



IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE PARK, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Pragmatic steps in bringing the PROS plan to reality

The PROS Plan was developed to be integrated with other City plans, such as the Pedestrian Master Plan, Bicycle Master Plan and the Community Investments Plan. The Long Range Strategic Plan is consistent with the major Goals and Objectives of the Park and Recreation components of the Community Investments Plan, however, the Plan provides further refinement of policy recommendations and promotes additional monitoring policies. Additionally, the Plan is in accordance with the major tenants of the other elements of the Community Investments Plan. The Department wanted to develop and implement a “built environment” strategic plan that better promotes healthy community lifestyles, neighborhood and community connectivity, resource conservation, protecting the City’s urban forest in public spaces, and multiple-use integration of our parks, open space and stormwater management systems.

To achieve the vision for parks and recreation in the City, there are multiple steps that need to be taken. Some of these steps are broad and sweeping and others are smaller. The intent of the Implementation Plan is to guide the progress of the Park and Recreation Department in that every incremental step, no matter how small, advances the City’s overall vision for the future. In order to accomplish this goal there are both program and policy initiatives that must be initiated as well as budgeting and capital improvement planning that must be done. All of the following recommendations below are intended to collectively meet the on the priorities identified during the planning process and are organized into those areas that require program or policy initiatives and those that would require capital improvement funding or budgeting. The priorities identified in the PROS Plan are:

- Citywide Recreation Services
- Tourism and Economic Development
- Partnerships & Cooperation
- Staffing
- Performance Measures
- Communications
- Program Improvements
- Maintain Existing Resources
- Site Amenities and Signage
- Major Renovations
- Minor Renovations

Following is a description of the recommended steps needed to meet the priority needs identified through the PROS planning process and to achieve the established priorities.

PROGRAM AND POLICY INITIATIVES:**Citywide Recreation Services**

Wichita offers citywide recreation services through its specialized centers and through events and activities at its regional parks, golf courses, and special use parks. These citywide programs are very successful. Continue the programming provided at the existing specialized centers, which are excellent facilities that fulfill specialized functions. The City should also continue to provide the events and activities supported by its regional parks, golf courses, and special use parks.

Program continuation to expand “At Will” Recreation Opportunities.

Responsible Party– Recreation Superintendent

- Provide more drop in style programs by 2017
 Met Not Met

- Create additional mobile recreation stations by the end of 2016
 Met Not Met

- Continue to apply the Pyramid Methodology for cost recovery- Ongoing
 Met Not Met

- Provide art supplies and equipment that can be utilized at any time during operational hours at recreation centers. 2017
 Met Not Met

- Provide music equipment that can be checked out with a deposit in 2017
 Met Not Met

- Provide technology based equipment for public use in 2018
 Met Not Met

Expand Neighborhood Events.

Responsible Party- Recreation Superintendent

- Promote neighborhood interaction and identity through our programming and outreach efforts- Ongoing
 Met Not Met

- Strengthen community ties with community groups by having additional groups partner with the City in 2017
 Met Not Met

Communications

During the preparation of the PROS Plan, public involvement results indicated that there continues to be a lack of awareness among Wichita residents about the parks, facilities and services offered by the Park and Recreation Department. The Department has tried to increase the public's use of its web site; however this has not reached all of the public. All brochures should encourage the use of the web site and provide an e-newsletter to those who sign up and then remove from the mailing those who prefer this method of communication. The Department does focus on communications and outreach to increase awareness and encourage participation and use, as well as to increase exposure, not only for the Department, but the community as a whole. A marketing plan was created to increase community awareness of Wichita's delivery system for recreation and the services available at Recreation Centers. This includes multiple methods of outreach, moving beyond the program guide currently provided on the City's website and social media outlets in-line with current best practices in the marketing community.

Increase Public Awareness and Promote Joint Marketing Opportunities.

Responsible Parties- Development Services Coordinator, Golf Manager, Recreation Superintendent

- Provide information about City facilities and programs to see a 10% increase in web traffic by the end of 2016
 Met Not Met
- Expand upon cross-marketing efforts for higher level exposure throughout the community
 Met Not Met
- To reach 20% of customers through social media marketing by May 2017
 Met Not Met
- Help increase recreation yearly revenue by 5% each year through strategic marketing messages
 Met Not Met
- Increase sponsorship revenue by 2.5% 2016-2018
 Met Not Met

- Increase engagement of customers by 5% through the Golf Mobile App by year end 2016
 Met Not Met
- Help increase golf yearly revenue by 5% each year through strategic marketing messages
 Met Not Met
- Continue to brand the family of Wichita Public Golf Courses to the public by increasing new players (Youth and Adult) by marketing lessons, clinics, other beginner programming each year by 2.5%
 Met Not Met

Tourism and Economic Development

The Park and Recreation Department is one of many departments and agencies within Wichita that support tourism and economic development. The Department's role is to be a partner in economic development, supporting the City's economic development and tourism promotion initiatives. This role includes providing support and venues for citywide events and activities organized by others, potentially providing citywide events and activities and actively partnering with others. Sports related services need to be enhanced by additional partnerships in order to promote travel and tourism to Wichita. The Departmental role is to be an economic driver in the Wichita region and has a major impact on the community's quality of life. Greens fee prices for the Golf Division have been adjusted over the years to account for different factors such as the amount of rounds played and the current economic climate. The Golf Division has and will continue to adjust greens fees as deemed necessary to keep up with the rounds and revenue projections to stay competitive in the Wichita area. Season passes have also been changed over time to stay competitive.

