

# City of Townsend DRAFT RECREATION PLAN

# Introduction

The **Recreation Plan** for the City of Townsend, Tennessee, is designed to guide the city and empower its volunteer **Parks and Recreation Advisory Board** in making thoughtful, informed decisions. As a community of 657 residents and a destination for thousands of visitors drawn to “The Peaceful Side of the Smokies,” Townsend faces the challenge of meeting growing recreational needs while protecting the qualities that make it special. A clear plan is essential to balance these priorities and ensure recreational opportunities evolve in step with both community values and visitor expectations, preserving Townsend’s unique character and natural charm.

This appendix to Townsend’s Comprehensive Plan provides practical guidance and strategies shaped by the Recreation Asset Inventory and **broad community engagement**, including surveys, focus groups, working group meetings with residents, local businesses, tourism stakeholders, and parks and recreation advocates. The resulting goals and actions have been refined with input from the Community Plan Advisory Committee to ensure alignment with the city’s broader vision and further strengthened by local expertise from ETDD. Together, these efforts created a clear, actionable roadmap for enhancing Townsend’s parks and recreational opportunities, bridging community needs with visitors’ interests and supporting the city’s long-term recreational development.

## Plan Contents

The plan includes the following elements:

1. GOALS & ACTIONS
2. RESOURCES
  - » *Best Practices for Recreation Projects*
  - » *Grant Development Strategy*
  - » *Subcommittee Strategy & Potential Roles*
  - » *List of Founding Documents*
3. WORKSHEETS & TOOLS

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### *What Counts as Recreation?*

For this plan, recreation is defined broadly as anything that **contributes to the quality of life for residents and visitors**. This includes both physical activities and organized social or cultural pursuits. This plan supports the full spectrum of recreation in Townsend, from the parks and trails that the City manages to the community-led activities and events that people enjoy. It’s about helping the community thrive in all the ways it loves to play, both formally and informally.

## ALIGNMENT WITH THE COMMUNITY VISION

The Recreation Plan strives to align with the Community Vision, set forth in the 2025 update to the City of Townsend Comprehensive Plan by supporting efforts to protect natural resources, support the needs of the local community, and welcome visitors to the “Peaceful Side of the Smokies.” The recommended goals and actions in this plan were crafted with the Community Vision in mind.

### Townsend Community Vision

We, the citizens, small business owners and leaders of Townsend, cherish our small-town charm and the natural beauty that surrounds us. We value clean water, clear air, mountain views, dark night skies, and the simple pleasures of life.

Our vision is to protect this heritage while embracing thoughtful development that respects our environment and enhances our quality of life.

#### We will:



**Preserve** the peace and serenity that defines Townsend, safeguarding our pristine landscapes, clean water, pure air, and dark night skies.



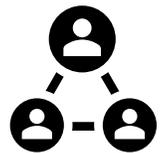
**Foster** a vibrant local economy that supports homegrown businesses and provides opportunities for all to prosper.



**Protect** the natural habitats that enrich our lives, ensuring a balanced and thriving ecosystem for generations to come.



**Embrace** thoughtful and measured development that enhances our community without compromising its character or natural resources.



**Nurture** a close-knit community where residents feel a strong sense of belonging, connection, and support.



**Create** infrastructure and amenities that benefit both residents and visitors, promoting accessibility, walkability, bike-ability, and access to outdoor recreation.



**Welcome** visitors to share in the beauty and tranquility of Townsend, inviting them to experience the “Peaceful Side of the Smokies” responsibly and respectfully.



**Celebrate** our rich cultural heritage, honoring the Ancient People of the Cove, the Cherokee, and European settlers who shaped Townsend’s history, showcasing their stories through museums, trails, and interpretive displays.

We envision a future where Townsend remains a peaceful respite for residents and visitors, a basecamp for recreational opportunities and an enduring community for generations to come.

# Recommendations: Goals & Actions

In this chapter, seven parks and recreational goals are outlined with several practical actions to help accomplish each goal. These goals seek to provide guidance for the City Council and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, but do not bind either body to specific financial decisions or actions. The City and Advisory Board are making headway on several parks and recreational initiatives. These goals and actions seek to reinforce existing initiatives and suggest additional projects to provide a comprehensive roadmap.

