

COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN



Adopted November 29, 1990

This plan provides direction for the development and improvement of Parks and Recreation Facilities for the next ten years. It provides a mechanism by which development can occur in an incremental fashion with maximum community support and participation. It is an element of the Fairbanks North Star Borough Comprehensive Plan.

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INTRODUCTION

Residents in the Fairbanks North Star Borough enjoy a wide range of recreational activities. In the summer we enjoy fishing, boating, cycling, camping, softball and other activities. When the season changes these activities are replaced with hockey, snow machining, cross country skiing and other winter activities. Because of the short intense summers and the long winters Fairbanks residents have unique recreational needs.

This plan has been designed to address those needs and provide a means to support and enhance them. It is intended to effectively maximize use of existing Borough resources. It also provides a comprehensive approach to Parks and Recreational development and offers an economical, incremental approach to improving the quality of recreational opportunities.

INVENTORY

There are a wide range of Parks and Recreational facilities in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. An inventory of Borough Parks and Recreational facilities is listed on the following pages.

In addition there are other facilities such as State and Federal Parks and Recreation Areas, University of Alaska facilities and private facility enterprises. These facilities were carefully examined. Many of these facilities, such as military recreational facilities are not open to the general public. They do however provide recreational opportunities for a large segment of the Borough population and play an important role in fulfilling the recreational needs of the Borough.

MINI PARKS

Mini Parks serve a limited population or specific group: i.e. neighborhood tots or senior citizens. Mini Parks are characterized by equipment such as swing sets, sandboxes, jungle gyms, horseshoe pits and siting areas.. They are small parks, generally less than one acre, usually serving people within a 1/4 mile area.

The only Borough owned and maintained mini-parks are located within the City of Fairbanks. There are eight mini-parks.

Existing Mini - Parks

	ACRES
Aurora Park	0.2
Baranof Park	.6
Bluebell Park	1.4
Graehl Park	.3
Mercier Park	.3
Midnight Sun Lions Park	.2
Mrytle Thomas Park	1.0
Riverside Park	.5
TOTAL	4.5

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

The neighborhood park is a combination playground and park, designed primarily for multi - purpose activity and non-organized recreation activities such as picnicking. In some cases organized community activities such as baseball or softball are allowed. These parks are larger than mini-parks, from one to fifteen acres, and service areas from within 1/4 to 1/2 mile.

There are eleven neighborhood parks, mostly in the Fairbanks urban area. Some of these facilities are presently utilized exclusively as ball fields.

Existing Neighborhood Parks

	ACRES
Chena Kiwanis Park	3.0
Gillam Park	2.0
Griffin Park	3.0
Hamilton Acres Park	13.5*
Kendall Park	2.0
Kiana Park	2.0
Kiwanis Picnic Area (in Growden Park)	1.5
Morning Star Park	11.0*
Slaterville Park	1.8
South Fairbanks Park	3.6
West Valley Little League Park	4.0*
TOTAL	47.4

* partially developed or undeveloped

COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks provide opportunities for a wide range of community recreation interests. They include areas suited for intense recreation facilities, such as athletic complexes, or for more passive recreation such as picnicking. Community Parks are generally greater than 15 acres in size and service the whole community.

There are eleven Community Parks in the Borough. Several of these parks are single use facilities such as the rifle range or the ski areas.

Existing Community Parks

	ACRES
Bernice Allridge Park	10.1
Fairbanks Lions Rec. Area	24.0
Fox Park	20.0*
Growden Complex	30.5
Mary Siah	2.5
Newby Park	13.0*
North Pole	7.0
Nussbaumer Park	6.4
Rifle Range	12.0
Salcha Ski Area	337.0
Two Rivers Ski Area	284.0
TOTAL	746.5

*partially developed or undeveloped

REGIONAL PARK

Regional Parks are recreation areas which serve the entire community as well as attract visitors from outside the Borough. This type of park can include day use recreation such as picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping and trail uses; may also include play areas or athletic fields. These parks are generally larger, at least forty acres.

Currently there are three Borough developments that classify as Regional Parks. They attract visitors or athletes from outside the Borough as well as local residents.

Existing Regional Parks

	ACRES
Birch Hill Park	440.0
Chena Lakes Rec. Area	2,178.0
Hez Ray/Big Dipper	302.0
TOTAL	2,920.0

SPECIAL USE PARK

A Special Use Park is an area that serves a distinctive purpose such as a nature center, conservatory or theme park. It can be of any size and like a Regional Park can attract visitors from outside the Borough.

Alaskaland is the one Special Use Park in the Borough. It is an historic theme park and draws large numbers of tourists and local residents.

	ACRES
Alaskaland	44.0

OPEN SPACE/NATURAL AREAS

A park or other open area which provides some visual relief from urbanization. Open space or natural areas may or may not be improved, but they do serve to interrupt more intense land uses. Its purpose is primarily for passive pursuits.