Continue to be a partner in tourism and economic development initiatives.

Responsible Parties- All staff

- Increase the number of regional sports attractions in the Wichita area by 2017
 Met Not Met
- Increase the number of golf tournaments in the Wichita area by 2017
 Met Not Met

Partnerships and Cooperation

The key to the success of this plan is the expansion of the Department outside its traditional role of strictly parks and recreation and the development of strategic partnerships with other organizations and agencies. The Park and Recreation Department also should be proactive in fostering new partnerships. Non-profit organizations, health care providers and the local business community may offer potential new partnerships. An example would be the Wichita Park Foundation which is a major contributor to scholarships, special events, promoting sponsorships, capital improvements and advocacy, which all support the mission and vision of the Park and Recreation Department. The planning process identified several key agencies and types of organizations that the Department must expand its association with by holding joint or co-sponsored events, establishing and/or increasing the number of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and increasing the number of affiliated groups by 10% annually.

Continue to communicate and collaborate with non-profit agencies.

Responsible Parties- Recreation Superintendent, Development Coordinator

- Develop and maintain partnerships with local school districts, and especially USD 259, to improve access to school grounds and facilities to expand recreation opportunities locations by 2017
 Met Not Met
- Formalize partnerships to identify responsibilities of each party, including financial responsibilities for an increase in donations to the Department by 5% by 2017
 Met Not Met

Staffing

Funding is a critical issue for the future of parks and recreation in Wichita. While the City has a strong foundation in its existing park system, analysis during the planning process indicates that the long-term sustainability of the park system is not possible given current practices and levels of funding. One of the recommendations is to expand Recreation Supervisor responsibilities in order to address more than one Center, thereby leveraging the professional training these staff members currently have. As programming and participation expands, the Department is also looking toward the feasibility of hiring specialty staff that would serve multiple centers in order to streamline operations.

Increase availability of staff to help visitors.

Responsible party- Recreation Superintendent

- Provide a center customer service representative to greet and direct visitors and provide security within the facility by 2017

Met Not Met

Performance Measures

The Department needs to consistently track attendance, revenues, and cost recovery across all programs and in all Recreation Centers in order to ensure comparability. It is the goal of the Department, and the Recreation Division in particular, to meet overall cost recovery goals of 30-50% system wide for the Recreation Centers. While some Centers may recover more costs than others, depending of the demographics of their surrounding neighborhood. This is accomplished through the regular review of programs to determine whether they meet participation and revenue goals. If performance does not improve, low performing programs will be changed or discontinued. The Department also periodically evaluates local, regional, and national recreation trends in order to incorporate updated trends knowledge into program design. The Recreation Division also releases surveys after new programs are implemented to track results. Similar programs also track attendance in a consistent manner Department-wide.

The following guidelines are used for tracking participation.

Responsible party- Recreation Superintendent

- Track the number of attendees for special events, drop-in activities and facility attendance-Ongoing
 Met Not Met
- Track participant hours for classes, leagues and workshops, as well as other program types that rely on registration for a scheduled activity-Ongoing
 Met Not Met
- Track the number of units for items sold, such as rounds of golf or swim passes-Ongoing
 Met Not Met

Program Improvements

The PROS planning process showed that residents would like access to nearby programming, but current options are not well-suited to their needs. The analysis showed that the City is well-positioned, given the existing facilities and strengths, to revive its neighborhood-oriented programming through Recreation Centers and serve a broad range of Wichitans. The Department will create and deliver recreation programming that foster healthy decision making and outcomes. Facilities will offer programming based on specific community needs as identified in regular surveys. Programs will be designed with goals and objectives that are attainable and advance the health and well-being of each participant physically,

socially, and emotionally. Across the country golf courses have been looking to new ways to attract users, particularly younger users, to courses and to the game of golf. This is a direct response to the aging of the primary user group and a need for these large, maintenance intensive assets to serve multiple purposes. New types of programming can be a key to bringing potential golfers to existing courses, attracting interest and shifting the perception of the game. Starting New At Golf (SNAG) is a program and equipment set designed for youth to teach fundamentals and emphasize the fun in playing golf.

Make programmatic changes an increase participation and centers and golf courses.

