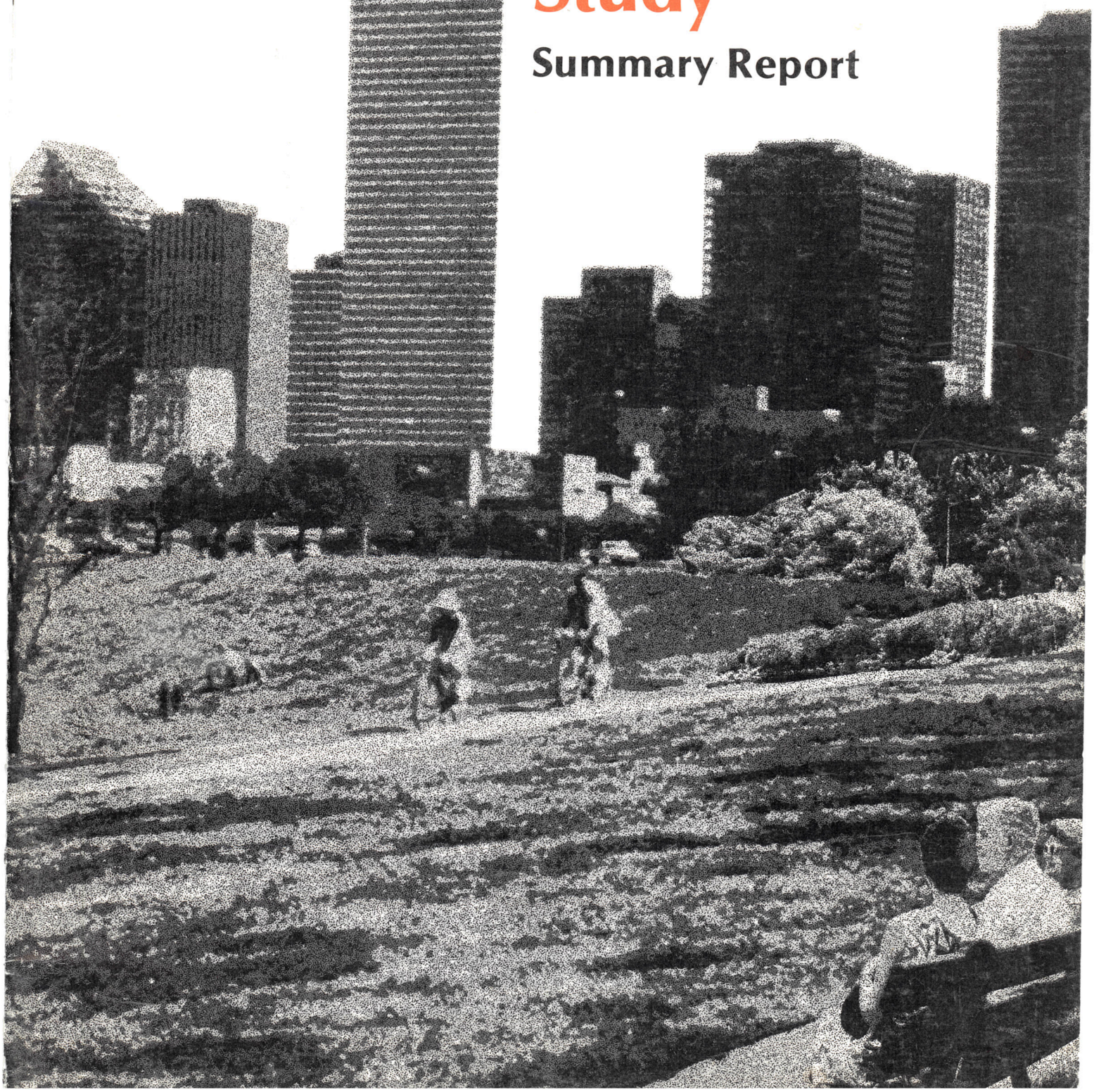
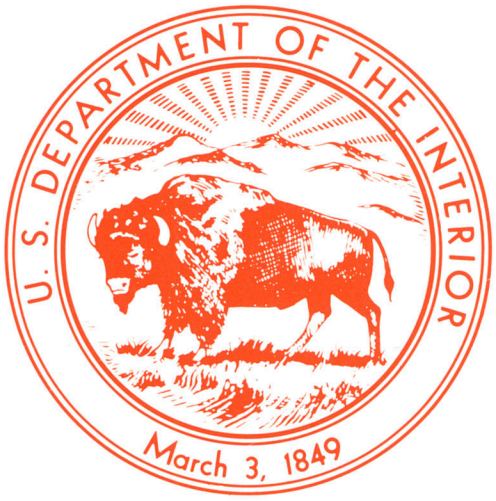
National Urban Recreation Study

Summary Report





As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, parks and recreation areas, and to ensure the wise use of all these resources. The department also has major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

United States Department of the Interior
Cecil D. Andrus, Secretary of the Interior
Robert Herbst, Assistant Secretary
for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Chris Therral Delaporte, Director

National Park Service
William J. Whalen, Director

February 1978



National Urban Recreation Study

Summary Report

Public Law 94-422
94th Congress, S. 327
September 28, 1976

An Act

To amend the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended, to establish the National Historic Preservation Fund, and for other purposes.

"SEC. 12. Within one year of the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary is authorized and directed to submit to the Committees on Interior and Insular Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives a comprehensive review and report on the needs, problems, and opportunities associated with urban recreation in highly populated regions, including the resources potentially available for meeting such needs. The report shall include site specific analyses and alternatives, in a selection of geographic environments representative of the Nation as a whole, including, but not limited to, information on needs, local capabilities for action, major site opportunities, trends, and a full range of options and alternatives as to possible solutions and courses of action designed to preserve remaining open space, ameliorate recreational deficiency, and enhance recreational opportunity for urban populations, together with an analysis of the capability of the Federal Government to provide urban-oriented environmental education programs (including, but not limited to, cultural programs in the arts and crafts) within such options. The Secretary shall consult with, and request the views of, the affected cities, counties, and States on the alternatives and courses of action identified.".





Contents

Purpose of the National Urban Recreation Study 4

The Concern for Urban Recreation 6

Approach to the Study 8

Summary of Findings 12

Options 17

Local and State Actions 18

Federal Options 26

- Federal Policy Options 26
- Federal Open Space and Recreation Land Options 28
- Federal Financing Options 32
- Federal Programmatic Options 36

Next Steps 46



Purpose of the

The National Urban Recreation Study is a response to the September 28, 1976, mandate of the United States Congress in Public Law 94-422, amending the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. The study responds in the following ways:

- **It documents the importance of recreation in cities** by taking a look at successes, problems, and needs expressed by local officials and residents. The study departs from previous Federal studies which have concentrated mainly on physical land and water resources. Instead, the Urban Recreation Study also considers many non-physical factors such as recreation service programs, planning, staffing, and administration. It does not attempt to document all the benefits of urban recreation, although it confirms the importance of recreation in urban areas around the country. Given this widespread recognition of the values of urban recreation, the study concentrates on ways to improve the protection and use of existing and potential recreation resources.

National Urban Recreation Study

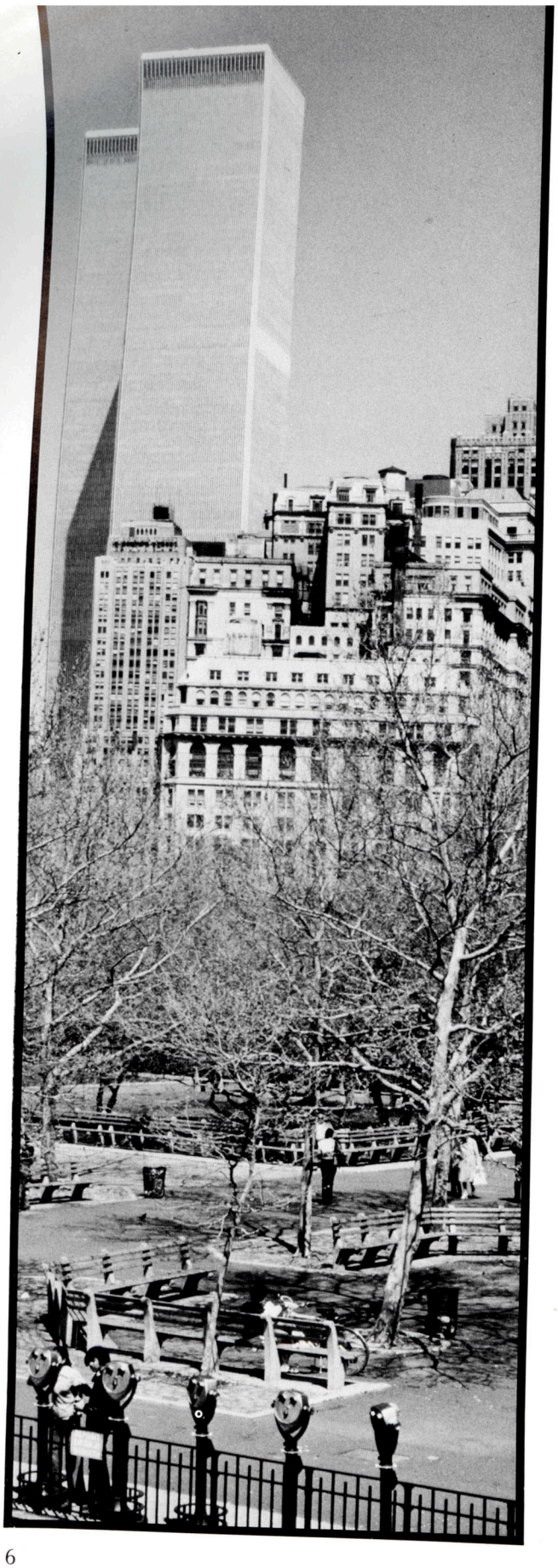
- **It focuses specifically on close-to-home recreation needs.** While a balanced recreation system should include appropriate resources and services at every level from the neighborhood to the interstate region, this study concentrates on neighborhood, community, and regional opportunities which are significant in the daily lives of urban residents. This focus is consistent with Congress direction for a study of urban recreation *"in* highly-populated urban regions." However, emphasis of this study on highly-populated areas does not mean that recreation outside these areas is unimportant.

- **It suggests possible actions** to solve many open space and recreation problems. The study presents Federal options which could be considered by Congress and Federal administrators. It also identifies important State, local and private actions which might be helped along by the Federal government. Most of the Federal and non-Federal actions were suggested by State, local, and private participants during the study.

- **It provides a basis for formulating coherent national recreation and national urban policies** which take full account of urban recreation needs and the potential which recreation programs have for improving urban living conditions. Of particular importance are the Study's distinctions between meeting urban recreation needs and preserving urban open space.

While no single effort can give final answers on every aspect of such a complex subject as urban recreation, the National Urban Recreation Study responds to Congress request by offering broad coverage of urban recreation issues, problems, and alternative strategies.

This publication summarizes the major findings and options for action of the National Urban Recreation Study.





The Concern for Urban Recreation

Recreation is widely accepted as a key contributor to good physical and mental health. The role of parks and recreation programs in the economic and social life of communities is also becoming well-recognized.

Over 70% of our nation's population lives in urban areas. For many urban dwellers, access to recreation opportunities is limited because of where they live or how much family income they have. In a number of cities, recreation opportunities have been less in recent years because of aging facilities and the lack of funds to maintain them. In a time of increasing recreation demand when energy and economic conditions are making it more and more desirable to have recreation close-to-home, many people have become deeply concerned about the loss of existing and potential recreation lands, facilities, and programs.

During the 1970's, every level of government has substantially increased expenditures for recreation resources and services. But these increases have not kept pace with inflation in costs of land, construction, energy, and staffing. Most of the open space and recreation problems identified in the 1962 Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission report and most of the urban problems spotlighted in the 1960's still exist. These problems have, in fact, been itensified by the fiscal crunch in many cities and by the energy crisis which emphasizes requirements for close-to-home recreation opportunities.

Today, Federal involvement in outdoor recreation and conservation programs is well-known, but the increasing impact of Federal revenue sharing, community development, public employment and public works programs on city recreation efforts is not apparent. The ability of local governments to meet recreation needs is strongly affected by Federal programs in social welfare, housing, transportation, environmental education, arts, and other recreation-related activities.

Despite substantial Federal involvement in recreation and urban problems the lack of a coherent national urban policy, as well as the absence of a national recreation policy, has resulted in fragmented and conflicting approaches to urban recreation. The National Urban Recreation Study's examination of the Federal role in addressing key urban recreation issues could be the first step in defining a national policy that addresses the full spectrum of recreation and open space issues.



Approach to the Study

Recreation as Related to Many Urban Functions

The existence and quality of urban recreation depend upon and affect many other systems which make urban areas function—housing, transportation, education, employment, health and social services, crime prevention, environmental protection, and many others. The National Urban Recreation Study has viewed urban recreation in the total context of local problems and potentials. This requires a broad analysis of the many functional areas in which government is involved and of how these functions are carried out through legislation, regulation, administration, and funding.