Six parks fall into the category of open space/natural areas. Some of the parks such as Weeks Field or Pierce Park have restrictions limiting development. There are also some open space/natural areas which have well used trail systems.

Existing Open Space/Natural Areas

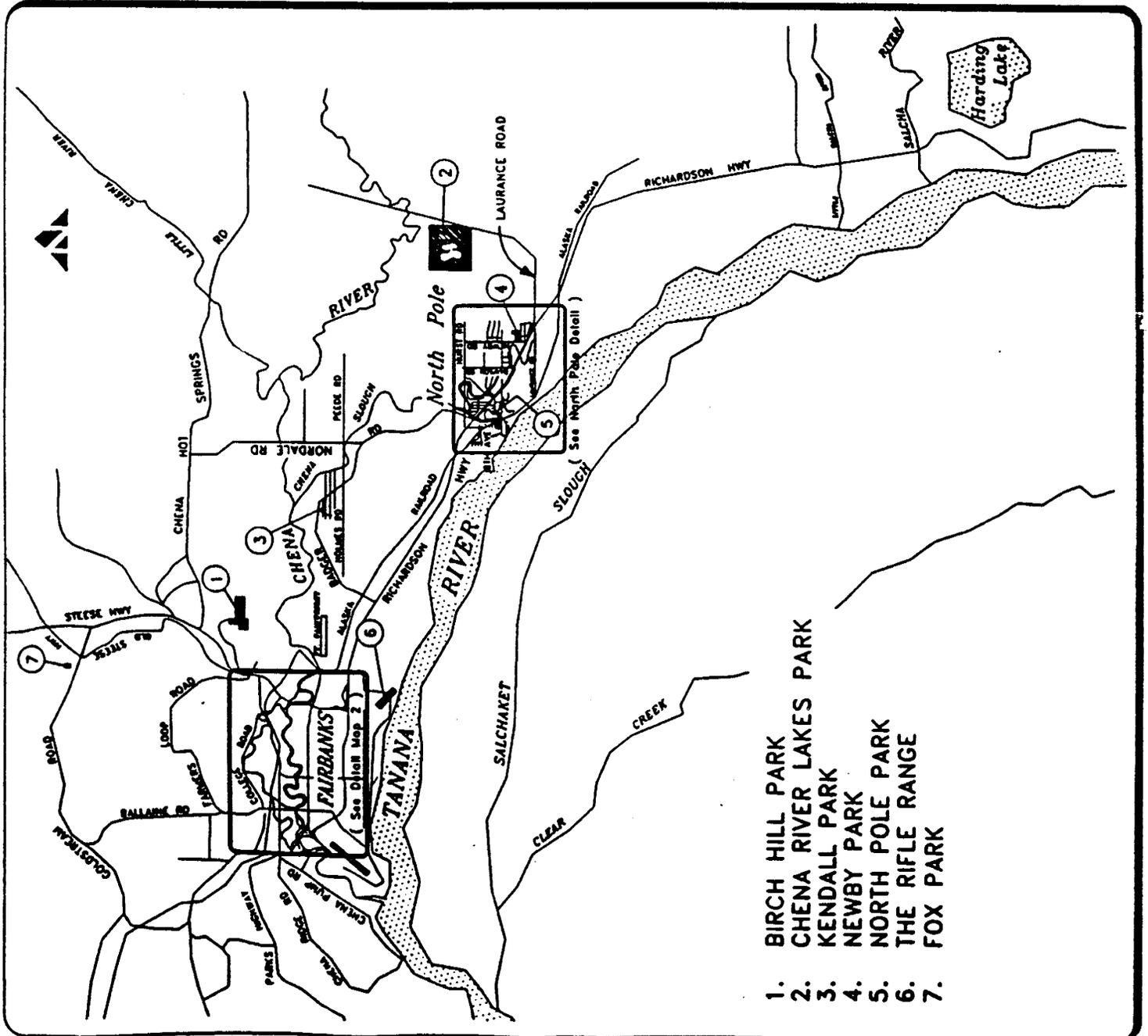
	ACRES
Bicentennial Park	1.0
Pearl Creek Park	124.0
Pierce Park	21.8
Ringstad Park (in Growden Park)	3.0
Weeks Field	16.1
Wein Park	3.8
TOTAL	169.7

