OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN

STRATEGIC PLAN

SUMMARY REPORT

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CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

Parks, trails, greenways and recreation facilities are the key components of a thriving community. Consequently, Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission has taken the initiative over the past 42 years to grow the system to more than 6,400 acres of natural landscapes, outdoor recreation parks and facilities for Oakland County residents. The 13 Oakland County Parks offer a wide variety of year-round recreation opportunities.

The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission provides and operates additional programs and facilities including five golf courses, miles of trails, two water parks, a toboggan run, two campgrounds and a youth camp, three beaches, a bicycle motocross track, a nature center, outdoor amphitheater, and conference and banquet facilities. Core programs include a therapeutic recreation program, a mobile recreation program, as well as numerous special activities, events and classes, are also offered.

The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission is proud of its leadership in preserving and developing park land and creating recreational opportunities for all the people of Oakland County. The parks function in an environmentally-sensitive manner to protect the natural world for future generations.

1.1 STRATEGIC PLAN PURPOSE AND PROCESS

The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) hired PROS Consulting, LLC to develop a Strategic Plan in the fall of 2007. The Strategic Plan provides a tactical approach to the continuation and development of future park and recreation activities and it will serve as a planning tool for the Commission that will guide them in future acquisition and improvement of parks, recreation facilities and program services. The Strategic Plan will also provide the Commission direction in operations and management of the system. A significant amount of community and stakeholder input was used to develop the strategies in the plan; thereby ensuring future directional decisions are aligned with resident needs.

The objective was to develop a Strategic Plan through an open public process that included:

- Identifying the values of the county
- Providing a vision for parks and recreation facilities and services
- Establishing a strategic direction for delivery of "best in class" parks and recreation services

The role of the consultant was to guide, advise, review, and prepare the plan. The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission and staff worked in close coordination with the PROS Team throughout the entire process.

The primary tasks performed in the development of this Strategic Plan included:

- Situational Assessment
  - Leadership and Focus Group Interviews

- - Review of past citizen household surveys, in-park assessments and user surveys
    - Facilities, Program, and Operational Assessment
  - Long-Term Financial Plan
    - Financial Review
    - Financial Model Development
    - Cost of Service Development
    - Funding Strategies
    - Long Term Financial Plan
  - Strategic Plan Development
    - Community Vision, Mission and Strategy Matrix Development
    - Organizational Analysis
    - Implementation Plan

The PROS Team formulated these tasks to develop a living document that provides guidance for future decisions, both operational and capital. This plan addresses short term and long term requirements through a financially sustainable and achievable manner.

1.2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following section details the findings and recommendations based on the review of the community input, staff and key leader interviews, review of existing documents, and analysis of Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission operations. This section is a brief overview of the entire Strategic Plan.

Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission Vision

> *"Oakland County Parks strives to be recognized and viewed by citizens as a "World Class" parks system that: meets the standards for high quality parks, natural areas and open spaces; that provides safe, clean, accessible, and affordable parks, trails, recreational facilities and services; that creates community through people, parks, and programs; that connects the community to a variety of outdoor recreation experiences while supports economic development, connectivity of residents, and health and wellness in a financially sustainable system."*

Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission Mission

> *"Our mission is to deliver quality parks, recreation, facilities, programs, services and maintenance through a dedicated professional Parks Commission and staff that listens to the needs of citizens, creates innovative parks, recreation facilities and programs and energizes the community for the value of living in Oakland County."*

It is very important that the Commission communicate the results of its efforts to implement these initiatives and strategies on an annual basis. The community should be aware of all successes to allow the Commission to build on existing community support.

The vision, mission and values have been translated into specific visions, goals, strategies, and tactics. These have been organized into a Vision Action Strategy Matrix presented in **Appendix 1** to facilitate communication and implementation of the plan.

Following is a summary of the specific vision, goals, and strategies for the Commission to follow during the next 10 years.

1.2.1 LAND

"Acquire, improve and maintain quality parks that support the community's values for the preservation of natural areas and open spaces, equity of access, and the natural heritage of Oakland County."

1.2.1.1 GOAL

"Acquire, maintain and improve park land for active and passive recreation to provide a variety of park experiences and to meet a land acreage goal of 800 acres in the next ten years, contingent upon full funding."

1.2.1.2 STRATEGIES

- Establish a dedicated funding source for land acquisition
- Implement a land acquisition strategy that recognizes the value of parkland in urban areas, including the southeast quadrant of Oakland County, while also acquiring park lands in other areas of the county in a strategic manner that complements other local government agencies' efforts
- Work with the Oakland County Trails Advisory Council, as well as county departments, state and local agencies, community leaders and non-profit organizations to complete and promote the Oak Routes Trail Network in Oakland County
- Develop and maintain quality park trails that provide a variety of trail experiences and connect into the larger, countywide Oak Routes Trail Network
- Create and implement system wide natural resource management program
- Update county park master plans where appropriate to meet the active and passive recreation needs of residents and to achieve the outcomes desired for each park in the system
- Coordinate with local land conservancies and recreational partners to acquire or lease land to meet the park land acreage goals
- Establish wetland mitigation opportunities in cooperation with developers, land conservancies, CVT's, state and county agencies
- Determine the economic value of park natural resources
- Establish levels of park maintenance and upgrades that meet the needs of park guests in a fiscally responsible manner
- Work closely with government agencies and recreational providers to create a balance of park types across the County that provide residents with a variety of park experiences and promote equity of access
- Establish design standards and principles to maximize efficiency and productivity

1.2.2 RECREATION FACILITIES

"Develop and maintain year round recreation facilities that support passive and active recreation pursuits for people of all ages."

1.2.2.1 GOAL

"Upgrade existing recreation facilities and add additional recreation facilities and amenities that energize the community to want to live, work, and play in Oakland County."

1.2.2.2 STRATEGIES

- Develop an asset management plan for infrastructure maintenance and improvements based on updating a minimum of 4-5% of the system annually
- Develop a revenue and operational management strategy for decreased participation for all facilities and programs
- Develop a business plan for every current and future park, golf course, or attraction in the system
- Remove unproductive facilities and resources
- Establish a data management system to enable staff to facilitate decision making on recreation programs and services to create a lifelong customer
- Develop a marketing strategy to maximize the use of facilities, programs, and services that enhance the awareness, use and revenue
- Define the future role of the nature centers
- Analyze all facility management contracts/leases through effective costing assessment, capital improvements required and measurable outcomes to maximize revenue return
- Establish a Partnership Policy that enhances relationships with schools; cities, villages, and townships; private, non-profit organizations; and other government agencies
- Develop a trail plan for each park that provides a combination of trail types
- Establish an ADA compliance plan for parks and golf courses
- Enhance all facility rentals and reservations to create higher levels of use and value to users

1.2.3 RECREATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

"Our vision is to develop the following core recreation services in the most productive and efficient manner. These include the following; Natural Resource Education and Interpretive Programs, Outdoor Adventure Programs, Fitness and Wellness, Active Adults for older populations, Youth oriented programs and camps, Facility Rentals and Reservations, Special Events, Family Programs, Therapeutic Recreation Programs, Volunteer Services, Golf Programs and Services, and Aquatics."

1.2.3.1 GOAL

"Develop each core program to the highest level possible that will provide residents with a quality experience that will last a lifetime."

1.2.3.2 STRATEGIES

- Determine core recreation services and programs
- Phase out non-core recreation services
- Develop a four season approach to park programming

- Develop a program plan in coordination with other service providers to increase the use and/or revenue of each park, golf course and attraction
- Develop program-based recreation attractions with broader age appeal
- Develop volunteer services as a core recreation program
- Determine where gaps in programs exist and eliminate duplication of services
- Incorporate fitness and wellness opportunities into facilities and programs
- Develop program standards for all core services and programs
- Develop cost recovery goals based on true cost of services
- Create and build dynamic programs that energize the community and staff

1.2.4 OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

"Our vision is to maximize the efficiency and revenue capability of each park, recreation facility, program and service that will create a sustainable park system for all residents in the county to enjoy."

1.2.4.1 GOAL

"Build and manage a sustainable park system that creates "World Class" parks, recreation facilities and programs for residents and visitors to the county to enjoy."

1.2.4.2 STRATEGIES

- Sustain high level of qualified professionals
- Obtain voter approval for millage tax(es) for Oakland County Parks
- Build advocacy, awareness, use and appreciation for Oakland County Parks
- Provide funding for an integrated Information Technology (IT) master plan
- Design an organizational structure that furthers a shared purpose and vision that will benefit the organization
- Increase revenue resources
- Develop cost recovery pricing based on true cost of services
- Maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of resources
- Eliminate higher dependency on tax revenues
- Establish a stronger, positive connection to Oakland County government services

1.3 CONCLUSION

Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission is a highly respected by both residents and visitors. To build on this support, this Strategic Plan focuses on a vision to refine all elements of the park system to create stronger advocacy and sustainability than what exists today. The Strategic Plan will require the support of the Parks and Recreation Commission and staff to make the plan a reality and to achieve the vision and goals stated. It will require a shift in management thinking and policy development, as well as tough decisions to implement the strategies outlined.

Overall, the implementation of the strategies will make Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission stronger, more efficient, sustainable and innovative in its approach and management of the park system for years to come. Some changes will be easy to implement and others will require time; however, in the end, it will be worth the time and energy required to make Oakland County a "World Class" park system for years to come.

CHAPTER TWO - COMMUNITY INPUT PROCESS

2.1 COMMUNITY INPUT FINDINGS

In order to meet the needs of taxpayer residents and customers, the Strategic Plan was developed through a robust and varied customer input component. This process ensures that strategic recommendations have an external customer focus. It also helps to direct the organization in being able to better deliver on resident needs, and having a clear understanding of their interests. This review process included a review of the completed Community Attitude & Interest Citizen Survey completed in December of 2006, as well as holding key leadership interviews with 18-20 key leaders over a two-day period on November 13 and 14, 2007. In addition PROS reviewed user survey from specific park and recreation sites as well as program participants.

The following details a summary of findings from the qualitative information generated from residents in the focus groups and community public meetings.

2.1.1 STRENGTHS OF THE SYSTEM

Within the focus groups, comments were made as to what characteristics make up a high quality park system. The most desired attributes mentioned were that the parks need to be clean, safe and well maintained. The groups discussed that the infrastructure of the parks should be well taken care of and that they truly value the natural beauty of the Oakland County parks. With difficult economic times in Michigan, they like parks that offer programs and services close to home. Those in the focus groups really understand that the parks represent a great natural resource and they deeply appreciate their presence in Oakland County. They know that not every community is so fortunate to have the ability to "get away" to a park system that offers them that opportunity.

There were many comments about the staff and their level of professionalism, qualifications and passion. There were also comments praising individual facilities such as the golf courses as a whole, nature centers, camp grounds, dog parks, and water parks. Participants also appreciated the use of the mobile stage for community events.

The financial funding of the system was also mentioned as strength. Having a dedicated tax funding source is seen as extremely helpful for the Commission to maintain the parks and facilities under their control.

2.1.2 VALUE MOST ABOUT PARK AND RECREATION SERVICES

People have great appreciation for parks being clean, safe and well maintained, which the participants agreed that Oakland County Parks is doing a fantastic job. In addition, residents appreciate the ability to get away from the city by visiting the parks. People appreciate the open space, the green space and outdoor experiences Oakland County provides. Taxpayers

value a system that is financially responsible, and people feel that the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission operates in this manner. People want to receive well-valued, cost-effective services for their investment in parks and services. There is also a lot of interest in developing trails that build connectivity throughout the county, especially in partnership with other municipalities. Users also value continued land acquisition efforts by the county for parks located in close proximity to where they live, so it makes it easy and economical for them to visit.

2.1.3 OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

There were many references for the system to be more responsive to the needs of seniors. One leader mentioned that the senior population over 65 is going to double within the next 15 years and more efforts to design park and provide program services needs to be addressed. Others mentioned that the system would benefit from having seniors as advocates for the system, as there may be a need for their positive support in future levy elections.

The Commission needs to be aware of the changes in demographics and how they can affect park use. There was mention of signage being written in languages beyond just English, such as Spanish. The cricket pitch that was developed and geared toward an ethnic minority group has been truly appreciated.

Many comments were noted about marketing; specifically that the marketing efforts are not effective or sufficient as what they feel should be done to inform residents of opportunities in parks and program services. Oakland County parks are viewed as a "best kept secret", and this should not be the case. Park marketing is not targeted correctly, especially in the southern portion of the county where the residents feel they are not getting proper information. Some park features are duplicated in marketing and promotional pieces while other features and attractions are left out.

Many references to partnering were mentioned by the focus groups. This included working with all the townships and cities in developing an urban recreation program plan, and a regional approach to recreation services and amenities. This includes trail and park development, as well as recreation programming. It is important that all the providers of recreation services work together to make sure individual program services are not duplicated. There was also mention of needing to work more closely with schools, particularly in camping and nature center related activities.

As for the balance of the park system, many people noted the lack of disparity in the location of the parks. The southeast quadrant and the south portions of the county are under-represented as far as park and recreation services go. Focus groups felt this needs to be addressed in the future.

The funding sources, which have been one of the strengths, are flattening, while expenses continue to increase. This will result in long term difficulties in being able to manage the system, as compared to current times. Therefore, there needs to be some financial strategies in place to build revenue streams, aside from the millage the county parks receive.

Many people noted that the Commission tries to be all things to all people. Yet, from an operational budget perspective, this puts a heavy demand on operating dollars. It is important, through this strategic planning process that priorities for funding are identified and are aligned with the needs of the customers within the dollars available. In addition, program and facility subsidy levels should be reviewed and analyzed. The focus groups discussed operational costs for programs and facilities, and then considering depreciation, they questioned the fairness for all taxpayers to help pay and subsidize golf operations. Across the board, the Commission needs to evaluate what programs and facilities cost to operate. These situations should be studied and decisions made as to what programs or services should be discontinued based on true costs.

Some concern was noted about the lack of participation by many segments of the population and overall park participation is declining. Therefore, the system needs to make sure they have signature parks, signature playgrounds and spray grounds to entice more non-users in the past to the county parks.

The county staff mentioned that the parks and recreation facilities operates too autonomously from county government. Parks and recreation staff should have more on-going dialogue with the county government staff. County government can help parks and recreation staff with their financial reporting and other support areas as well. It was noted that parks and recreation has to pay indirect charges to the county, of which parks and recreation does not have control of the amount which tends to limit more involvement by the department as a whole.

The department has opportunities to position itself as a significant contributor to fitness and wellness activities throughout the county; this is a quality of life issue. Young people entering the work world are looking for recreational and fitness opportunities. Parks and recreation can play a part in enticing young workers to move to Oakland County because of the future amenities related to fitness if developed in county parks. The parks contribute to the economic impact of the county, and this should be quantified in the future and promoted in parks related communication pieces.

There were comments about the need for an equestrian center in county parks. Though, there were just as many comments about not needing an equestrian center that were based on the community needs assessment as well.

2.1.4 KEY OUTCOMES OF THE PLAN

Some focus group members noted that they would like to see development of a clear vision for the department that can be deployed over a ten year period. Other focus groups asked for the PROS Team to tell them what an ideal park system looks like, in terms of percentage of tax support and services provided.

