

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Master Plan FY 2008-12

I. Mission. To act as an advocate for the youth and their families in Lake of the Woods.

II. Responsibilities: The Committee coordinates the planning and operation of youth programs and facilities, and creates and supports ideas, actions and programs which will contribute to a better quality of life for youth of Lake of the Woods. The Committee works directly with the Activities and Wellness Director who has overall responsibility in this area. By working with other youth oriented organizations in the community, the Committee is able to suggest and advise on programs that maximize the use of existing facilities and programs and aid in the development of new facilities and new programs.

III. Goal. To provide safe and attractive playgrounds, recreational facilities, and programs for LOW youth featuring year-round recreational amenities that permit a high quality of life for a diverse youth population. Activities to achieve this goal include:

A. Upgrading Facilities. Upgrading and expanding the existing facilities in our parks by:

1. Providing our youngest members with safe, attractive and well-maintained playgrounds and equipment that fully satisfy state standards
2. Expanding and upgrading recreational playing fields and courts to accommodate the growing number of youths within LOW.

B. Additional Facilities. Building new recreational facilities to meet growing and changing demands of LOW children and young adults.

C. Programs. Providing our youth and their families with a variety of recreational activities at safe and supervised areas allowing enjoyment of LOWA amenities by all its members.

D. Information Dissemination. Work with the Communications Committee to expand the network of information to the families of youth in our community to further utilize the LOWA amenities

IV. Implementation of Planned Projects

A. Capital. All new projects require new Capital expenditures. Improvement or expansion of existing facilities are generally funded from Replacement Reserves or a combination of Replacement Reserves and new Capital. Except for the Community Center and Skate Park, none of these projects generate revenue.

B. Demand. Demand for facility upgrades and additions is determined using a variety of sources. These include

1. Surveys/Census. Information sources include the 2002 and 2005 LOWA surveys and the U.S. 2000 census. Information from the Orange County schools system is used to determine the number of youths now living in Lake of the Woods. (See pages N-2 and N-3).

2. Property Assessments. It is generally accepted that well-maintained and appropriately-equipped neighborhood parks have a positive effect on property values.

3. Informal Interviews. Committee members solicit the views of a cross-section of parents within the community.

C. Alternatives. Recommendations include evaluation of, but do not always present here, alternatives: locations, site work, materials, equipment configurations, etc. Considerations include safety features, durability, and cost (numbers include inflation).

D. Benefits. Upgrading existing facilities increases their attractiveness to members and therefore increases use. Providing safe equipment for all age groups meets community as well as industry standards. Giving youth and their families safe, supervised facilities and programs validates their importance within the community helping them develop a sense of pride, ownership and community. Supplementing existing facilities with new equipment maintains the overall attractiveness of our recreational facilities and makes it easier for families to provide recreational outlets for their children within LOW. Collectively, this recreational infrastructure benefits the home values within LOW as is evidenced by responses to the surveys.

V. Supportive Rationale

A. From the 2000 Census (tract 9901.01 Block 2 – Lake of the Woods):

Total Population	5,180
0-5 year olds	288
6-17 year olds	706
0-19 years	1,056 (20% of total)
Total # of households	2,241
Households with one or more people 17 or younger	536 (24% of total)

B. From the LOWA 2002 Survey

1. 31% of 2002 survey respondents indicated they use the playgrounds at least some of the time. This suggests that 1361 of LOWA's 4,126 lots use the playgrounds at least occasionally. If one-half of playground users are in the 0-5 age range, it is estimated that 340 lots take advantage of tot lots, if provided. Estimating a 15 year lifetime for playground equipment, after 15 years the project cost and annual maintenance costs will average of approximately \$24,000. If one-quarter of the lots above use the requested new tot lots, the annual cost per user is approx \$19. The annual cost per lot owner is approximately \$ 0.40.*

2. 8% of the 2002 survey respondents indicated that they use the basketball courts and/or soccer fields at least some of the time. This indicates that about 330 lot owners use the basketball courts and/or soccer fields at least occasionally.*

3. 3.5% of the 1001 survey respondents indicated that they use the sand volleyball courts at least some of the time. This indicates that about 140 lot owners use the courts at least occasionally.*

4. 15% of the 2002 survey respondents reported they use the baseball field at least some of the time. This would indicate that about 620 lot owners use the existing facilities and would benefit from the addition of another field.