SCHOOL FACILITIES

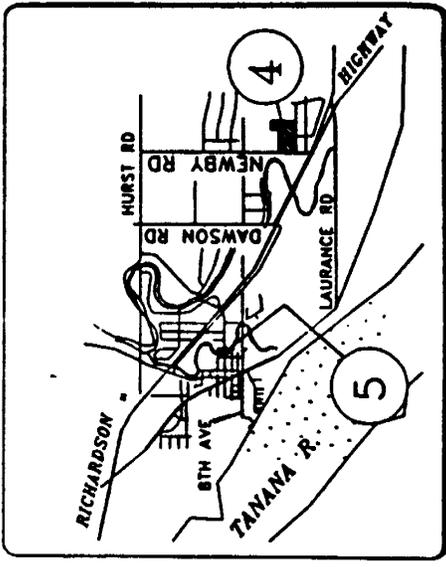
School	Indoor Facilities	Outdoor Facilities
Anderson Elementary	Gym	Skating Rink
Aurora Elementary	Gym	Skating Rink
Badger Elementary	Multi-purpose Room	
Barnette Elementary	Gym	Multi-purpose Field, Hockey Rink
Ben Eielson Jr/Sr High	2 Gyms	Track, Football Field
Birch School	Multi-purpose Room	2 Tennis Courts
Chena Elementary	Gym	
Denali Elementary	Gym	Softball Field, Skating Rink
Ft. Wainwright Elementary	Gym	Skating Rink
Hunter Elementary	Gym	Hockey Rink
Joy Elementary	Gym	
Lathrop High School	Gym, Pool	Football, Field, Track, Softball Fields, Ski Trails
Nordale Elementary	Gym	Softball Field, Skating Rink
North Pole Elementary	Gym	Hockey Rink, 2 Tennis Courts
North Pole Middle School	Gym, Pool	Hockey Rink, Football Field, Ski trails Track, Softball Field
North Pole High School	Gym	Football Field, Hockey Rink, Softball Field, 4 Tennis Courts
Pearl Creek Elementary	Gym	Hockey Rink, Ski Trails,
Pennell Elementary	Gym	Skating Rink
Ryan Jr. High	Gym	Football Field, Track, Softball Field, Ski Trails
Salcha Elementary	Multi-purpose Room	Ski Trails, Skating Rink, Softball Field
Tanana Jr. High	Gym	
Taylor Elementary	Gym	Skating Rink
Ticasuk Brown	Gym	Hockey Rink
Two Rivers Elementary	Gym	Hockey Rink, Ski Trails
Univ. Park Elementary	Gym	Hockey Rink, Ski Trails
Weller Elementary	Gym	Hockey Rink, Ski Trails
West Valley High School	Gym	Football Field, Track
Woodriver Elementary	Gym	Skating Rink, Multi-use Field

