

Session: Sustaining Outdoor Recreation Facilities for the Future

Panel Members:

Greg Mack, Ramsey County; greg.mack@co.ramsey.mn.us

Larry Peterson, MN DNR; larry.peterson@dnr.state.mn.us

Mark Peterson, Plymouth; MPeterso@ci.plymouth.mn.us

Don Deveau, Three Rivers Park District; ddeveau@threeriversparkdistrict.org

Moderator: Greg Mack, Ramsey County; greg.mack@co.ramsey.mn.us

Note-taker: Jody Yungers, Ramsey County; jody.yungers@co.ramsey.mn.us

Key points from the panel discussion (include “who”):

Greg Mack offered the following quotes:

- Quote: “If what we have falls apart before its time, it was either poorly constructed or poorly maintained. Increased spending on new construction will address neither problem. If our fiscal processes systematically generate inadequate maintenance spending, then a new, larger round of new construction will only condemn us to watch the decay of a more expensive capital investment. The solution lies in finding ways to strengthen maintenance, no in creative ways to raise funds with which to repeat old mistakes.” Reference: Herman B. Leonard, Checks Unbalanced: Quiet Side of Public Spending.
- Nationally Recognized Standards suggest 1 – 3% of a buildings worth should be reinvested into maintenance to keep properties in good working order and increase in value. Reference: Whitestone Buildings and Maintenance and Repair cost Reference 2005-06, Whitestone Research.

Attached are handout examples of presentation of panel members

- Larry Peterson – MN DNR – Handout on Maintenance and Capitol Investment Program
- Mark Peterson – Handout on Land Logic GIS and Map based Asset Management and Inventory System used by Plymouth Parks and Recreation Department
- Greg Mack – Handout on Facility Condition Report and Asset Management 10 Year Life Cycle Plan

Q & A after speaker/panel presentation:

- Question – Project Priority Systems?
 - Ramsey County has a CIP committee that has a cross section of community members that serve on a County-wide committee. The committee follows a priority rating system, including safety, matching money, targeted audience (regional/local reach/special use), current condition, ect...).
 - Saint Paul has a rating system, emphasis and added value for outside \$ investment/match for project.
 - DNR has a 5 priority system.
 - Three Rivers does an annual priority assessment to determine project priorities.
- Question – How do you determine what projects should be supported out of operating budget vs. it being a cost in Capitol/Rehab Projects?
 - Ramsey County has a \$5,000 minimal threshold for projects that qualify under rehab, otherwise would need to come out of operating budget. Needs to be over \$25,000 expense to qualify for CIP project, funded by Capitol Bonds. Important factor is

- match project to funding, for example, it would not make good fiscal sense to fund a 5 year life-cycle project, e.g. painting of Beach buildings with 10 year bonds.
- DNR has a similar approach; they have a four tiered approach, routine maintenance, replacement, rehab and capitol. Rehab and Capital is included in the state bonding bill.
 - Plymouth – In the process of reframing funding of rehab projects. Before park system started to age, park dedication interest used to support life cycle replacement program, now in addition to park dedication interest, city is allocating a percent of operating budget to support rehabilitation program.
 - Three Rivers Park District – Any projects over \$100,000 would be include in Capitol Improvement Project. Those projects under \$100,000 would be included in the Rehabilitation Plan, unless the long-range improvement has a life expectancy of over 20 years.

What are the greatest challenges you face regarding this topic? List specific examples: (This should help in determining where BPs is needed.)

- Money to support life cycle/asset management plans/programs.
- We are creating the “tail that wags the dog”! We do not identify the maintenance impact and preservations costs up front during the construction phase of new facilities.
- Project priority systems – if not appropriately funded have a tendency to have political influence as to what is replaced.
- Ultimately most organizations are looking for a sound business approach to a 5 year plan that is flexible and provide an imperial way to determine what rehabilitation/preservation functions or actions need to be taken to maintain the integrity of our facilities for asset preservation.

What are some existing BPs or good examples of successful practices? (Record what and who to contact; at a minimum.) Other than those presented:

- Plymouth Parks and Recreation, Mark Peterson – Currently working with GIS based software that helps identify maintenance impact and asset preservation costs to new construction projects.
- Don Deveau, Three Rivers Park District – Have a Pavement Management index system.
- Greg Mack, Ramsey County – Life Cycle (life expectancy) list of asset types, based on construction industry standards.
- ? Brooklyn Park – Five Year Plan includes and evaluation value rating (1-4 rating) that is simple and easy to work with.
- Barb? – Referenced a speaker “Kaplan” – Estimating maintenance costs for new construction.

Where are the gaps? Where do we need to strengthen existing BPs or develop new ones?

- Standard Definitions for current facility rating system (fair, good, excellent conditions....).
- Common Life Cycles life expectancy based on product/element
- Shared list of good construction products (new construction)
- Use of GIS in Asset Management systems

What are the top priorities from this session that need to be addressed post-summit?

1. Collection of Standards for construction product expected life cycles.
2. Sustainable maintenance standard for specific facilities. Identify best practices in maintenance standards, i.e. bituminous, roofs, flooring, tennis courts, playground surfaces, etc....
3. Historical Facilities – Identify assessment/evaluation process for deciding if feasible to restore or get rid of!!!

4. Develop common definitions for determining current conditions of facilities/surfaces.
5. Collection of sample priority rating systems.
6. Use of GIS for Asset Management systems.

What lends itself best to a workshop?

- Suggested that we provide a way to share more details on the different tools that organizations have used in asset management systems.
- A 2 day institute would best serve this need and should include a working session, allowing fellow professionals and industry experts to agree to standard language and agreed upon life expectancies based on product and elements.

To the website?

- Need to solicit members to submit the following:
 - Definitions used to assess facility conditions
 - Life cycles for facility element/types
 - Examples of funding rating systems
 - Example software applications used for Asset Management systems.
 - Other Asset Management tools (e.g., handbooks, fact sheets, etc.)?

Ideas on who should/could take the lead?

- Although not discussed, a good project leader on this subject would be Mark Peterson, Plymouth MN. Jody Yungers would be willing to be co-chair.

What are the 3 most important factors/ideas to emerge from this session?

1. Need to upfront identify maintenance and operations impact to new construction.
2. Asset Management Plans are only as good as the funding source to support the plan. Otherwise, it is just a plan. However, as professionals, we can not sell the need for funding unless we have the plan to demonstrate the need!!!!
3. Organizations are looking for a sound business approach to a 5 year Asset Management Plan that is flexible and provide an imperial way to determine what rehabilitation/preservation functions or actions need to be taken to maintain the integrity of our facilities for asset preservation.