiring the improvements. If all parties benefit from improvements, then costs should be split proportionally.

## Soccer Field @ Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club

<b>Property Ownership:</b>	Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club
<b>Lead Agency:</b>	Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club
<b>Partner Agencies:</b>	Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club Decatur Recreation Department Decatur-Dekalb Y.M.C.A.

**Facility Renovation Requirement:** Field improvements will be required to provide a level that is consistent with other athletic fields in the community. Improvements should include field grading to eliminate hazards in the playing surface, irrigation, lighting, and a turf management program.

**Site Impacts:** Temporary loss of playing time for the Boys and Girls club during renovations.

**Joint Use Evaluation:** The Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club owns and operates the current facility and will potentially be impacted the most during construction due to loss of use. Current investments will be lost because they do not meet new program needs. The demand will be potentially increased with the new facility. Shared use of the renovated field should be at no cost to the Decatur Recreation Department or the Y.M.C.A. with the exception of improvement dollars and ongoing maintenance costs.

**Capital Development:**Improvement costs to the existing field should be equally shared between the Recreation and Community Services Department and the Decatur-Dekalb Y.M.C.A. The Samuel L. Jones Boys and Girls Club will contribute the land and water for the irrigation system. The Boys and Girls Club will have priority use Monday to Friday with the Recreation Department and the Y.M.C.A. having priority use on the weekend. Neither agency will be granted exclusive use.

**Operations Recommendations:** The renovated field should be placed under the same maintenance schedule with other fields around the community. Maintenance costs associated with the field should be shared equally between the partnering agencies.

**Revenue Generation:**Gate receipts should be held by the hosting agency if desired.

**Insurance:** Each agency shall maintain, at its own cost and expense, liability insurance for all participants.

**Long Term Capital Improvements:** Long-term capital improvements should be an equal responsibility of all three partnering agencies.

## Skate Park @ McKoy Park

<b>Property Ownership:</b>	Decatur Recreation Department
<b>Lead Agency:</b>	Decatur Recreation Department
<b>Partner Agencies:</b>	Decatur Recreation Department Private Interest Groups

**Facility Development Requirements:** A skate park approximately 10,000 square feet in size located on the existing tennis courts in the park.

**Site Impacts:** Loss of tennis courts in the park.

**Joint Use Evaluation:**The development of a skate park will provide increased recreation opportunities for skating enthusiasts.

**Capital Development:** With the help of special interest groups and private donations, the City of Decatur should be the primary funding source of the skate facility. A donation of \$4,000 from local fundraisers as well as a possible grant of \$25,000 from the Tony Hawk Foundation will provide needed capital dollars.

**Operations Recommendations:** The skate park will have a primary use as a recreation component; therefore, all maintenance costs should be the responsibility of the Recreation Department.

**Revenue Generation:** Many similar public facilities are free for use however, there is willingness within the community to purchase an annual pass to help offset development and operation costs. Youth fees have been proposed in the amount of \$240/yr or \$20/month for after school, weekend and summer use. Adult fees are being considered for night use to generate additional revenue.

**Insurance:** This will be a skate at your own risk facility. Signs should be posted with rules and regulations for the safest possible environment.

**Long Term Capital Improvements:** Long-term capital improvement costs should be the responsibility of the City of Decatur.

## **Dog Parks @ Adair, Oakhurst and Glenlake Parks**

**Property Ownership:** City of Decatur  
**Lead Agency:** Decatur Recreation Department  
**Partner Agencies:** Decatur Recreation Department  
 Private Interest Groups

**Facility Development Requirements:** The dog park requires a fenced area approximately 1 acre in size or less.

**Site Impacts:** The proposed dog parks have been recommended in Adair, Oakhurst and Glenlake Parks. Minimizing the impact on surrounding neighbors, a black, vinyl-coated fence has been recommended with a minimum 100-foot landscape buffer whenever possible.

**Joint Use Evaluation:** The Decatur Recreation Department will operate the facility.

**Capital Development:** With the help of special interest groups and private donations, the City of Decatur will be the primary contributor to the development of the dog parks.

**Operations Recommendations:** The same maintenance crew that handles maintenance in the parks should maintain the dog parks.

**Revenue Generation:** Possibility of an annual pass to help offset development and maintenance costs.

**Insurance:** Signs should be posted requiring owners to have dogs licensed and vaccinated. Dog owners use the park at their own risk.

**Long Term Capital Improvements:** Long-term capital improvement costs should be the responsibility of the City of Decatur.