MAP 1

EXISTING BOROUGH RECREATION SITES

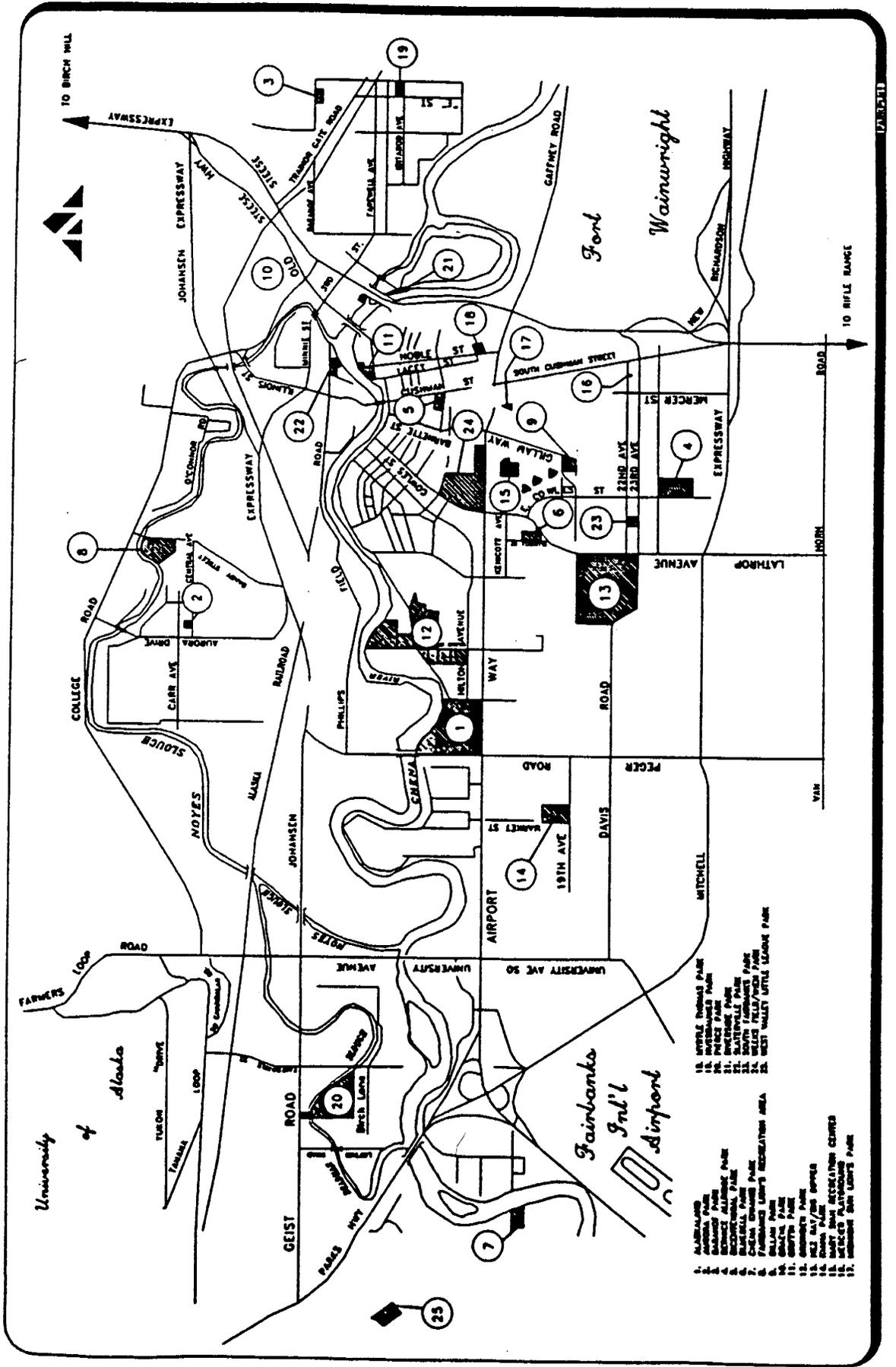


- 1. BIRCH HILL PARK
- 2. CHENA RIVER LAKES PARK
- 3. KENDALL PARK
- 4. NEWBY PARK
- 5. NORTH POLE PARK
- 6. THE RIFLE RANGE
- 7. FOX PARK



NORTH POLE DETAIL

EXISTING BOROUGH RECREATION SITES



STANDARDS

Standards are guides to estimate the number of acres or facilities required to meet potential demand. By using standards, surpluses or deficiencies can be identified.

Standards are used to assess the need for additional recreational opportunities in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. These standards were developed from National Standards with modifications adjusting for local conditions and needs.

These standards are applied Borough wide. However, the plan recognizes that there are differences in urban and rural needs. For instance, it is more appropriate and cost effective to locate athletic complexes in urban areas. Rural residents will commute to use these types of facilities or should use local school recreational facilities. Because of limited urban space, there are other types of facilities which are more practical to locate in rural areas, i.e. large regional parks, ski areas, rifle ranges, and extensive trail systems.

Military installations in the Borough pose a difficult situation for developing recreational standards. Military personnel regularly use Borough facilities, however, civilians are generally not allowed to use military facilities. For the purposes of this plan, military facilities are not included except for the golf course and the White Bear Loop trail which are used regularly by non-military residents. Because military personnel generally do not use mini parks or neighborhood parks off base they were not included in calculating these standards.

It is important to emphasize that standards should not be used as the sole criteria for making decisions regarding facility development. The National Recreation and Park Association states that the standards should be used by local agencies only as a "guide for future recreational enhancement".

The standards are described on the following pages.

STANDARDS FOR PARKS

Type of Rec.	Local Standards	Existing	Surplus or Deficiency
Mini Park	.10 acres per 1,000 pop.	4.5 acres	-.8 acres
Neighborhood Park	1 acre per 1,000 pop.	47.4 acres	- 5.6 acres
Community Park	10 acres per 1,000 pop.	746 acres	+ 16 acres
Regional Park	30 acres 1,000 pop.	2,961 acres	+ 771 acres
Special Use Park	variable	41 acres	0
Open Space	5 acres/ 1,000 pop.	169.7 acres	-195.3 acres

STANDARDS FOR ATHLETIC FACILITIES

Type of Rec.	Local Standards	Existing	Surplus or Deficiency
Archery	1 per 50,000 pop.	0	-1
Baseball/Adult	1 per 20,000 pop.	2	-1
Baseball/Youth	1 per 4,000 pop.	10	-8
BMX track	1 per 30,000 pop.	1	-1
Cross Country Ski Areas	25 acres per 10,000 pop.	1061 acres	- 764 acres
Football	1 per 15,000 pop.	1	-3
Golf (9 hole)	1 per 25,000 pop.	2	0

STANDARDS FOR ATHLETIC FACILITIES
(continued)

Type of Rec.	Local Standards	Existing	Surplus or Deficiency
Golf (18 hole)	1 per 60,000 pop.	0	-1
Gym (basketball, volleyball, etc.)	1 per 2,500 pop.	25	-4
Ice Hockey indoor	1 per 20,000 pop.	1	-2
Ice Hockey/ice skating outdoor	1 per 3,000 pop.	16	-9
Luge	1 per 50,000 pop.	1	0
Play Lot (indoor)	1 per 50,000 pop.	0	-1
Rifle Range	1 per 30,000 pop.	1	-1
Rugby	1 per 30,000 pop.	0	-2
Running Track	1 per 15,000 pop.	5	0
Snow Machine area	1 per 30,000 pop.	1	-1
Soccer	1 per 4,000 pop.	10	-8
Softball	1 per 3,500 pop.	15	-5
Swimming Pools	1 per 20,000 pop.	3	0
Tennis Courts	1 per 6,500 pop.	7	-4
Trap/Skeet	1 per 50,000 pop.	1	0

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL I. Provide year round recreational opportunities for all Borough residents.