## 1. FOSTER YEAR-ROUND COMMUNITY CONNECTION THROUGH RECREATION

Develop amenities, programs, and events that support year-round recreational opportunities for all ages, especially children, teens, and intergenerational groups, while strengthening community bonds through accessible play, organized activities, gardening, programming, and community-focused events.

### Action: Develop Targeted Intergenerational Programming

Conduct focused community engagement to understand desired recreational programs, and prioritize developing initiatives that connect older and younger generations through storytelling, music, arts, history, and outdoor activities. This may include after-school programming for Townsend's children—both in the public school and homeschooled children—and partnership with area non-profit organizations.

### Action: Utilize Existing Community Spaces

Formalize agreements for the expanded use of Townsend Elementary School's soccer field and playground for community-wide recreational programming, especially for children and teens.

## 2. ACTIVATE UNDERUTILIZED AND AGING ASSETS

Strategically optimize the use of existing City-owned recreational assets like the Jean Headrick Moser Memorial Park and Special People's Park, transforming them into vibrant, accessible community hubs for residents and visitors alike.

### Action: Expedite Special People's Park Universal Access

Prioritize the comprehensive redesign and reopening of Special People's Park, focusing on replacing the pier/ramp with flood-resilient, universally accessible materials and ensuring accessible parking and restroom facilities, acknowledging potential NEPA review.



*Accessible fishing pier*

## Action: Repair and Preserve Historic Bridge

Develop a clear strategy and secure funding for the repair of the Dark Island Swinging Bridge, actively collaborating with Blount County and investigating historic preservation grant opportunities (e.g., Historic Preservation Fund Grant).

## Action: Transform Memorial Park into a Community Hub

Redesign the Jean Headrick Moser Memorial Park to be more inviting and utilized by residents, considering new access points from the elementary school, adding a playground and enhancing picnic shelter, remediating the pond, and improving park signage to establish it as a dedicated community space. The City/Advisory Board should conduct a master planning process for the park and then take a phased approach to ensure steady progress.

## Ongoing Work and Vision for Memorial Park

The Jean Headrick Moser Memorial Park will be a quiet, natural retreat for residents and visitors alike, thoughtfully integrated with the surrounding residential neighborhood and elementary school. By prioritizing key features like peaceful spaces with natural seating, meandering paths, and a revitalized pond with a focal point, the park will highlight its beautiful rolling hills and mature trees. The pavilion and barn will be re-imagined as multi-purpose spaces for community gatherings, and a natural amphitheater will serve as an outdoor classroom for the adjacent school. This future will be realized through a phased approach, prioritizing projects and securing essential partnerships and volunteer efforts to ensure the park's long-term sustainability.



Picnic shelter



Gravel path and picnic tables



Terraced park area



Picnic tables and play area

### 3. IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY & SAFETY

Enhance walkability and bikeability throughout Townsend, particularly along the Highway 321 corridor and connecting to the Greenway, by improving lighting, signage, and designated crossings.

#### Action: Collaborate on the TDOT Corridor Study of Highway 321

The Advisory Board should provide input and feedback, where possible, on the TDOT Corridor Study to advocate for reduced vehicle speeds and improved pedestrian and bicycle safety through Townsend. This may look like improved crossings, expanded sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure, expanded bicycle lanes, and extended multi-use paths.

#### Action: Improve Lighting and Wayfinding Signage along Highway 321

Implement standardized, human-scale lighting and wayfinding signage along Highway 321 and the multi-use paths (Townsend Greenway) throughout the area. This has the potential to improve safety, pedestrian and bicycle activity, and the visitor experience.



Example wayfinding signage, Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail

### 4. SUPPORT LOCAL RECREATION ECONOMY

Outdoor recreation is a cornerstone of Townsend's local economy. The City should foster recreation initiatives that encourage sustainable tourism and provide year-round employment opportunities, addressing needs for economic growth and support.

#### Action: Increase Communication between Recreation Businesses and Local Government

Increase outreach and communication with local outdoor recreation businesses to better understand potential barriers to Townsend's economic growth. Encourage business owner participation in the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to improve lines of communication and trust between the business community and the City.

