

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLANNING IN ONTARIO: DETERMINING FACTORS THAT LEAD TO SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION

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What is Parks and Recreation Planning?

- Kelsey & Gray (1996)
 - “is a document that provides an inclusive framework for orderly and consistent planning; acquisition; development; and administration of the parks and recreation resources, programs, and facilities of the agency that sponsors the master plan”
- Several different terms used to describe
 - Comprehensive plan
 - Culture and recreation plan
 - Leisure Strategy

History of Parks and Recreation Planning in Ontario

- 1972 – First Parks and Recreation Master Plan created for Thunder Bay
- 1975 – WINTARIO Capital Grants Program
- 1980 – WINTARIO Planning Grants Program
 - ▣ Provided guidelines and Community program Consultants
 - ▣ 40% of cost for municipalities over 5,000
 - ▣ 75% of cost for municipalities under 5,000
- 1983 – Recreation planning, recreation centers, capital programs for new and innovative projects

Current Knowledge

- **Common pitfalls** (Wolter, 1999; McKinny, et al., 1986)
 - ▣ Failure to involve citizens
 - ▣ Limited involvement by recreation staff
 - ▣ Failure to include finances
- **Implementation** (Ontario, 1985; Eagles & Gebhardt, 2009; Leone, 2008)
 - ▣ Widespread public participation
 - ▣ Support from key players
 - ▣ Focus on implementation
 - ▣ Financially conscious
 - ▣ Approved by council

Current Knowledge

- Evaluations of Parks and Recreation Plans
 - ▣ Sessions (1964) – standards
 - ▣ Getz, et al. (1985) – Overview of Ontario plans
 - ▣ Wilkinson (1985) – Overview of Ontario plans
 - ▣ Eagles & Gebhardt (2009) – Increasing Implementation
 - ▣ Leone (2008) – Increasing Implementation
- Planning Process
 - ▣ Jackson (1985) – Community Characteristics
 - ▣ Yoder et al. (1995) - Triangulation
- Needs and Finance
 - ▣ Curry (1980) – Economics
 - ▣ Reid (1985/86) – Needs Assessment

Defining and Measuring Success

- Plan success versus planning success (Talen, 1996)
- Planning Literature
 - ▣ Qualitative
 - Personal Judgements (Roeseler, 1982)
 - ▣ Quantitative
 - Deviations in land use (Alterman & Hill, 1978; Talen, 1996a)
- Recreation literature
 - ▣ No such body of literature
 - ▣ Level of implementation of plan recommendations

Purpose and Research Question

- Purpose
 - ▣ The purpose of this study is to determine the factors that make parks and recreation master plans more successful in Ontario municipalities.
- Research Question
 - ▣ What are the factors that lead to implementation of parks and recreation master plans in Ontario municipalities?
 - Looking at both content of the plans and the process of creating the plans as well as human factors.

Justification and Rational

- Justification
 - ▣ Location
 - ▣ Planning Legislation
 - ▣ Literature
- Benefits and Rational
 - ▣ Up-date the literature
 - ▣ Information for consultants
 - ▣ Information for Parks and Recreation Staff

Methods - Overview

- Phase 1
 - ▣ Gathering the Sample
- Phase 2
 - ▣ Content Analysis of the plans
- Phase 3
 - ▣ Parks and Recreation Staff Interviews
- Phase 4
 - ▣ Expert Consultation

Methods - Sample

- Municipal Parks and Recreation Departments in Ontario
 - 3 Large – over 100,000 (23)
 - 3 Medium – 10,001-100,000 (120)
 - 3 Small – under 10,000 (268)
 - ▣ Stratified Random Sample
 - ▣ Criteria:
 - Comprehensive Plan
 - Plan approved by November 2007
 - Willing to provide a copy of the plan
 - 2 individuals to be interviewed
- Experts
 - ▣ Convenience sample

Methods – Phase 2

- Quantitative Content Analysis using a Checklist
- Based on:
 - Getz et al. (1985)
 - Baer (1996)
 - Other relevant literature
- Pre-test (Brantford)
- For each item
 - Presence or absence
 - Quality (replicability, accuracy, and complexity)
 - Notes

Methods – Phase 3

- Parks and Recreation Staff Interviews
 - Involved in creating the plan
 - Were there any parts of the plan process that you feel made plan implementation easier?
 - How did they make plan implementation easier?
 - Involved in implementing the plan
 - What items/sections in the plan have made implementation easier?
 - Why have they made plan implementation easier?
- Interviews
 - Semi-structured
 - Standard set of questions
 - Additions specific to their plan