The focus of the Urban Recreation Study is on major concerns of public recreation providers. Critical roles and problems of private non-profit agencies and the commercial sector are highlighted, however, to show their relationship to public recreation issues.

Distributed and Diversified Study Areas

Seventeen field study areas were chosen as a sample of the nation's most highly populated urban areas, and a separate, detailed field study report has been prepared for each area. The sample included all 13 of the Standard Consolidated Statistical Areas, each comprising two or more Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSAs) which have a high degree of geographic integration and intermovement. Four additional SMSAs were also chosen to provide regional diversity, a variety of city types, and opportunities for involvement by a wide range of Federal, State and local interests.

Urban Recreation Field Study Areas

Name	Population (1970)
Standard Consolidated Statistical Areas	
Boston*-Lawrence-Lowell	3,526,349
Chicago*-Gary	7,612,314
Cincinnati-Hamilton	1,611,058
Cleveland-Akron-Lorain	3,000,276
Detroit-Ann Arbor	4,665,493
Houston-Galveston	2,169,128
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim	9,972,037
Miami-Fort Lauderdale	1,887,892
Milwaukee-Racine	1,574,526
New York*-Newark-Jersey City	17,028,710
Philadelphia*-Wilmington-Trenton	5,621,375
San Francisco*-Oakland-San Jose	4,423,314
Seattle*-Tacoma	1,832,896
Other SMSAs Including Federal Regional Centers	
Atlanta,* Georgia	1,597,816
Dallas*-Fort Worth, Texas	2,377,979
Denver*-Boulder, Colorado	1,237,208
Kansas City*-Kansas, Missouri	1,273,926
Total Population	71,412,597

*Federal Regional Centers

Recreational opportunities and deficiencies are closely related to the activities of specific political jurisdictions. For this reason, several jurisdictional subsamples were selected from the thousands of political entities in the 17 areas. An initial sample of 88 jurisdictions included all designated central cities (44), one or more satellite cities, and usually an urban county or township.

Public Involvement Critical to the Study

In each of the selected study areas, initial meetings were held with city, State, and Federal officials who had first-hand knowledge of local situations. These officials assisted in establishing study goals and procedures, and in conducting the field studies.

Maximum participation by citizens of study areas was an important aspect of this study. Over 2,000 government officials, community and neighborhood leaders, special interest representatives, and private citizens contributed to the study by providing information or commenting on study draft reports.

In every study area, field teams made special efforts to involve all concerned interest and user groups, including young, elderly, handicapped, minority, and poor residents of study neighborhoods. In several cities, the problems of inner-city residents were given special attention through specific assignments of team members and the cooperation of neighborhood, youth, and senior citizen organizations. Study teams reported on field study findings and solicited public comments by using a variety of public involvement tools, ranging from public information meetings to radio and television call-in programs.



The Scope of Recreation as Viewed in This Study

The Meaning of Recreation:

Recreation is refreshment of people's minds and bodies through non-compulsory free-time activities, usually in contrast to or as a diversion from day-to-day routines. Recreation activities may be pursued for many purposes, including physical and mental fulfillment, personal recognition, stimulation, learning, and socializing.

The Setting for Recreation:

Recreation takes place in many physical settings ranging from buildings (homes, museums, recreation centers, movie houses) to completely natural environments (mountains, rivers, seashores). The recreation settings discussed here, however, are in or near urban residential areas, usually within one hour's travel time. Designated neighborhood, community or regional recreation areas are often important determinants of urban land use and development of community definition and of social life.

Providers of Recreation:

All levels of government—Federal, State and local—plus the private non-profit and commercial sectors are significant providers of recreation areas and services. In urban America, the mix of open and developed lands, indoor and outdoor facilities, organized and unstructured activities within any city's recreation system has been influenced by a variety of historic, economic, political and cultural patterns. Where societal and urban patterns have changed over time, the mix provided must be changed to meet expectations of citizens.

Findings

The many field surveys, meetings, and studies produced an array of findings about the problems, successes, and needs in urban recreation. This summary focuses only on findings which are predominant in the Study and which represent the wide range of concerns for urban recreation.

In reading these findings, it should be remembered that the urban areas studied include large and small cities, old cities and new ones, and suburban areas as well as core cities. Therefore, it is not surprising that some cities have excellent parks and recreation systems and others have poor ones, and that some problems are common to all areas studied and others exist only in a few jurisdictions.

People's Expectations

Open Space and Recreation Land

People expect balanced, well-distributed sytems of recreation land available at neighborhood, community, regional, State, and national levels. Recreation and open space lands should be recognized as essential components of urban growth and of efforts to revitalize our cities. Open space areas with unique ecological, cultural, or resource production values should be protected wherever found, but not necessarily through public acquisition.

Physical Facilities

People expect convenient and well-maintained recreation facilities which accommodate a wide range of indoor and outdoor recreation activities and programs.

Programs and Services

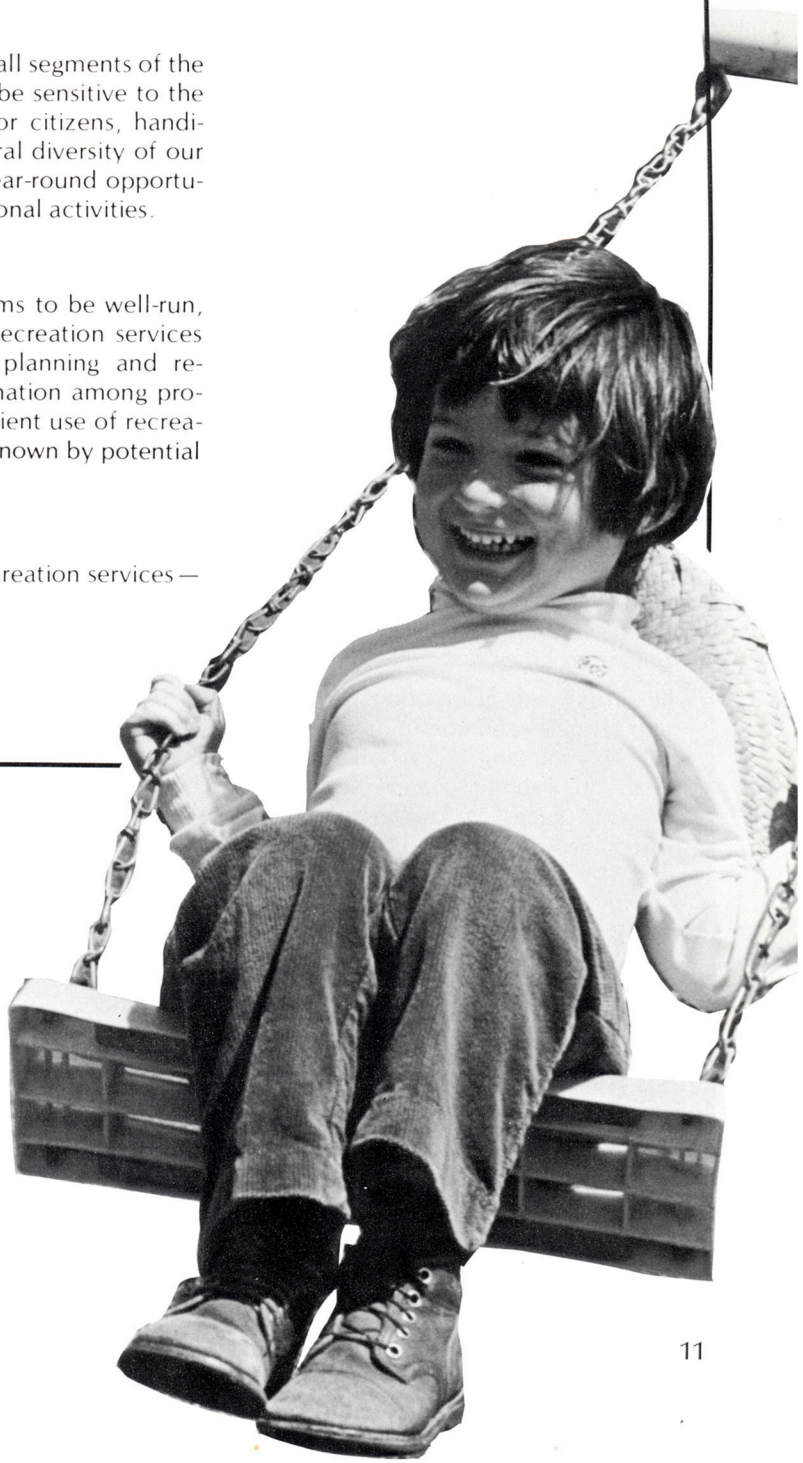
People expect urban recreation programs to serve all segments of the urban population. People also want programs to be sensitive to the special needs of many Americans who are senior citizens, handicapped, or disadvantaged; to recognize the cultural diversity of our communities; and to provide a broad range of year-round opportunities for educational, social, cultural, and recreational activities.

Management and Support Systems

People expect park and recreation delivery systems to be well-run, well-financed, and well-used. Provision of good recreation services requires good management techniques, sound planning and research, adequate and capable staff, good coordination among providers, and careful budgeting. Maximum and efficient use of recreation facilities and programs requires that they be known by potential users and that they be accessible and safe.

Financing

People expect well-financed and cost-effective recreation services—maximum services at the lowest possible cost.



Summary of Findings

People in all urban areas want a well-balanced system of urban recreation opportunities which includes close-to-home neighborhood facilities and programs for all segments of the population.

- Most people want recreation close-to-home, but recreation opportunities are often poorly distributed in urban areas. The 17 field studies clearly demonstrate the importance of nearby recreation programs and facilities. Many urban neighborhoods lack a variety of year-round programs and facilities that are responsive and available to all residents. About 3/4 of the neighborhoods sampled in field studies reported dissatisfaction with neighborhood opportunities.
- Recreation in urban areas includes a wide array of programs provided by many organizations in a variety of locations. Urban recreation opportunities encompass participant and spectator sports, environmental education, arts and cultural programs, "just relaxing" in the parks, and many others. These opportunities are provided by local governments, schools, private voluntary groups, and commercial organizations. They are found in parks; community and senior citizen centers; service centers of nonprofit, voluntary agencies; and in other public and private facilities.
- In virtually all jurisdictions studied, indoor recreation facilities and community centers play a critical role in providing recreation services. General purpose community centers serve as neighborhood meeting places, are usable throughout the year, and often have supervised recreation programs not always available at outdoor areas.

A wide variety of open space areas with substantial scenic, cultural, environmental, agricultural, and recreational values exist in and near our cities. While threats to remaining open space areas due to continued urban expansion into the countryside are very real, acquisition of these areas can meet only a small portion of total recreation needs.

- A large number of potential open space and recreation sites exist in the study areas, within and outside cities, but the primary values of most open space sites are environmental and economic rather than recreational.
- In the 17 field study areas alone, almost 200 open space sites ranging in size from 2 to 1,000,000 acres, were identified as having open space or recreation potentials. These sites comprise only a tiny fraction of all potential sites in urban areas across the nation.
- Protecting all the valuable areas being threatened by unsuitable development will require better use of land protection tools such as zoning, performance standards for developments, tax incentives and easements in addition to full fee acquisition. Land purchases are just one among many approaches to open space protection, not a total solution. In fact, over-reliance on public acquisition can lead to loss of unique resources, due to purchase delays and cost escalations, which might have been saved under more comprehensive strategies.
- The most densely settled, older cities have the least land dedicated to park and recreation use. Field studies generally confirm that the largest amounts of recreation land in urban regions are located at some distance from heavily populated residential areas.
- Open space acquisition on the fringe of urban areas, such as that involved in creation of new National Recreation Areas is frequently justified on the basis of providing recreation opportunities for urban residents, but does not meet the highest priority recreation needs of most city dwellers.

Existing and potential recreation resources are not being fully utilized.