Other comments included which are not weighted in order of priority were as follows:

- Increased the percentage of households using parks
- Review all fees, including non-resident fees, cost of services, rate structures, and other financial aspects of managing parks
- More innovation and creativity in program offerings to support youth solutions problems should be addressed in the Strategic Plan
- Use more cost effective and efficient ways to be more resourceful in managing parks recreation and program services
- Review outsourcing some services to be more cost efficient
- Review golf course performance and opportunities to make them more self supporting
- Review whether mobile recreation services should even be offered as a service in the future
- Work more closely with county government in managing elements of the park system
- Develop action plans for implementation of the strategic plan with a communication process on the results of the work completed to stakeholders in the county
- Regionalize senior services
- Work together with cities and townships in the development of a regional program plan for recreation services
- Increase partnerships, particularly with schools in Oakland County in providing more outdoor education services
- Ensure lower income residents can use the parks and recreation services as programs are designed
- Continue to acquire land, but monitor the resultant operating expenditures to ensure that the Park Commission does not get overextended
- Review golf course operations in light of the criticism generated by private golf course operators in the area
- Develop more signature parks in the system to draw in more people into using parks
- Expense growth is exceeding revenue growth in the system, which needs to be reviewed and analyzed on a yearly basis to keep the park system as a whole sustainable
- Provide more opportunities for senior activities in parks and recreation related facilities
- Ensure environmental sustainability in designed into the operations, as well as green management practices

2.1.5 PROGRAM SERVICES NEEDED

There were a variety of programs mentioned from focus group members that need to be addressed in the Strategic Plan. These included the need for more outdoor recreation programs particularly in the winter months, such as cross country skiing, ice skating and winter special events to bring people out to the parks. There should also be a review of the balance of program offerings from park to park, as there seems to be an over-abundance of offerings at some parks and not enough at others. The idea and development of a cricket pitch was referenced as a good example of extending services to ethnic groups in the county.

The Commission needs to pay attention to changing demographics. As a result of the senior population doubling in the next ten years, there were many comments by the focus group members about the need to enhance senior services. This was noted as being the most frequent program need. In addition, there should be more coordination with arts groups to establish art services and amenities in the parks. Some focus group members mentioned that there should be an analysis done to eliminate some programs as a result of flattening revenues and the program going past their useful life. There are many programs that have been offered that need to be eliminated or reduced because of low participation. Other program offerings mentioned that should be enhanced included:

- Adding more urban recreation initiatives
- Adding more camping opportunities created for single parents with kids
- Enhance therapeutic recreation activities
- Enhance women in the outdoors programs
- Add more young adult programs in outdoor adventure type activities
- Add more equestrian activities and programs

2.1.6 RECREATION FACILITY/AMENITY NEEDS

Many comments were noted regarding the need for the Commission to continue its strength in maintaining and updating the parks infrastructure. It was also noted that the Commission needs to ensure that it is aligning its resource allocation according to changing demographics and trends as well as evaluating the overall deficiencies and developing new priorities. New park amenity needs include:

- Adding additional trails in parks for walking and biking
- Adding more equestrian trails
- Adding disc golf courses in some parks
- Adding more dog parks
- Creating an outdoor ice skating rink near the toboggan run
- More accessible restrooms
- Adding trail mileage markers for people to gauge how far they have walked or biked
- Adding additional program activities to get non-users in the parks
- Adding bicycle rentals in some parks
- Increasing seniors programs in parks
- Adding a warm water indoor water park
- Adding more spray grounds at campgrounds

2.1.7 OPERATIONAL/MAINTENANCE CONCERNS

It is highly unusual to hear responses that suggest that there are no operational or maintenance concerns; however, during the focus group/key leader meetings, there was significant consensus around just that. Most people did not have suggestions about improvements.

The few suggestions made for operational/maintenance concerns included:

- Making sure the parks are fully ADA compliant
- Continued maintenance on developed trails
- Paved trail is needed at Independence Oaks
- Partnering with other entities and sharing maintenance costs
- Use of more native landscapes in parks to cut down on maintenance costs
- Fully functional bathrooms are needed at dog parks
- Need to have designated areas for the varied sizes of dog – a small, medium and large at dog parks
- More parks and amenities in the south east area of Oakland County are needed
- Some parks need infrastructure improvements

2.1.8 CHANGES TO THE SYSTEM

The most frequently mentioned ideas included items related to linear park development, trail development and connectivity, more park land in the south, land acquisition, and environmental practices including partnering with environmental groups. Other items included:

- Providing more recreational opportunities
- Additional marketing efforts
- Separate millage for land acquisition
- Golf course in the southern portion of the county
- Bike trails
- Acquire state park land
- Expand the user base and build advocacy
- More of an urban initiative
- Sports complexes around the region that can be leased
- Multipurpose parks
- Nature center at Lyons Oak
- Equestrian center
- Additional accommodations and activities for seniors

2.1.9 IN THE FUTURE, WHAT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS NEED THE MOST ATTENTION

- The county needs to minimize operational costs so they do not get overextended
- Continue to acquire land
- Cater more to baby-boomers and their needs
- Sports complex in the south
- Customer base needs to expand beyond golf and aquatics
- More balance between parks and recreation services is needed
- More senior services are needed
- Park passes need to be instituted
- Scholarship programs for the economically disadvantaged youth and adults
- Southeast quadrant needs more services

- Secure a staff person who specializes in senior services
- Develop a parks foundation
- Take care of park amenities that are present
- Address the many discounts given to seniors versus other people who need the discounts
- Need to get more residents comfortable using the parks
- Focus on going green where the Commission can
- Focus on more on environmental programs
- Create more flexibility with the parks to draw more age segments
- Additional spray grounds need to be added to campgrounds
- Need to move more toward more of an urban park system in design of parks for future users

2.1.10 WHAT HASN'T BEEN ASKED THAT YOU WOULD LIKE DOCUMENTED IN THE PLAN

- The key word is "connection" – connections with partners, trail connections, connections with other cities and townships, connections with other service providers
- Consider a citizen's senior council
- Partnering with more organizations to get more people to use the parks and in development of facilities
- Better directional signage to access the parks
- Some parks are open for hunting, others are not and more should be made available
- Michigan is in serious economic difficulty and parks can help in supporting families hurting by providing low cost programs
- Rails to trails opportunities exist in Oakland County and should be taken advantage of for bike and walking trails
- Work more with land conservancies throughout the county in acquiring land
- Regularly communicate with the Commission on progress of the Strategic Plan implementation
- Marketing efforts are inadequate and needs to be improved to let people know of the services and parks available to them
- There exists concern that if the county's assessed value goes down, parks and recreation's revenues will decrease and new revenues will need to be found to support the operational costs of parks and recreation facilities
- Assess duplication of services for therapeutic services and senior services with other service providers
- More special events need to be created in county parks to bring in more people to use them and appreciate them

- The Commission operates as a closed system, and they need to open themselves up more to public input
- Examine park maintenance operations and building maintenance operations according to green criteria
- Keep the mobile recreation program
- Regional recreation centers are need that can support multi-functional groups and seniors in one setting
- Geo caching and disc golf in parks is needed
- Coordinate master plans with surrounding communities
- Establish a recreation facility that is a joint use facility, such as a regional multigenerational recreation center with townships and cities where there is no park land available

CHAPTER THREE - PARK AND FACILITY ASSESSMENT

As part of the Strategic Plan process, PROS Consulting toured the park system to evaluate the facilities, amenities, and parks as it applies to park design, infrastructure and asset management, park maintenance, natural resource management, and levels of use.

3.1 PARK AND FACILITY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, Oakland County parks are well maintained and provide a quality experience for users in a safe environment. The community appreciates the parks and the attractions within them. The golf courses are well-maintained and are reasonably priced for the level of experience provided. The water parks for the most part are well used and maintained.

Waterford Oaks Park needs some improvements to make it more attractive and exciting for users in the future. The hospitality sites at the golf course are well designed and maintained with some facilities furnishings in need of upgrades, especially at Addison Oaks and Glen Oaks. The major amenities in the parks such as campgrounds, beaches, cabins, trails, playgrounds, shelters, restrooms, and concession facilities are well maintained and in good operating order. The staffing levels and customer service efforts were excellent at the parks and facilities visited by the PROS Team. Park staff at each site is very committed to performing successfully in their work.

The areas in the parks that are in need of improvements include the following:

- The parks need to have updated master plans that focus on creating opportunities for users of all ages. The park properties are beautiful, but are adult driven in design with exception of the playground areas. By updating park master plans, the design can focus on the following:
    - o Natural area management
    - o Age segment design
    - o Campgrounds that are more family friendly
    - o Revenue operational design of parks, campgrounds, and water parks
    - o Removal of unproductive amenities in parks that can be replaced with new productive amenities
    - o Aging infrastructure
    - o New trails to enhance fitness and mountain biking
    - o More program space that is both passive and active to drive more use and energy into each park
- Each park and attraction is in need of a business plan that will focus on four seasons of use, existing users, potential new users, cost to operate, revenue to offset operations, partnerships that will bring in additional money and advocacy, a marketing plan, as well as a improved communication approach at each site to attract more users to increase the use and appreciation for each park.
- The parks need improved branding and signage to guide users to the parks and in the park. This includes color schemes and positive word use on each sign.
- The parks need an asset management schedule for replacement and upgrades to key amenities. For the most part repairs are made by park staff, which requires a

tremendous amount of staff time. The park administration needs to compare staff time and cost against the private sector for doing similar work.

- Golf courses are not programmed, which is a concern as the competition for golfers continues to become an issue in the industry. The programs offered are of the traditional variety, such as the Men's and Women's Clubs, junior golf tournaments, golf outings, golf leagues, clinics and workshops. While these are good programs, the courses need to be expanded into more creative programming opportunities such as:
  - o Junior golf leagues
  - o Professional women leagues
  - o Church leagues
  - o Co-ed single night out events
  - o Golf, wine and dine events
  - o Player events set up around the major professional (PGA or USGA) tournament weekends
  - o College and NFL games golf outings
  - o Holidays golf outings focusing on family golf
  - o Mother's and Father's Day golf programs for youth and parents
  - o Family Play nights
  - o Driving range leagues
  - o Additional effort needs to occur to grow corporate outings

Some of these events are occurring, but they are not consistent across the system. Stronger efforts to capture the different types of customers at each course should be used to grow the amount of usage through targeted marketing efforts.

- Trails vary in the parks from paved to natural to equestrian. These need to be highlighted as a major amenity within the system. This can be accomplished by adding more walking events, biking events, mountain biking events, races, competitions, "cause" walks, and exercise and fitness trails that are mile marked.
- Currently, campgrounds cater strongly to RV's and tent camping; however, greater efforts should be made to program specific areas of campgrounds such as:
  - o Family camping
  - o Senior camping
  - o Music campgrounds where people enjoy playing music can find other campers to play along with them
  - o Single adults with kids camping that includes firewood, camping amenities, and camping tools to make it easy for parents to camp with their kids

Adding and testing these types of promotional events on weekends in shoulder seasons (spring and fall) would be a worthy trying to see how residents will respond. The park system has added miniature golf to some sites, concessions, movie and entertainment nights, which are all excellent in marketing toward family camping. Programming campgrounds is a very powerful marketing strategy that the park system should consider especially during the week and during shoulder seasons.

- Parks are in need of updated playgrounds for ages 2-5, 6-10, and adult play areas in one setting. They also are in need of additional group picnic shelters, family shelters, dog parks, outdoor adventure learning centers, fishing areas, special events areas, boat rental, concessions, play courts, sports fields, bocce ball, croquet areas, as well as sand grounds for volleyball and sand box play areas for kids.
- Safety lighting is needed in some parking areas throughout the system.
- CPTED standards (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) are needed in some parks to improve visual security from the road, parking lots and along trails.
- A Natural Areas Management Plan is needed for each park to manage invasive species and to control nature growth as well as to create a natural feature inventory for the users of the parks to enjoy.
- Parks need amenities to support winter activities like cross-country skiing, sledding, ice-skating with warming huts, concessions, and fire pits.
- A Green Infrastructure Plan needs to be incorporated into each master plan and become LEED Certified when updating facilities.
- Make all parks ADA accessible and create at least one park as a universal park.
- Develop a Deer Management Plan for each park.
- Create an extreme sports site within at least two parks in the system to train skill users on basic elements of extreme sports and outdoor based adventure programs.

CHAPTER FOUR - NEEDS ASSESSMENT

4.1 FACILITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The purpose of the Facility Needs Assessment is to provide a prioritized list of facility / amenity needs for the residents of Oakland County. The Needs Assessment evaluates both quantitative and qualitative data.   Quantitative data includes the statistically valid Community Survey, which asked 607 Oakland County residents to list unmet needs and rank their importance in county parks. Qualitative data includes resident feedback obtained in focus group meetings, key leader interviews, and public forums.

A weighted scoring system was used to determine the priorities for park and recreation facilities / amenities. This scoring system considers the following:

- Community Survey
  - Unmet needs for facilities – A factor from the total number of households mentioning their need for recreation facilities. Survey participants were asked to identify the need for 25 different facilities. Weighted value of 4.
  - Importance ranking for facilities – Normalized factor, converted from the percent (%) ranking of programs to a base number. Survey participants were asked to identify the top four facility needs. Weighted value of 3.
- Consultant Evaluation
  - Factor derived from the consultant's evaluation of facility importance based on demographics, trends and community input. Weighted value of 3.

These weighted scores were then summed to provide an overall score and priority ranking for the system as a whole. The results of the priority ranking were tabulated into three categories: High Priority, Medium Priority, and Low Priority.

The combined total of the weighted scores for Community Unmet Needs, Community Priority and Consultant Evaluation is the total score based on which the Facility / Amenity Priority is determined.

Figure 1 shows that Walking and Hiking Trails, Nature Trails, Swimming and Sunbathing Beaches were the top three facilities / amenities. These were followed by biking trails, picnicking areas and shelters and children's playground as other high priority facility/amenity needs.

Oakland County Department of Parks and Recreation Facility / Amenity Needs Assessment			
	High	Medium	Low
Walking & hiking trails	1		
Nature trails	2		
Swimming & sunbathing beaches	3		
Biking trails	4		
Picnicking areas & shelters	5		
Children's playgrounds	6		
18 & 9 hole golf courses	7		
Waterparks & waterslides	8		
Fishing areas	9		
Outdoor ice-skating areas		10	
Dog parks		11	
Boating & sailing areas		12	
Overnight camping areas		13	
Nature interpretive centers		14	
Amphitheaters		15	
Cross country skiing		16	
Toboggan runs		17	
Mountain biking trails			18
Tennis courts			19
Skate park			20
Conference centers			21
Platform tennis courts			22
Equestrian center			23
Equestrian trails			24
Bicycle motocross track			25

Figure 1 – Facility / Amenity Priority Needs Assessment

CHAPTER FIVE - RECREATION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

The PROS Team performed an assessment of the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission program offerings. The Recreation Program Assessment offers an in-depth perspective of the recreation program offerings and helps to identify the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities in the program offerings. The assessment will also assist in identifying core programs, program gaps within the community, duplication of programs with other recreational service providers in the community and to assist in determining the future program offerings for the Commission.

The PROS Team based these program findings and comments from review of the Oakland County programs, meeting with program staff, doing an analyzes of programs based on an assessment tool provided by PROS for staff to fill out as well as going through current and previous program guides. This report addresses the program offerings from a macro and micro perspective. It identifies system-wide key issues and presents recommendations for these issues, while also offering recommendations to elevate the core programs to the next level.

PROS' recommendations in this document should be considered for implementation over a 10 year timeframe, with ample staff input to ensure the success of the same.

5.1 OVERALL FINDINGS

- There is a need to develop the programming divisions as an overall system. There is variation in the way programs are offered, measured, publicized, and evaluated.
- It appears that the program offerings are developed randomly, without regard to customer needs.
- Facility rentals / reservations / party services / banquets are a core program area. There is an abundance of facilities in the repertoire of offerings, from golf course clubhouses and water parks to activity centers and tent rentals. This can be built upon and expanded even more significantly.
- Residents appreciate the department's dedication toward offering programs for special needs populations.
- Most of the program areas use volunteers, which are coordinated by a staff volunteer, and this is a good practice. The volunteer program is easy to navigate through the web and detailed volunteer jobs are listed.
- The lifecycle distribution of programs is skewed toward more mature programs such as birthday parties and the Car Show. Fewer programs indicate growth areas, such as Lewis Wint Field Trips and the Wild Adventure programs.
- Given that the southern part of the county is under-represented in terms of facilities, the programs are not geographically balanced to serve all areas of the county.
- Park usage by resident households is below the national standard. Parks with the greatest visitation are Independence, Waterford, and Addison, and they have 19%, 16% and 13% visitation respectively within the last 12 months. 56% of surveyed households have visited a park within the last 12 months. This compares to the

national average of 72%. Adding more programs can help to improve this visitation number.

- There is no identification of core program areas. There are programs in many different areas such as coordinating the senior softball leagues, programs for special populations, outdoor education and interpretive programs, birthday parties and special events. Yet, in reviewing the programs, there is no sense of what program areas are most important and what programs should be developed as a core program.