#### Action: Local Business Partnerships for Amenities/Programs

Actively engage Townsend's river outfitters, bicycle rentals, and other recreation-related businesses to explore partnerships for shared equipment, program sponsorships, or facility enhancements. Work with event organizers and local businesses to explore opportunities for new, locally driven events.

## 5. LEVERAGE NATURAL ADVANTAGES

Capitalize on Townsend’s unique natural setting and proximity to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Cades Cove, and local waterways by promoting activities like fly fishing, kayaking, tubing, and diverse trail use (hiking, cycling).

### Action: Explore Managed River Access & Recreation

Investigate opportunities for improved, safe, and managed public access to the Little River for activities like fishing, swimming, kayaking, and tubing, acknowledging its value for both locals and visitors.

### Action: Dark Skies & Conservation Initiatives

Explore what it would take for Townsend to become a certified Dark Skies community and integrate conservation priorities (e.g., reducing human/bear interactions) into recreational planning, leveraging the town’s natural setting.

### Action: Expand Stewardship of Natural Assets

Work with regional conservation organizations to implement regular and transparent water quality monitoring initiatives in the Little River. Organize annual river, trail, and roadway trash cleanups.

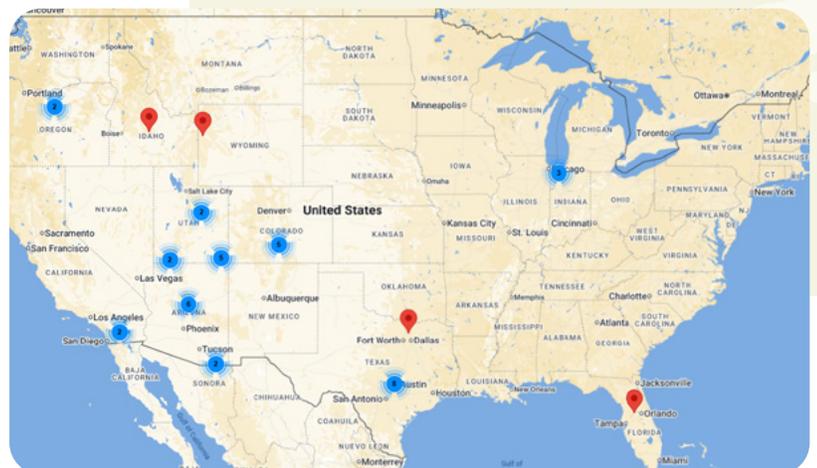
## *International Dark Skies Program*

A town, city, or municipality can become a certified Dark Skies Community through the implementation and enforcement of quality lighting policies, dark sky education, and citizen support of the ideal of dark skies.

There are 40 total Dark Skies certified communities throughout the country, predominantly concentrated in the Western United States, and many are National Park gateway communities.

To qualify for a certification, the community must write and adopt a lighting policy, hold night sky outreach events for residents and visitors, and conduct night sky quality monitoring several times a year. There are no night sky quality requirements for a Community; however, the community must retrofit all publicly owned lighting within five years and encourage private entities to do the same.

Visit [DarkSky International](https://darksky.org) (darksky.org) for more information.



Map of Certified Dark Skies Communities, USA

## 6. EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS

Leveraging local and regional partnerships is essential to achieving goals, given the limited capacity of the volunteer Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and City staff. Strong partnerships create more community buy-in and creative problem solving.

### **Action: Leverage Regional Expertise from ETDD & Design Center**

Leverage the Eastern Tennessee Development District's (ETDD) planning expertise and the Eastern Tennessee Design Center for design concepts, feasibility studies, and guidance on navigating review and permitting processes (e.g., for Special People's Park).

### **Action: Collaborate with Blount County on Shared Assets**

Forge stronger working relationships with Blount County officials for joint funding and maintenance strategies for shared recreational assets such as the Dark Island Swinging Bridge.



### **Action: Partner with Businesses and Event Organizers**

Actively engage Townsend's outdoor recreation businesses and event organizers to provide support where necessary and develop shared goals. Provide more consistent organizational support for established events like the Dancing Bear Bicycle Bash, Synchronous Fireflies, Hot Air Balloon Festival, and Jeep Festivals.

