

Process

Approach

This updated master plan reflects a similar approach as the 2000 document but has been tailored to reflect the change that has occurred in Elgin over the past ten years. This study acknowledges the neighborhood make-up of Elgin as a critical, defining feature, while reflecting the significant geographic growth that has changed how the City is now organized. As a result, Elgin was divided into five multi-neighborhood geographic planning districts with analysis and public input conducted in each district. Like the 2000 plan, this plan is grounded by the following considerations:

- Reflect and respect the physical character, community context and history of each new and improved park development.
- Maintain a unique identity in each park that evokes the pride and involvement of the surrounding community.
- Determine the needs and uses of each park and facility in accordance with the community's requirements and desires.
- Design parks and facilities to be sustainable and adaptable to new ideas, trends and technologies as well as changing demographics or community needs.
- Consider equally the initial capital cost as well as ongoing operation, maintenance and durability in new park developments and renovations.
- Explore innovative implementation and funding models with an increased emphasis on creative partnerships.

Methodology

The planning process for this project has been a collaboration between City of Elgin residents, Elgin Parks and Recreation Staff, Park and Recreation Advisory Board members, the City's Planning and GIS Department and the consulting team including JJR, LLC and PROS Consulting.

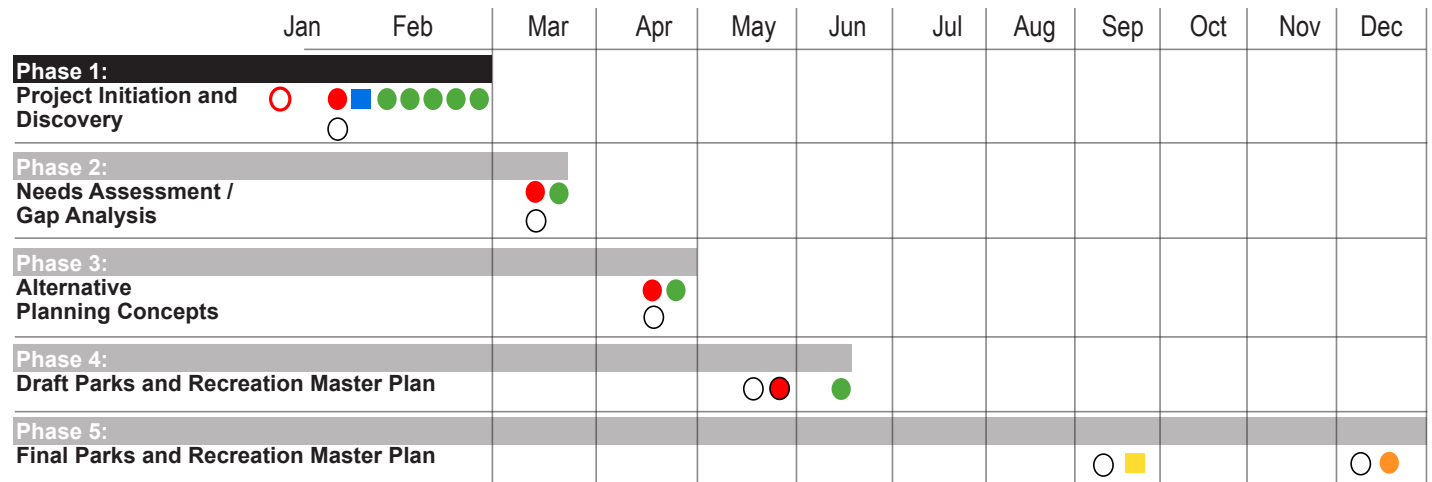
The planning process included site reconnaissance, focus group interviews, public meetings, and meetings with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee.

A sub-committee of the Master Plan Steering Committee conducted an extensive site reconnaissance for each of the parks and facilities in the City. This data was used to identify preliminary issues and opportunities that exist in the city.

There was extensive public participation that included public meetings during each phase of the project. Various planning tools and techniques such as visual preferencing, break-out groups and one-on-one dialogue were employed during a process that included 8 public meetings, 17 focus group meetings, and 8 master plan steering committee meetings over a period of 8 months (see project timeline).

The project review and update meetings with the Master Plan Steering Committee were conducted on monthly basis prior to public meetings.

The following pages summarizes the process utilized to conduct the focus groups and public input meetings. A detailed summary of each meetings is attached in the appendix A and B.



- Project Kick-off meeting
- (red) Steering Committee Meetings
- (blue) Focus Groups Meetings
- (green) Public Meetings
- (yellow) Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting
- (orange) City Council Meetings
- (white) Master Plan Website Development

Focus Groups

The purpose of the focus group meetings was to hear from the wide-range of stakeholders and groups regarding the current parks and recreation offerings, as well as what they would like to see offered in the future. Where new parks should be located, what parks should be improved, what new programs should be offered, what new play elements would they like to see in their neighborhood parks. Each focus group was asked a series of questions and their responses were recorded. The questions include the following:

- *What do you believe are the strengths and weaknesses of Elgin's park and recreation system (parks, facilities, programs, services)?*
- *Do you have any suggestions for parks or recreation facilities that should be renovated?*
- *Do you feel the City needs to add more parks and/or recreation facilities (pools, rec centers, ball fields) or recreation programs? If so, in what geographic area of our community?*
- *What community challenges are you aware of that could be addressed by additional parks, recreation facilities, or programs?*
- *Can you suggest any park or facility additions or improvements that would help the economic development of Elgin?*

- *What park and recreation offerings have you seen in other communities that you think should be offered in Elgin?*
- *What can the Parks and Recreation Department do to better communicate with you regarding its parks, recreation facilities and programs?*
- *Do you have any suggestions for future improvements that we have not yet touched upon?*