- It appears that many programs are offered according to recreation program staff's likes and dislikes and personal preferences in programming certain activities.

- Program offerings should be dynamic and constantly changing according to customer needs and trends. Programs offered within the system, by and large, are a continuation of what has been offered in the past.

- The web site does not do enough to promote the program offerings. The site does a good job listing all of the facilities and facility use, but programs are somewhat forgotten. In the email marketing update section, programs are not even listed as an interest area.

- There does not appear to be any mechanism to register for programs or facility use through the web, which creates inconvenience for customers and results in lost opportunity for revenues.

- A general program guide does not exist, which contributes to a lack of awareness of program offerings. Some use the program guides of neighboring park and recreation departments, which is a good practice.

- An overall marketing approach is absent for programs. General marketing was mentioned as being an area of weakness for the department.

- Most program areas use partners in promoting and developing their programs. Based on the review of the program assessments, there are opportunities to expand the use of partners through formalized agreements with partners and assess satisfaction of partners working with the department. There are opportunities to develop more corporate partners and the use of foundations and grants for general programs and specific special populations programming.

- Most program areas have good adherence to human resources standards, such as staff training, performance appraisals and certifications.

- Most programs and special events use post program evaluations and surveys to determine customer satisfaction measurement.

- Most frequently used promotional methods include flyers, specific program brochures, direct mail and partner program guides. Fewer programs use email blasts, public service announcements and newsletters. There is an absence of paid advertisement and use of media throughout the system. According to the needs assessment survey, word of mouth was the most effective communication method

for program and facility awareness. The Commission brochure was second with 40% finding information this way. Finding out about activities from the newspaper was mentioned by 27%.

- Some programs have limited performance measures in place. Others do not have any measurements in place. There were some program areas that noted they have 100% satisfaction. This reads more as a goal, rather than actual performance measure.
- Several of the program assessments had programs that did not meet five or more of the core program criteria.
- During the community input phase of the plan, consensus comments regarding programming included:
  - The need to respond to the aging population and offering more senior related programs was the most frequently mentioned program enhancement desired
  - The second most frequent comment related to an urban recreation initiative and ensuring that programs are available to residents who live in more urban areas where county parks are not present
  - More winter related activities, such as cross country skiing, ice skating and winter special events were discussed as opportunities
  - Some comments were brought forward about the need for equestrian related events, though there were just as many comments about not needing these events, was low on the list of priorities
  - There is interest in programs being used to position the department as a choice provider for fitness and wellness activities
  - Some interest in more outdoor adventure programs in county parks was discussed as a opportunity
  - More camping opportunities with special focus was discussed as well
- Pricing strategies related mostly to a competitive analysis and additional fees for non-residents. Most programs had no financial goals, such as cost recovery goals.

5.2 PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the program findings, it is imperative for Oakland County to develop a systems approach to recreation programming. This will ensure consistency in the customer experience and program standards. There should be a staff person or staff persons who oversee the entire program process, including program development, promotions and marketing of programs, developing instructional quality, ensuring high customer satisfaction and reviewing financial indicators of performance. In the absence of a system, the staff is left alone to determine how to best satisfy customer experiences with little oversight. It is far better for an organization to determine how to monitor and oversee quality requirements. This includes setting up systems to measure performance, auditing the system according to set standards, regularly monitoring customer satisfaction and creating internal communication processes to inform employees of how the agency is performing against established standards.

An overall marketing plan for programs should be developed. This should include a schedule of promotional activities, web site improvements and market research to capture customer demographics. The more the organization knows about its customers, the better

job it can do in targeting marketing efforts. In addition to an overall marketing plan, the department should have micro level plans for each core program area as some park usage is declining in some areas of the county. Marketing efforts need to be employed to reverse the downward trend and attract new markets and customers to Oakland County parks and program services.

There is an absence of an overall programming guide. This contributes to the lack of awareness of the Departments products and services. At a minimum, the department should develop a program guide three times a year that lists all of the programming and facility information and it should be included within the web site. Hard copies should be made available and distributed throughout all of Oakland County parks and facilities, as well as county government buildings. A database of names should be developed for mailing the brochure to interested residents, as well as non residents.

Continuously improving on the web site is important for customer awareness. Currently, there is no direction or capability for customers to register for programs on-line. Furthermore, it is difficult to find where programs are offered.

The rental of hospitality spaces is a large component of facility offerings and needs to be viewed as a core business. This includes picnics and parties, family reunions, and banquets. Also included is the mobile recreation program, rental of a bus, tents and inflatables. The web site is somewhat confusing to read for rental of space and services as there are no specific pages listed on the web site for mobile recreation, picnics and parties, family reunions and banquets. This can be condensed more simply to be more effective. Some of these amenities available on the web site include pictures and some do not. The goal should be that all rental spaces have pictures or virtual tours for customer to see what they are renting. A more distant goal should be the ability of the customer to reserve most of these rental spaces on-line.

PROS suggest that the following core program areas be enhanced or created over the next three years. The recommended core programs include:

- Natural resource education and interpretive programs
- Outdoor adventure programs
- Fitness / wellness programs
- Active adults and senior services
- Youth oriented programs and summer day camps
- Facility rentals and reservations
- Special events
- Special populations programs
- Volunteerism as a core service
- Golf program services
- Aquatics program services and events

It appears as though the department should look to expand its current offerings, particularly in the natural resource area. Compared to other agencies serving the same population, the department offers less than other agencies. A good benchmark agency to compare programs within the natural resource area is Mecklenburg County in North Carolina. Along with expansion of this area, the department should also grow senior related programs based on the demographic changes occurring in the county.

The department should target 4-5% of its recreation program and facilities budget towards marketing. This is the standard for the industry. Along with developing the standard for expenditures, there should be a review process to identify marketing effectiveness. This can be easily accomplished by asking customers how they found out about the program / event / facility when they register, or the question can be included in program evaluations and surveys.

As for promotions, the Park and Recreation Commission may want to consider increasing paid advertisement in the newspaper since this is the third most effective way residents find out about programs and services. Twenty percent (20%) of household residents do not know what is offered by Oakland County. Nineteen percent (19%) of residents use city and township services and 17% mentioned that parks are too far from their home. This provides data for future marketing and promotions efforts. The Park and Recreation Commission staff should work toward decreasing the percentage of residents who do not know what is offered through effective marketing practices.

An overall partnership policy should be developed since almost all program areas use partners. The partnership policy should include public/public partnership, public/ not-for-profit partnerships and public/private partnerships. All partnerships should be guided by formal agreements, which should be updated every couple of years. There should be a person assign to oversee the development and management of partnerships throughout system. This would include the development of an inventory of existing partnerships in place, identify potential new partners, clarifying the nature of the partnership relationship, and ensure equity between the department and the partner and tracking measurable satisfaction levels of partners working with the department. Based on the review of program assessments, there is an opportunity for expanding corporate partnerships and support in programming and recreation facility development. This can be accomplished by developing a partnership strategy with the business community.

The department should identify grant monies from foundations and government related grants for programs, particularly those for older adult, youth and special populations. Adaptive recreation programs do have scholarships available and this program can be highlighted more as a cause related marketing tool which the business community will invest in.

During the public input process, there was some sensitivity toward the department for carving out a unique programming repertoire in order to refrain from competing against local park and recreation departments. The department could play a role in hosting an annual park and recreation summit, in which each agency outlines its core offerings and the direction it is headed. This will ensure that there is cooperation, rather than duplication of service efforts.

Customer service systems have a very important part to play in the success of programming. Best in class systems (ISO 9000:2001 requirements, which is the International Standards Organization set of standards for customer service) include four important components in their service delivery process. They include:

- Obvious management commitment to the service side of the business
- An on-going process to determine customer needs, both at the organizational level, the core program and facility level
- An overall system of measuring customer satisfaction
- An overall process to determine customer dissatisfaction, inquiries, help requests

The department does measure satisfaction; however, this is limited to surveys and post program evaluations. In order to have a robust measurement system in place, the department should include ongoing needs assessment surveys, both at the organizational and core program level. This helps to align the department with customer needs. The department should also use methods other than just surveys to determine how satisfied customers are with the services provided. This includes transactional surveys (particularly effective at special events), focus groups, mystery shopping, front line staff interviews to assess their satisfaction and what they hear from customers, lost customer research and customer interviews. Surveys themselves should always include three questions:

- How likely are you to purchase this service again
- How likely are you to refer this service to a friend
- How would you assess your overall satisfaction

The compilation of satisfaction for these three questions, averaged into one percentage becomes the customer satisfaction index that should be documented and charted from year to year.

The department should also develop a process to capture customer dissatisfaction. This includes creating many various ways of accessing the agency in an easy way, listening to customer complaints, tracking the complaints and monitoring the response to customers. Software programs exist to help in this area. Many large cities and counties have developed call centers that provide assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This is something the department could develop with the county.

The department should have a revenue policy and pricing policy to guide staff in their programming efforts. Programs serve a public, merit, or private good. Pricing should follow these categories. For example, the use of a trail is a public good and has no fee assessed. Senior services typically fall in the public good category and are priced to be subsidized. On the other hand, golf course services serve a private good and completely capturing operating costs should be the goal. This analysis should also include cost of service analysis. Similar to the county assessing parks and recreation administrative overhead fees, the

department should quantify cost of services for major facility elements. For example, the mobile recreation program area is expansive in size and pricing for this service could be substantially different if true costs associated with the service were known.

Recreation programs should have cost recovery goals established for core program areas. This provides staff with a direction of how they should price their services and to ensure equity of offerings for programs that serve a public, merit, or private good. This also serves as a measurement tool for recreation staff performance. The golf courses would be a good area to develop cost recovery goals as a way of ensuring the public that the Department's courses are not set up to compete against daily fee courses. Cost recovery goals for the golf courses could also result in pricing changes.

A set of performance measures should be identified to measure program performance. Measures can include metrics such as:

- Number of programs offered
- Number of program registrants
- Percent of repeat customers
- Class cancellation rates
- Percentage of programs in the introduction and growth lifecycle
- Number of new programs offered per year
- Program net revenues
- Cost per experience
- Program standards met
- Total gross revenues against established subsidy levels
- Customer satisfaction levels met
- Customer referral rates
- Percent of new registrants annually
- Capacity levels met
- Partnership equity levels met
- Special event attendance based on cost to produce

These measures can be developed on an organizational basis and on an individual program basis as well.

An important component to programming excellence is the development of standards for instructional quality. Standards also help to reduce variation in the customer experience. The development and commitment to standards is a vitally important way to ensure programming excellence. Standards include items such as:

- Cleanliness standards
- Maintenance standards
- Uniform standards
- Signage standards
- Class size
- Safety
- Instructor communication
- Marketing and communication standards
- Hiring of instructional staff

- Customer satisfaction measurements used
- Staff training levels met
- Customer complaint resolution standards met

The development and deployment of standards is only part of the process for developing excellence. Other parts to the process include continuously reviewing and reinforcing standards to ensure they become a living element for the way the agency does business. One way to achieve this is to develop a standard of the month for each month of the year, email reminders, develop training, and discuss each of the standards. The development of standards also requires a system for auditing to ensure that standards are being met. This can be accomplished through the development of a check list and the staff that is not involved in the operation would complete a review of compliance to the standards and specifications.

The department has a volunteer coordinator, which is good practice. There are many volunteer positions to choose from, and most programs utilize volunteers. Natural resources education programs seek to solicit volunteers as an ancillary benefit of this program, which is a great idea. The suggestion for improvement in the volunteer area is to ensure a robust volunteer recognition program and develop volunteer loyalty. Some park systems have found great success in developing a "point" program for volunteer hours. Volunteers are awarded with discounts or free use for accumulating points through volunteer hours.

CHAPTER SIX - FINANCIAL ANALYIS

The Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission retained PROS to develop a Financial Assessment as part of the Strategic Plan. As a key element of the Financial Plan, PROS reviewed available information to assess the financial situation of the Commission.   The revenues, expenditures and capital funds were analyzed to identify trends and assess the Commission's financial integrity. The cost recovery for facilities, programs and services at major functional levels has been analyzed to access the cost of service readiness.

6.1 DATA REVIEWED

The PROS Team reviewed the detailed cost and activity information prepared by the Commission staff. Following is a list of the cost and activity data reviewed by PROS:

- Commission Financial Statements for years ending 2001 through 2006
- Fixed Asset Summary for years ending 2001 through 2006
- Oakland County Parks – Capital Improvement Projects Budget, July 18, 2006
- Activities Report for years ending 2006 through May 2007
- Actual and Projected Millage Revenue Summary
- Golf Course Analysis 2001-2005
- Donations and Contributions by Organization
- Oakland County 4-H Fair Association Contract
- Oak Management concession contract
- Waterford Oak Activity Center Rental Policies
- 2007 Fees and Charges
- Waterpark Staff Manual – May 2007
- The Fridge – 2006-2007 Employee Manual
- Mobile Recreation Unit Manual 2007
- Mobile Recreation Staff Manual
- Participants and Capital Assets 1997-2006
- Fixed Assets-Gift, Donations and Grants

6.2 FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT

The financial statements and operations reports for fiscal years ending 2001 through 2006 were analyzed to assess the financial situation of Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission. The information for this section is from the Audited Financial Statements for 2001 through 2006.

6.2.1 FINANCIAL STRENGTH

The Commission has experienced increasing financial strength for each year shown in **Figure 2**. The cash balances have increased for each year in the study period. Cash balances provide flexibility with respect to managing programs, maintaining assets and meeting the changing needs of the county.

The Long-Term Debt is relatively low for such a large agency. The debt related to the Lyon Oaks Golf Course Clubhouse is a long term financing lease and is decreasing significantly each year. Based on the average revenues in excess of expenditures, the Commission has

the financial capacity to service bond debt to fund a significant capital projects. If one-half of the average revenues in excess of expenditures were used for debt service payments, the Commission could service a $20 million bond sale.

The Unrestricted Net Assets and Total Net Assets increase for each year in **Figure 2**. The Unrestricted Net Assets show strength in operations and maintenance of the system. The Total Net Assets amounts are an indicator of the capital maintenance and investment in the total system.

Fiscal Year Ending:	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Cash and investment pool	$ 15,165,987	$ 14,253,001	$ 17,545,900	$ 17,074,555	$ 18,503,596
Long-Term Debt	$ 3,500,000	$ 3,050,000	$ 2,600,000	$ 2,125,000	$ 1,625,000
Unrestricted Net Assets	$ 13,659,524	$ 14,436,588	$ 17,803,843	$ 16,852,438	$ 18,268,540
Total Net Assets	$ 69,606,188	$ 73,558,662	$ 76,382,997	$ 78,161,020	$ 81,412,330

Figure 2 - Selected Financial Statement Balances

The statements and reports show a financially strong entity. The Commission continues to invest in the system and to maintain the system assets.

6.2.2 OPERATING REVENUES

The revenues for fiscal years ending 2001 through 2006 are shown in **Figure 3**. Over the period, revenues increased by 18%. Property tax revenues increased by 10% and the operating revenues increased by 27%. The major fluctuations in Non-operating and Other Revenues are primarily due to the interest income on the cash and investments in the capital fund. The interest income varies with the cash balances reserved for capital projects.

Fiscal Year Ending:	2001*	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Taxes	$ 12,830,298	$ 10,950,682	$ 12,196,371	$ 12,647,696	$ 12,811,366	$ 14,071,266
User Fees and Charges	$ 6,887,893	$ 8,139,750	$ 7,914,714	$ 8,459,002	$ 9,016,793	$ 8,761,342
Non-Operating and Other	$ 975,074	$ 355,243	$ 305,332	$ 174,738	$ 505,118	$ 933,216
Total Revenues	$ 20,072,311	$ 19,445,675	$ 20,416,417	$ 21,281,436	$ 22,333,277	$ 23,765,824
NOTE: The Financial Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2001 were prepared in different format. Statements prepared after 2001 in a Net Asset format in complaince with GASB 34.						

