CHARTING THE WAY FORWARD
2013 IERM Convention, Stellenbosch

The Parks Planning Hierarchy
Presentation Objectives

• Understand the big picture

• Know what the different parts of the planning jigsaw are

• Have an idea of planning document priorities

• Get you thinking about what planning documents you need to develop over the next 5 years
Does this look familiar?
Cycle of Reaction

1. Missed Procedure
2. Preventable Mistakes Occur
3. Resource Priorities Get Dictated
4. Use Quick Fix Low Cost Solution
5. Work Load Increases/Efficiencies Decrease
6. Manpower/Budget Reductions
7. Morale Declines
8. Standards Drop
Why Plan?

“To get to where we want as efficiently and as effectively as we can”

Jayson Kelly, IERM Convention 2013
Strategy versus Policy

• Strategies have long term vision and goals – often with a 20+ year planning horizon. They help direct resources to achieve end goals

• Policies help guide day to day decision making, often through directing procedures, or how we do things
Strategy Content

• Setting out of a vision for the future

• Explaining how the strategy fits in to the planning hierarchy (including legislation)

• Assessing the current situation

• Reviewing future demand, trends and demographic change

• Establishing planning categories and catchments

• Setting out of targets and measures
Strategy Content

• Implementation plan with tasks/projects, timeframes, resources and priorities

• Appendices with inventories, plans, other supporting information
Policy Content

• Discussion of issues

• List of objectives

• Procedures and processes to achieve the policy objectives
Public Art on Parks

Public art is one of the more visible and accessible forms of art, and often is complimentary to the installation and the location if placed within a park. However public art can be controversial, and if located in the wrong place, can be in conflict with the primary purpose of the park.

Objectives

1. To allow the installation of appropriate public art within Parks

Policies

1. Public art may only be installed in the park with the formal approval of council.

2. Any application to council to install a piece of public art must be accompanied by a landscape assessment undertaken by a qualified landscape architect.

3. The location of any public art installation must be in keeping with the scale and values of the park, and it must not unduly impact on the cost or operation of recreation or maintenance activities.
1. Organise your parks network into different categories. For example:

- Destination parks
- Sports parks
- Community parks
- Neighbourhood or local parks
- Nature parks
- Linkage parks
- Amenity Parks etc.
2. For each park category, identify a suitable provision level of service that describes:

- How much park land is to be provided (per capita)
- How it is to be distributed
- Guidelines for park sizes, locations and layout
- Good to know what the ball park is so use comparative information from other parks organisations e.g via Yardstick

This could be a good project for IERM as ideally we all want to use the same park categories and terminology
3. Using the provision levels of service:

- Identify “holes” in current park provision
- Identify over supply of current park land
- Identify shortfalls in current park land
- Suggest how best to use future land acquisition
- Inform any land planning schemes to ensure that subdivision contributions comply with the parks strategy vision and goals
4. For each park category, identify a suitable development level of service that describes:

- What assets or features are provided on each park category
- Any exclusions for each park category
- The quantity of assets or features provided for each park category
5. Using the development levels of service:

- Establish development guidelines for new subdivisions
- Audit existing parks to identify new capital programmes, renewal programmes, and decommissioning of assets
- Document implementation plan
1. Assess current supply of recreation facilities

- This is more about facilities rather than land e.g. numbers of playing fields, courts etc.
- Consider facilities provided by other organisations
- Consider planned facilities
2. Assess current and future demand

- Consider existing participation numbers
- Consider demographic trends
- Consider trends in participation locally and nationally
3. Undertake a supply gap analysis

- Identify the user groups that are declining/growing against current facility provision
- Take into account transport and access, equity, identity and integration
- Identify future requirements for facility provision
- Consult, consult, consult!
- Document implementation plan/re-allocate facilities
1. Break jurisdiction into logical catchments

2. Take lead from development levels of service in parks/recreation strategy with regards to providing destination, local or a mix of destination and local playgrounds

3. Identify over/under supply areas

4. Identify new capital and renewal capital requirements and costs

5. Allocate funding to each catchment and consult on how best to spend the available funding
1. Assess current track/walkway network

2. Categorise network e.g. short walk, extended walk, shared path etc.

3. Establish standards for track/walkway development taking into account gradient, width and surface material

4. Undertake gap analysis of standard against current provision

5. Identify new network development

6. Document implementation plan
1. Establish toilet categories e.g. premier, beach, park, sportsground, remote etc

2. Define design criteria for each category

3. Assess current location and provision

4. Identify under/over supply

5. Establish assessment criteria for new toilet proposals

6. Document operating levels of service for each category

7. Document implementation plan
1. Document current provision, including location and species

2. Identify vision – usually based on landscape character

3. Identify catchment areas

4. Identify species list for each catchment area that will achieve the vision

5. Document provision and planting standards

6. Document implementation plan

7. Develop tree removal policies
Collect asset information – start at a high level and work to a level of detail that matches ability to maintain the information. Capture:

- Asset description
- Location
- Condition
- Remaining useful life
Establish a “library” of asset information, including:

- Theoretical lives
- Replacement values
Produce an asset renewal plan that takes account of:

- Development levels of service
- Asset condition
- Remaining useful life
- Ability to fund the renewal
- Ability to spend the funding
1. Develop “omnibus” park management plans based on park categories used in the parks strategy

2. Develop individual park management plans for premier/destination parks

3. Develop standard set of parks policies to cover all parks

4. Develop set of parks policies specific to each park category (management plan)
Document information about each park covered in a management plan, including:

- Aerial photo of each park
- Legal description of land
- List of encumbrances (leases, planning designations, utility services etc.)
- Description of topography, vegetation, soil and climate
- Describe the main features
- Document potential developments
- Identify park specific policies (if any)

- Major parks will have entries against all of these areas, while small parks may only have entries against a small number (e.g. excluding climate, soils, developments etc.)
Service standards should document all of the tasks involved in parks maintenance. For example:

- Grass cutting
- Garden maintenance
- Litter control
- Hedge cutting
- Toilet cleaning
- Furniture maintenance
- Playground maintenance etc
Each service standard should:

- Be directed by the park categories described in the parks strategy
- Contain an intent statement using language members of the public would understand
- Describe what the end result should look like
- Describe the minimum number of service frequencies that should be used

Avoid being prescriptive as we want to take advantage of staff knowledge and innovation to achieve the desired end results
Planning Priorities

• Parks strategy

• Asset management plan

• Parks management plans

• Activity strategy for any activities which are causing significant problems/public complaints
Be realistic!

• Try and develop just one of these strategies or plans each year

• You will still have reactive work distracting you and it will initially be hard to find the time/resources to put these in place

• Expect initial staff resistance – they are busy as it is!

• Be persistent. After 5 or so years you will tip the balance and will become proactive instead of reactive, and your staff, politicians and residents will love you for it.
“Mighty oaks from little acorns grow”