### **Action: Collaborate with Local and Regional Organizations**

Establish and maintain strong relationships with the River Walk & Arboretum, the Little River Watershed Association, Keep Blount Beautiful, Little River Railroad Museum, Great Smoky Mountain Heritage Center, Tremont, the Townsend Elementary School, the Tuckaleechee Garden Club, and other regional organizations to expand the Advisory Board's capacity to recruit volunteers and plan events. Work with partners to establish shared goals, apply for grants, and execute projects.

### **Action: Collaborate with Private Landowners**

Work closely with private landowners who may be interested in providing public recreational access to their property, or with landowners who are interested in selling or giving land to the Town for parks or recreational purposes. Establish a pathway to evaluate the feasibility of private land donations or sales.

## 7. IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND MANDATE

As a volunteer board, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board has limited capacity; however, with clear organizational structures and an empowering mandate from City Council, it has the potential to accomplish many large goals.

### **Action: Dedicated City Staff Liaison**

Secure consistent, dedicated staff time from the City's Public Works Maintenance Department or an assigned liaison to support the Parks and Recreation Committee's administrative and project implementation needs, addressing the current lack of organizational support.

### **Action: Formalized Volunteer Program**

Establish a system for recruiting, training, and retaining volunteers, recognizing their crucial role in both project implementation (e.g., trail maintenance, park clean-ups) and program delivery (e.g., fitness classes, event support), leveraging their labor towards potential grant matches.

### **Action: Grant Funding Identification & Management**

Establish a clear process and potentially identify a dedicated point person (staff or volunteer with specific expertise) for researching, applying for, and managing grants, utilizing the Grant Development Strategy and Opportunities. A Grant Research & Writing Subcommittee may also be useful to share the responsibility and workshop grant writing (see the Subcommittee Strategy Resource).

### **Action: Public Awareness & Communication Channels**

Develop improved internal and external communication strategies to inform residents and visitors about available parks, programs, and opportunities, ensuring the committee's work is well-known and appreciated.

### **Action: Delegate through Subcommittees and Point People**

Delegation to existing Advisory Board members through identifying point people and subcommittees will help the Advisory Board work more efficiently by dividing complex tasks into focused areas. This structure fosters deeper expertise, ensures clear accountability, and enables more effective project management. It also encourages broader member engagement by allowing volunteers to contribute according to their interests and strengths, ultimately leading to better outcomes and stronger community partnerships. Based on stated goals, the Advisory Board should prioritize developing the following three subcommittees, made of existing Advisory Board members and any new volunteers:

- » *Special People's Park Revitalization*
- » *Grant Research & Writing*
- » *Community Programs & Engagement*

See the Subcommittee Strategy and Potential Point People resource below for suggested topic areas for future subcommittees and point people.

### **Action: Update Advisory Board Bylaws**

The Advisory Board should consider updating its bylaws, adding elements regarding semi-regular updates to City Council to inform them about ongoing projects and initiatives and to clarify expectations around annual budgets.

# Resources

The following resources provide more information and next steps for the implementation of the goals and actions listed in the previous section. These include:

- **Best Practices for Recreation Projects**
- **Grant Development Strategy**
- **Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Founding Documents**
- **Subcommittee Strategy & Potential Roles**

## BEST PRACTICES FOR RECREATION PROJECTS



### ✓ **Universal Design & Accessibility**

**First:** Implement “universal access” as a guiding principle for all new and renovated facilities, ensuring spaces like Special People’s Park are truly usable by everyone, going beyond minimum ADA requirements.

✓ **Context-Sensitive Design:** Ensure all recreational infrastructure, lighting, and signage are designed to complement Townsend’s scenic beauty and rural character, avoiding intrusive or overly urbanized elements.

✓ **Integrated Multi-Use Planning:** Develop recreational assets with a multi-modal approach, considering how paths, parks, and attractions connect for pedestrians, cyclists, and potentially future transit options.

✓ **Flood-Resilient Infrastructure:** Utilize flood-resilient materials and design criteria for facilities in or near floodplains (e.g., Special People’s Park pier) to minimize damage and ensure long-term usability.

✓ **Phased Implementation Strategy:** Break down large projects into manageable, fundable phases to build momentum, demonstrate success, and adapt to evolving needs and funding availability.