Figure 3 - Revenues

While the overall revenues show a general increase, the dependency on tax revenues has increased between the 2002 and the 2006 year ends. **Figure 4** shows the percentage of

Fiscal Year Ending:	2001*	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Taxes	62%	56%	60%	59%	57%	59%
User Fees and Charges	33%	42%	39%	40%	41%	37%
Non-Operating and Other	5%	2%	1%	1%	2%	4%
Total Revenues	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
NOTE: The Financial Statements for Fiscal Year Ending 2001 were prepared in different format. Statements prepared after 2001 in a Net Asset format in complaince with GASB 34.						

Figure 4 - Percent of Revenues by Category

total revenues by category. The User Fees and Charges made up 42% of the total revenues in 2002 and have decreased to 37% in 2006. The Tax Revenues were 56% of the total in 2002 and have increased to 59% in 2006. These changes reflect that the User Fees and Charges have not been adjusted on a regular basis. **Figure 5** shows the trend lines of the revenue categories. The tax trend line is increasing a greater rate than the other categories showing an increasing reliance on taxes to fund the system. The best practices are to establish a cost recovery policy to guide the mix of revenue sources. The trend lines indicate a need to adjust User Fees and Charges to an established recovery goal.
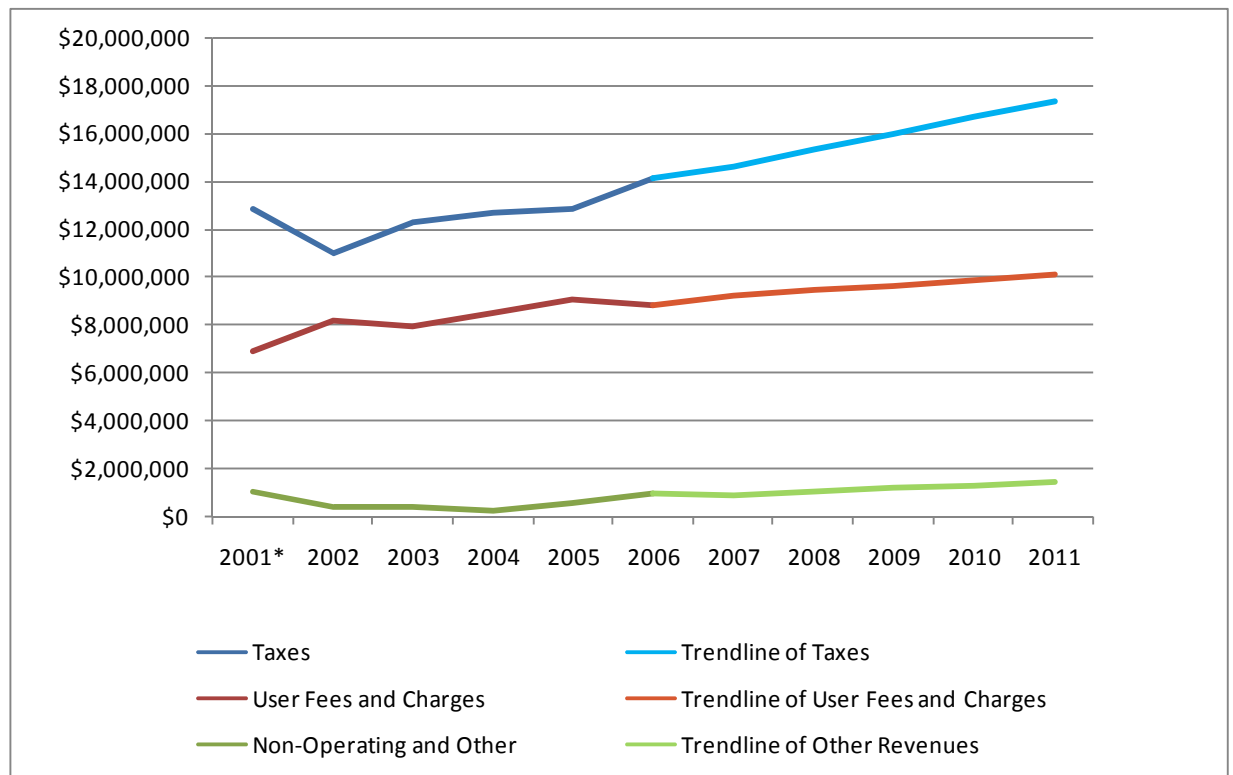

Figure 5 - Revenue Trend Lines

6.2.3 OPERATING EXPENDITURES
The operating expenditures for fiscal years ending 2002 through 2006 have increased by 24% while the operating revenues have increase by 22%. The greatest increases are in

Salaries and Commodities. The expenses for 2001 were not used in this analysis because the financial presentation of expenses was in a different format. **Figure 6** shows the historical expenses. Increases in Salaries, Benefits, Commodities, and Depreciation are expected over the next five years, as shown in **Figure 7**.
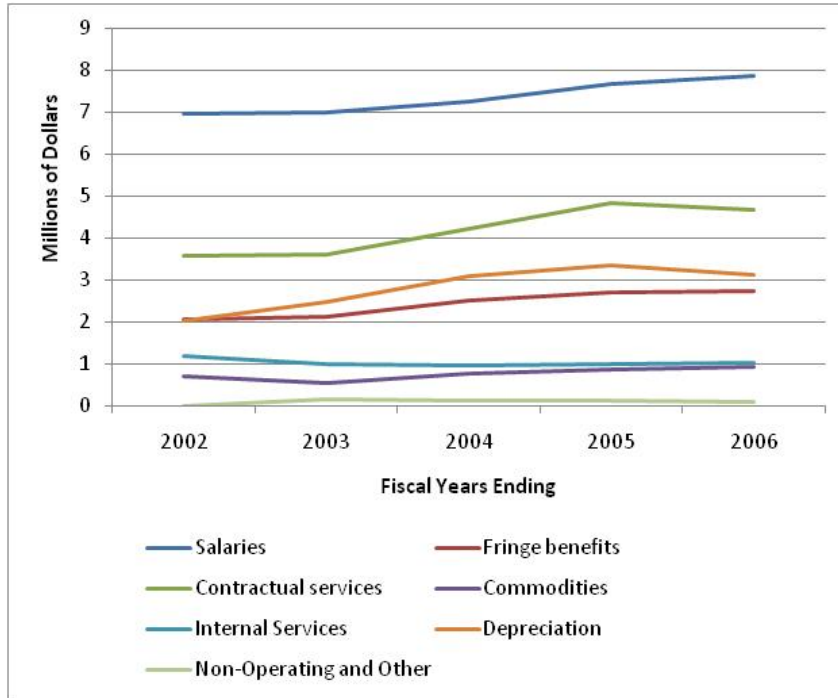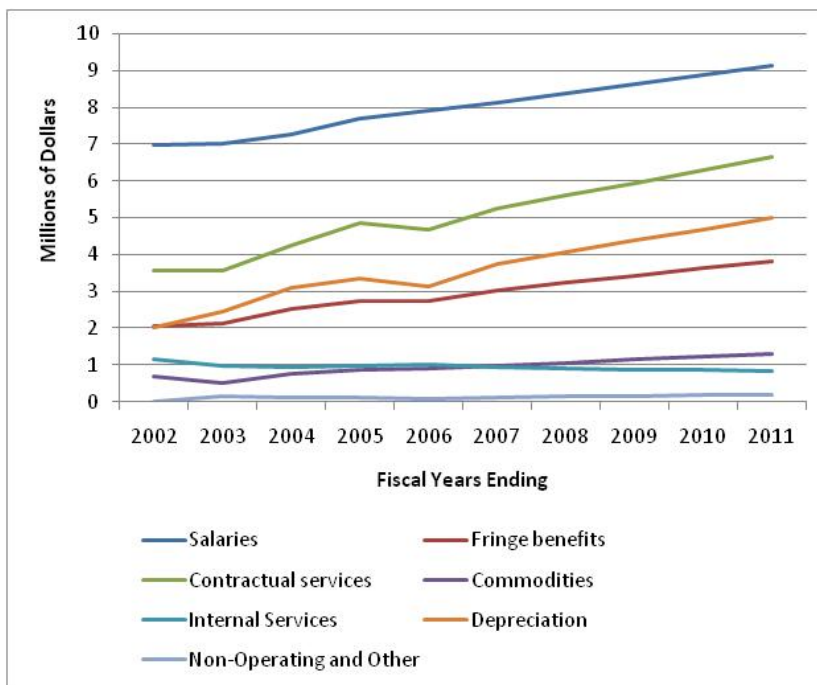

Figure 6 - Historical Expenses

Figure 7 - Trend Line of Expenses

6.3 OPERATING BUDGET ASSESSMENT

The annual revenues from charges in programs and services and the annual expenditures are shown in **Figure 8**. These figures are based on financial documents. The expenditures are increasing at a faster rate than the revenues. **Figure 9** projects that the revenues will be slightly greater than the expenditure through fiscal year ending 2010. Beginning projected year ending 2011, the expenditures are projected to exceed the revenues.
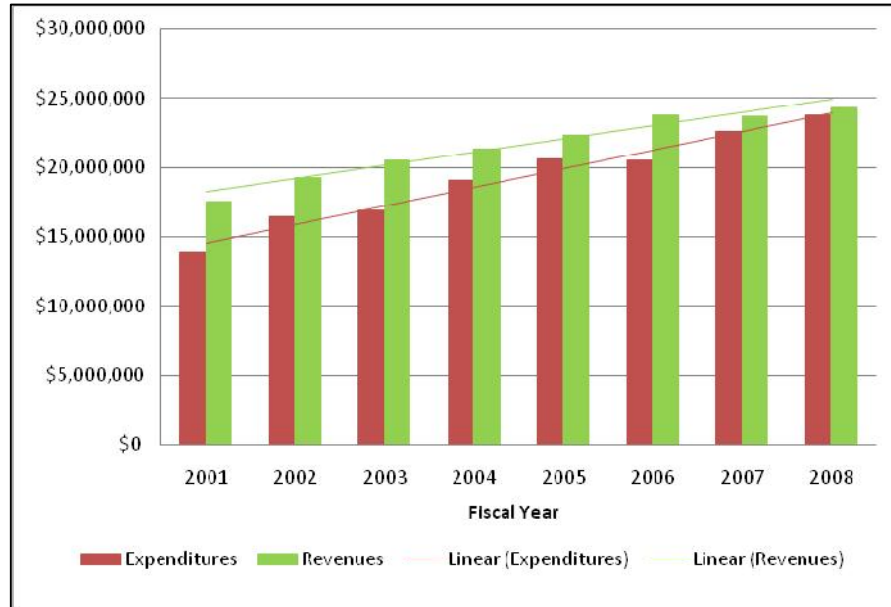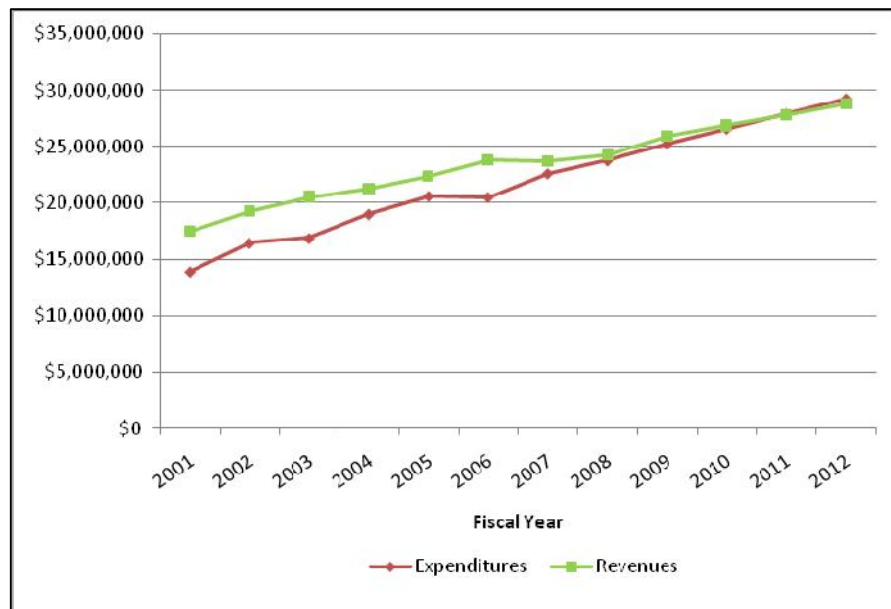

Figure 8 - Revenues and Expenses

Figure 9 - Trend Line of Revenues and Expenses

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The average revenues from programs and services are approximately 53% of the annual operating expenditures for fiscal year 2008. The industry best practices are 40% to 60%. **Figure 10** shows the trend of cost recovery from revenues without the property tax revenues. The gap between earned revenues and expenditures is projected to increase. Revenues from charges and fees are flat and should be increasing consistently with operating expenditures according to a cost recovery / pricing policy.
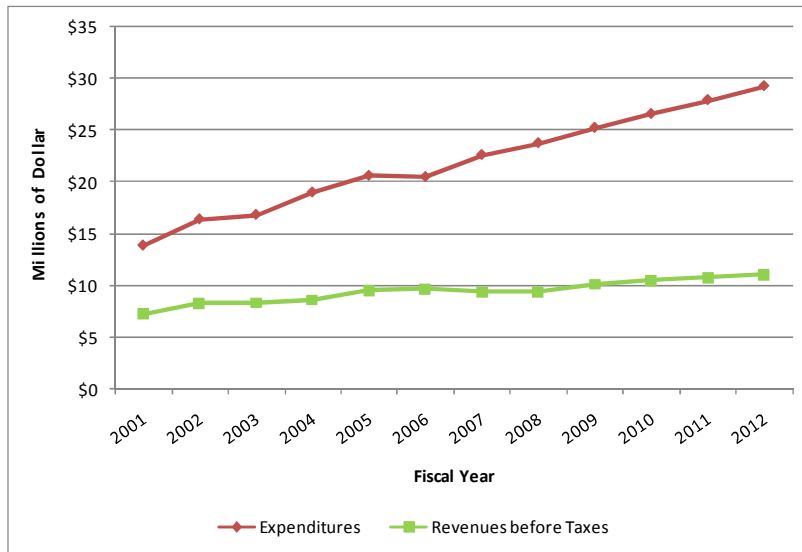
Figure 10 - Trend Line of Revenues and Expenses

6.3.1 PROPERTY TAX REVENUES

The Taxable Property Values have increased an average of 6.8% per year. A significant increase in assessed property value occurred for the 2004 tax year. Property tax revenues along with a trend of tax valuation are shown in **Figure 11**. Our experience shows that over longer periods of time the rate of increase will slow. The Commission should plan for the slowing of the growth rate by looking for external funds and annually review the charges for programs and services.