Methods – Phase 4

- Expert Input
 - Delphi Technique (Homenuck, Keeble, & Kehoe, 1977)
 - Write up of findings from phase 1&2 for each sized municipality (best practice for content and process)
 - Send document to experts
 - Elicit responses
 - Adjust original instrument
 - Send to experts again

Findings - Sample

- Contacted 47 Small Municipalities
 - 4 With Plans
 - Majority indicated too small to have a plan
 - Others indicated lack of support for a plan
- Contacted 7 Medium Municipalities
 - 4 With Plans
- Contacted 16 Large Municipalities
 - Many are currently creating/updating their plan

Findings - Background

- Education
 - ▣ Bachelors degree is recreation or fitness
 - ▣ Many with Master's Degrees
- Training
 - ▣ OPA and PRO
 - ▣ No formal Training
- Job descriptions
 - ▣ No change when plan was accepted
- Orientation to Plan
 - ▣ Spotty at best



Findings

- Input from Experts

Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5
Comments: _____				

- Process
 - ▣ The process needs to be developed to meet the needs of the community creating a master plan.
 - Each community is different and therefore the process for creating the plan needs to develop accordingly.

Findings

□ Process

- ▣ Though the process of creating a plan is different from community to community, several components need to be in place to conduct a successful planning process.
 - Terms of Reference
 - Public Consultation
 - Staff Input
 - Council input
 - Consultation with Professionals
 - Evaluating, Updating, and Reviewing

Findings

□ Content

- ▣ There were two schools of thought with regard to the format of the plan.
 - The first were municipalities that believed the plan should include the recommendations and action steps for the future and the background information should be in a separate document.
 - The second were municipalities that believed that the background provided justification for the recommendations and therefore should be in the document. This could be the background in its full form or a summary of this information.

Findings

□ Content

- ▣ Though the format of the content differed among the plans, there were several key sections/items that are necessary.
 - Goals, Objective, Vision
 - Background Information
 - Inventory
 - Public Consultation Process and Findings
 - Tourism
 - Culture
 - Implementation

Findings

□ Content - Implementation

- ▣ The implementation section was essential to successful implementation of plan recommendations. Recommendation need to be written in a manner that everyone can understand them. The following were found to be the key items needed in this section to increase the success of implementation and to achieve a realistic plan.
 - Priorities
 - Timing
 - Named Individuals
 - Cost Estimates
 - Action Steps

Findings

- Implementation/Human Factors
 - ▣ When asked what they key factors that aided implementation a lot of human factors arose. The following are key human factors necessary for successful implementation.
 - Staff Acceptance and Commitment
 - Political Acceptance
 - Public Acceptance
 - Key Players

Findings

- Major Challenges
 - ▣ Personnel Changes
 - ▣ Resistance to Change
 - ▣ Political, Staff, or Public Backlash
 - ▣ Resources
 - ▣ Amalgamations
 - ▣ Commitment to Process

Conclusions

- Many of the problems experienced in the past are still being experienced
 - Indicates a lack of communication and research
- Two of the key areas (the terms of reference and the public consultation process) are the least explored and researched
- Recreation professionals are ill-equipped with knowledge of planning and few opportunities exist to gain knowledge

Conclusions

- Implementation section is the most important section of the plan and is often the weakest.
 - The implementation section must include: action steps, financing, priorities, timelines, and responsibilities
- Though financial matters are politically sensitive they are essential to creating a realistic plan
- Need for ministry support (financial and human)

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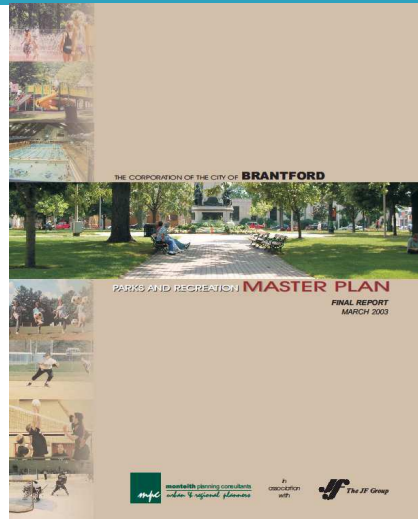
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