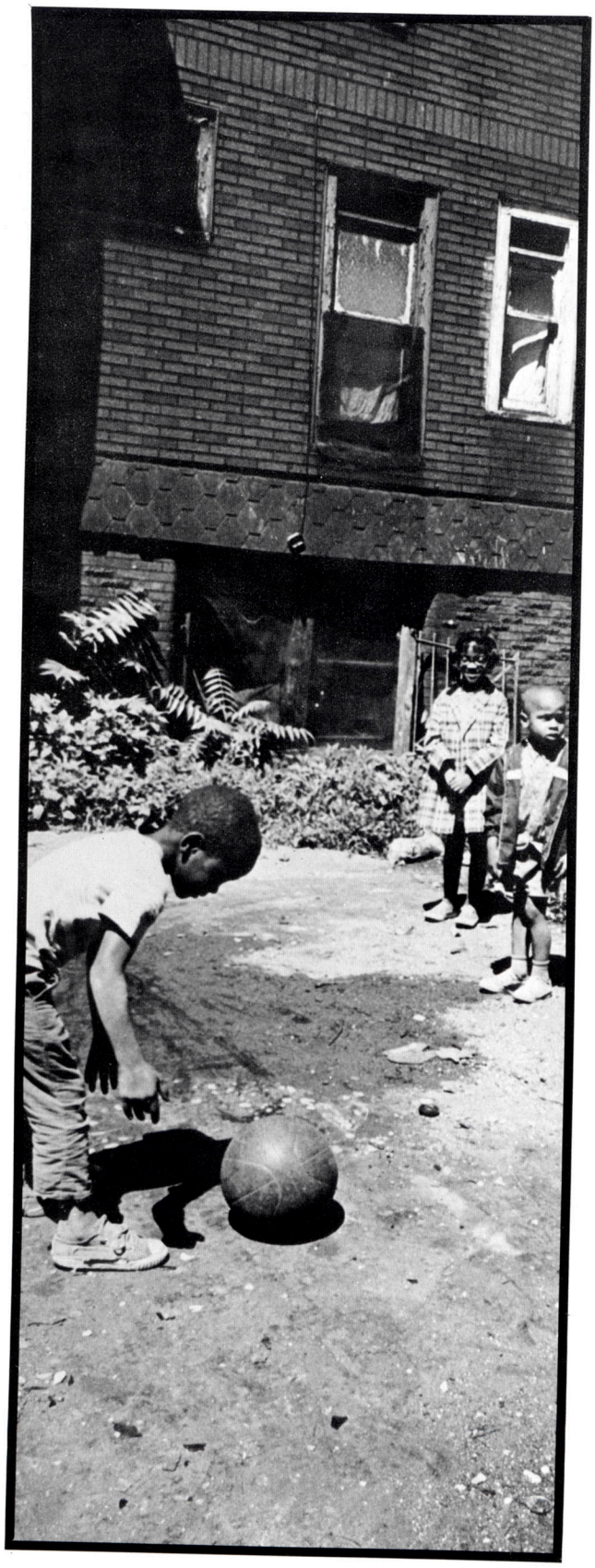
- Almost every city recognizes the desirability of using all community resources and facilities to develop and maintain successful recreation and parks systems; but personnel, funding and institutional problems limit cooperative ventures in many areas.
- The city itself is a recreation resource—its streets, its museums, its churches, its gathering places all provide recreation opportunities.

- Many city parks and recreation facilities are underutilized because of limited activity programming, poor staffing, deteriorated conditions, or bad locations.
- Water supply reservoirs, utility corridors, abandoned railroad rights-of-way, and decaying waterfronts all have potential to be re-used for recreation.
- Schools, community centers, churches, and public buildings have unrealized potential for recreation use in conjunction with their primary functions.

Good management, well-trained staff, and adequate financial support are the keys to providing good recreation services.

- Satisfaction with recreation opportunities in the urban area studies was more dependent on the existence of good programs and imaginative leadership than on large acreages or elaborate facilities.
- Accessible facilities, diverse programs, year round operation, and good maintenance are critical determinants of citizen satisfaction with community recreation. These elements all require substantial numbers of competent staff and a steady source of funds to sustain them.
- Hiring freezes and staff cutbacks have occured in a majority of park and recreation departments over the last 5 years, resulting in reduced program opportunities and facility maintenance while demands for recreation facilities and programs have increased.





Lack of coordination among recreation providers at every level of government is a serious barrier to more efficient and responsive urban recreation programs.

- Since schools and private non-profit agencies are major recreation providers in most cities, or could be, coordination between public recreation departments and these agencies is often critical. Cooperation among Federal, State and local agencies and between local jurisdictions can also enhance recreation opportunities. Yet few urban areas have effective mechanisms for coordination of recreation services and facilities. While virtually all jurisdictions report some informal cooperation in use of facilities, only 13 out of 49 jurisdictions report formal coordination bodies which represent all recreation providers; the private non-profit sector is represented on only 8 of these bodies.
- In some cities, fiscal conditions discourage coordination that can create more effective and efficient recreation services. For example, several joint school-park and recreation programs have been discontinued due to lack of funds.
- At the metropolitan level, lack of common land use goals and strategies makes protection of identified regional open space very difficult.

The greatest urban recreation deficiencies for land and facilities exist in the inner cores of the nation's largest cities.

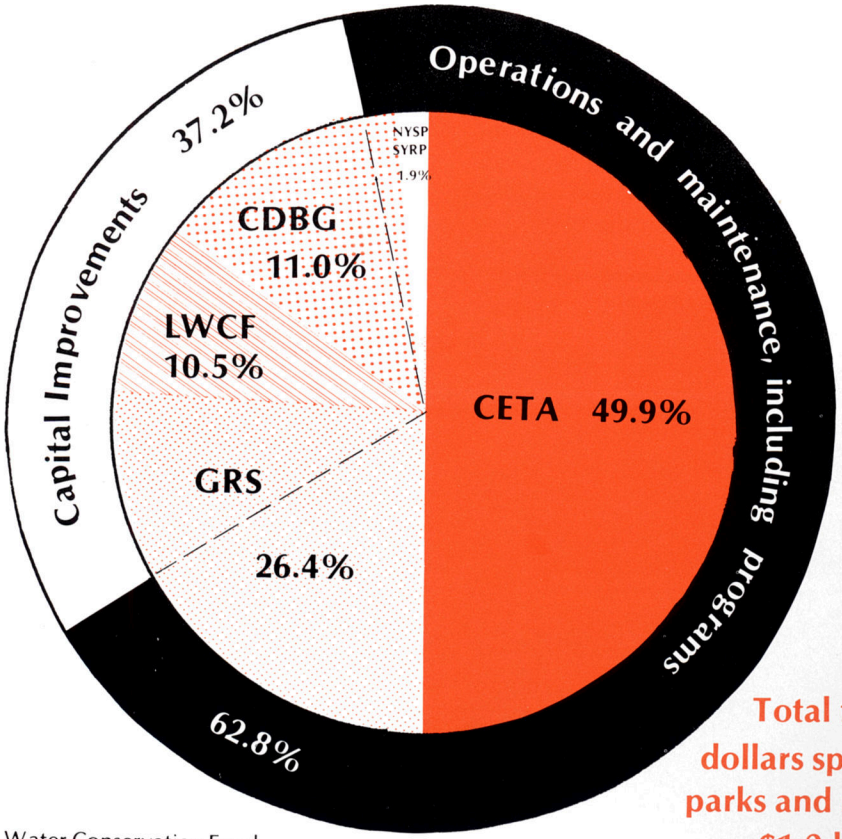
- In the growing cities, the greatest need is for development of new park land and facilities; in the older cities, lack of funds for programs and maintenance has restricted recreation opportunities and has resulted in the loss of large investments in park facilities as these facilities deteriorate and become unusable.
- Rehabilitation of existing facilities is a massive need in large, older cities and their suburbs. Neglect of short-term investments in maintenance has produced needs for large expenditures to accomplish essential renovation and redevelopment. Soaring energy prices make rehabilitation and modernization a high local priority, but current rehabilitation efforts are hampered by the fiscal distress of older core and satellite cities.
- Recreation deficiencies in the large, economically hard-pressed cities are unlikely to be corrected through local efforts or through existing Federal programs since parks and recreation agencies in these cities are having difficulty competing for public dollars. These cities are often receiving less money to provide recreation services than they did 5 years ago.

As local dollars for parks and recreation become more scarce, localities have turned for help, not to the states, but to the Federal Government.

- Very few States direct their own financial resources to urban recreation.
- The major Federal programs providing funds for parks and recreation, either directly or indirectly are: the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), General Revenue Sharing (GRS), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), and the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA).
- Federal assistance programs provided $1.2 billion, or 35.4% of all funds used by cities and counties for parks and recreation in Fiscal Year 1976. This total includes $127 million from LWCF, $316.7 million from GRS, $132.1 million from CDBG and an estimated $600 million from CETA. (See Chart 1)
  - The Land and Water Conservation Fund—the major categorical grant program for recreation—provides almost twice as much money per capita to suburban areas as to central cities. Only 16% of the State and local share of the Fund has been expended in central cities containing 30% of the national population.

Chart 1

Local Park and Recreation Use of Six Major Grant Programs, Fiscal Year 76



Total federal dollars spent on local parks and recreation—$1.2 billion*

LWCF— Land and Water Conservation Fund
CDBG— Community Development Block Grant
GRS— General Revenue Sharing
CETA— Comprehensive Employment and Training Program
NYSP— National Youth Sports Program
SYRP— Summer Youth Recreation Program

* These six programs are the major sources of park and recreation funding identified in this study. Other agencies, such as the Economic Development Administration and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, supply substantial amounts of public works, health, social service and educational funding that have secondary recreational benefits.

- General Revenue Sharing and the Community Development Block Grant Program are used least for recreation in the older, economically hard-pressed cities which use these Federal funds for more urgent and essential needs.
- The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act program has enabled many park and recreation agencies in economically hard-pressed cities to maintain recreation services that they would have been unable to provide with local funds alone. However, use of the CETA Program, which was not specifically intended to meet park and recreation manpower needs, has had unintended, adverse consequences on the quality of recreation services provided.

No coherent national urban policy exists that considers urban recreation.

- Current Federal policy emphasizes State and local discretion in use of revenue sharing, block and single-purpose, categorical grants for urban recreation. The targeting of these funds to meet critical urban needs is largely a function of State and local priorities. The Federal Government promotes coordination of these grant and planning programs mainly through Statewide, metropolitan, and areawide A-95 clearinghouses. Thus, while a national policy does exist, based on State and local discretion and coordination, the lack of an explicit national policy on meeting urban recreation needs has resulted in piecemeal and sometimes conflicting efforts.
- The lack of a coherent policy has resulted in uneven application of Federal programs to urban recreation problems. Conflicting or uncoordinated goals and strategies at the Federal level produce gaps and overlaps in local use of Federal dollars. The effects of Federal dollars could be made much more positive by a unified approach which encourages Federal, State, and local cooperation in addressing critical urban recreation problems.

Current national recreation programs do not effectively address priority open space and recreation needs of urban areas.

- Federal programs directed at land protection have had little impact on continued loss of valuable open space resources in and near cities. The emphasis has been on full-fee acquisition of threatened lands and resources rather than alternative land protection strategies.
- Federal support for urban recreation comes primarily from community development, manpower, and human services programs that are not primarily directed toward recreation, but are, nevertheless, major influences on community and neighborhood programs.



Options

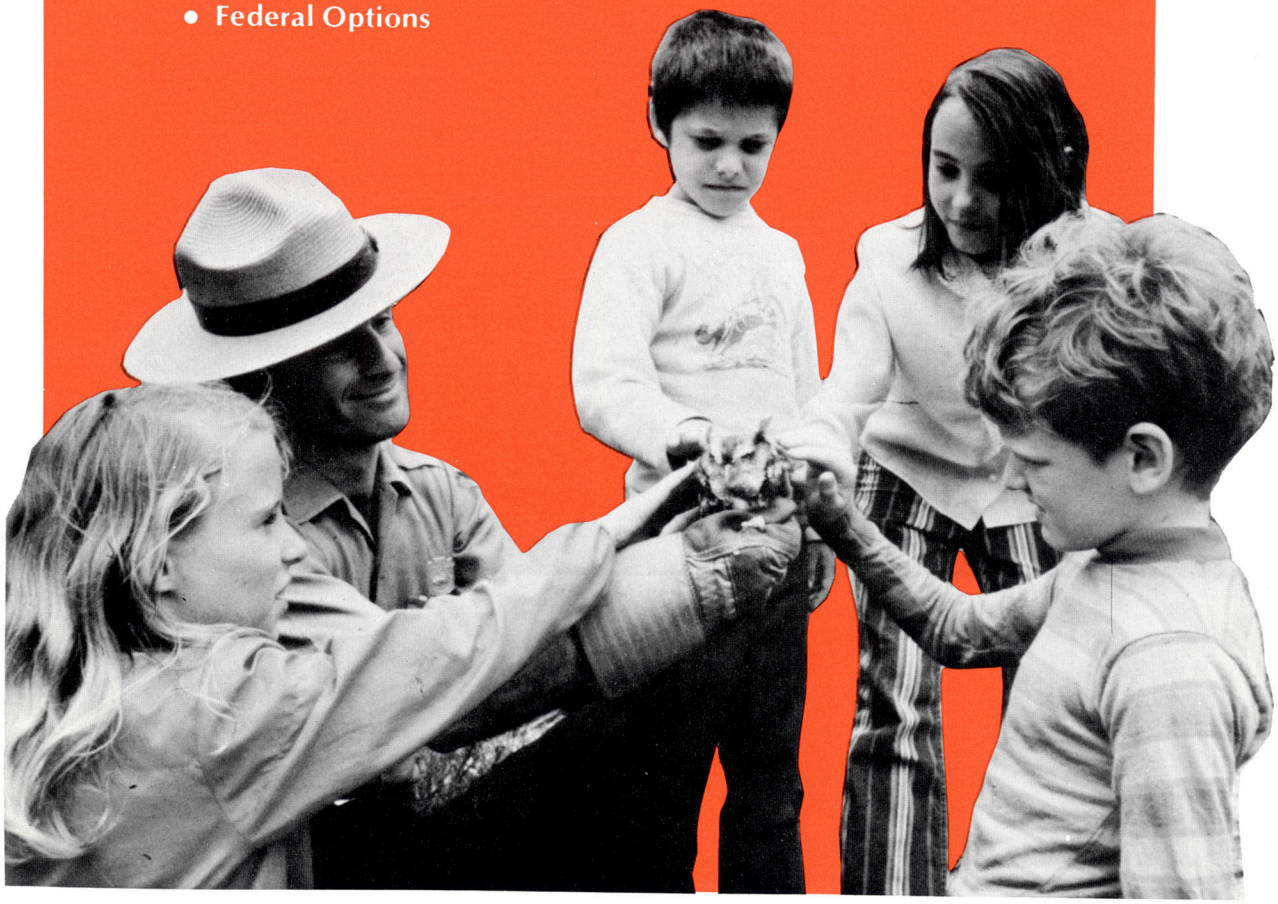
The Findings of the Study suggest many shortcomings and serious problems with providing open space and recreation land and in delivering urban recreation services. The summary of options in this section identifies possible courses of action which might be followed by the local, State, and Federal governments.