OBJECTIVE A. Develop future Parks and Recreation facilities and programs through an incremental process.

Policy 1. Place emphasis on upgrading and maintaining existing facilities before developing new facilities.

Policy 2. Obtain recommendations from the Parks and Recreation Commission for decisions regarding future Parks and Recreation development.

Policy 3. Use the Parks and Recreation Plan project selection guide when analyzing specific proposed projects.

Policy 4. Develop recreational programs which are not provided by other sources such as the Community School programs.

OBJECTIVE B. Increase recreational opportunities in areas with limited recreational facilities.

Policy 1. Continue to support the development of borough-wide recreational programs and facilities in the school system.

Policy 2. Guide the nodal development of new facilities in North and South Fairbanks, North Pole and the Badger Road area.

Policy 3. As the population of the Borough grows, provide recreational opportunities to avoid overuse of existing facilities.

OBJECTIVE C. Increase winter recreational opportunities.

Policy 1. Design parks which can be used more effectively in the winter months.

Policy 2. Provide winter recreational programs.

Policy 3. Support winter recreational events.

OBJECTIVE D. Provide facilities and programs which meet the special needs of youth, senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

Policy 1. Insure that all facilities provide adequate access for people experiencing disabilities.

Policy 2. Guide the development of facilities which provide year round play space for young children.

Policy 3. Support local recreational programs for senior citizens which include physical fitness and arts and crafts.

OBJECTIVE E. Implement the Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan.

Policy 1. Consult the Trails Advisory Commission on all matters involving trails.

Policy 2. Refer to the Comprehensive Recreational Trail Plan in planning any trails.

Policy 3. When possible, connect new recreation areas, facilities and programs with the Borough recreation trail system.

OBJECTIVE F. Assist Chena River planning efforts.

Policy 1. Provide assistance to groups organizing a greenbelt along the Chena River from Peger Road to the Steese Highway.

Policy 2. Consult the Chena River Plan when developing river front recreation.

GOAL II. Fully utilize existing facilities.

OBJECTIVE A. Increase public use of existing facilities.

Policy 1. Increase public exposure of existing facilities and programs.

Policy 2. Monitor facility use to identify recreation demands.

OBJECTIVE B. Maintain existing Borough recreational facilities.

Policy 1. Establish maintenance of existing recreational facilities as a priority in Capital Improvement Project requests.

Policy 2. Include safety and accessibility improvements in all budget proposals.

OBJECTIVE C. Maximize participation in recreation programs.

Policy 1. Review programs annually to insure maximum participation and satisfaction.

OBJECTIVE D. Maintain reasonable and appropriate user fees.

Policy 1. Examine user fees annually.

Policy 2. Modify user fees as needed.

OBJECTIVE E. Promote and develop multi-use areas and facilities.

Policy 1. Develop multi-use site plans for all Borough Parks.

OBJECTIVE F. Promote the use of School facilities for recreational purposes.

GOAL III. Maximize volunteer efforts.

OBJECTIVE A. Increase the effective use of volunteers.

Policy 1. Expand the Adopt a Park program.

Policy 2. Recognize contributions made by local groups to Recreation development in our community.

Policy 3. Evaluate volunteer programs as a means to reduce costs in the Parks and Recreation Department.

Policy 4. Assist volunteer groups in finding appropriate sites for projects.

Policy 5. Assist volunteer groups to build recreation projects.

GOAL IV. Insure sufficient public land for recreational uses.

OBJECTIVE A. Designate adequate Borough lands for passive and active recreation.

Policy 1. Support the designation and development of recreational lands for sports activities.

Policy 2. Support the designation and development of passive recreation land along waterways and public open space lands.

Policy 3. Recommend and support greenways along the road and trail system to link Parks and Recreation facilities.

Policy 4. Investigate transfer of state land to the Borough through Alaska Statute for recreational purposes.

Policy 5. Identify and designate appropriate tax foreclosure land for recreational purposes.

GOAL V. Actively search for feedback regarding Parks and Recreational needs.

OBJECTIVE A. Develop a channel of communication with the public regarding recreation issues.

Policy 1. Use Parks and Recreation Commission meetings as a forum for public input and feedback.

Policy 2. Utilize survey, suggestion boxes, or other informal means of obtaining public input regarding recreation issues.