Figure 11 - Property Tax Trends

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In some areas of the U.S., the mortgage markets are experiencing significant difficulty with respect to interest rates and foreclosures. These issues can result in flat or decreased property values which result in flat or decreased property tax revenues. **Figure 12** shows trend lines of total revenues and expenditures with the property tax rates flat for fiscal years ending 2008 through 2012.
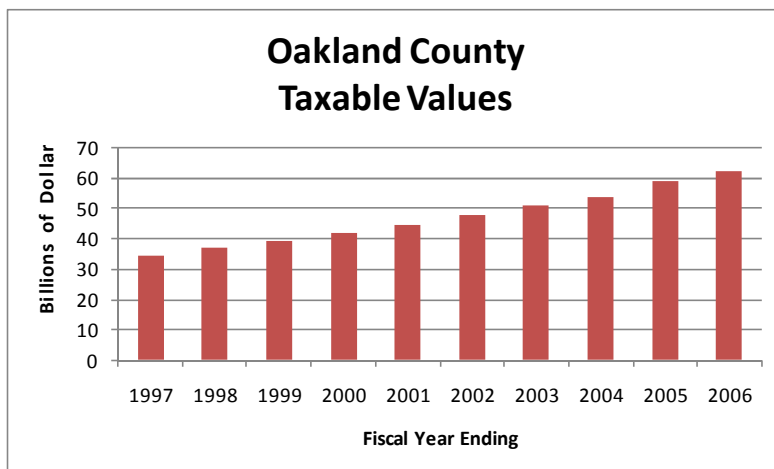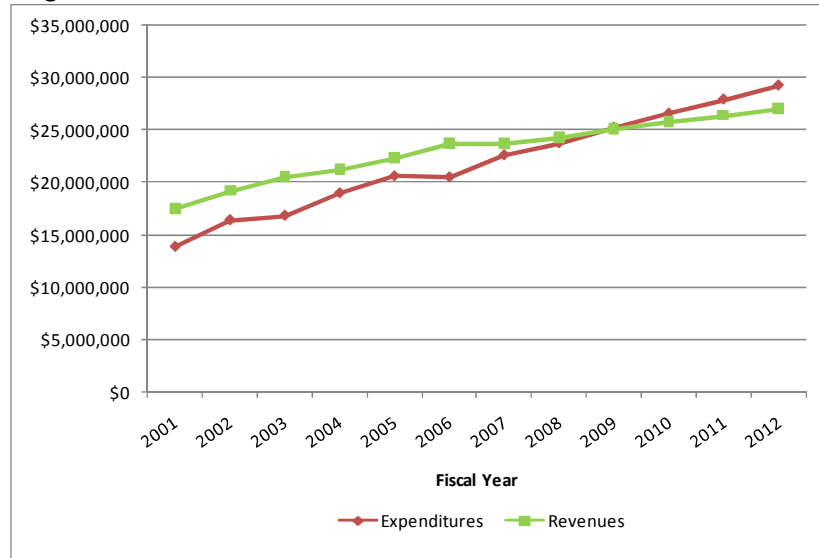

Figure 12 - Revenue and Expenditure Trends with Property Values Fixed at 2008 Amount

Figure 12 projects that a funding deficit will exist after fiscal year ending 2009 if property were to become flat and other revenues and expenditures are trended based on historical increases. The Commission management should continue to monitor the potential mortgage market impacts.

6.3.2 COST RECOVERY

A summary of the cost recovery by selected groups is shown in **Figure 13**. Administration, Recreation Administration and Technology support are allocated to the parks operations budget and programs to the respective cost center. The average earned revenue recovery is approximately 53% of the expenditures for the budget year 2008. The Golf cost recovery is 78.42% which is less than the industry standard of 100%. The Specialty Parks / Complexes are 53.16% which is near the industry standard of 60%. The Activity/Conference Center revenues are 13.07% while the industry expected recovery is 40%.

Oakland County Park / Facility	Revenues	Expenses	Revenues Net of Expenses	Cost Recovery
FY 2008 Budgeted				
Golf Courses	$ 4,803,810.00	$ 6,125,960.00	$ (1,322,150.00)	78.42%
Parks	$ 2,366,265.00	$ 6,633,052.00	$ (4,266,787.00)	35.67%
Specialty Parks/Complexes	$ 1,784,300.00	$ 3,356,527.00	$ (1,572,227.00)	53.16%
Activity/Conference Center	$ 157,788.00	$ 1,207,361.00	$ (1,049,573.00)	13.07%
Total	$ 9,112,163.00	$ 17,322,900.00	$ (8,210,737.00)	52.60%

Golf Courses = Glen Oaks Golf Course, Lyon Oaks Golf Course, Red Oaks Golf Course, Springfield Oaks Golf Course, and White Lake Oaks Golf Course

Parks = Independence Oaks Nature Center, Addison Oaks, Catalpa Oaks, Groveland Oaks, Highland Oaks, Independence Oaks, Lyon Oaks, Orion Oaks, Rose Oaks, and Mobile Recreation

Specialty Parks/Complexes = Red Oaks Water Park, Waterford Oaks BMX Complex, Waterford Oaks Games Complex, Waterford Oaks Toboggan

Activity/Conference Center = Addison Oaks Conference Center, Springfield Oaks Activity Center, Waterford Oaks Activity Center

Figure 13 - Summary of Cost Recovery from User Fees and Charges

6.3.3 CAPITAL BUDGET

The Commission has a capital budget of $25,331.999 for fiscal year 2007. Approximately 20% is funded through grants and an additional 1% through donations. The capital budget includes the current year and four forecasted years through the fiscal year ending 2011.

The amount spent on annual capital expenditures is an indication of an entities willingness to invest and maintain its system assets. The Commission spent approximately 24% of the value system capital assets on capital projects. The industry best practice is 4% to 6% of the system value. This is sign of a financial strong growing and expanding system. Capital expenditures from operating funds are also shown in **Figure 14**.

Fiscal Year	Project Cost
2006*	$ 23,920,734
2007	9,534,724
2008	2,750,000
2009	8,020,000
2010	2,650,000
2011	12,160,000
*Note: Increases Balance Forward	

Figure 14 - Capital Project Budget

6.4 GOLF COURSE FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

The revenues and expenditures for Oakland County golf courses for fiscal years ending 2001 through 2007 are illustrated below in **Figure 15**. The overall trend for these facilities shows that operating expenses generally exceed revenues generated. One exception is fiscal year 2002 where revenues generated outpaced expenditures. Depreciation expense began in fiscal year 2002 and is a part of operating deficit. Also illustrated below is that expenditures exceed revenues in a greater proportion during the later years of the analysis when revenues began to decline slightly beginning in fiscal year 2005 and operating expenses began to increase at the same time. An analysis of revenues and expenditures between fiscal years ending 2001 and 2007 for each of the five golf courses is below.
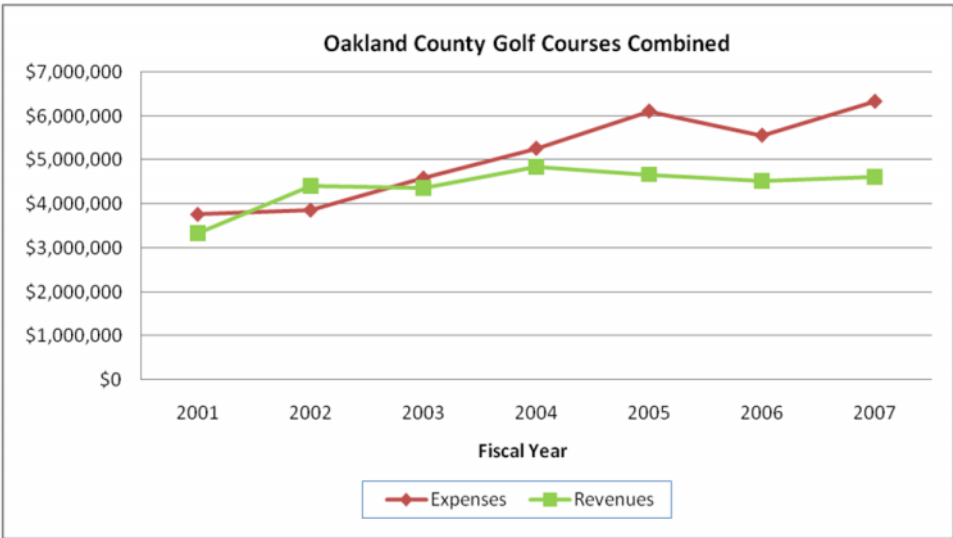

Figure 15 - Golf Course Revenues and Expenses

6.4.1 GLEN OAKS GOLF COURSE

While revenues generated at the Glen Oaks Golf Course outpaced operating expenses between fiscal years 2001 and 2004, the trend reversed in 2005 when expenditures experienced a 42% increase and revenues decreased by 2% during the same year. Since 2004, the operating expenses of the golf course have been on the rise while the revenues generated have continued to drop (**Figure 16**).
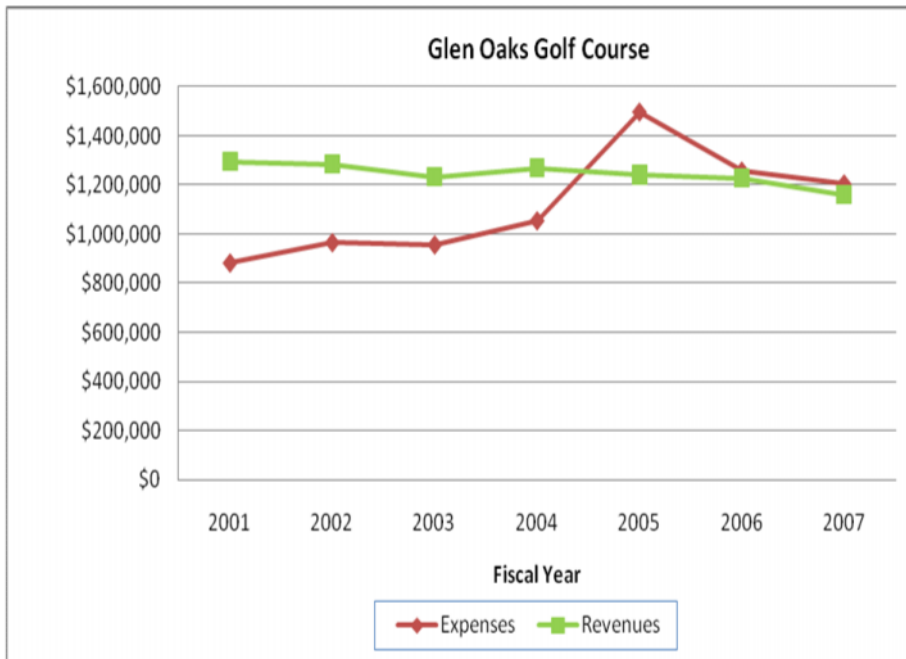
Figure 16 - Glen Oaks Golf Course Revenues and Expenses

6.4.2 LYON OAKS GOLF COURSE AND RED OAKS GOLF COURSE

The operating expenses of the Lyon Oaks and Red Oaks Golf Courses have consistently surpassed the revenues generated during each year of the analysis. Lyon Oaks revenue began in 2002 when the golf course opened – Red Oaks was closed during fiscal years 2001, 2002 and 2003 for a Drain Commission project. For both facilities, the amount of revenues generated in fiscal year 2002 were closer to paralleling expenditures than in any other year, however, the gap between the two continued to grow during the subsequent years. Lyon Oaks revenues peaked in 2004 at $1.36 million, followed by a general decline in the remaining years. Expenditures, however, have continued to increase excepting a small dip in fiscal year 2006. By the 2007 fiscal year end, operating expenses at the Lyon Oaks Golf Course exceeded revenues by approximately $906, 000; the largest since 2001. Between 2004 and 2006, the Red Oaks Golf Course realized an increase in revenues while expenditures simultaneously decreased. At the end of fiscal year 2007 revenues continued to increase paralleled by an increase in expenditures as well (**Figures 17** and **18**).
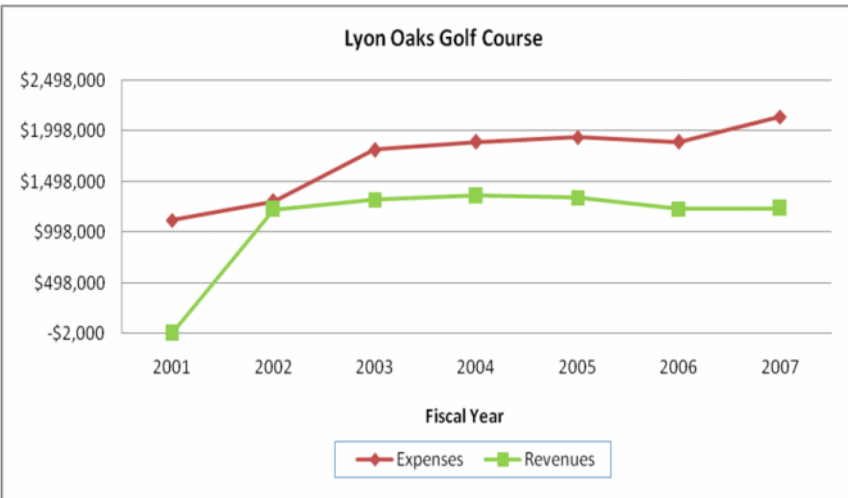
Figure 17 - Lyon Oaks Golf Course Revenues and Expenses
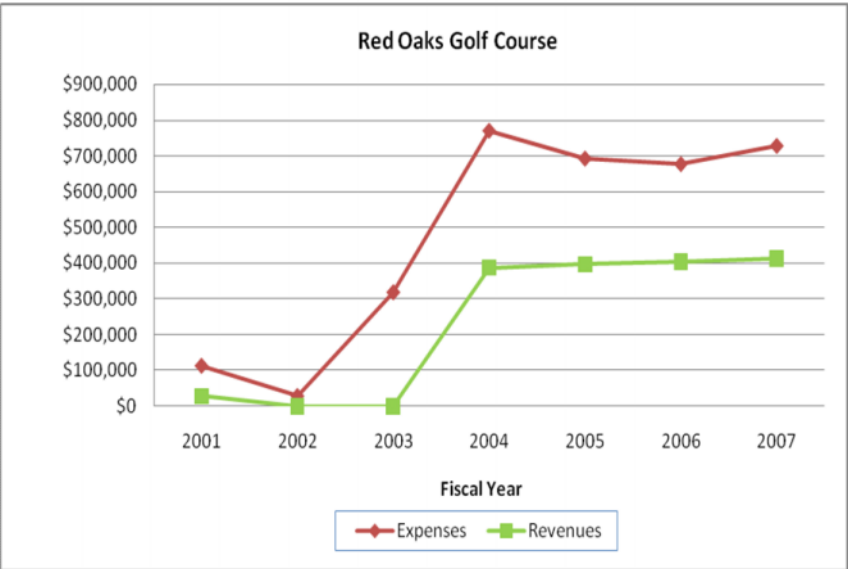
Figure 18 - Red Oaks Golf Course Revenues and Expenses

6.4.3 SPRINGFIELD OAKS GOLF COURSE

Revenues generated by the Springfield Oaks Golf Course have exceeded operating expenditures during five of the seven analysis years.   In fiscal year 2007, expenses increased markedly (54% over 2006 expenses) because of grounds maintenance and expendable equipment costs while revenues experienced a 2% increase as shown in **Figure 19**.
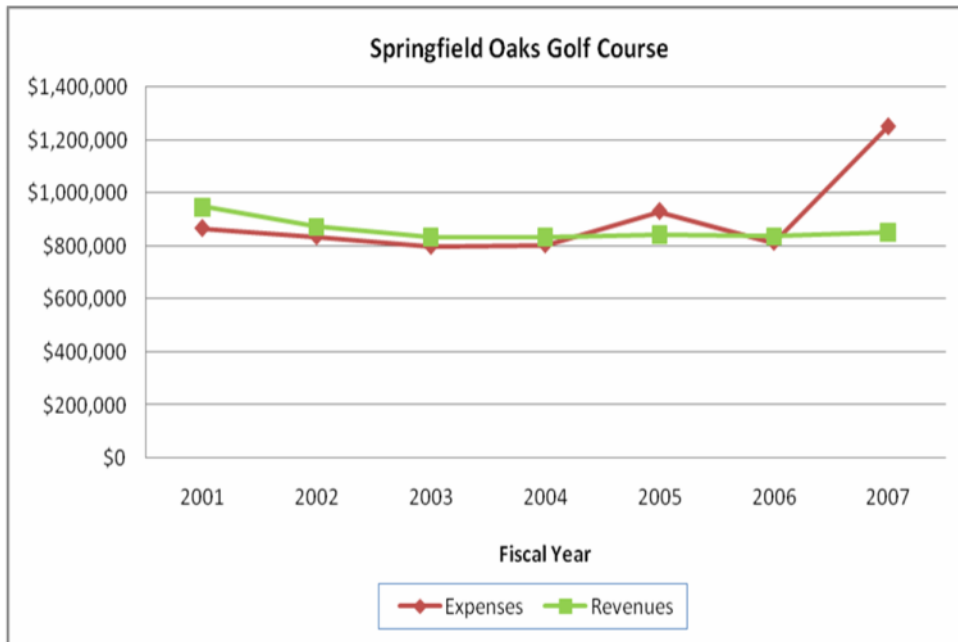
Figure 19 - Springfield Oaks Golf Course Revenues and Expenses