✓ **Active Community Engagement Cycles:** Maintain continuous engagement with residents, businesses, and tourists through various methods (surveys, workshops, online forums) to ensure plans remain responsive and reflective of community desires.

✓ **Cross-Departmental Collaboration:** Foster strong working relationships between the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Public Works, Planning, and potentially other city departments to streamline approvals, maintenance, and project delivery.

✓ **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Utilize insights from the Recreation Asset Inventory, focus group notes, and future community surveys to inform priorities, project selection, and resource allocation, rather than relying solely on anecdotal evidence.

# GRANT DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



Tips and Tricks:

- ✔ **Prioritize Universal Access & Connectivity Grants:** Focus on grants that support universal design, accessible infrastructure (e.g., TN ORec Capacity, Local Parks & Recreation Fund, Transportation Alternatives Grants, Multimodal Access Grants) for projects like Special People’s Park and path improvements.
- ✔ **Target Capacity & Planning Grants:** Actively pursue grants that build internal capacity and support master planning (e.g., TN ORec Recreation Planning Grant) to strengthen the committee’s ability to develop and manage projects.
- ✔ **Leverage Historic Preservation Funding:** Systematically investigate and apply for grants specifically for historic preservation (e.g., Historic Preservation Fund Grant) for structures like Dark Island Swinging Bridge.
- ✔ **Pursue Community Development & Placemaking Grants:** Explore opportunities from non-traditional funders (e.g., T-Mobile Hometown Grant, AARP Community Challenges, NEA Our Town Grants, TN Arts Commission Creative Placemaking Grant) for programs and amenities that enhance community connection and vibrancy.
- ✔ **Develop “Shovel-Ready” Project Pipeline:** Work proactively to define clear project goals, objectives, and preliminary designs for key initiatives (e.g., Memorial Park improvements, trail connections) to make them competitive for “shovel-ready” grant cycles.
- ✔ **Secure Matching Funds Strategically:** Identify diverse sources for local match requirements, including city budget allocations, in-kind contributions (e.g., volunteer hours, donated materials), and private sector partnerships (e.g., local businesses).
- ✔ **Cultivate Funder Relationships Early:** Establish communication with grant makers well in advance of deadlines to clarify expectations, ask questions, and demonstrate Townsend’s commitment and project readiness.
- ✔ **Tell Townsend’s Compelling Story:** Craft grant narratives that clearly articulate the unique needs of Townsend’s residents and visitors, highlight the project’s community impact, and showcase the city’s commitment to thoughtful, sustainable growth, supported by local data.
- ✔ **Maintain & Monitor Grant Opportunities**  
**Resource:** Update the detailed, running list of potential grant opportunities as they align with specific projects, etc.



# PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD FOUNDING DOCUMENTS

- **City of Townsend Charter & Ordinances:** All foundational legal documents governing city operations, land use, public spaces, and parks.
- **Townsend Comprehensive Plan (including current and all subsequent updates):** The overarching strategic document that guides all development in Townsend, with which this Recreation Plan must be fully integrated.
- **Townsend Parks and Recreation Board Bylaws & Mission/Vision Statements:** The committee’s specific operational rules and its guiding principles, adopted in 2023.
- **Tennessee Code Annotated (relevant to Municipal Parks & Planning):** State laws that define the powers and responsibilities of municipalities regarding parks, recreation, and land use.
- **Recreation Asset Inventory Report (full version):** The detailed compilation of all recreational assets in and around Townsend, including mapping and condition assessments.
- **Community Focus Group Summaries (Business & Tourism, Rec & Parks):** Direct input from key stakeholders providing qualitative insights into needs, opportunities, and concerns regarding recreation and growth in Townsend.
- **TDOT Corridor Study Materials (for Highway 321):** Any available information, drafts, or timelines related to infrastructure improvements, pedestrian crossings, and lighting along the main highway.
- **Blount County Parks and Recreation Plans/ Documents:** Relevant county-level plans that might impact or offer collaboration opportunities for recreational assets shared with Townsend.