## **Community Park @ United Methodist Children’s Home**

**Property Ownership:** United Methodist Children’s Home  
**Lead Agency:** United Methodist Children’s Home  
**Partner Agencies:** United Methodist Children’s Home  
 City Schools of Decatur  
 Decatur Recreation Department  
 Decatur-Dekalb Y.M.C.A.

**Facility Development Requirements:** To develop a community park that accommodates youth baseball, soccer and passive recreation uses. It will be necessary to determine the acreage that will be made available in exchange for the Children's Home residents attending the City Schools of Decatur. Once that number has been decided, a long-term lease should be crafted for the property.

**Site Impacts:** The United Methodist Children's Home will have the greatest impact with the development of a community park. Development of soccer fields should be restricted to the existing open areas of the property while passive uses should be held for wooded areas and areas surrounding the existing lake on the property.

**Joint Use Evaluation:** The community park will be a shared use facility between a variety of organizations. If the park is developed for use by the YMCA and the Recreation and Department, then priority use time should be split equally between both agencies. The Recreation Department should be the principal scheduling agent.

**Capital Development:** The capital development cost for the soccer fields and support amenities such as parking, restrooms and concessions should be split equally between the Dekalb-Decatur YMCA and the City of Decatur. Costs associated with the passive recreation areas of the park should be the sole responsibility of the city of Decatur.

**Operations Recommendations:** All facilities that are jointly used should be placed under contract agreement and costs split equally. This would include turf care, irrigation maintenance, sports lighting, facility electrical costs, and custodial requirements. Custodial costs should be split evenly for facilities associated with the athletic fields. The balance of the park operation costs should be the responsibility of the city.

**Revenue Generation:** Revenue raised through gate receipts should be collected if desired by the agency hosting the event. Concession sales should be handled as a joint operation between partnering agencies with revenues used for athletic field operations and maintenance. If a concession contract is not obtained for operations, then one of the partnering agencies should take on management. Revenue from concessions should be used to offset the management cost with the remainder of the proceeds going to the park.

**Insurance:** Each agency shall maintain, at its own cost and expense, liability insurance for all participants.

**Long Term Capital Improvements:** Long-term capital improvements for athletic facilities should be an equal responsibility of both agencies. Capital improvements to other areas of the park should remain the responsibility of the city of Decatur.

## **Facility Implementation**

The opportunity with the potential for the biggest community impact is the development of a new park with athletic facilities on the property of the United Methodist Children's Home. The construction of soccer fields, a Little League field and passive recreation amenities at the United Methodist Children's Home will allow many current

activities at existing parks to shift to this site. By shifting uses, permanent facilities can be developed throughout the recreation system to better serve various users. Facility changes that would result from this move are as follows:

- Temporary soccer field development in Oakhurst Park would no longer be required. This would allow for the development of a high quality girls soft ball field to be used by Agnes Scott College and the City Schools of Decatur.
- The soccer field located at Ebster Park could be converted to a multi-purpose soccer and practice facility to be used by the Recreation and Community Services Department and the city school system for sport and band activities.
- The YMCA and the Boys and Girls Club would also be able to use the new soccer complex to expand soccer programs.
- The Boys and Girls Club soccer/football field could become a general use field for the Club, practice field for the YMCA, and a game field for the recreation department.
- The development of two youth baseball fields at the United Methodist Children's Home will alleviate overuse of fields located in Oakhurst Park.

Second to the Children's Home property, Ebster Park offers the highest potential for joint use of multiple groups. Both the middle and high school sports and band programs need more space. The proximity of Ebster to the schools makes the park an ideal choice to support the practice and game needs of soccer, football, band and expanded programs such as lacrosse. In addition to the school programs, recreation programs after school and on weekends can continue to use Ebster for recreation league play.

Maximizing existing facility use is another method of meeting demand. This is most applicable to indoor swimming and track facilities. The existing facilities are sufficient to meet some of the aquatic demands in the community. What is not in place is a system to schedule use of the facilities and share in the operating costs. By implementing new joint use policies, current indoor swimming and track facilities can be better utilized to meet some of the user demands.

### **Joint Use Strategies**

Critical to the success of this master plan is the continued cooperation and collaboration between the various partners in the community. In order to ensure that improvements move in a positive direction, a committee should be formed to continue to work through the details and recommendations of the plan. The partners of the plan should appoint a single representative on the committee who has the authority to negotiate a strategy for implementation. Key topics of discussion should be for funding, lease agreements (if necessary) and maintenance responsibilities.

Subcommittees should also be formed to serve as athletic and pool oversight committees to represent each organization's interests and to formulate agreed-to policies that each partner will be required to follow. The athletic and pool committees should be



responsible for working through schedule requirements and restrictions as well. Monthly meetings of oversight committees should be sufficient to keep plans progressing. Coordination of budget cycles should be explored to ensure funding is available for maintenance and capital improvements.