6.4.4 WHITE LAKE OAKS GOLF COURSE

Similar to the Glen Oaks course, the White Lake Oaks Golf Course has generated enough revenues to surpass its operating expenses between fiscal years 2001 and 2004.   In 2005, however, operating expenses experienced a 42% increase mainly because of small tools and depreciation expenses while revenues dropped by 15%.   Revenues have yet to recover completely but have been on the rise again beginning in 2007 (**Figure 20**).
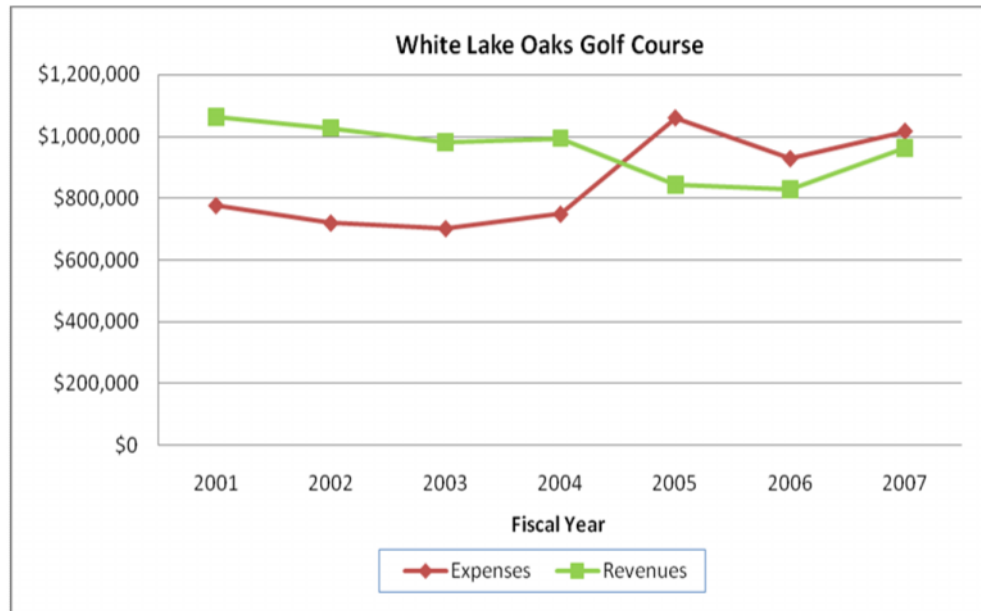
Figure 20 - White Lake Oaks Golf Course Revenues and Expenses

6.4.5 SUMMARY OF GOLF

The analysis of golf operations indicate a disconnect between the levels of service and the user fees and charges.   The golf courses are not recovering their costs.   Three of the five courses recovered their costs through fiscal year ending 2004.   Lyon Oaks and Red Oaks golf courses have operated in a deficit between 2001 and 2007.   The industry standard for golf courses is full recovery of direct costs.   The user fees and expenditures should be adjusted to recover 100% of the direct costs.

6.5 CONCESSIONS AGREEMENT

The Commission has a concession agreement with E. A. Fuller Oak Management Corporation to provide services at twelve of the Commission's facilities.   The Commission receives a portion of the gross revenues from the concessionaire and is reimbursed for an allocated percent of the utility costs at seven locations.   The current agreements do not recover all of the utility and maintenance costs for the contracted facilities.

The Commission staff has negotiated an amendment to the concession agreement that will better align the revenues from the agreement with the Commission's cost to provide

utilities to the facilities. With the proposed amendments, the Commission will continue to subsidize 100% of the grounds and building maintenance costs of the concession facilities.

The Commission should establish a fixed amount or fixed percentage level for subsidizing the maintenance of the concession facilities.

6.6 SPRINGFIELD OAKS ACTIVITY CENTER

The Commission has a contract with the Oakland County 4-H Fair Association to operate the Springfield Oaks Activity Center. The Commission has made significant investments in the facilities as shown in **Figure 21**. Over the last fifteen years the Commission has invested an average of over $165,000 per year in capital improvements and invested $1,624,732 in capital improvements to the facilities in fiscal year ending 2007. The annual operating subsidy has been an average of $169,000 per year and a total operating and capital subsidy of $344,000 per year. For fiscal year ending 2007, the operating subsidy was $218,232.

	Total Facility Revenues	Operating Expenditures	Recovery of Direct Costs	CIP Expenditures	Total Expenditures	Revenues Over (Under) Expenditures	Subsidy Percent
Fifteen Year Operations for 1993 through 2007	134,841	2,673,085	5%	2,484,293	5,157,378	(5,022,537)	97%
Fifteen Average	8,989	178,205	5%	165,620	343,825	(334,836)	97%
Fiscal Year Ending 2007	15,506	233,828	7%	1,624,732	1,858,560	(1,843,054)	99%

Figure 21 - Springfield Oaks Cost Recovery

Section 6.3 of the contract under the Commission Obligations states:

With the recommendations of Contractor, to establish fees and charges for rental and use of facilities and grounds, which fees will remain in effect until such time as the Commission, with the recommendation of the Contractor, establishes different fees.

This section appears to work against the Commission , especially since the Commission is responsible to maintain and provide utilities for the facilities without provisions to adjust fees and charges to recover a fixed portion of the operating costs. The contract should be amended to fix the subsidy amount or the subsidy percent.

Exhibit I: General Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission Expectations of the Oakland County 4-H Fair Association, Item IV states:

Work cooperatively with park operational staff to communicate building and grounds maintenance needs, monthly event schedules and proposed facility improvement projects as they relate to operating budget development and fees and charges.

The Commission staff has not had input in the adjustment of fees and charges with respect to the changes in operating and capital expenditures.

Item V, states: "Evaluate the cost benefit of programs, facilities and special events." PROS did not find any evidence of the Association's cost benefit analysis with respect to program or facility fees and charges.

The Commission should annually review and update fees and charges with the Association to maintain a cost recovery for the facilities.

6.7 DEBT CAPACITY

The Commission's only long term debt is related to the cost of Lyon Oaks Golf Course Clubhouse building and related improvements. The balance at September 30, 2006 was $2,125,000.

Figure 22 shows the debt capacity using revenues in excess of expenditures for the fiscal year ending 2006. Using 50% of the average revenues in excess of expenditures for new debt service, the calculated debt capacity is based on annual fixed payments. At 5% interest for 20-year bonds, the debt capacity is $20,200,000.

	Fiscal Year Ending 2006
Revenues Over Expenditures	$ 3,243,355
Sample Precentage Used for Debt Service	50%
Annual Debt Capacity	$ 1,621,678
Debt Service Capacity	
Sample Interest Rate	5%
Sample Term (Years)	20
Maximum Bond Issuance Capacity	$20,200,000

Figure 22 - Debt Capacity Based on Fiscal Year 2006

6.8 PRICING POLICY

The Commission does not have a written and adopted pricing policy to guide the establishment of fees and charges. A Pricing Policy provides a philosophical framework for setting fees and charges, defining cost categories and presents the guidelines for subsidies. A policy provides a basis for pricing new programs and serves.

PROS recommends that any program subsidy be communicated to the program participants to demonstrate the investment that the Commission is making to the recreational program. This communication should include the cost of operating the program and facilities even if facilities costs are not being recovered in the fee.

6.8.1 FEES AND CHARGES GUIDELINES

The guidelines should include age segment, exclusive use, contractual and special event pricing classifications. A pricing guideline should consider the following elements:

- Cost Recovery Goal Pricing
- Age Segment Pricing
- Group Discounting and Packaging
- Non-primetime
- Level of Exclusivity Pricing
- Incentive Pricing
- Primetime

Guidelines should include incentive pricing for programs that provide significant social benefits, group discounts, and primetime / non-primetime classifications to its guidelines. Incentive pricing may also be used for new programs and services to test the program content and adequacy of the facilities. Cost recovery guides also help programmers in developing program content, number of sessions and materials and supplies that may be included in the program fee.

The following chart (see **Figure 23**) is a sample of cost recovery percentages for the recreation programs based on direct and indirect costs.

Program/Service	Cost Recovery Rates
Aquatics	60%
Senior Programs	50%
Outdoor Adventures	100%
Exclusive Use	100%
Facility / Shelter Rentals	20%
Admissions (Daily, Monthly, Annual)	100%
Adult Sports	100%
Adult Health	90%
Adult Education	90%

Adult Arts and Crafts	*100%*
Adult Dance	*100%*
Adult Music	*100%*
Martial Arts	*100%*
Youth Sports	*70%*
Youth Health	*70%*
Youth Education	*90%*
Youth Arts and Crafts	*100%*
Youth Dance	*100%*
Youth Music	*100%*
Youth Camps	*100%*
Youth Special Events	*100%*
Child Care	*100%*
Indoor Aquatics	*60%*

Figure 23 - Sample Cost Recovery Rates

6.8.2 PRICING POLICY PHILOSOPHY

A Pricing Policy provides the Commission with consistent guidelines in pricing services and programs. This allows users to better understand the philosophy behind pricing a service. Furthermore, the level of service and benefits that the users receive is translated into a price that is based on a set subsidy level, or on the level of individual consumption or exclusivity that is involved outside of what a general taxpayer receives.

Cost-of-service documentation with adopted pricing policies provides the Commission tools to adjust the pricing of programs and services as operation and maintenance costs increase against a fixed tax revenue stream.

The objectives of pricing user fees are fourfold:

- Equity
- Revenue production
- Efficiency
- Redistribution of income

Equity means that those who benefit from the service should pay for it; and those who benefit the most should pay the most. The type of service will directly determine the cost recovery strategy or pricing strategy to be used in pricing the park and recreation services. Public agencies offer three kinds of services.

- Public services normally have no user fee associated with their consumption. The cost for providing these services is borne from the general tax base.

- Merit services can be priced using either a partial overhead pricing strategy or a variable cost pricing strategy. Partial overhead pricing strategies recover all direct operating costs and some determined portion of fixed costs. The portion of fixed costs not covered by the price established represents the tax subsidy. Whatever the level of tax subsidy the Commission needs to effectively communicate the level of tax subsidy being provided by the Commission.
- Private parks and recreation services are where only the user benefits, then most parks and recreation agencies are pricing services using a full cost recovery strategy. The price of this particular service is intended to recover all fixed and variable costs associated with the service.

Revenue production means that user fees from parks and recreation programs and activities will assist in the overall operation of the Park and Recreation budget. Revenue production gives the Commission the needed cash flow for projects not budgeted in that year's budget. It gives flexibility in providing services not normally provided through tax dollars. Example: Promotional dollars for programs and services. Revenue production gives the Commission in-kind dollars for grant matches and the ability to enhance facilities.

Revenue production helps offset tax dollars spent on a specific program that over time has lost enthusiasm by the public, but demands more tax dollars to maintain expenses associated with a market that is losing support. Example: Tennis and playground programs. Revenue dollars paid by individuals would place value on the experience that the individual is obtaining from the services provided by the Commission which develops a deeper commitment to the programs that they help support.

Efficiency is maintained by the Commission utilizing revenue dollars because expenditures are not made unless necessary revenues are available. Priorities in management of park lands, resources and activities are clearly defined because the services provided are clearly made priorities by direct user dollars that are associated with the activities that the public wants provided. Cost tracking of dollars spent for each activity is documented. Pricing can achieve six positive results:

- Reduce congestion and overcrowding
- Indicate clientele demand and support
- Increase positive consumer attitudes
- Provide encouragement to the private sector (so it can compete with us, and we can reallocate our resources when necessary)
- Provide incentives to achieve societal goals
- Ensure stronger accountability on the agency staff and management

Redistribution of income means that the dollars associated with each activity it came from is to pay for direct costs and for future improvements associated with the activity. Example: Adult softball players pay fees for maintenance and capital improvements associated with the activity they choose to participate in.

6.9 FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

The Commission is in a sound financial position with respect to operating revenues and expenditures, fund balance and investments in capital projects.

The Commission has used a balance of operating cash to fund capital expenditures. The use of operating revenues for capital renewal and replacements demonstrated that the Commission is willing to maintain the system asset to the maximum potential life. The Commission's financial policies provide the capacity to service additional debt for capital projects.

The total revenues are consistently in excess of the operating expenditures which indicate sound financial planning with respect to financial strength. Sound financial management has resulted in increasing fund balances from operations. A trend analysis shows that there is an increasing gap between the operating revenues and expenditures. This indicates a need to review user fees and charges.

For the fiscal years ending 2001 through 2008, Taxable Property Values has increased each year by average of over 6%. The property tax revenues have increased by an average of 5.4% over the same period.

To maintain the strength of the Commission, PROS recommends:

- Establishment of pricing guidelines and policies with pricing objectives and cost recovery percentages
- Annual review schedules of charges for programs and services
- Modify the concession agreement as planned to improve the cost recovery of the concession facilities
- Modify the Fair Association contract to establish and maintain a consistent subsidy of Springfield Oaks facilities

CHAPTER SEVEN - COST OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

A cost of service model was developed to document the costs and revenue recovery amounts for the Commission's programs and services. The model is based on the Commission's annual budget and available operating information. The model was presented to management. The current functions and future enhancements to the model were discussed.

The cost of service analysis is to determine the total cost of providing services to individual customers, groups of customers, or an entire customer base. The total cost of service includes all direct and overhead costs associated with a particular service or facility. This analysis will support decision making for determining what programs and services require additional operating capital or additional revenues to meet the desired cost recovery goals. Following is the methodology used to prepare this cost of service analysis:

Direct costs include those incurred directly by the budget organization such as salaries and benefits, supplies equipment rental, and contractual services. Overhead costs are allocated to each budget organization.

The total costs divided by the units of service were identified to determine the total costs per unit of service.

The result of the cost-of-service analysis does not necessarily mean that the Commission should recover the total costs-of-service through user fees and charges. The results should be compared to the Commission's Pricing Policies as a guide the future recovery of costs through user fees.

7.1 COST OF SERVICE PROCESS

The cost of service analysis is based on the Commission's 2008 Proposed Budget. The Commission's Microsoft Excel budget workbook is used as the base for the cost of service model. The budget workbook presents each budget organization in a separate workbook. Linking the model to budget workbook will facilitate updating the model without significant data entry.

The model queries the information from the budget workbook and presents the linked information in the model workbook. The tab named "Trend Analysis" shows the linked information. Each of budget organizations is shown in model in same order as the budget workbook.

The Administration, Recreation Administration, and Tech Support organizations are considered as overhead and the expenditures of these budget organizations are allocated to the other organization budgets based on the percent of the budget organization to the total organization expenditures.

Each budget has a separate worksheet in the model. The model shows the total budget for each organization and has a set of columns for allocating expenditures to the revenue categories. The expenditures are allocated by entering a percent of the budget line item that should be associated with the corresponding revenue account.

The result is a presentation of the total cost associated with the respective revenue account and is show as the revenues over or under the allocated expenditures with and without overhead expenditures. A percent of cost recovery is shown.

Where available, the cost per participant or unit of service is shown with the revenues per unit. The revenue over or under cost is shown as an amount and as a percent of total cost recovery.

7.2 TREND ANALYSIS

The historical expenditures and revenues have been entered to this worksheet as integers and are not linked to the Commission's budget workbook. The model contains information from fiscal years ending 2004, 2006, and 2007. The 2008 information is linked to the budget workbook and is updated each time the model workbook is opened. The "Regression Coefficient" column shows the linear regression coefficient for each budget line item. This is an indicator of the linear nature of the historical data. The closer the coefficient is to one (1), the more linear the trend. A low coefficient indicates that the historical information is not linear.

The project year expenditures and revenues are based on the 2008 budget year plus estimated cost increases. The projected cost increases as entered in the "Projected Expenditure Increase Percentages" box and the "Projected Revenue Increase Percentages" box. The boxes are located in columns AB through AJ and are shown below in **Figures 24** and **25**.