Policy 3. Encourage recreation and sports organizations to coordinate with the Parks and Recreation Commission.

OBJECTIVE B. Update the Parks and Recreation Plan as Capital Improvement projects are completed.

OBJECTIVE C. Coordinate and communicate with other Borough Departments and outside agencies on recreational matters to maximize cooperative effort.

IMPLEMENTATION

To implement the goals, objectives, and policies it was necessary to prepare a list of implementation measures which would allow for maximum use of existing resources and offer a way of making incremental improvements. The following implementation measures offer a flexible approach which will outline an organized process for expanding recreational opportunities in the Borough.

Implementation procedures include:

- development of site plans,
- recognition of recreational nodes,
- identifying potential recreation sites,
- following steps to project development,
- using a project selection guide,
- organizing volunteers, and
- short and long range recommendations.

SITE PLANS

To develop our park system to it's fullest potential a site plan for each park should be completed. The site plan should take into account year round recreational possibilities including, where appropriate, lighted ski trails and sledding hills. The site plans should develop parks for multi-use with input from local neighborhoods. This work should be completed under the direction of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Recommendation: The Parks and Recreation Commission should work closely with the Parks and Recreation Department to develop site plans for each Borough park.

RECREATIONAL NODES

To provide recreational opportunities to the maximum number of Borough residents, recreational facilities should be distributed throughout the Borough. At the same time it is vital to keep travel distance to a minimum in order to reduce maintenance costs and make efficient use of land resources.

To do this it is important that we develop recreational center or nodes. These nodes should be the focus of development for many types of appropriate

recreational activities in the urban areas of both North and South Fairbanks as well as the North Pole and Badger Road areas.

For rural recreation it is vital that local residents make use of nearby schools. Schools presently provide recreational opportunities for many residents. Making the maximum use of schools for recreation should be promoted and school recreational facilities should be upgraded if necessary.

Recommendation - Recreational nodes should be recognized and developed in North and South Fairbanks, North Pole and the Badger Road area. School recreational facilities should be upgraded to encourage use by local residents especially in rural areas.

POTENTIAL RECREATION SITES

It is important to identify recreation lands before alternative development occurs. These lands should be designated as recreation lands and be set aside for this purpose.