The following questions were for those focus groups that represent organizations within the community that do, or could have, a partnership with EPRD (education, natural resources, churches, youth sports groups)

- *If your organization currently has an affiliation or partnership with the Parks and Recreation Department, how would you describe that relationship? What could be done to enhance it?*
- *What new partnerships do you think the Parks and Recreation Department could establish to strengthen its offering of parks and recreation services?*
- *Does your organization currently provide recreation space (playgrounds, playing fields, etc.) on your property that is available for the surrounding neighborhood to use?*

The various focus group included representatives from:

- Churches
- Education
- Youth Sports Groups
- Elgin Community Network / Neighborhoods
- Business Community
- City Staff
- Sustainability Group
- Latino Community
- Natural Resources
- Elected Officials
- Not-for-Profit Organizations
- Teen Representatives
- Police Department
- Miscellaneous

A summary of all focus group input is included in Appendix A



Process

Public Input

During the master planning process a total of eight public meetings were conducted during each of the five phases of the project.

Phase 1: Discovery

The purpose of the first five public meetings was to hear from the residents regarding the current parks and recreation offerings, as well as what they would like to see offered in the future. Where new parks should be located, what parks should be improved, what new programs should be offered, and what new play elements they would like to see in their neighborhood parks.

With the intent of listening from all residents throughout the City, the planning team with the help of City of Elgin Parks and Recreation Department, organized 5 public meetings, one in each of the five planning districts.

Each public meeting included the following:

- Project Objectives
- Project Timeline and Schedule
- Mission Statement and Guiding Principles
- Focus Group Summary
- Understanding Elgin where existing conditions, growth trends from year 2000, and existing park and recreation system at city-wide level and for each of the five planning districts were presented.
- General/visual observations of existing parks system

Listening Session where the participants were asked specific questions and their responses were recorded. The following questions were asked:

- *What do you believe are the strengths of Elgin's park and recreation system (parks, facilities, programs, services)?*
- *What do you believe are the weaknesses of Elgin's parks and recreation system (parks, facilities, programs, services)?*
- *Do you have any suggestions for parks or recreation facilities that should be renovated?*

- *Do you feel there are physical barriers, and if so, where in our community?*
- *Do you feel the City needs to add more parks, and if so, in what geographic area of our community?*
- *Do you feel the City needs to add more recreation facilities (pools, rec centers, ball fields) or recreation programs? If so, in what geographic area of our community?*

Phase 2: Gap Analysis

The purpose of the sixth public meeting was to share the findings from the previous input meetings (meetings 1 to 5), along with an associated needs and gap analysis. Following this presentation it was discussed where future efforts should be focused to address the issues that have been identified.

The public meeting included the following:

- Project Objectives
- Project Timeline and Schedule
- Public Input Summary (by districts)
- Demographic Trends Analysis
- Preliminary Gap Analysis / Need Assessment
- Listening Session - where the residents participated in validating the findings and shared new ideas.

Phase 3: Alternatives

The purpose of the seventh public meeting (alternatives) was to share the findings from the previous input meetings (meeting 6); along with an associated needs and gap analysis; preliminary city-wide system standards; and preliminary alternatives. Following this presentation it was discussed where future efforts should be focused to address the issues that have been identified and validation of preliminary recommendations.

The public meeting included the following:

- Project Timeline and Schedule
- Analysis and findings (by districts)

- Gap Analysis / Needs Assessment (City-wide and by districts)
- Preliminary Alternatives and recommendations (City-wide and by districts)
- Listening Session - where the residents participated in validating the findings and shared new ideas.

Phase 4: Draft plan

The purpose of the eighth public meeting was to share the findings from the previous input meetings (meeting 7); along with the draft plan and draft City-wide system standards. This meeting was held as an open house where the participants were asked to prioritize projects. They were asked to pick their first five preferred projects and this information was used to develop the preliminary list of priority projects.

A summary of the public input process is included in Appendix B.



Discovery Phase Public Meetings: Presentation

Discovery Phase Public Meetings: Break-out session



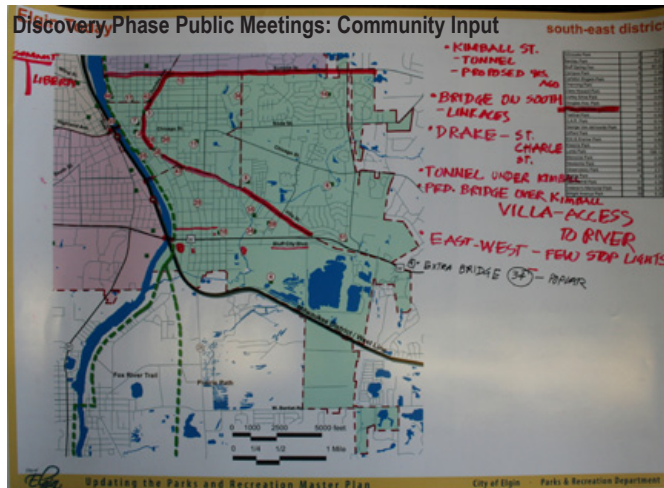
Gap Analysis Phase Public Meetings: Presentation



Draft Plan Phase Public Meetings: Community Input



Discovery Phase Public Meetings: Community Input



Alternatives Phase Public Meetings: Break-out session



Draft Plan Phase Public Meetings: Community Input



Discovery Phase Public Meetings: Community Input

Alternatives Phase Public Meetings: Presentation



Draft Plan Phase Public Meetings: Community Input