* The number of homes in LOW has increased by approximately 450 since this survey was taken, making the number of users estimated from the survey low for the current population.

C. Other Indicators.

1. In May, 2005, 819 Lake of the Woods children were enrolled in Orange County schools grades K-12. This figure does not include children under the age of 5, those home-schooled, or those attending private schools or other school districts.

2. Between FY 2000/01 and 2004/05 there were 693 new home completions in Lake of the Woods, an average of 138/yr. The figures available indicate a similar number of completions are likely for 2005/06. If the percentage of households with people 17 or younger has remained constant, there are now over 750 residents in that age bracket. The Orange County School figures above show a much larger number, indicating a trend of an increasing population under age 17.

3. These estimates do not include children of weekend or seasonal residents or visiting grandchildren.

D. Additional Research Information: All original playground areas in LOW parks are designed for use by children age 6 or older. According to a study released by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission in April, 2001, the majority of preschool-age children injured on playgrounds in 1999 were using equipment designed for older children. The National Program for Playground Safety, established by the US Center for Disease Control and Injury Prevention and the University of Northern Iowa in 1995 recommends that playgrounds provide separate play areas with age-appropriate equipment for 2-5 year olds. Since 1994, playground equipment suppliers have been labeling their equipment to indicate whether it was designed for 2-5 year olds or 5-12 year olds. Since 2003 tot lots have been established at Clubhouse Beach, Keaton's Run, Greensprings Park and Sweetbriar Park to accommodate the 2-5 year old LOW population.

The US Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends protective ground cover in playground areas at depths to accommodate critical fall heights equal to the height of the equipment-on average 12". The surface under and around playground equipment can be a major factor in determining the severity of an injury from a fall, especially from head-impact injuries which carry the most potential for being life threatening. Edging is also recommended to keep the protective ground cover at the depths necessary for safety.

VI. Five-Year Plan

A. Upgrade Existing Facilities. Over the past several years, LOWA has replaced playground equipment with equipment that meets current safety standards. The plan is to add playground equipment specifically designed for children ages 2-5 to all parks and to meet guidelines for playground safety established by the National Program for Playground Safety. The plan includes edging for all playground areas to contain the ground surface material necessary to satisfy safety guidelines. This plan to provide new or upgraded recreational playing fields and courts is in accordance with the Land Use Update Study recommendation to "promote and improve the quality of existing facilities."

B. New Projects.

1. Skate Park. The plan to build a skate spot in a supervised location with specific rules and hours of operation provides a safe place for a growing number of skateboard and rollerblade enthusiasts to practice these sports. It also supports regulations to preclude skating in other existing facilities not meant for this purpose. Phase I usage will determine need for additional or upgraded equipment for a potential Phase II.

2. Community Center Equipment. Completion of the Community Center has identified the need for additional equipment based on member usage and program requirements. Specifically, padding is needed on the walls in the multipurpose room for safety of our members and sound control.

C. Conceptual Project. Disseminating information timely to young families is a concern.

The Youth Activities Committee works to keep the LOWA website updated with easily accessed information pertaining to youth. The committee continues to expand its networking email system to keep families informed about available programs and other pertinent information pertaining to youth.

Projected funding is shown in priority order in the table below.:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	COST ESTIMATE	FY
Wall, I beam, and guide wire padding in the Multipurpose Room of the Community Center	\$20,000	08
Edging and mulch at Spottswood Park	\$ 3,731	08
Tot Lot @ Spottswood Park	\$ 16,500	08
Edging and mulch at Hollyfield Park	\$ 10,875	09
Tot Lot @ Hollyfield Park	\$ 16,000	09
Build Phase II Skate Park as justified by Phase I usage and experience	\$ 25,000	10
Upgrade and/or add recreational sports fields and courts based on condition and utilization of existing fields, population increase, change in demographics, and added programs		
-SB soccer fields-Bermuda grass, drainage, irrigation	\$ 25,000	11
-Life Estates – creation of field and parking	\$ 25,000	12