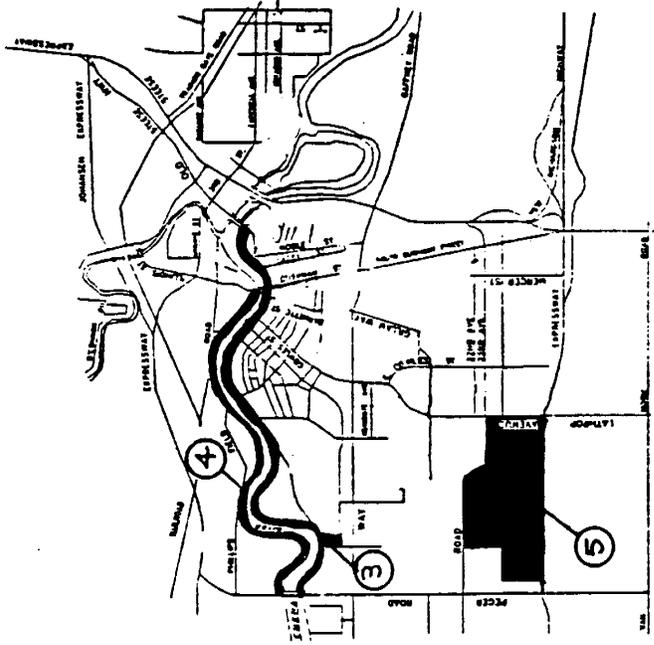
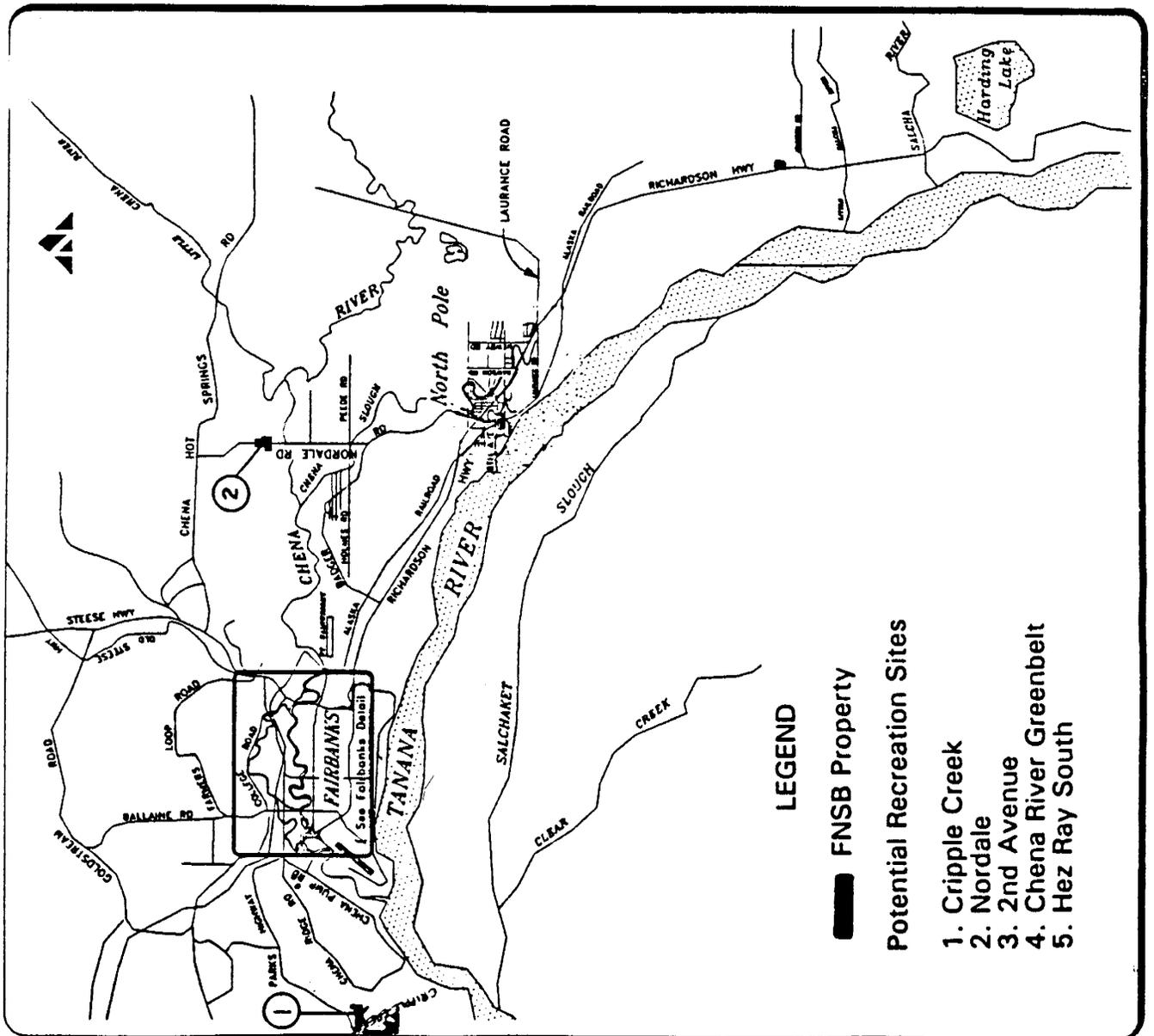
Five Borough parcels were identified (see Map 3) for potential recreation development. Other Borough owned lands were deemed less appropriate due to isolation, steep slopes or saturated soil conditions.

There are also several parks that have not been developed. These parks are identified as undeveloped in the inventory (see pages 2 - 5). These parks should be considered for future recreational projects.

A brief description of the potential recreation sites follows:

- 1. Cripple Creek** - This 600 acre parcel is located in the Cripple Creek subdivision west of Fairbanks. It is zoned Rural Estate 2 and has moderate to steep slopes and good road access. Its most important contribution to the recreational system would be as open space/natural area to protect existing trails.
- 2. Nordale Road** - This 80 acre parcel is located on Nordale Road south of Chena Hot Springs road in a flat boggy area. The present zoning is General Use. It has good road and trail access. This area is traditionally a blueberry picking site and would be appropriate to designate it as an open space/natural area.

POTENTIAL BOROUGH RECREATION SITES



FAIRBANKS DETAIL

- 3. 2nd Avenue** - This parcel is currently zoned Outdoor Recreation. It is located near the Growden Recreation complex and across from Alaskaland. There has already been a proposal to develop two additional Little League Fields at this location.
- 4. Chena River Greenbelt** - There is high public interest to develop a greenbelt along the public land on both sides of the Chena River from Peger Road to the Steese Highway. It is currently zoned Open Space, Industrial, Residential, and Business/Commercial. Presently community members are working to develop trails along this corridor.
- 5. Hez Ray South** - This parcel of land is located to the south of the Hez Ray Recreation Complex. It is approximately 200 acres in size and is zoned both Light Industrial and Single-Family 10. It has flat terrain but is located in a permafrost area. Because of its central location and proximity to other recreation sites its potential for recreation development is high. There has already been a proposal for a golf course in this area.

Recommendation - Work with the Planning Department and the Property Management Department to rezone all potential recreation sites with appropriate zoning change.

STEPS TO PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

An outline of the parks and recreation development process will facilitate public involvement in developing these community facilities. Below is a summary of the steps necessary to complete a Parks and Recreation project in the Borough. It is important that the steps be understood by those who play a role in the process.