## SUBCOMMITTEE STRATEGY & POTENTIAL ROLES

As mentioned in Recommendation 7, Action E, projects are more effective when there is clear delegation and responsibility frameworks. This can be accomplished through designating specific “point people” and/or establishing a subcommittee to specialize on a specific project or initiative. **It is not expected that new volunteers must be recruited for every single role or subcommittee; this strategy is designed to be successful through Advisory Board membership alone.**

The following is a list of potential roles and subcommittees that the Advisory Board could establish to advance specific projects and goals. Depending on board member capacity and project needs, several subcommittees may be active at a time, though it is neither expected nor realistic that all subcommittees will be functional at the same time. Defining these initiatives and subcommittees can also support board member recruitment, as people are more likely to get involved when they see a clear project or purpose.

### Crosscutting Roles

- **Committee Chair (Primary Liaison):** Leads meetings, sets agendas, coordinates across subcommittees, and liaises with City Council, ETDD, and Public Works. It is a best practice for the chair to be a different person than the City Council liaison.
- **Secretary & Communications Specialist:** Records meetings, manages communications, and produces public updates. As outlined in the Advisory Board’s current bylaws, this is to be the City Recorder for the City of Townsend.
- **Volunteer Coordinator:** Recruits, schedules, and recognizes volunteers for events and projects.

### Potential Subcommittees

As recommended in Action 7E: Delegate through Subcommittees and Point People, subcommittees can help make projects more efficient and effective for the Advisory Board. These subcommittees are designed to be flexible and agile, and can be established or closed based on the committee’s priorities. Their structure directly addresses the key opportunities and challenges outlined in this plan’s recommendations.

#### Special People’s Park Revitalization Subcommittee

Leads redesign, permitting (including NEPA/archeological review), grant funding, and construction oversight for the universal access park.

**Point Person: Project Development Lead:**

Moves project milestones forward and coordinates design/engineering.

#### Memorial Park Activation Subcommittee

Guides master planning, community engagement, school access discussions, pond remediation, and playground development for the Jean Headrick Moser Memorial Park.

**Point Person: Project Development Lead:**

Oversees planning and engagement for park improvements.

#### Connectivity & Wayfinding Subcommittee

Addresses lighting, signage standardization, pedestrian/bike safety along Highway 321, and connections to the Greenway and River Walk.

**Point Person: Project Development Lead:**

Manages design and coordination for connectivity projects.

### Grant Research & Writing Subcommittee

Finds and drafts grant applications; supports other subcommittees with funding and project details.

**Point Person: Grant Coordinator:** Pursues funding opportunities and ensures grant compliance.

### Programming & Events Subcommittee

Develops and implements recreational programs (children, teens, intergenerational, fitness), coordinates with existing events, and explores new community gatherings.

**Point Person: Community Programs & Engagement Coordinator:** Designs programs and drives public participation.

### Maintenance & Operations Support Subcommittee

Works directly with Public Works to assess and prioritize maintenance needs for all recreation assets, helping to identify efficiencies and long-term upkeep strategies.

**Point Person: Asset Management & Maintenance Liaison:** Monitors asset condition and schedules repairs.

### Business & Community Partnership Subcommittee

Acts as a liaison with local businesses and community organizations to foster collaborations, sponsorships, and volunteer support for recreational initiatives.

**Point Person: Business & Tourism Partnership Lead:** Connects with local businesses and tourism stakeholders.

### Historic Assets & Conservation Subcommittee

Focuses on the Dark Island Swinging Bridge repair, Sunshine Covered Bridge preservation, and broader efforts related to Dark Skies initiatives or human-bear conflict reduction through recreation planning.

**Point Person: Historic Assets & Conservation Lead:** Leads heritage and conservation initiatives.

# Worksheets & Tools

To improve project management efficiency, effectiveness, and standardization, the Advisory Board could develop some of the following worksheets and tools. These worksheets and tools do not need to be complicated! Often, simpler is better. Examples of the three highlighted worksheets and tools are included on the following pages.