Due to the many options and actions suggested by and for all levels of government during the study, it is not possible to present them all in this Summary Report. Options which are included in this report are representative of the types and ranges of options identified in the National Urban Recreation Study.

Because of the many sources of options, and their nature, the reader should be mindful of the fact that options may be conflicting or complementary, general or specific, simplistic or extensive.

This summary of options is presented in two parts:

- Local and State Actions
- Federal Options



Local and State Actions

Park and recreation services in urban areas are primarily the responsibility of the local government. Localities generally have the authority to zone and acquire land, and to provide public services, including recreation. Traditionally, they have done so, and the field studies show that local governments want to retain these roles. However, it is becoming more and more difficult for local governments to perform these functions alone. Political fragmentation often makes solutions to the problem of providing open space on a regional scale very difficult; it requires a cooperative approach which individual jurisdictions are sometimes reluctant to undertake. The increasing disparity in wealth of communities—poor core cities surrounded by wealthier suburbs—results in inequitable recreation services. Thus, purely local solutions are sometimes impossible and often inadequate. The assistance of higher levels of government is frequently required.

Some States now are actively involved in providing, or assisting local governments to provide, urban recreation opportunities. However, most States concentrate their park and recreation efforts on acquiring open space of regional or Statewide significance. The potential is great for more States to play a major role in urban recreation. States could use the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning (SCORP) process to identify priority urban recreation needs, work with local governments to develop comprehensive strategies to alleviate identified deficiencies, and assign Land and Water Conservation Fund priority to urban recreation projects. The States can also encourage localities in metropolitan regions to work together to develop regionwide open space strategies. States can also provide technical assistance.

This section outlines local and State roles and responsibilities in the provision of park and recreation services. The field studies indicate that a great deal can be done locally to improve recreation lands and services without any assistance from the State and Federal governments. The local and State courses of action listed here are classified by objectives, are based on suggestions made by local officials and other local people, and include actions by both public and private (for-profit and non-profit) providers. In many cases, these suggestions are currently being successfully carried out in localities and States.





Local and State Actions

Local and State Objective 1:

Conserve open space for its natural, cultural, and recreational values.

Local Actions

- Develop procedures for multi-jurisdictional, public-private conservation of open space, through mechanisms such as fee acquisition, purchase of easement, management strategies, or establishment of regional resource conservation and recreation authorities with independent taxing and management roles.
- Transfer derelict land, tax delinquent land, surplus highway rights-of-way and and other land not presently in productive use to park agencies through land exchange, purchase, or long-term, no-fee leases.
- Make maximum use of lands associated with public water supply reservoirs to meet urban recreation needs.
- Adopt regulations for new residential, business, or industrial development and redevelopment which require either the dedication of park lands, provision of recreation facilities, or payment of money to a public recreation fund.

State Actions

- Maintain Statewide inventories of critical environmental resources that need protection, as part of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning (SCORP) process.
- Develop open space strategies which rely heavily on less-than-fee acquisition techniques by amending or providing new legislation to expand the legal basis for open space conservation in less-than-fee, including differential taxation, land use regulations, revolving funds, establishment of special conservancy districts, and others.
- Utilize the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and the LWCF distributive process to provide more State parks in urban regions or provide more funds and a larger State match to needy local jurisdictions.
- Require local jurisdictions to prepare plans to implement State or regionwide open space strategies as a prerequisite to receiving State and Federal funding assistance. Funding assistance for such plans could come from State or Federal grants.
- Pass legislation authorizing local governments to require mandatory dedication of park land, or payments to a recreation fund, by developers.

Local and State Objective 2:

Provide financial support for parks and recreation.

Local Actions

- Evaluate user fee policies and identify ways to increase recreation revenues through user fees and concession royalties.
- Earmark a portion of local tax revenues for parks and recreation.
- Hire grants experts to insure that the local government is taking advantage of all appropriate non-local sources of assistance.

State Actions

- Adopt legislation allowing localities to earmark a portion of the property tax for parks and recreation.
- Adopt legislation giving local governments full authority to set tax rates and issue bonds.
- Adopt legislation authorizing localities to deposit revenues earned from specific park and recreation activities (i.e., concessioners, golf, etc.) in accumulated capital outlay funds that can be used only for similar park and recreation activities.
- Increase State and local tax incentives for donations of land, easements, and money.
- Make State payments to local jurisdictions as a replacement for local tax losses due to preservation of otherwise developable land for park and recreation use.
- Create local public trusts and foundations to receive donations that will assist in land preservation, or provide programs and services.
- Provide funds for land acquisition and development by combination of public and private providers.

Local and State Objective 3:

Provide close-to-home recreation opportunities.

Local Actions

- Establish priorities which recognize the location of potential users when considering new recreation land acquisition.
- Use streets closed to traffic, rooftops, parking lots, utility rights-of-way, water supply reservoirs, etc. to provide nearby recreation in heavily-developed and densely-populated areas.
- Use mobile recreation units where appropriate.

State Actions

- Give priority, whenever possible, to meeting close-to-home recreation needs in State administered or State assisted planning, acquisition and development projects.

Local and State Objective 4:

Encourage joint use of existing physical resources.

Local Actions

- Utilize school buildings that have been closed because of declining enrollments for recreation.
- Consider the potential for joint recreation use in the planning stages for all new or expanded school and park facilities.
- Develop reciprocal, no-fee policies which encourage both park use by school groups and school use by park groups.
- Assist in providing services required to open up school facilities to the public for recreational purposes after school hours; this will overcome present constraints on joint-use due to prohibitive custodial and maintenance costs.
- Encourage joint-use for recreation, wherever possible, on lands and facilities committed to other private and public purposes, including Federal properties, utility rights-of-way, and the property of institutions and private corporations.
- Encourage use of local park and recreation facilities for a wider range of human delivery services (i.e., health information, consumer protection, nutrition, bookmobiles, etc.)

State Actions

- Provide financial and technical assistance programs to encourage the development of full service community centers, including strategies to use both public and private resources to provide human services including recreation.
- Examine State laws and funding programs to see how they can be used to encourage multiple-use at the local level.



Local and State Objective 5:

Ensure that recreation facilities are well-managed and well-maintained, and that quality recreation programs are available, by employing an adequate number of well-trained staff.

Local Actions for Using the CETA Program More Effectively to Augment Park and Recreation Staff Capabilities

- Seek representation on local CETA Advisory Committees to gain a greater degree of input into the local CETA planning and policy-making process.
- Work with CETA program staffs on an individual basis to provide work orientation, counseling, and short training periods to CETA Public Service Employees.
- Consider using CETA-funded employees for short-term projects rather than in jobs with ongoing permanent responsibilities.
- Consider using local funds to augment the CETA $10,000 maximum salary in order to hire supervisors and other qualified personnel at higher salaries.

Local Actions to Improve the Quality of Park and Recreation Staff

- Develop, with universities and colleges, well-planned curricula and intern programs to train recreation professionals to deal with the unique problems and opportunities associated with urban recreation.
- Provide support for in-service training to create greater job mobility and career ladders in parks and recreation. Specialists from other non-park and recreation disciplines could participate in the program.
- Increase use of neighborhood residents as recreation leaders and aides by recruiting staff from neighborhoods in which they will work, and by developing flexible recruitment standards which will allow use of non-professionals with neighborhood experience.
- Develop meaningful, highly-visible volunteer recognition programs which express appreciation for citizen-volunteer services.

Local Actions to Utilize Resources of Non-Park and Recreation Personnel to Augment Staff Capabilities

- Contract for services with non-profit agencies for recreation programming, and with private-for-profit agencies for operation and maintenance, when savings can be achieved without lowering service levels.
- Contract with non-profit community organizations for development, operation, and maintenance of neighborhood facilities. Encourage use of neighborhood residents in these activities, especially of unemployed youth.
- Utilize private-non-profit agencies to help recruit volunteers.

State Actions

Provide technical assistance to localities regarding the determination of staffing needs, staff organization, personnel administration practices, contracting services, and new sources of staff.

Local and State Objective 6:

Reduce deterrents to the full utilization of existing urban recreation facilities and programs.

Local Actions to Make Parks Safer

- Encourage residents to assume responsibility for making neighborhood parks safe by giving them a role in park supervision and/or maintenance.
- Develop park-oriented crime prevention courses for integration into public safety and law enforcement curricula at State and local colleges and universities.
- Improve police-community relations in parks by greater involvement of police officers and police academy cadets in the supervision of youth recreation activities under Police Athletic League and other programs.
- Design park facilities which discourage crime and vandalism without reducing recreation, aesthetic, and environmental benefits.

Local Actions to Make Parks More Accessible

- Coordinate park planning and public transit planning to insure that new parks are accessible by public transit.
- Improve public transit service to parks during weekends and evenings, times of peak recreation use.
- Plan for maximum pedestrian and bicycle access to new parks, as an alternative to automobile access.
- Ensure that transit-dependent people have real input to the transportation planning process.

Local Actions to Increase Use of Recreation Services by Special Populations

- Provide recreation leaders with sensitivity training on conducting recreation programs for members of special populations.
- Increase the awareness of all park and recreation employees relative to the needs and desires of special populations.
- Develop a comprehensive inventory and plan for all parks and physical improvements as a first step toward removing or modifying architectural barriers for the physically-handicapped.
- Provide specialized staff and equipment for the handicapped, seniors, and young children to help them make better use of park facilities and programs.

Local Actions to Better Inform Citizens About the Available Recreation Services

- Expand local efforts to inform citizens of existing recreation opportunities and issues, with emphasis on reaching residents such as the handicapped or economically-disadvantaged who do not regularly participate in recreation programs, as well as informing regular users of new programs, schedules, and use-related problems.
- Utilize the techniques described in "How Effective Are Your Community Recreation Services?" (BOR, 1973) to determine who the users of recreation services are and what citizen desires and preferences are not being served.

State Actions

- Provide guidelines for use by localities through various State agencies to facilitate local actions to make parks safer. State departments of education could help improve resident responsibility for safe parks through the schools and help establish crime prevention courses to train law enforcement officers in the special problems of park safety. State crime commissions can be an instrumental force in advising localities on park safety, and State recreation agencies can offer park planning and design guidelines for building safety into parks.
- Adopt accessibility policies in connection with State transportation programs, recreation programs, and State public projects and actions which ensure greater opportunity and ease of access to State and local parks.
- Provide information and technical assistance to local agencies through State health, education, and welfare agencies.
- Provide information on effective techniques various local recreation agencies across the State are using to inform the general public and special populations about opportunities.
- Publish information on comparative local recreation preferences and needs throughout the State.

Local and State Objective 7:

Provide appropriate and responsive recreation services through sound planning.

Local Actions to Improve Park and Recreation Planning

- Employ professionals to do recreation services planning, as well as facility planning, on a continuing basis.
- Improve coordination between planning and implementation efforts to ensure realistic plans and responsive action to meet identified needs.
- Coordinate recreation planning with other human service planning; coordinate park and facility planning with overall land use planning.
- Conduct citizen participation and preference surveys to determine recreation deficiencies.

State Actions to Improve Park and Recreation Planning

- Encourage direct participation of city recreation planning entities and regional planning authorities in the preparation of Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORPs).
- Encourage continuing recreation planning and data collection at city and regional levels.
- Provide financial and technical help for local recreation planning on a systematic basis, through State community assistance programs.
- Insure that urban residents are adequately represented on SCORP advisory groups.