Each joint use facility will have different requirements and considerations for implementation. Specific considerations that should be studied when exploring joint use of new community activity centers at the schools are:

- Determining the total hours of operation with dedicated use
- Determining hours for primary use by the schools
- Determining hours for public access and use
- Determining supervision requirements during each period of use including:
  - Minimum staff requirements
  - Custodial requirements
  - Security requirements

Joint development partnerships will require determination of financial responsibilities for new facilities. The following are costs that should be taken into consideration when determining initial financial obligations:

- Determine value of land and/or existing facilities
- Determine cost of proposed facilities
- Design and engineering costs
- Construction cost
- Furnishing/fixtures/specialized equipment

The development of new facilities or renovation of existing facilities will have costs outside of the initial investment. In some cases opportunities will exist to produce revenue to help offset these additional costs. The following are items to consider as relate to costs outside initial improvements and opportunities for revenue generation:

- Daily operations and maintenance fees
- Staffing costs
- Long term renovation and maintenance costs
- Materials/supplies (i.e. chemicals, specialized equipment)
- Membership/activity fees
- Fee scholarships

Many new facilities will attract users outside the original partners. Requests from outside users will require special conditions and considerations. The following represent some of those considerations:

- Determine availability of facility for special events outside of dedicated use
- Determine special event requirements and reservation procedures
- Determine required set up time if applicable
- Determine length of activity to be held at the facility
- Determine special staffing needs
- Determine clean-up requirements
- Determine if fees will be charged for use of the facility

General considerations like the ones outlined above will be necessary for each joint use agreement, however, specific issues will need to be resolved dependent on the facility and organization. An example of an issue to be resolved is the desire of the United Methodist Children's home to send their children to the City Schools of Decatur. Meetings between the City Schools of Decatur, city officials and the United Methodist Children's Home will need to be scheduled to work through the details and impacts of adding more students to the City School system. In exchange, property negotiations will need to outline the terms of a long-term lease or property transfer to the city. One concern of the Children's Home is to not compromise the safety and security of its residents with a new park. All issues between interested parties should be identified and solutions outlined in a joint agreement.

Other issues to be worked out in the joint use agreements will deal with scheduling, operational costs, capital developments, safety and oversight, and insurance needs and responsibilities. Every effort should be made by all parties to make compromises for the benefit of the community.

### **Recommended Policy**

To promote successful joint use agreements, the following policy recommendations are provided as a base point for agreement development:

- Funding facility improvements should be based on use, wherein the primary user should pay the highest percentage of the cost regardless of ownership.
- Long-term maintenance and capital improvements should be the responsibility of all users who benefit.
- Existing capital investments should be considered when formulating cost-sharing responsibilities for renovation or expansion of facilities to meet new or expanded programs.
- Uniform maintenance standards should be established and all parties should pay their appropriate share of the cost at joint use facilities.
- Sidewalk and trail improvements, and other things enjoyed by the majority of the public, should be done at the cost of the city.

### **Recreation and Community Services Department Policy**

Interviews with the Decatur Recreation Department staff and Decatur citizens yielded recommendations specific to city parks and recreation. The planning team has developed a list of general policies for consideration by the department to improve their overall offering to the community.

#### **Open Space:**

In an effort to secure and protect greenspace within the City of Decatur and along city boundaries, conservation easements and fee simple purchase of properties is recommended.

**Revenue Generation:**

Increased revenue streams should be pursued with new ventures. A policy should be developed that allows some programs to produce revenue, some to break even and others to operate at a deficit. New program development should not be dependent on the ability to subsidize a predetermined percentage of participants in the programs. All, or a high percentage of, adult programs should be operated to generate a profit. Whenever possible revenue should be secured through grants, donations, fundraisers, the preservation alliance, Governors' Greenspace program or other entities.

**Programming:**

New programs should be developed for senior, special needs groups and young professionals to meet the diverse social and physical abilities of these segments of the population. In addition, a community-wide calendar should be implemented that coordinates the various activities available around the city. Staffing to program for these groups should also be considered.

**Maintenance:**

Implement a new, dedicated parks maintenance crew to perform daily tasks associated with parks. Members of the crew should work to obtain playground safety certification to perform routine inspections and repairs of new and existing playgrounds in the community.

Complete a cost benefit assessment of contracting maintenance on all joint athletic facilities to insure consistent, safe, playing surfaces.

Initiate an adopt-a-park program to encourage neighborhood involvement in park beautification, safety and improvements.