- 1. Review the Borough Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan.**
- 2. Search for a suitable site, if needed, using the resources of the Property Management Department, the Planning Department and the Parks and Recreation Department.**
- 3. Prepare a description of the recreation project and present it to the Parks and Recreation Department.**

4. The Parks and Recreation Commission will examine the project using the Project Selection Guide (see page 21).

5. If the Parks and Recreation Commission approves the project it will recommend to the Parks and Recreation Director that the project be implemented.

6. The Parks and Recreation Department informs the Borough Mayor of the Parks and Recreation Commission recommendation. The Mayor will inform the Assembly of the recommendation if the project requires Assembly action.

7. If funding is available the project will be constructed. If there is no funding available, the project will be added to the list of Capital Improvement requests to the state.

Recommendation - Make the steps for project development available to the public.

PROJECT SELECTION GUIDE

Often, recreational projects in the Borough have been developed in a random manner. It is apparent that there is a need for projects to be evaluated in an impartial fashion. To do this a Project Selection Guide (see page 21) has been developed to aid the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Parks and Recreation Department, and policy makers in prioritizing recreation projects. The Project Selection Guide provides a way of reviewing projects based on their suitability and benefit to the Borough. It can also be used by groups in the community to choose low cost, well planned projects in appropriate locations.

The Project Selection Guide allows the project to be evaluated based on a series of questions. Those projects which have the most "yes" responses should be more strongly supported.

Recommendation - Use the Project Selection Guide to evaluate potential recreational projects.

PROJECT SELECTION GUIDE

	Yes	No
<u>LOCATION</u>		
1. Does the project conform to the Comprehensive Plan?	_____	_____
2. Does the project conform to the Comprehensive Trial Plan?	_____	_____
3. Does this project conform to zoning?	_____	_____
4. Does this project fit with local land use?	_____	_____
5. Is this project in an area without similar rec. facilities?	_____	_____
6. Does this project serve a highly populated area?	_____	_____
7. Will this project have minimal noise impacts to residents?	_____	_____
8. Is there adequate parking available?	_____	_____
9. Does the project have a minimal environmental impact?	_____	_____
10. Is this the only project requested for this land?	_____	_____
<u>COST</u>		
11. Will this project be maintained by volunteers?	_____	_____
12. Will this project be built by volunteers?	_____	_____
13. Does the Borough already own the land for the potential site?	_____	_____
14. Is there adequate access available?	_____	_____
15. Does this project tie in with any existing or proposed trails?	_____	_____
16. Is this project funded with non-Borough dollars?	_____	_____
<u>PLANNING</u>		
17. Does this project meet National Park and Rec. Assoc. design standards?	_____	_____
18. Has this project been requested for more than two years?	_____	_____
19. Is this project supported by 1990 Parks and Rec. Plan survey results?	_____	_____
20. Is this a multi-use facility?	_____	_____
21. Will people use this facility for more than four months a year?	_____	_____
22. Is there a site plan for the project?	_____	_____
<u>BENEFITS TO COMMUNITY</u>		
23. Will this project increase local business?	_____	_____
24. Will this project be a direct benefit to senior citizens?	_____	_____
25. Will this project be a direct benefit to people with disabilities?	_____	_____
26. Will this project benefit youth?	_____	_____
27. Will it benefit people who are financially disadvantaged?	_____	_____
28. Will this project attract tourists?	_____	_____
TOTAL	_____	_____

SHORT AND LONG RANGE PROJECTS

The Commission will use the guide to prioritize proposals into short and long range project categories.

Short range recommendations are projects which:

- are safety related,
- are in a stage of development, or
- have at least partial funding allocated.

Long range recommendations are projects which:

- have strong public support,
- are supported by recreational standards, and/or
- have no funding commitment.

Within the short range project category, projects will be further categorized as Group I, II, III depending on their urgency, the status of funding and their stage of current development. To permit maximum flexibility in response to changing factors involving these projects, there will be no further ranking or prioritization within these group designations. Because of the nature and criteria for categorizing projects as long range, they will not be ranked or prioritized within that classification.

The Commission will develop and maintain a current list of recommended projects based on these procedures. The list will be reviewed and updated as often as required by the addition, completion or change in status of proposed projects but no less frequently than during annual review of the overall plan.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Presently there is an Adopt-a-Park program within the Parks and Recreation Department. It is used successfully by volunteer groups to maintain existing facilities. There is a need to expand this program. There is also a need to set up a system for volunteers to build facilities, and develop programs.

To do this a recreational coordinator is recommended. This person will be responsible for expanding the volunteer program in the following manner:

- match maintenance projects with interested individuals or groups,

aid groups in developing recreation programs,
assist local groups in finding appropriate land,
help to locate funding, and
coordinate projects through to completion.

RECOMMENDATIONS - Expand the recreational volunteer program by hiring a person to coordinate the efforts.