Local and State Objective 8:

Make environmental education and management an integral part of urban park and recreation policies and programs.

Local Actions

- Adopt policies and provide in-service training programs that result in sound environmental management.
- Use local parks as year-round, close-to-home urban environmental laboratories for all age groups to study natural systems. Use other facilities such as waste water treatment centers, streets, and utilities to study the interaction between man and his environment.
- Broaden the scope of interpretive programming to address local environmental issues; sponsor public forums on land use planning, energy conservation, and environmental management programs to involve the public in the decision-making process.
- Develop cooperative programs between resource agencies and local educational advisors so that park and recreation resources become an instrument for environmental teaching as an extension of the standard academic program.

State Actions

- Encourage environmental education training as part of teacher training by incorporatihg environmental education courses into teacher education degree requirements, placing student teachers in local park systems, and sponsoring accredited post-graduate environment education teacher work-shops.
- Authorize and encourage the use of school bond monies for the developement of environmental education centers on local and State park lands in urban areas.
- Recruit inner-city personnel through a State Office of Volunteerism to lead interpretive environmental education in the urban environment. Sponsor training programs for urban volunteers utilizing resources of local professional interpreters.

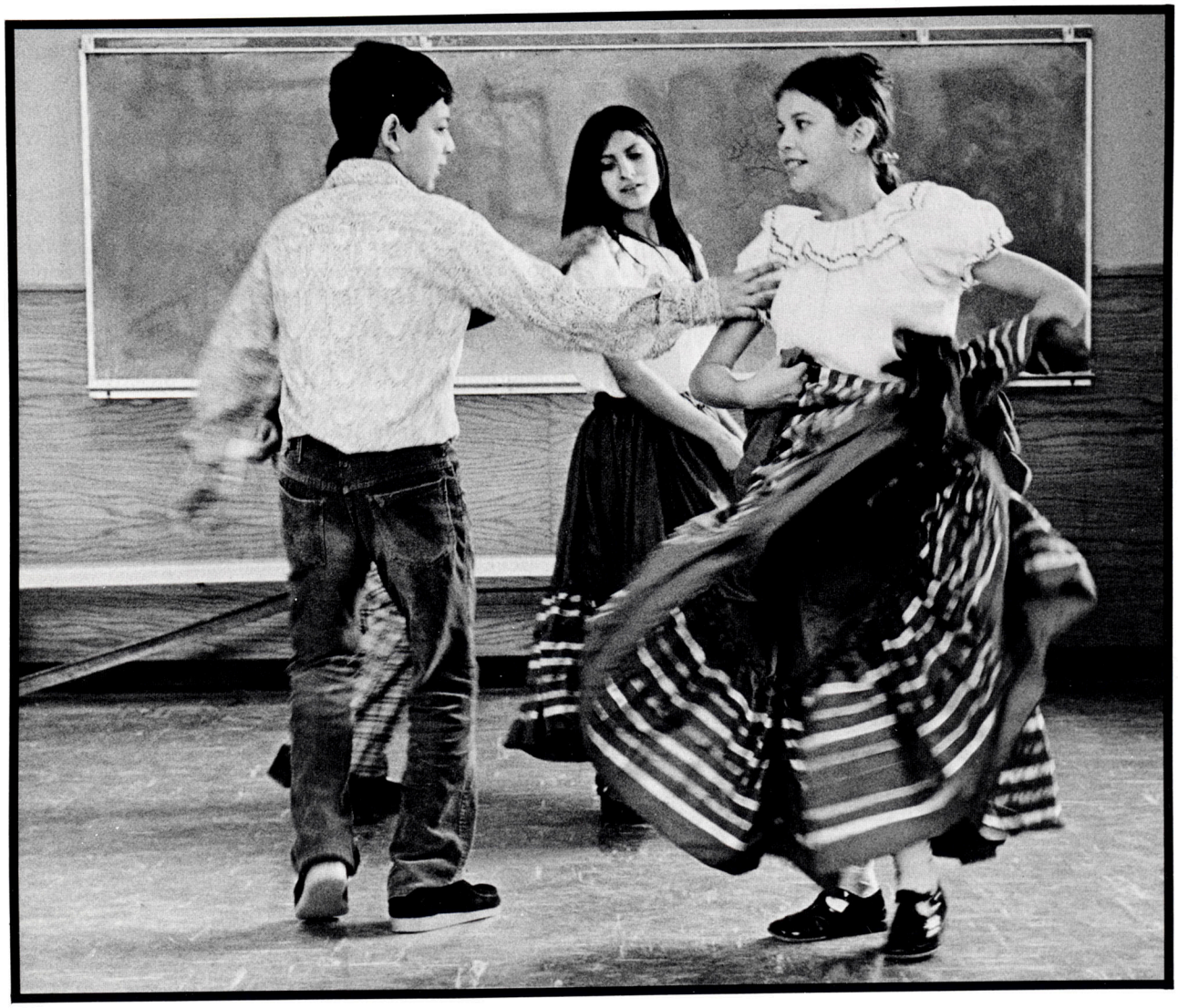
Local and State Objective 9:

Strengthen the role of the cultural arts in urban recreation.

- Encourage urban recreation programming to include quality art opportunities by using imaginative, locally-available talent of public and private institutions, organizations, and individuals.
- Appoint an Arts Committee to do an inventory of public and private facilities with potential for public recreation and art program use. Such a survey could also identify facility deficiencies and needs.
- Develop more arts-in-the-parks programs, combining such features as citizen mural programs, regularly-scheduled art shows and sales, mobile performance stages, etc.

State Actions

- Encourage coordination between State art councils and State park and recreation departments to increase art and cultural opportunities through their programs. If possible, allocate a share of the State Arts Council Budget for quality local park and recreation-based cultural arts programs.



Federal Options

This section outlines some Federal options, including alternative courses of action, which might be taken to help support or encourage localities in providing recreation lands and services. The options focus on such actions as increased funding, technical assistance, and incentives to improve local coordination. Many of the options also reflect suggestions made by State and Federal participants in the study. Federal options which could result in better utilization of Federal resources to provide urban recreation opportunities are also discussed. The options are categorized, by objective, into four subjects and presented in this summary as follows:

- Policy Options
- Open Space and Recreation Land Options
- Financing Options
- Programmatic Options

The options summarized here are representative of the types of options in the total study. They are not to be construed as being preferred or recommended. The total list of options is provided in the National Urban Recreation Study—Executive Report.

Federal Policy Options

Many of the problems in urban recreation are due, in part, to the lack of public policies which recognize the contribution of parks and recreation to individual human development, community pride and neighborhood cohesiveness, environmental quality, and economic stability. Narrow interpretations of recreation in the past have resulted in lost opportunities to improve recreation while we were pursuing other primary goals in education, transportation, housing, economic development, energy conservation, and environmental quality. Recreation is an important human service which can help meet other social objectives including crime prevention, social and physical development, and employment.

The field studies reveal that many urban recreation problems can be traced to poor definition and support of recreation goals at local, State, and Federal levels; poor coordination between the numerous agencies and programs which affect recreation in the cities; and lack of responsiveness to the real needs of many urban residents. Federal park and recreation policies have traditionally been land and resource-based and have generally had little effect on local recreation. The Federal government has not strategically encouraged local governments to comprehensively address the broad spectrum of urban recreation issues. Also, the Federal government has not always realized the true impacts of recreation-related programs on the abilities of local parks and recreation agencies to deliver quality recreation services.

The following is one possible Federal policy objective and accompanying policy options which might help clarify and improve urban recreation policy.

Policy Objective 1:

Develop a national recreation policy which gives full recognition to the needs, problems, and opportunities of urban recreation and which provides a framework to guide Federal programs affecting urban recreation.

Stimulate discussion of urban recreation directed toward defining a national policy.

One possible option is is to initiate a national information campaign promoting recreation close-to-home and public involvement in the planning process. Public service announcements on television, radio and in the press could be used to relate urban recreation to community pride, energy conservation, personal achievement, and physical fitness. Major accomplishments in urban parks and recreation could be given special attention.

Coordinate Federal programs affecting urban recreation.

A few of the options in the study are to:

—Establish a Federal recreation ombudsperson to help local governments deal with the State and Federal agencies.

—Designate, by Executive Order, a Federal agency as the central coordinating agency for all Federal recreation programs and as a national clearinghouse for channeling Federal recreation program information to State and local governments.

—Implement the Federal Program Information Act (P.L. 95–220) to better inform local agencies of recreation-related programs. The data bank could contain current information on funds available for urban recreation projects and on application procedures so that a community can formulate a project or identify a problem, and ask the system for information about it.



Federal Open Space and Recreation Land Options

Many open space areas with substantial scenic, cultural, environmental, agricultural, and recreational values remain in and near our cities, but these areas are being threatened by urban growth. Land already dedicated for recreation is poorly-distributed to meet the major needs identified in the National Urban Recreation Study. The National Urban Recreation Study Executive Report, in Appendix A—Open Space Opportunities, identifies open space areas with potential for Federal Acquisition and Management, and lists major open space opportunities identified in the 17 field study areas.

The primary value of most open space (as compared to recreation lands) in and near urban areas is not recreational; it is environmental and economic. While many of these areas have recreation value, governments cannot reasonably rely solely on fee simple acquisition to protect all of the open space being threatened by urban development.

Open space is usually thought of as the land, or the resource base, upon which recreation takes place. However, open space is increasingly being viewed as the landscape which possesses other critical environmental, cultural, recreational, and economic values which are being threatened by urban sprawl. Protection of open space conserves valuable resources and can be used to help shape the growth of urban areas.

Within the older cities, open space is scarce and increasingly must be created by the recycling of industrial, commercial, and residential areas that have become derelict through changes in population, the economy, and technology. Here the provision of open space, if carefully-integrated into an overall city plan, can contribute to the revitalization of economically-depressed areas; can improve the social, physical, and economic aspects of life; and can provide jobs in areas of chronic high unemployment.

Several major courses of action are available to the Federal government to assist State and local governments in meeting needs for urban open space and recreation land. These courses of action can be complimentary and should be selectively used to improve the protection of open space and to provide recreation opportunities in urban areas. To be most effective, they should be carefully coordinated with local and State efforts to protect open space described under Local and State Actions.

Representative List of Federal Open Space and Recreation Land Options

Land Objective 1:

Develop a range of new tools and approaches at the Federal level for dealing with complex land use issues and for insuring preservation of numerous important landscapes throughout the country.

Establish additional urban National Recreation Areas.

This is the only course of action currently applied by Congress for direct Federal management in urban areas.

Utilize the national heritage program to protect cultural and natural resources.

Such a program could assist the private sector and local and State governments to identify, register, and protect cultural and natural resources.

Give special assistance to local governments in acquiring necessary open space and recreation land critically needed for recreation for later transfer to local governments.

Create a comprehensive national reserve program based on partnership between local, State and Federal governments.

In addition to present policies of acquiring National Park System lands of varying ecological, cultural, and recreational value, the Congress could establish a system of National Reserves to conserve, singly or in combination: natural land, scenic landscapes, islands, areas of ecological importance, historic and cultural resources, reclaimed landscapes, and agricultural, grazing or forest lands.

A National Reserve System would be a mechanism through which the Congress and the Department of the Interior could offer incentives to States, regional, and local entities to prepare and implement cost-effective management strategies to protect outstanding natural and cultural areas. A system could be designed to accomplish such objectives as providing planning assistance to State and local governments to prepare comprehensive strategies for potential National Reserve Areas; exploring options to develop the most cost effective strategy to meet goals established for each area; permitting strategies to be carefully crafted to local conditions; placing a moratorium, during the planning period, on Federal activities that would adversely affect candidate areas; and motivating the private sector to become vigorously involved in conservation strategies within the Reserve boundaries.

Land Objective 2:

Better utilize existing land and water resources for recreation.

Make better use of existing Federal land for recreation.

An Executive Order to Federal land-managing agencies could direct all Federal agencies to use Federal lands located in urban areas to the fullest extent practicable for recreation, consistent with their basic mission and purpose.

Maximize recreation at urban reservoirs and in water project study areas by such actions as amending the Federal Water Projects Recreation Act, P.L. 89-72 and amending Corps of Engineers' urban study procedures to insure strong local/regional commitments to coordination and implementation, to allow planning grants for participating agencies, and to require designation of a single entity to implement urban recreation portions of such plans.

Maximize protection of flood plain open space by such actions as amending the Flood Insurance Act to allow HUD to make grants to State and local governments to acquire flood plain properties as part of community recreation and open space planning efforts, and authorizing the Corps of Engineers to make block grants to States and localities to assist them in acquiring flood plain lands for protection of flood conveyance areas, erosion areas, wave hazard areas, flood storage areas, and critical wetlands.

Maximize recreation on watershed lands by such actions as ensuring that enforcement of the Safe Drinking Water Act, which requires municipal and private water suppliers to install filtration systems on their open reservoirs, does not force water suppliers to sell watershed lands so they can finance the installation of additional treatment facilities.