Projected Revenue Increase Percentages		
Description	Code	Increase Percent
Taxes	Tx	2%
Commissions	Cm	2%
Sales	Sl	2%
Fees	Fe	2%
Antenna Management	At	2%
Rental Income	Rt	2%
Program Fees	Fp	2%
Water Feature Ride	Wf	2%
Green Fees	Gf	2%
Rental Golf Carts	Gc	2%
Pro Shop Sales	Gs	2%
Rental Equipment	Gr	2%
Other Income	Ot	2%
Prior Year Revenues	Pr	2%
Contributions	Ct	2%
Gains	Gn	2%

Figure 24 - Projected Revenue Increase Percentages

Projected Expenditure Increase Percentages		
Description	**Code**	**Increase Percent**
Salary Increase	S	4%
Fringe Benefit Increase	B	2%
Contracted Services	C	2%
Technology and Communicati	T	2%
Utilities	U	2%
Interest Expense	I	2%
Other Expenses	O	5%
Depreciation	D	2%

Figure 25 - Projected Expenditure Increase Percentages

The expenditure and revenues items are increased by the amounts shown in the yellow areas of the boxes.

7.3 BUDGET ORGANIZATION

The non-overhead budget organizations are shown by budget line item with column for each revenue account. The expenditures are allocated to the revenue accounts by entering the applicable percentage for the expenditure under the revenue account. **Figure 26** shows the allocation percent area from the White Lake Oaks Golf Course worksheet.

Expenditures:	Amount	Greens Fees	Commission Food Services	Miscellaneous Income	Rental House	Rental Equipment	Rental Golf Carts	Sales Pro Shop	Refund Prior Years Expenditure	Gain on Sale of Equipment	Gain on S
Salaries & Wages	388,365.12	58%	3%	0%	3%	3%	3%	30%			
Fringe benefits	130,289.70	58%	3%	0%	3%	3%	3%	30%			
Bank Charges	409.50	70%	0%	0%	5%	5%	5%	15%			
Building Maintenance	25,200.00	40%	15%	0%	10%	10%	10%	15%			
Cash Shortage	-	67%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	30%			
Charge Card Fee	7,024.50	67%	0%	0%	1%	1%	1%	30%			
Utilities - Electric Service	69,768.00	40%	15%	0%	10%	10%	10%	15%			
Equipment Maintenance	39,900.00	40%	15%	0%	10%	10%	10%	15%			
Equipment Rental	1,260.00	40%	15%	0%	10%	10%	10%	15%			

Figure 26 - Sample Cost Allocation Fields

Based on the percent allocations, the expenditure line item amounts are allocated to the revenue accounts as shown in **Figure 27**.

Expenditures:	Amount	Greens Fees	Commission Food Services	Miscellaneous Income	Rental House	Rental Equipment	Rental Golf Carts	Sales Pro Shop	Refund Prior Years Expenditure
Salaries & Wages	388,365.12	223,970.16	11,650.95	-	11,650.95	11,650.95	11,650.95	117,791.14	
Fringe benefits	130,289.70	75,138.07	3,908.69	-	3,908.69	3,908.69	3,908.69	39,516.87	
Bank Charges	409.50	286.65		-	20.48	20.48	20.48	61.43	
Building Maintenance	25,200.00	10,080.00	3,780.00	-	2,520.00	2,520.00	2,520.00	3,780.00	
Cash Shortage	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Charge Card Fee	7,024.50	4,706.42		-	70.25	70.25	70.25	2,107.35	
Utilities - Electric Service	69,768.00	27,907.20	10,465.20	-	6,976.80	6,976.80	6,976.80	10,465.20	
Equipment Maintenance	39,900.00	15,960.00	5,985.00	-	3,990.00	3,990.00	3,990.00	5,985.00	
Equipment Rental	1,260.00	504.00	189.00	-	126.00	126.00	126.00	189.00	

Figure 27 - Sample Allocated Expenditures

The overhead organizations are allocated based on the percent of the allocated expenditures to the total expenditures. The overhead allocation for White Lake Oaks Golf Course is shown in **Figure 28**.

Expenditures:	Amount	Greens Fees	Commission Food Services	Miscellaneous Income	Rental House	Rental Equipment	Rental Golf Carts	Sales Pro Shop	Refund Prior Years Expenditure
Administration/Support									
Administration	197,668.74	116,624.56	9,883.44	-	3,953.37	3,953.37	3,953.37	59,300.62	
Recreation Administration	30,225.64	17,833.13	1,511.28	-	604.51	604.51	604.51	9,067.69	
Tech Support	72,083.03	42,528.99	3,604.15	-	1,441.66	1,441.66	1,441.66	21,624.91	
Total Administration/Support	299,977.42	176,986.68	14,998.87	-	5,999.55	5,999.55	5,999.55	89,993.23	

Figure 28 - Sample Overhead Allocation

The cost recovery is presented as the revenues over or under expenditures. The revenues under expenditures amount is shown in parentheses. The cost recovery is also shown as a percent with and without overhead allocation. The cost recovery goal is an input and should be consistent with the Commission's pricing policies. **Figure 29** shows a portion of the cost recovery for White Lake Oaks Golf Course. The differences between modeled cost recovery and the cost recovery goals are also shown.

Expenditures:	Amount	Greens Fees	Commission Food Services	Miscellaneous Income	Rental House	Rental Equipment	Rental Golf Carts	Sales Pro Shop	Refund Prior Years Expenditure	Gain on Sale of Equipment
Revenues Over Expenditures	(390,447.94)	(40,534.16)	(17,727.10)	-	(75,783.89)	(77,568.89)	143,261.11	(325,155.01)		
Recovery Percent		73%	94%	85%	0%	7%	4%	277%	4%	
Recovery Percent without Overhead		92%	125%	97%	0%	7%	5%	299%	6%	
Recovery Goal		100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	
Revenues Over (Under) Recovery Goal										
With Administration and Overhead		-27%	-6%	-15%	0%	-93%	-96%	177%	-96%	
Without Administration and Overhead		-8%	25%	-3%	0%	-93%	-95%	199%	-94%	

Figure 29 - Cost Recovery Presentation

Figure 29 indicates that Green Fees recovered 125% of the allocated costs before overhead which is 25% over the cost recovery shown and that the Green Fees recovered 92% of the allocated costs including allocated overhead costs.

The model also shows the costs and revenues per unit of service. For the White Lake Oaks Golf Course, the number of participants is shown in **Figure 30**. The "Amount" column shows the number of participants from all activities and the "Greens Fees" column shows the number of "18-hole rounds." The subsidy per participant is shown in dollars and as a percent of total costs. The Base Fees and Charges are shown at the below of **Figure 30** for comparative purposes.

Expenditures:	Amount	Greens Fees	Commission Food Services	Miscellaneous Income	Rental House	Rental Equipment
Participants		76,483	24,998 18-hole rounds			
Cost Per Participant	$	18.73	$ 29.16			
Revenue Per Participant	$	13.63	$ 27.54			
Subsidy (Profit) Per Participant	$	5.11	$ 1.62			
Subsidy Percent of Cost		27%	6%			
Base Fees and Charges						
18-Holes			$ 29.00			
18-Holes - Resident			$ 23.00			

Figure 30 - Sample Cost per Unit Presentation

Each budget organization is shown in a separate worksheet. The participant and service units and analysis are shown in the worksheets where the unit data was available.

7.4 REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE TRENDS

The "Recovery – DS Cap" worksheet presents the total revenues and expenditures from all budget organizations. The worksheet shows the revenues without tax revenues and presents the recovery percentage from all other revenues. The worksheet also presents the projected maximum debt capacity for years ending 2009 through 2013.

A graph of the total revenues and total expenditures is presented as a guide to when fees and charges will need to be revised.

Graphs of total earned revenues and expenditures and Golf Course revenues and expenditures are shown in the "Charts" worksheet.

7.5 COST RECOVERY SUMMARY

A summary of the cost recovery for each budget organization is shown the "Summary Cost Recovery" worksheet. The revenues, expenditures, revenues over (under) expenditures, and a percent of cost recovery are shown for each budget organization. The golf courses are presented as group to present the results of all golf operations.

7.5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

To enhancing the costs-of-service analysis and revenue management, PROS recommends the following:

- Gather and maintain unit data for major revenue accounts. The units should be based on the type of revenue stream; such as number of transactions, number of events, and/or number of participants.
- Adopt the pricing policies to establish cost recovery goals for major revenue accounts and update the cost of service model annually to verify the revenue recovery.

CHAPTER EIGHT - IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

It is very important that the Commission communicate the results of its efforts to implement these initiatives and strategies outlined in this Strategic Plan on an annual basis to allow it to build on its existing community support.

The vision, mission and values have been translated into specific visions, goals, strategies, and tactics. These have been organized into a Vision Action Strategy Matrix presented in **Appendix 1** to facilitate communication and implementation of the plan.

Following are the specific vision, mission, goals, and strategies and tactics for the Commission to follow during the next 10 years.

Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission Vision

> *"Oakland County Parks strives to be recognized and viewed by citizens as a "World Class" park system that: meets the standards for high quality parks, natural areas and open spaces; that provides safe, clean, accessible, and affordable parks, trails, recreational facilities and services; that creates community through people, parks, and programs; that connects the community to a variety of outdoor recreation experiences while supporting economic development, connectivity of residents, and health and wellness in a financially sustainable system."*

Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission Mission

> *"Our mission is to deliver quality parks, recreation, facilities, programs, services and maintenance through a dedicated professional Park Commission and staff that listens to the needs of citizens, creates innovative parks, recreation facilities and programs and energizes the community for the value of living in Oakland County."*

8.1.1 LAND

"Acquire, improve and maintain quality parks that support the community's values for the preservation of natural areas and open spaces, equity of access, and the natural heritage of Oakland County."

8.1.1.1 GOAL

"Acquire, maintain and improve park land for active and passive recreation to provide a variety of park experiences and to meet a land acreage goal of 800 acres in the next ten years, contingent upon full funding."

8.1.1.2 STRATEGIES

- Establish a dedicated funding source for land acquisition

- o Seek voter approval of a dedicated millage for land acquisition
- o Identify potential acquisition priority areas and the projected costs over the next ten years for presentation to voters
- o Establish a policy and mechanism for the distribution of land acquisition funds to support CVT's, recreational partners and land conservancies
- Implement a land acquisition strategy that recognizes the value of parkland in urban areas, including the southeast quadrant of Oakland County, while also acquiring park lands in other areas of the county in a strategic manner that complements other local government agencies' efforts
  - o Develop a land acquisition model to identify properties both public and private potentially available for purchase and/or lease
  - o Establish a weighted land acquisition criteria policy
    - ▪ Develop a protocol for prioritizing parkland acquisition targets
    - ▪ Develop a method for documenting the acquisition targets according to the goals of the park system
  - o Develop a protocol for soliciting and accepting the donation of land, easements, wetland mitigation/preservation and right of first refusal
  - o Coordinate with county and municipal planning departments to identify potential resource for the redevelopment of urban parks
  - o Acquire another golf course in south Oakland County if the business plan supports it and or if the site could be used for other recreation purposes that supports a community park in south county
- Work with the Oakland County Trails Advisory Council, as well as county departments, state and local agencies, community leaders and non-profit organizations to complete and promote the Oak Routes Trail Network in Oakland County
  - o Complete the Oakland County Trails Master Plan and update it every five years
  - o Work with the Oakland County Trails Advisory Council to develop long-and short-term goals for the Council and the Oak Routes Trail Network – every
  - o Develop partnerships to fill missing gaps in the Oak Routes Trail network based on the Oakland County Trails Master Plan
  - o Research the feasibility of creating a "green fund" (with private dollars or with a separate millage) to provide local units of government with match funding for state and federal grants for trails
  - o Work with local units of government to provide trail access to and between Oakland County Parks to provide ways for residents and visitors to visit Oakland County Parks by using the trail network
  - o Develop a process to assist local units of government in the trail planning, design and construction process to extend and complete the Oak Routes Trail Network
  - o Work with local communities and the Trails Advisory Council to create projects, including trail signage – and programs to promote the Oak Routes Trail Network to generate additional use and awareness

- o Work with neighboring counties to extend the Oak Routes Trail network beyond county borders and to connect to the larger regional trails system currently being developed
- Develop and maintain quality park trails that provide a variety of trail experiences and connect into the larger, countywide Oak Routes Trail Network
  - o Develop a trails master plan that can be tailored to each county park that provides for a variety of trail experiences throughout the park system, and includes construction standards and guidelines
  - o Develop a trail maintenance plan for each park which would include maintenance procedures, trail specifications and timelines for park staff and volunteers
  - o Create and implement a "tag" system for special use groups to track usage and promote shared trail use in Oakland County Parks
  - o Create and implement a system for working with volunteers to build and maintain trails within Oakland County Parks
  - o Create standardized trail maps for each park that standardizes wayfinding and promotes health and fitness activities
  - o When possible, construct trails with grading and surface materials that meet ADA standards for accessibility
  - o Research the mileage and trail types desired for different large-scale events (i.e. mountain bike races, cross-country meets, fundraising walks, etc.) to assist in bringing more such events (and therefore more people and revenue) to Oakland County Parks
  - o Develop a process for working with partner organizations on events on park trails to help publicize park trails and to generate awareness and revenue for Oakland County Parks
- Create and implement system wide natural resource management program
  - o Identify park natural features, delineate current coverage and describe in a regional context
  - o Develop park specific, phased management plans
  - o Develop a funding source to support management requirements
  - o Document current management and prescribe alternative best management practices (BMP's) to support the resource management goal in alignment with the natural resources management plan
  - o Develop a program for evaluating park practices and policies that influence the management of natural resources
  - o Remain proactive in evolving wildlife issues in suburban and urban areas as they impact parks and the community

- Update county park master plans where appropriate to meet the active and passive recreation needs of residents and to achieve the outcomes desired for each park in the system
  - Update a minimum of one park master plan yearly
  - Park maintenance should be in compliance with natural resource management best management practices
- Coordinate with local land conservancies and recreational partners to acquire or lease land to meet the park land acreage goals
  - Through the Green Infrastructure Planning process, identify lands that promote ecological and recreational connectivity
  - Develop a strategy for acquiring or leasing state surplus property
- Establish wetland mitigation opportunities in cooperation with developers, land conservancies, CVT's, state and county agencies
  - Identify wetland mitigation opportunities within the park system
  - Establish wetland mitigation program that could function as a dedicated funding source
- Determine the economic value of park natural resources
  - Develop a method for determining the economic value of park land, natural resources to tourism, property values, quality of life, public health and environmental quality
  - Work with Design & Development & Planning/Economic Development to understand collected data
  - Create a marketing communications plan to communicate economic value
    - Partner with other P & R agencies (Huron-Clinton Metroparks, state, local) to develop a common message
    - Seek health/environmental partners to help further the message
    - Communicate message to internal staff and targeted audiences – chambers of commerce, visitor bureaus, citizens, stakeholders, elected officials, etc.
- Establish levels of park maintenance and upgrades that meet the needs of park guests in a fiscally responsible manner
  - Develop an asset management inventory and condition assessment
  - Set standards for maintaining park assets
  - Research and assess the effectiveness of implementing green practices in park maintenance and development
- Work closely with government agencies and recreational providers to create a balance of park types across the County that provide residents with a variety of park experiences and promote equity of access
  - Develop a regional assessment to identify gaps and the means of improving parks to meet the gaps
- Establish design standards and principles to maximize efficiency and productivity
  - Standardize design standards and principles
  - Incorporate natural resource management guidelines into park design standards, development protocol and maintenance practices

- o Establish procedures for the implementation and long term monitoring of design standards
- o Identify alternative funding to support the implementation of innovative design standards

8.1.2 RECREATION FACILITIES

"Develop and maintain year round recreation facilities that support passive and active recreation pursuits for people of all ages."

8.1.2.1 GOAL

"Upgrade existing recreation facilities and add additional recreation facilities and amenities that energize the community to want to live, work, and play in Oakland County."