- ▶▶▶ **Asset Condition Assessment Form:** Establish a standardized checklist for periodically evaluating the physical condition of parks and facilities, identifying maintenance needs, and prioritizing repairs. This may include an evaluation as simple as rating the safety, signage/welcoming environment, and signs of wear for each asset.
- ▶▶▶ **"Lessons Learned" Project Debrief Template:** A post-project or post-event form to capture successes, challenges, budget adherence, and key takeaways for continuous improvement in future recreation initiatives.
- ▶▶▶ **Community Input & Feedback Log:** A structured spreadsheet to systematically record, categorize, and track responses from community surveys, public meetings, and direct feedback regarding recreational needs and preferences.
- ▶▶▶ **Townsend Project Concept Worksheet:** A standardized form for members of the public to submit new project ideas to the Advisory Board, outlining goals, target users (residents/visitors), estimated costs, potential partners, and alignment with recreation plan goals.
- ▶▶▶ **Partner Collaboration Agreement Template:** A simplified Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) template for committee use when formalizing partnerships with non-profits, businesses, or other community groups on specific projects or programs.
- ▶▶▶ **Recreation Program Planning Grid:** A tool for developing new programs, outlining objectives, target audience, activities, required resources (staff, volunteers, facilities), budget, and potential impact.
- ▶▶▶ **Grant Pre-Application Checklist:** Tailored checklists for the most relevant grant programs (TN ORec, TDOT, T-Mobile, AARP), detailing Townsend-specific requirements, internal review steps, and supporting documentation.
- ▶▶▶ **Volunteer Recruitment & Placement Matrix:** A worksheet to match potential volunteers' skills and interests with specific committee needs or project tasks, ensuring effective deployment of volunteer energy.

# LEASONS LEARNED: *A Project Debrief Template*

<b>Event Name:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Debrief Meeting Date:</b>
<b>What went well in this project/event?</b>	
<b>Is there anything that didn't go as expected? What did we learn from that?</b>	
<b>Should we do this project/event again?</b>	
<i>If so, how can we improve or build on this project/event in the future to increase its impact or participation?</i>	

# TOWNSEND PROJECT CONCEPT WORKSHEET

**Name:**

**Email address:**

**Type of project:**

Event       Ongoing programming       Infrastructure

Other (write-in):

**Project purpose - who will this project serve?**

**Estimated costs (if known):**

**Potential partners:**

**Does this project support any of the goals outlined in the Townsend Recreation Plan?**

- 1. Foster Year-Round Community Connection Through Recreation
- 2. Activate Underutilized and Aging Assets
- 3. Improve Connectivity & Safety
- 4. Support Local Economic Vitality
- 5. Leverage Natural Advantages
- 6. Expand Partnerships
- 7. Improve Organizational Structure and Mandate

*Please elaborate:*

# GRANT DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST: A Resource for Recreation Committees

This checklist is designed to guide your committee through the grant development process, with a focus on best practices for securing funding in the state of Tennessee.

## Phase 1: Research & Strategy

- Identify community needs and connect them to specific project recommendations.
- Research potential Tennessee-specific grant programs (e.g., from the TN Department of Environment and Conservation, TN Department of Tourist Development).
- Review grant guidelines and confirm project eligibility.
- Align your project with funder goals. Does your project address a priority area for the grant program?

## Phase 2: Building Your Case

- Collect data to support your project. Use publicly available data from state sources (e.g., health statistics, census data) to show the need.
- Secure letters of support from key community stakeholders.

## Phase 3: Application Development

- Define roles and responsibilities for each committee member (Project Lead, Grant Writer, Data Specialist, etc.).
- Create a clear project timeline with specific milestones for the grant cycle.
- Draft the project narrative, budget, and other required documents.
- Request a second set of eyes on the application for a thorough review.

## Phase 4: Communication & Follow-Up

- Schedule meetings to provide updates to key stakeholders, such as the City Council, at major milestones.
- Submit the grant application on time and according to the instructions.
- Develop a plan for post-submission communication and follow-up.

## External Resources & Key Reminders:

- » **State Departments:** The TN Department of Environment and Conservation's Office of Outdoor Recreation manages several key programs like the Local Parks and Recreation Fund (LPRF) and Recreational Trails Program (RTP).
- » **UT Support:** Local universities may have grant writing centers or professors who can offer guidance or review your proposal.
- » **Data is King:** Strong grant proposals use data to show a problem exists and that your project is the solution.
- » **Letters Matter:** Letters of support demonstrate community buy-in, which is a key factor for many funders.