Maximize recreation opportunities and conserve existing recreation resources in coastal and river areas by such possible actions as emphasizing recreation in State Coastal Zone Management Programs under P.L. 92-583 and amending the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to include an Urban River classification.

Maximize recreation access to cleaned-up urban rivers by such actions as giving technical assistance to local agencies in the identification, evaluation, and acquisition of water-oriented recreational and open space areas capable of providing access to cleaned-up urban waters, assisting State and local agency recipients of EPA grants under Section 208 of P.L. 92-500 in the identification of shoreline areas suitable for parks, access areas, or open space while also serving as nonstructural water pollution control areas, and assisting local agencies receiving EPA grants to incorporate supplemental park and recreation uses within their projects.

Protect existing parks from Federally-assisted encroachments by increasing advanced monitoring and coordination under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act. Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act, as amended, declares a national policy of minimizing impacts of transportation projects on public park, recreation, wildlife or historic lands of national, State, or local significance.

Land Objective 3:

Use selected national recreation areas as national demonstration and training centers to assist local governments in improving their park systems and programs.

Use National Urban Recreation Areas as recreation demonstration and training centers.

To address the demonstrated need for training and technical assistance in park planning, management and maintenance, the National Park Service could, in cooperation with other Federal, State, and local agencies and the private non-profit sector, develop demonstration and training centers at its National Recreation Areas—Gateway in New York and New Jersey, Cuyahoga Valley in Ohio, and Golden Gate in San Francisco.

Enact legislation to enable Federal land-managing agencies to demonstrate alternative approaches for non-automobile transportation to and within national parks, forests, refuges, and reservoirs, etc.

Legislation could address one aspect of this problem on a pilot basis at selected national sites and could provide models for local efforts to improve access to parks for non-automobile users, to conserve energy, and to reduce impacts of auto-oriented developments on federally-managed resources.

Land Objective 4:

Make open space reclamation and rehabilitation an integral element of the total redevelopment of decayed urban areas.

Undertake a new Federal assistance program for rehabilitation of large urban parks with regional or national significance by such actions as instituting a Federal assistance program to rehabilitate large urban parks; or encouraging establishment of national or local private trusts to rehabilitate these special parks.

Give adequate attention to open space and recreation in HUD's Urban Development Action Grants and other HUD programs aimed at improving viability of cities.

Utilize existing and abandoned utility and circulation corridors for recreation by such actions as accelerating the Department of Transportation's Auto-Restricted Zone (ARZ) Program to convert streets and parking lots to use for pedestrians and bicyclists, making "conversion on abandonment" of corridors a requirement of Federal transportation/utility assistance, increasing "rails to trails" conversion funding under Section 809 (b) of P.L. 94-210, the Railroad Reorganization and Regulatory Reform Act, and establishing a category of Urban Recreation Trails within the National Trails System, emphasizing urban trails that provide access from the core city to outlying areas.

Federal Financing Options

The major Federal programs used by local governments to meet urban recreation needs are: the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), General Revenue Sharing (GRS), administered by the Department of the Treasury and the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), administered by the Department of Labor, which is discussed under Programmatic Objective 2.

The major categorical grant program is the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), administered by the Department of the Interior. The LWCF is used primarily for land acquisition and facility development; CDBG is used primarily for park acquisition, facility development, and rehabilitation; and GRS is used for both capital improvements and operations and maintenance. The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), is used for staffing and training.

The results of the Federal Program Analysis clearly indicate that the existing resources and assistance programs are not responsive to the greatest urban recreation needs. If Federal assistance is to more adequately respond to urban recreation needs, restructuring will be necessary to direct more resources where they are needed the most. Federal efforts should strengthen, rather than preempt, the roles of States and localities in responding to such needs. This can be accomplished only through a purposeful, comprehensive, and immediate program of action that will:

- recognize parks and recreation as an integral part of a national urban policy to revitalize urban neighborhoods and communities;
- provide recreation where it is needed most — in the nation's older central cities and aging suburbs;
- treat recreation as an essential, not incidental, public service that must be made available equitably to everyone; and
- integrate recreation into the planning and development of other important urban systems such as housing, transportation, economic development, employment, health, and education.

The following objectives and accompanying options can be considered as possibilities for improving Federal financing of urban recreation.

Funding Objective 1:

Change the Land and Water Conservation Fund (P.L. 88–578 as amended) to address high priority urban recreation needs more effectively.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established to provide: (1) a funding source for Federal land managing agencies (National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management) to acquire lands for their systems, and (2) grants-in-aid to States, and through them to localities, for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation areas. The LWCF is authorized as a $900 million program annually.

Amend the Land and Water Conservation Fund (P.L. 88-578 as amended) to include such items as: providing direct assistance to local jurisdictions without going through the States, allowing the funding of indoor recreation facilities, making operation and maintenance allowable as a part of the total project cost for selected jurisdictions, and providing financial assistance for program support (staffing, supplies, etc.) on a limited basis in high-need areas.

Adopt a set of administrative changes in the LWCF program to accomplish such actions as: giving priority to a substantial portion of the Secretary's Congingency Fund for meeting identified neighborhood recreation needs or for urban projects developed jointly by local jurisdictions and States, requiring States to establish an Urban Congingency Fund to include a percentage of their annual allocation (10% perhaps) which could be available on short notice for use in urban projects where timing is critical, and requiring States to make full assessments of the recreation delivery systems in their large urban areas as part of State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans.

Provide increased State technical assistance to local governments, providing matching funds using the LWCF to support and encourage States to develop strong technical assistance programs to local governments.



Funding Objective 2:

Modify the Community Development Block Grant Program (P.L. 93–383, as amended by P.L. 95–128) to improve its use for parks and recreation purposes

In 1974, the Congress authorized the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), which consolidated seven categorical grants—urban renewal, model cities, water and sewer facilities, neighborhood facilities, rehabilitation loans, public facility loans, and the open space program—into one program. The block grant was established to provide greater flexibility to local governments in setting development priorities.

Funding was provided in the amount of $8.3 billion to be distributed by the Department of Housing and Urban Development over a three-year period, ending in fiscal year 1977. Recent legislation has extended the basic block grant program for another three years at a level of $10.95 billion.

While the permissible uses of CDBG funds are broad and flexible, the law aims at dealing with the problems of urban blight and gives priority to programs benefiting low- and moderate-income groups. Other requirements include: a three-year community development plan, an annual community development program statement, and a housing assistance plan.

Improve existing uses of CDBG for parks and recreation by improving coordination and technical assistance and by providing funds for developing implementation strategies.

Such an option might include: encouraging better local formulation of goals and development strategies which take into account all Federal, State, and local funding sources, and helping cities develop short-term management action plans for recreation services as well as capital improvements.

Remove constraints on the use of CDBG for operation and maintenance, which could give localities the opportunity to meet very urgent recreation needs.

Funding Objective 3:

Administer the General Revenue Sharing Program (P.L. 92-512, amended by P.L. 94-488) to encourage effective coordination of recreation with other municipal services in local allocation of funds.

In 1972, a major effort to "decontrol" Federal aid came with the passage of General Revenue Sharing (GRS) legislation which provided nearly $6 billion per year over a 5-year period to State and local governments, with virtually no program strings attached. The GRS represents 12% of all Federal funds to State and local governments.

Provide technical assistance on the use of GRS as matching monies for LWCF grants and other Federal grants. Particularly important is instruction on how to effectively package available Federal funds for solution of multiple municipal problems, e.g., housing, recreation, law enforcement.

Carefully monitor the new provisions which add the handicapped and the aged to anti-discrimination requirements for compliance by both the Federal and local levels.

Encourage a full range of local interests in the GRS decision-making process by ensuring that citizen participation requirements, which have been strengthened in the renewal legislation for public hearings, are effectively implemented.

Recommend to the Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations that it address effective and integrated application of GRS funds for park and recreation projects in its mandated evaluation. ACIR could coordinate with all appropriate Federal agencies in this effort.



Funding Objective 4:

Undertake major new federal funding initiatives to bring local park and recreation systems up to an acceptable standard

Even if all possible adjustments to existing funding programs were made with the aim of ameliorating urban recreation deficiencies, some cities might not be able to devote any more of their allocations to recreation. If the park and recreation systems of fiscally-troubled cities continue to decline, facilities and resources will go unused because of decay, and large investments of the past will be lost. Various funding alternatives could address these problems, including establishment of new Federal grants and creation of credit mechanisms.

Create new direct assistance programs

which could include a categorical grant programs targeted to meet a variety of recreation problems and needs not being directly addressed by current programs. New assistance programs could address a number of needs: operations and maintenance, rehabilitation, program services, training, and planning and development of implementation strategies. A new categorical grant program for recreation programs and services only is another option for consideration. New direct assistance could take many different forms. Matching rehabilitation grants could be directed to targeted local governments with high needs for rehabilitation of existing indoor and outdoor facilities and low interest loans from a revolving loan fund could be made available to cities and private voluntary agencies for rehabilitation and construction of indoor recreation facilities.

Make new money available for public parks and recreation through a variety of credit options.

New legislation could be enacted establishing a program of Federal guarantees for local park and recreation bonds and interest rates on bonds. A revolving loan fund could be created to provide for the development of recreation facilities, and for emergency financing of key acquisitions. The loan fund could be available to States, local governments, and private/non-profit organizations, and could be administered in conjunction with the LWCF at a minimum cost. It could be focused first on the redevelopment and modernization of urban recreation facilities to minimize energy, operational, and maintenance costs and on the emergency acquisition of key projects.

Expand development of recreation facilities through existing loan programs by such actions as expanding the use of the Army Corps of Engineers' 710 loan program for the local cost-sharing of Corps' projects and expanding existing EDA and SBA loans and loan guarantee programs in urban areas.

Expand development and use of recreation facilities through tax incentives to the private sector.

One action could be to amend the Internal Revenue Code to allow commercial recreation enterprises which provide their services at no cost through public agencies to claim, as a charitable deduction, the full face value of services provided.



Federal Programmatic Options

The findings report that there is an enormous range in the quality and quantity of recreation facilities and programs offered in urban areas around the country. In many cases, the difference is due to fiscal constraints, but the delivery of quality recreation services also requires sound management, well-trained staff, good coordination among local providers, and well-maintained facilities that are accessible to the public.

Most programming, management and coordination decisions must be made at the local level but the findings also reveal that many Federal programs which are not designed for recreation use, may unintentionally have very direct effects on recreation. The CETA program is the most outstanding example, but a range of Federal programs, from transportation to the arts and from agriculture to urban development, have impacts on recreation. All of these programs make real contributions to urban recreation, but many of them could be even more effective if Federal agencies were aware of unrealized potentials or adverse consequences of their current efforts. If local agencies took vigorous steps to remedy identified management problems and if all Federal agencies administering recreation-related programs coordinated their goals and procedures, localities could take better advantage of Federal programs.

Programmatic Objective 1:

Encourage and support more effective use of physical community resources through joint use of schools, community centers, and private facilities.

Joint or multiple use of existing physical resources can result in lower costs, avoid duplicalion of facilities and programs, and help provide year-round indoor recreation. Opportunities to satisfy recreational needs through the joint use of existing facilities abound, but are not currently being fully utilized. Community centers, and other public and private facilities, especially schools, provide the greatest opportunities for joint use.

Encourage localities to make better use of school facilities for public recreation.

—Change legislative requirements for Federal educational funding to require or reward joint development and use of school facilities during non-school hours.

—Extend the Community Schools Act (P.L. 93-380) beyond 1978 and increase funding authority to allow full-scale, continuous support of multi-purpose community school programs, as well as demonstration projects.

—Amend the Community Schools Act to allow park and recreation agencies to sponsor projects as part of overall multiple-use efforts.

Strengthen use of community centers for recreation and other human services.

—Identify all existing Federal programs of significance which could be brought to bear in establishing full service community centers; evaluate the need for legislative and administrative changes; initiate actions deemed essential in the delivery of cost-effective services.

—Create a New Facilities Development Package allowing the combined use of existing Federal grants for public housing, the aging, parks and recreation, nutrition, day care, health clinics, cultural facilities, etc. in the development of multi-purpose facilities to house three or more of these functions.

—Provide State or Federal grant bonuses for joint recreation planning and development that includes innovative, cooperative arrangements among public and private service agencies, businesses, and volunteers.

Programmatic Objective 2:

Encourage effective use of Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) programs to help meet park and recreation staff needs

The CETA program provides jobs for the unemployed and underemployed. The program is operated at the local level by designated prime sponsors, which are States, cities, counties and/or combination urban groupings with a population of over 100,000. Prime sponsors can provide CETA programs themselves or through contracts or subgrants with other government units, non-profit organizations, community groups, or private firms. The mix of services provided is at the discretion of the prime sponsor. The prime sponsors monitor programs and evaluate their effectiveness in meeting local needs.