8.1.2.2 STRATEGIES

- Develop an asset management plan for infrastructure maintenance and improvements based on updating a minimum of 4-5% of the system annually
  - o As master plans are updated the infrastructure asset management plan is updated accordingly
  - o All asset management information is place incorporated into GIS databases and utilized to determine annual infrastructure status
  - o Establish a weighted criteria to prioritize infrastructure maintenance and improvement
- Develop a revenue and operational management strategy for decreased participation for all facilities and programs
  - o Ensure all golf courses and parks are Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program certified and remain certified, plus monitor the cost savings to the operation and report yearly
  - o Create a marketing plan to communicate the economic/environmental value of green practices to staff, guests, golf course associations, environmental groups, media (Including Michigan Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Program)
  - o Develop written operational standards and policies
  - o Quantify impact of "going green" and determine additional changes that can be made
  - o Staff to determine additional "green" changes that can be made and the cost savings of those changes
  - o Compare savings/value of Michigan Turfgrass vs. Audubon certification
  - o Market environmentally friendly, family and women friendly courses to youth and women, emphasizing concept of "home courses"

- Develop a business plan for every current and future park, golf course, or attraction in the system
    - Develop a business plan for the least productive facilities first and monitor the operational changes based on the business plans being implemented
    - Teach and train staff on business management practices and create performance measures that hold staff accountable to the outcomes desired
    - Create marketing plan for all facilities based upon data evaluation collected at point-of-sale (ZIP, gender, year of birth). Research GIS availability for point-of-sale
- Remove unproductive facilities and resources
    - Develop a weighting criteria with finance and recreation staff
    - Give each facility one year to reposition itself and determine next steps in contracting out the management or disposal of the property
- Establish a data management system to enable staff to facilitate decision making on recreation programs and services to create a lifelong customer
    - Develop and implement IT Master Plan
    - Train Parks and contractors' staff to manage cost centers effectively
    - Develop and implement a data management program of users to build advocacy and a user base to support program operations
    - Secure systems & equipment to allow for data transfer (use Palm Pilots and other existing equipment to capture info until the IT Communication Plan is in place)
    - Set protocol for regular reporting of data so that marketing plans can be adjusted
    - Develop plan to communicate technology changes (such as online registration, reservations for golfing, camping, shelters, merchandise sales, etc.) to public
- Develop a marketing strategy to maximize the use of facilities, programs, and services that enhance the awareness, use and revenue
    - Develop a marketing plan for each recreation facility and monitor the results
    - Demonstrate the cost benefit of marketing at a 7 to 1 ration of return to the facility in revenue
    - Develop and promote a signage and branding program
    - Develop and distribute a three season program guide
    - Incorporate the following evaluation and survey tools: Pre-evaluation surveys; post-evaluation surveys; focus groups; intercept surveys; trailer calls; online surveys
    - Measure the results of communication efforts via coupon returns, park attendance, web stats and other measurement tools
    - Post customer service results on agency website as monitoring tool
- Define the future role of the nature centers
    - Develop a business plan for the Nature Center
    - Seek out all local agencies with nature centers for their approach on these facilities to determine how Oakland County will be repositioning the nature center for the future

- o Review the nature center's business plan to determine marketing needs
  - o Measure results via attendance and off-site bookings
- Analyze all facility management contracts/leases through effective costing assessment, capital improvements required and measurable outcomes to maximize revenue return
  - o Establish cost of service and seek Park Commission support for contract changes
  - o Create contractor customer service standards and measure against them
- Establish a Partnership Policy that enhances relationships with schools; cities, villages, and townships; private, non-profit organizations; and other government agencies
  - o Seek out all partners and outline the partnership policy that applies to them and a five year planning effort to implement the policy
  - o Establish written agreements with measurable outcomes for each partner involved in the system and monitor and report the results
- Develop a trail plan for each park that provides a combination of trail types
  - o Evaluate existing trails and develop a strategy/policy to guide the addition of new trails
  - o Create trail construction and maintenance standards
- Establish an ADA compliance plan for parks and golf courses
  - o Develop and implement a system-wide phased accessibility plan with the goals of creating ADA compliance and one park with entirely universally accessible facilities by the end of 2018
  - o Identify potential funding sources to assist in the implementation of the phased accessibility plan
  - o Develop an ADA toolbox
  - o Analyze the self-evaluation and develop the transition plan
  - o Inventory and replace existing facility features to meet or exceed the ADA standards
- Enhance all facility rentals and reservations to create higher levels of use and value to users
  - o Develop a centralized reservation system
  - o Seek out and interview all business planners and caterers in the area and establish a partnership agreement with them for booking park facilities

8.1.3 RECREATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

"Our vision is to develop the following core recreation services in the most productive and efficient manner. These include the following; Natural Resource Education and Interpretive Programs, Outdoor Adventure Programs, Fitness and Wellness, Active Adults for older populations, Youth oriented programs and camps, Facility Rentals and Reservations, Special

Events, Family Programs, Therapeutic Recreation Programs, Volunteer Services, Golf Programs and Services, and Aquatics."

8.1.3.1 GOAL
"Develop each core program to the highest level possible that will provide residents with a quality experience that will last a lifetime."

8.1.3.2 STRATEGIES

- Determine core recreation services and programs
    - Prioritize program business plans and train staff on how to develop
    - Develop a strategy for coordinating facility business plans and program plans
    - Communicate to users the outcomes desired for each business plan
    - Enhance recreation facilities and park operations that meet the recreation needs of the community
    - Establish a marketing strategy for each core program service to build the highest level of use and productivity while creating a user base of information that creates a lifelong customer
    - Develop a consistent program evaluation criteria for all programs and track and report measurable outcomes every quarter
    - Develop key special events within the system to create new energy from users and to connect people to the system and each other while working in conjunction with the County Executive offices
    - Create a geographic approach to programs offered throughout the county to have a more balanced approach on the delivery of program services
- Phase out non-core recreation services
    - Develop a strategy for non-core services to either eliminate or find partners willing to adopt the program
    - Reposition mobile recreation to be a stronger program that can serve a multitude of users
    - Partner with other service providers before elimination
    - Devise a strategy for communication to public and staff why a certain amenity may be discontinued and provide a feedback method
    - Feedback to be considered during viability evaluation process
    - Eliminate programs that duplicate other services provided by other agencies and keep them if appropriate where the market is larger than what a single provider can deliver
    - Track each program for one year and determine whether to reposition or eliminate it
- Develop a four season approach to park programming
    - Develop a program plan for each park by season to attract users to the system
    - Establish measurable benchmarks for each quarter
    - Add additional winter related activities to create greater use of parks in the winter time, based upon business plan evaluation

- o Inventory existing facilities to meet current trends and communities' needs
- o Utilize information collected to refine the 4-season plan and marketing efforts
- Develop a program plan in coordination with other service providers to increase the use and/or revenue of each park, golf course and attraction

- o Develop a county wide program and facility plan working in cooperation with other service providers to identify gaps and strategies to resolve
- o Evaluate the lifecycle trends for each program and eliminate programs in decline or reposition them in the future
- o Develop and incorporate customer service standards for program services and facilities
- o Develop and implement communications plan to market re-positioned facilities and/or programs
- o Communicate programs and services through partners, advocates and other service providers
- o Cross-promote programs and services at each facility
  - Educate staff on programs available at other facilities
  - Interest area postcards at each facility
- Develop program-based recreation attractions with broader age appeal
  - o Establish which recreation programs need support facilities to enhance their core programs
  - o Explore an outdoor adventure program and site to teach people how to use the outdoors and introduce programs and events that celebrate the outdoors, increase skill levels of the participants and attracts new users to the parks system
  - o Develop a mini-business plan for each new potential attraction or program with a funding alternative
- Develop volunteer services as a core recreation program
  - o Establish a volunteer policy and manual for the department with training tools
  - o Recruit volunteers to all areas of the system to develop advocacy and support program and maintenance operations
  - o Communicate volunteer opportunities, accomplishments and contributions of staff to other staff, on website and through other media
- Determine where gaps in programs exist and eliminate duplication of services
  - o Develop a program plan for each core program
- Incorporate fitness and wellness opportunities into facilities and programs
  - o Develop a fitness plan for each park and recreation facility in the system
- Develop program standards for all core services and programs
  - o Develop and implement program standards for all services and track performance

- o Establish cost of service standards for all programs and reflect changes in pricing as needed
- o Create training vehicles with consistent messages (i.e., meeting notes, PowerPoint presentations, DVDs, email updates, etc.) for staff to use for training purposes
- Develop cost recovery goals based on true cost of services
  - o Develop, implement, and monitor a cost recovery model for each core program and a revenue strategy to meet it
- Create and build dynamic programs that energize the community and staff
  - o Develop and implement creativity guidelines for programs and services
  - o Track the results of creativity in programs through customer response forms

8.1.4 OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

"Our vision is to maximize the efficiency and revenue capability of each park, recreation facility, program and service that will create a sustainable park system for all residents in the county to enjoy."

8.1.4.1 GOAL

"Build and manage a sustainable park system that creates "World Class" parks, recreation facilities and programs for residents and visitors to the county to enjoy."
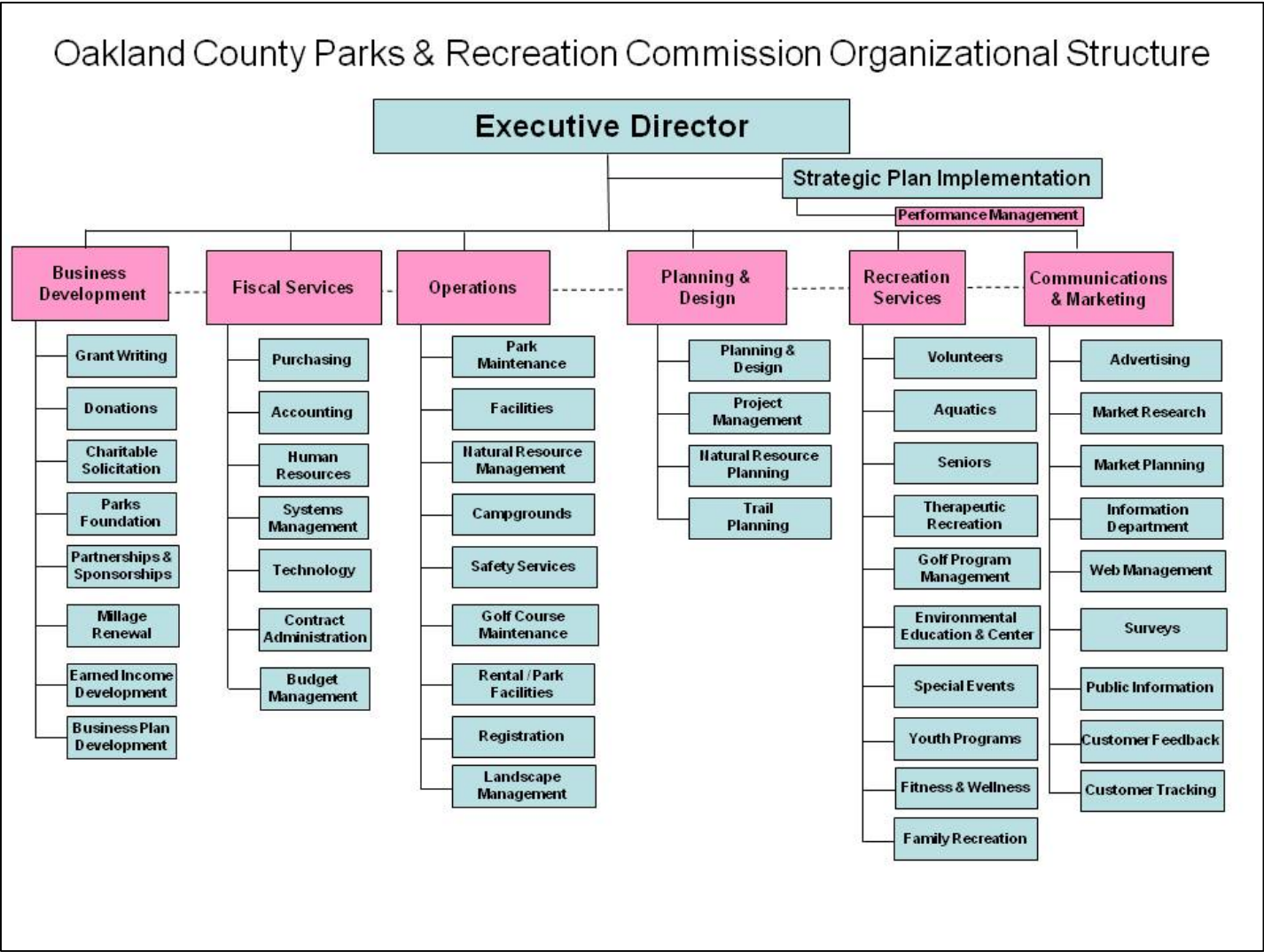
8.1.4.2 STRATEGIES

- Sustain high level of qualified professionals
  - o Develop and implement a succession plan for the department
  - o Develop a succession leadership team to train staff on leadership and the history of the park system
  - o Create educational tools for staff as needed (i.e., orientation for seasonal staff)
  - o Recognize staff and volunteers for years of service or accomplishments
  - o Communicate staff accomplishments to media, on website and to fellow staff
- Obtain voter approval for millage tax(es) for Oakland County Parks
  - o Seek voter approval in 2010 for renewal of the ¼ millage tax
  - o Seek voter approval for a land acquisition millage in 2012
  - o Create tools for delivery of millage message to voters
- Build advocacy, awareness, use and appreciation for Oakland County Parks
  - o Develop a marketing plan for the Department
  - o Establish a strategy for pricing services
  - o Establish a strategy for data management
  - o Establish a strategy for promotions of services, facilities and programs
  - o Communicate value of park system to residents (i.e., property values, quality of life, VIP messages)
- Provide funding for an integrated Information Technology (IT) master plan
  - o Develop and implement the technology plan
  - o Develop business plan and revenue funds to support IT costs

- Design an organizational structure that furthers a shared purpose and vision that will benefit the organization
    - Update the organizational design of the department to ensure greater functionality, maximize productivity, and coordinate services
- Increase revenue resources
    - Develop and implement a revenue policy for all operations of the system
    - Educate and train staff on methods to generate revenue
    - Develop new or alternative revenue funds to support operational costs, including grants, sponsorships, etc.
    - Determine the true costs of services between the parks system and contractors they manage at each site
    - Evaluate management contracts/leases on an annual basis
    - Train staff on how to compete for services and submit competitive bids
- Develop cost recovery pricing based on true cost of services
    - Develop true cost of services for all park maintenance, programs and facilities
    - Identify cost centers and methods to improve each cost center to the desired outcome
    - Develop goals for each cost center based on desired outcomes
    - Develop communication program to educate staff on value and importance of cost recovery
- Maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of resources
    - Develop a maintenance tracking costing model and apply hours against the standards
    - Track the cost of services, including supplies, equipment and labor
    - Develop a safety management plan for the department
    - Eliminate entitlement by establishing policies that build equity and fairness
    - Develop criteria and implement CIP plan
    - Educate partners and staff on the criteria and the priority schedule
- Eliminate higher dependency on tax revenues
    - Create new earned income opportunities, i.e. seeking grants, and new ways to increase efficiency
    - Train staff on business revenue tracking and costing
    - Increase use at all cost centers through effective design of programs and services
    - Establish transition plan if the millage renewal is not approved
- Establish a stronger, positive connection to Oakland County government services
    - Determine which of our services can be coordinated, along with an implementation strategy
    - Meet with respective departments to determine ways/methods to gain mutual cooperation

8.2 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

In order to achieve the Vision, Mission and Goals for the Strategic Plan, PROS recommends a new functional organizational chart, which will allow the organization to operate in a more cost effective and functional manner. The organization structure is centered on a philosophy of lead and support divisions. The lead divisions are recreation services, planning and design, and business development. The support divisions are fiscal services, operations, and communications and marketing. The final updated organizational chart will have names of staff associated with respective operational functions with accountabilities and responsibilities.

Oakland County Parks & Recreation Commission Organizational Structure

8.3 CONCLUSION

Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission is a highly respected by both residents and visitors. To build on this support, this Strategic Plan focuses on a vision to refine all elements of the park system to create stronger advocacy and sustainability than what exists today. The Strategic Plan will require the support of the Parks and Recreation Commission and staff to make the plan a reality and to achieve the vision and goals stated. It will require a shift in management thinking and policy development, as well as tough decisions to implement the strategies outlined.

Overall, the implementation of the strategies will make Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission stronger, more efficient, sustainable and innovative in its approach and management of the park system for years to come. Some changes will be easy to implement and others will require time; however, in the end, it will be worth the time and energy required to make Oakland County a "World Class" park system for years to come.