Title II, III and VI CETA participants have become a mainstay of most park and recreation departments in large urban areas. It is estimated that approximately 30-35% of their staff are funded from CETA. The majority (80%) of these positions are unskilled maintenance and clerical positions. About 20% are professional staff.

Since CETA is essentially a local program, the major decisions are made at the local, not the Federal level. The changes which would most significantly increase CETA's effectiveness in parks and recreation use must be made at the local level. These changes are discussed in the section on State and Local Actions. Options which the Federal Government could consider to encourage local actions include:

Amend CETA legislation to alter the ceiling on specific uses of funds to:

—Increase the maximum funds usable for materials and equipment to a higher percentage of those allocated for Public Service Employment (PSE), allow a higher percentage of the PSE funds to cover administrative costs incurred by using CETA PSE, and allow funds under Title II and Title VI to be used to support short, on-the-job training and/or orientation periods for PSE participants in their jobs.

—Increase the salary ceiling for PSE employees in high-wage geographic areas and increase the length of PSE employment from one year to two or three years.

Improve monitoring, technical assistance and information exchange on employment programs.

—Amend CETA legislation to allow for a Federal comprehensive evaluation of the CETA program in addition to, or in lieu of, local evaluations.

—Establish an Office of Recreation Employment and Training with a broad mandate to undertake a comprehensive analysis and monitoring of manpower and employment in State and local park and recreation agencies.

—Establish a regional structure to provide the services undertaken by an Office of Recreation Employment and Training to local park and recreation officials.

Programmatic Objective 3:

Encourage local park and recreation agencies to provide good services, using a combination of well-trained professional staff and volunteers.

Parks and recreation agencies generally are only as effective as the people who operate them. The presence of well-trained professionals is reflected in the quality of the recreation services provided and in the condition of park facilities. Although the field studies report no lack of available professionals, tight fiscal policies have caused recreation agencies to rely increasingly on the CETA program and on innovative use of non-professional assistance, rather than on increasing their professional staffs.

Improve the quality of recreation staffs

—Establish training centers for parks and recreation to provide technical assistance and training to local staffs.

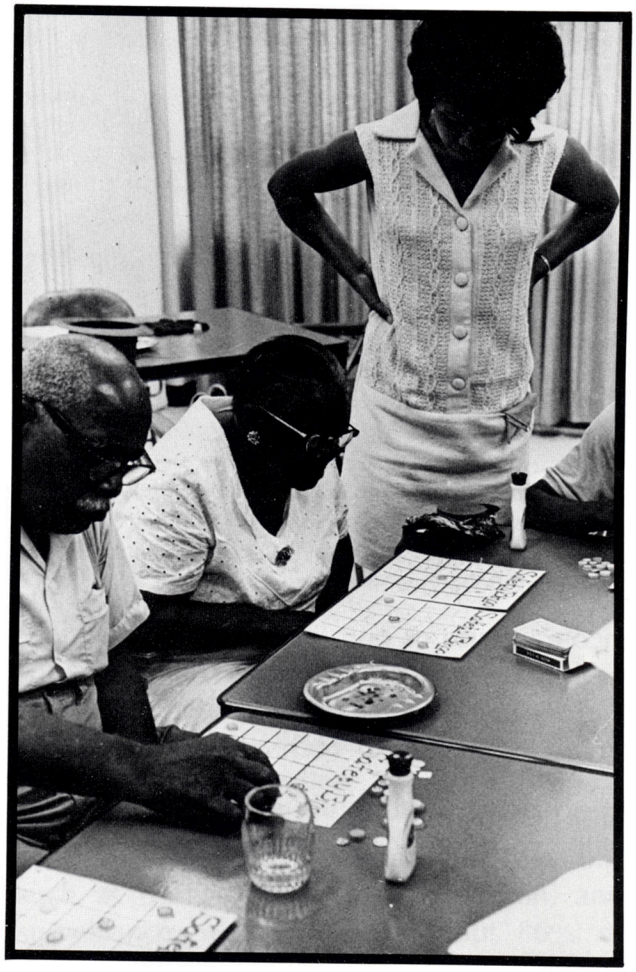
—Sponsor leadership training seminars through short extension-type training courses; seminars could be offered to local agencies which lack their own training resources.

—Provide Federal or State seed money directly to private voluntary community groups in the form of grants to allow greater use of their staffs for supplying recreation programs and services to city residents.

Encourage use of non-professionals to increase staffing capacity.

—Develop a joint agreement between Interior and VISTA to encourage use of volunteers in local parks through information and technical assistance efforts. Voluntary groups that could be called upon include RSVP, Jobs Corps, and community service organizations.

—Allow volunteer time donated to public and private non-profit park and recreation agencies as a charitable deduction against ordinary income.



Programmatic Objective 4:

Encourage and support improved accessibility of recreation opportunities

More than 45 million Americans live in households without a car or other motor vehicle. Such persons are concentrated in disproportionate numbers in older cities. Access to recreation by non-motorists is most severly restricted because present transit systems are heavily oriented to the journey to work and are generally unresponsive to recreational needs. Use of alternative transportation modes is frequently constrained by physical barriers and by street and highway traffic. To improve accessibility for everyone, recreation access planning must consider access by foot, bicycle, and public transportation as well as by automobile.

Improve responsiveness of planning and policymaking to the mobility needs of transit-dependent Americans.

—Appoint full-time ombudspersons for the transit-dependent at key decision-making locations in the transportation and urban development planning and policymaking processes. At the Federal level, at least three such appointments would be highly productive—in the Executive Office of the President, in the Office of the Secretary of Transportation, and in the Office of the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development. In addition, Federal planning assistance and grant programs could encourage the appointment of Ombudspersons for the transit-dependent at the State level.

Make more effective use of existing public transportation systems to serve recreation travel needs of urban dwellers.

—Require public carriers, as a condition of Federal grants or licenses, to ascertain leisure travel needs of non-motorists in their service area, and (a) to provide an adequate level of service to those needs, or (b) to show that such service is infeasible after thorough study and consultation with target populations.

—Require public carriers to offer lower fares during off-peak hours (evenings and weekends).

Encourage use of non-scheduled and specialized transportation modes (school and church buses, rail vehicles, watercraft, etc.) for public access to recreation destinations.

Use existing and future transportation and utility corridors for non-motorized travel and provide bikeways for recreation and for travel to recreation resources.

—Establish, by law or Executive Order, a policy that pedestrian and bicycle traffic will be accommodated in all Federally-aided highway, waterway, and utility corridors unless the applicant demonstrates that such inclusion is infeasible or undesirable. Require such accommodation wherever a new corridor crosses an existing highway, waterway, rail line, or similar barrier.

—Amend Federal and State transportation laws to earmark a portion of annual transportation budgets exclusively for bikeway acquisition and development.

—Encourage (through SCORP process, grant criteria, etc.) State governments to earmark certain funds for bikeways. Besides general revenues, these might include a percentage of the State gasoline tax (Oregon is an example), State bicycle registration receipts, and the portion of sales taxes derived from bicycles and related goods.

Amend the LWCF Act to insure access for non-motorists to Federally-assisted lands and projects.

—Increase access of non-motorists to LWCF-assisted parks and other federally-assisted recreation areas by amending the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act to require access and provide funds for planning such access.

—Require assurance of access by non-automobile modes when LWCF projects are justified, in whole or in part, on the basis of service to the young, aged, and/or inner-city, non-car-owning populations.



Programmatic Objective 5:

Make parks safer.

Initiate a technical assistance effort involving NPS, LEAA, and State law enforcement agencies to help train city police in park and crime prevention and to encourage creation of special park police or park ranger units, where appropriate.

Establish a National Park Service police training center and demonstration area at one of the urban National Recreation Areas, and work closely with local law enforcement agencies to train park police and rangers.

Provide Federal technical assistance for creation of auxiliary park police forces to handle essential, but routine enforcement functions such as traffic regulation, information, and surveillance, which take up about 80% of park police time.

Provide funds to localities to hire park police.

Programmatic Objective 6:

Provide support for effective recreation planning and research.

Many jurisdictions still rely on generalized, locally-insensitive national standards to plan local parks and programs; few use available survey or assessment tools to determine precise local preferences and needs. Planning efforts among localities are often uncoordinated and may result in conflicting policies and programs.

Localities want the Federal Government to play a central role in directing urban recreation research efforts and in disseminating research results.

Provide technical assistance regarding techniques and models to guide local recreation planning efforts.

—Intitiate a joint effort by Federal, State and local agencies in conjunction with professional planning and recreation organizations to develop alternative models for local use. Models could be tested in pilot programs around the country with funding by special or existing Federal planning grants.

Encourage needs assessments as input into the planning process.

—Provide funding for recreation preference surveys of general and special populations at the local level. Demonstration surveys could be jointly-funded by HCRS, HEW, CSA, the United Way and national special interest organizations.

—Require SCORPs to identify urban recreation deficiencies, including analysis of demand and need for close-to-home facilities and programs, and clear delineation of State priorities for responding to urban needs.

Encourage citizen involvement in the planning process.

—Provide, through appropriate State, Federal, or professional agencies, a handbook and training program on various techniques to secure public participation in urban recreation planning.

—Establish an inter-departmental advisory group with representatives from all Federal agencies and selected private groups conducting or sponsoring recreation-related research. Provide staff support in one of the agencies. The purpose would be to review proposed Federal and private sector research to eliminate duplication; to focus on areas of new or critical need; to standardize data survey techniques and forms; and to propose appropriate legislation or funding revisions.

Provide Federal financial support for urban recreation research.

—Amend the LWCF to earmark a small percentage of the fund for recreation research to provide a continuing and reliable source of funds.

—Enact legislation to authorize an applied research and development grant program for urban recreation. Grants would be limited to a particular theme on nationwide problems each year, and would be on a matching basis to organizations or individuals.

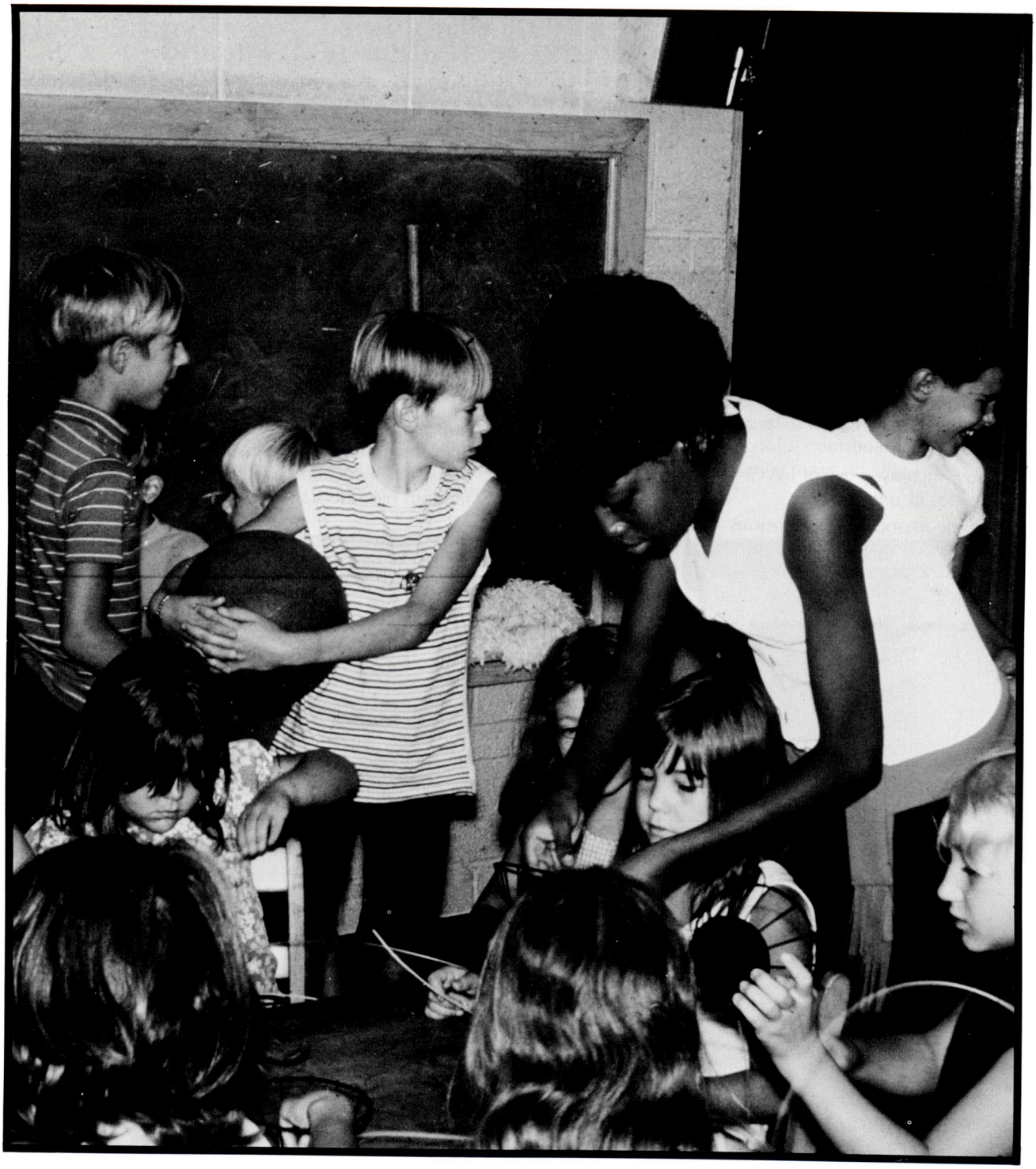
Improve coordination and dissemination of urban recreation research and technical information.

—Designate a single Federal Agency to coordinate Federal research through letters of agreement among the Federal agencies and to coordinate federally-funded research with other academic and private sector efforts.

—Establish a Federal recreation research clearinghouse to disseminate findings to all concerned Federal, State, and local agencies.

—Establish a reference service within the Department of the Interior to research, develop, strengthen and provide information to governmental agencies and the private sector on open space preservation techniques, effects of tax policies on land economics, and regulatory tools.

—Establish a unit on recreation education in HEW's Office of Education. This unit could be the source of expertise for urban school and recreation departments.



Programmatic Objective 7:

Help make environmental education and management an integral part of urban park and recreation policies and programs.

Environmental education has been too narrowly perceived in terms of formalized programs and/or isolated settings; it reaches only a small segment of the urban population and is usually not relevant to urban environments. Federal policy could work to re-define environmental education to include education about all environments—natural or man-made.

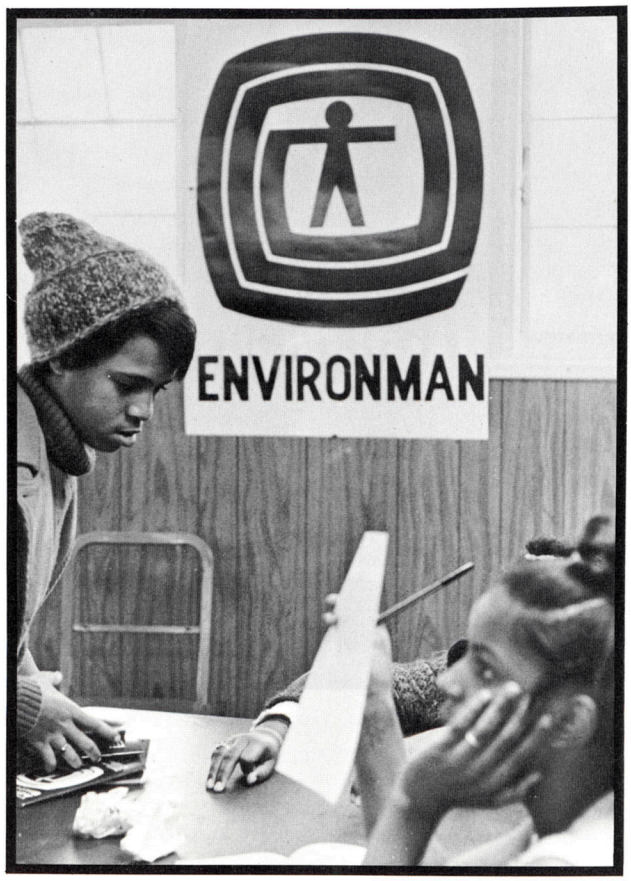
Environmental education is most effective when experienced on the resource, and consists of formal academic training, interpretive programs for the general public and environmental management practices which apply sound environmental principles.

Increase financial support for environmental education facilities and programs.

—Increase appropriations under the Environmental Education Act (P.L. 91–516 as amended by P.L. 93–278).

—Allow increased use of LWCF monies for interpretive facilities in urban areas.

—Include mandatory provisions for trails and other interpretive (passive recreation) facilities in Environmental Protection Agency 201 and 208 project funding.



Encourage coordination of schools and park systems in providing environmental education.

—Coordinate the environmental education activities of the Department of the Interior and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare through a memorandum of understanding.

—Provide funds from the Environmental Education Act to park and recreation agencies for developing models of cooperative programs, including teacher/parent workshops, environmental education "packages" and program development.

Improve environmental education efforts in Federal programs and agencies.

—Give a mandate to an agency within the Department of Interior to coordinate and promote the development, implementation, and operation of all environmental education efforts conducted by the various Interior agencies.

—Use CETA funds to train inner-city residents in interpretive techniques through cooperative programs with the NPS, and State and local park agencies.

Programmatic Objective 8:

Help strengthen the role of the arts in urban recreation.

Cultural arts programs are increasingly becoming a responsibility of park and recreation agencies as they turn from a limited focus on providing active, sports programs toward providing a wider range of leisure activities. Federal support could encourage local agenices to continue broadening their cultural arts programs and to make them an accepted, permanent component of recreation programs.

Improve coordination, management and funding of urban arts and recreation programs.

—Institute an agreement between the Department of the Interior and the National Ednowment for the Arts to work together on arts and cultural programs. Such efforts could be combined with other Federal agency assistance programs—HUD, CETA, Revenue Sharing.

—Improve leadership and management in urban art-recreation program workshops, conferences, and field trips for urban recreation providers sponsored by the Department of the Interior and the National Endowment for the Arts.

—Amend the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act to meet urban recreation and arts needs by allocating a special portion of the Federal, State, and city shares to the arts.

—Improve coordination of Federal support for arts and recreation by channeling a specific percentage of NEA and LWCF grants through local prime sponsors. The sponsors could coordinate local public and private agencies which are seeking Federal support for their projects.



Next Steps

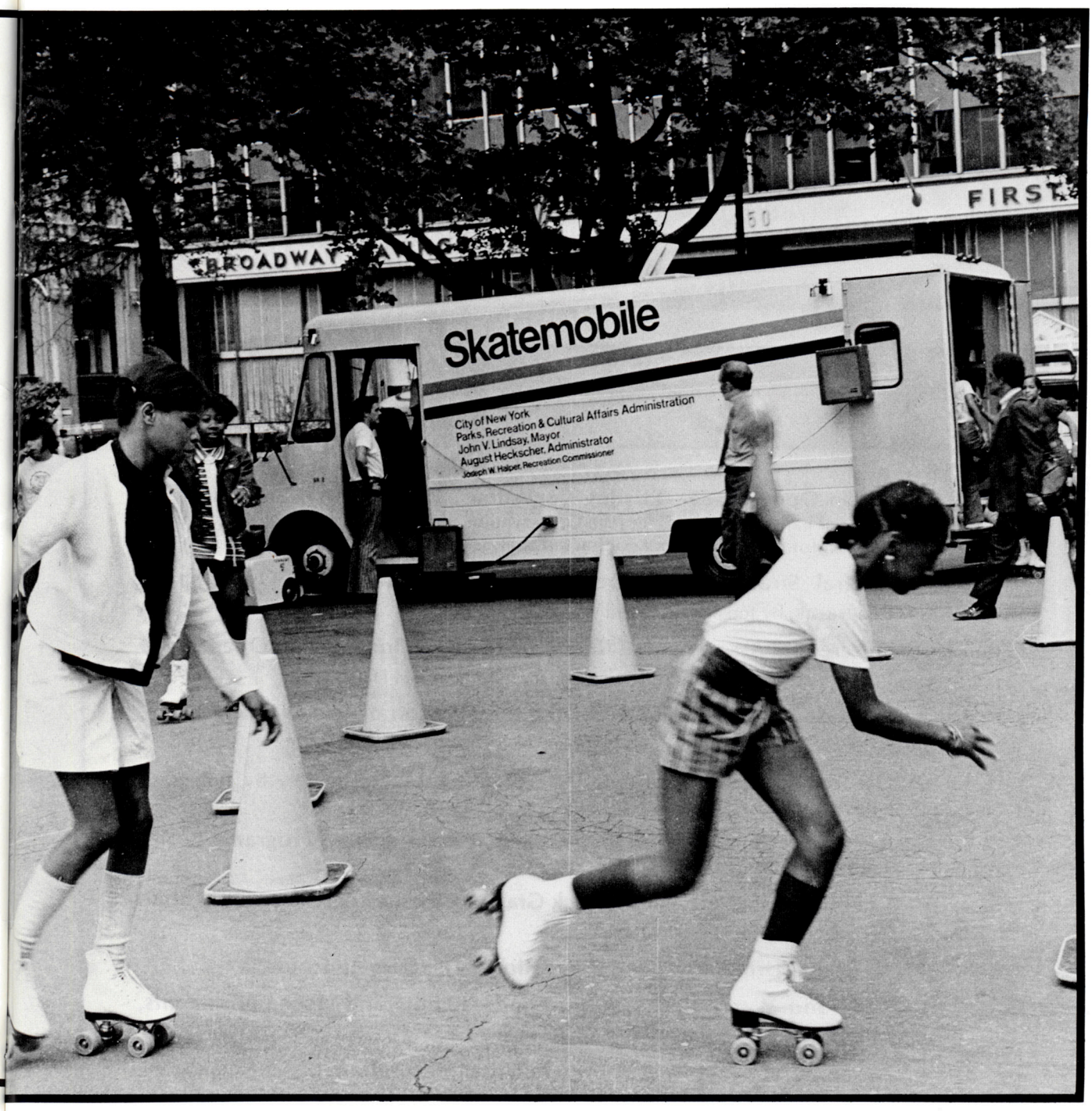
The National Urban Recreation Study provides the most extensive review and analysis of urban recreation to date but it is just a study. It describes various problems and catalogues a wide range of proposals for consideration. However, by mandate and design, it takes no position on the courses of action for any of these proposals. The very act of conducting this study—of talking with numerous community leaders, recreation professionals, city officials, Federal agencies, etc.—has produced great public interest in the actions which can be taken by local, State and Federal governments. A great deal of public discussion should and will take place on the findings and meaning of this study as new directions are considered.

The Administration has not yet established a position on urban recreation, and cautions against premature action on alternatives presented in the National Urban Recreation Study. Certain findings of the Study, such as those on specific open space sites and financing of park and recreation programs, will require further systematic analysis if they are to provide a firm basis for action. The Interior Department is now conducting additional analysis of the Federal options with the goal of developing specific action recommendations for consideration by the President and Congress. In this process, possible actions will be considered in light of the Administration's comprehensive national urban policy which recognizes the critical impacts of park and recreation programs on the quality of urban life.

A responsive, sustained public commitment will be necessary to stimulate thorough consideration of the issues and possible solutions. A key will be the willingness of all levels of government to recognize the importance and impact of good open space and recreation systems in peoples' lives and in the development of viable neighborhoods and cities.

Expressions of your concerns and interests are welcomed.




Skatemobile
City of New York
Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs Administration
John V. Lindsay, Mayor
August Heckscher, Administrator
Joseph W. Halper, Recreation Commissioner
BROADWAY
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Other Reports and Studies prepared as part of the National Urban Recreation Study

Executive Report

Field Reports

Atlanta SMSA
Boston SCSA
Chicago SCSA
Cincinnati SCSA
Cleveland SCSA
Dallas SMSA
Denver SMSA
Detroit SCSA
Houston SCSA
Los Angeles SCSA
Kansas City SMSA
Miami SCSA
Milwaukee SCSA
New York SCSA
Philadelphia SCSA
San Francisco SCSA
Seattle SCSA

Technical Reports

T. R. 1. **Urban Open Space—Existing Conditions, Opportunities and Issues,** by National Park Service and Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service staff. This includes information from four contracted analyses:

T. R. 2. **Federal Strategies for Strengthening State and Local Open Space Programs,** by Jon A. Kusler and William Duddleson.

T. R. 3. **Differential Assessment of Real Property as an Incentive to Open Space Preservation,** by Robert E. Coughlin, Thomas Plaut and David Berry.

T. R. 4. **Land Acquisition Methods for the Preservation of Urban Open Space,** by Robert E. Coughlin, Thomas Plaut and Ann Louise Strong.

T. R. 5. **Use of Regulatory Powers in Protecting Open Space,** by Robert C. Einsweiler and Associates.

T. R. 6. **Analysis of Federal Recreation and Recreation-Related Programs,** by NPS and HCRS staff.

T. R. 7. **Community Development Block Grant Program: Recreation and Urban Priorities,** by the Brookings Institution.

T. R. 8. **CETA and Urban Parks and Recreation,** by Kirschner Associates.

T. R. 9. **Land and Water Conservation Fund—Intents and Accomplishments,** 1965–1977 by HCRS staff.

T. R. 10. **Art and Culture: A New Priority in Urban Recreation,** by Ann Satterthwaite for the National Endowment for the Arts.

T. R. 11. **National Voluntary Agencies and Urban Recreation,** by Peter L. Kohnstamm.

T. R. 12. **Urban-Oriented Environmental Education,** by Office of Environmental Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

T. R. 13. **Urban Recreation Bibliography,** by HCRS staff.

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