Responsible party- Recreation Superintendent, Golf Manager

- Expand fitness center hours to a minimum of 7 AM to 9 PM, Monday through Saturday by the end of 2016.
 Met Not Met

- Recreation will increase the number of program participant in the available programming by 6% annually.
 Met Not Met

- Increase number of rounds of golf played by 7% by 2017
 Met Not Met

- Design some programs to meet the interests of different ethnic groups; and provide program materials, brochures and flyers in different languages in the Recreation Centers by 2017.
 Met Not Met

Maintain Existing Resources

In many cases, the existing recreation resources at a park are doing a fine job of serving community needs and are in good condition. This is often due to the playground improvement initiative undertaken by the Department in recent years. The critical recommendation for these sites is to ensure a level of maintenance that preserves the assets and to keep up regular reinvestment in existing resources. This ensures that the parks continue to be a positive influence on the surrounding community. Some of these sites could accommodate additional resources in the future, if the community requested it.

Expand our current system of infrastructure and facility assets.

Responsible party- Parks, Forestry and Maintenance Superintendent

- Maintain and replace what we currently have- Ongoing
- Make enhancements to what we currently have- Ongoing

Site Amenities and Signage

This category captures the smallest, but not least important, improvements to park sites. Site amenities include a wide range of shelters, park furniture (benches, picnic tables, etc.), drinking fountains, trash receptacles and other features that make park visits more comfortable and pleasant. Signage at a park would typically include at least a park entrance sign that clearly identifies the name of the site so that residents understand it is a publicly owned site available for use. Additional signage might include wayfinding signs that indicate where important sites within or around the park are located, directional signs helping visitors find the park from major roads, or interpretive signage to tell an important story about the site or resources within it. Not all sites will have additional signage needs but larger parks and natural areas would include more than smaller neighborhood sites.

Expand our current system of infrastructure and facility assets.

Responsible party- Parks, Forestry and Maintenance Superintendent

- Update the all of the 26 sites that have been identified as needing additional site amenities or signage by 2018.

Major Renovations- Enable Recreation opportunities in the Arkansas River and Downtown Areas

Improved parks, plazas and green streets Downtown can significantly enhance Wichita's social, economic and environmental sustainability alike. While a particular set of activities may distinguish a particular park, all Downtown parks and plazas should, as a group, accommodate a broad variety of activities. Multi-use paths accommodate walking, jogging, biking and similar activities. Downtown already enjoys the benefit of multi-use paths flanking the Arkansas River that extend for

miles and link to many other neighborhoods. There are important additional opportunities to add a path on the former railroad right-of-way in Delano—as was done between Central Avenue and Midtown—and along Santa Fe Street flanking Downtown’s active railroad corridor. Recreation facilities are important local and regional destinations that often reinforce activity along the paths and streets that link to them and Downtown has several significant opportunities for new or improved recreation facilities. Investments in this green infrastructure will invite community gathering and recreation, attract development, make Downtown a comfortable place to walk and bike, and help keep Arkansas River water clean. Periodic excursion boats and/or water taxis during public events would further expand public opportunity to enjoy being on the water. A bike rental facility, potentially combined with the public boat facility, would enable more people to take advantage of the river’s long and beautiful recreational paths. Continue to host public concerts, festivals and other events in park areas along the river to reinforce its importance as a regional community destination. Ongoing introduction of shrubs and other plantings along the river edge, and removal of debris, should be continued to help control the goose population and create a more inviting setting for people.

Increase Special Events in the Downtown and Arkansas River Areas.

Responsible Party- Development Coordinator

- Implement new fall special event (Oktoberfest) by 2016
 Met Not Met
- Events at the new pop up park, i.e. small concerts, music recitals, choral groups in 2017
 Met Not Met

Increase development in the downtown core area and the historic Oldtown District.

Responsible Party- Principal Planner

- Development signature urban plazas and parks to reflect the needs of a community- Ongoing
 Met Not Met
- Renovate Naftzger Park by the end of 2017
 Met Not Met
- Renovate Reflection Square Park by the end 2016
 Met Not Met

Major Renovations- Development of Consistent Park Facility Planning and Design Guidelines

The City of Wichita has a number of facilities that were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s. Many are indicative of particular design styles or periods in the Park Department history, however there is little consistency in regard to materials and form. This leads to a lack of recognizable branding for the Park and Recreation Department and also creates maintenance difficulties by virtue of the vast array of materials and products used. This effort should not preclude creative and unique design, but sufficient guidelines should be developed that all facilities start to take a consistent character that is unique to Wichita and are maintainable with readily available materials, when possible. The department will also work to maximize current usage with minor renovations to existing space to increase participant involvement in programs and services. This focus will ensure that in the Wichita will be able to enjoy facilities that focus on user needs and desires, offer amenities that are appealing to the site specific community, and have participation and safety as the top priority. Finally, a long-term plan for center-by-center renovation should be developed and implemented to update existing Recreation Centers to meet community needs. While program improvements can begin immediately, recreation center improvements may span many years, depending on funding availability.

Develop a Life-Cycle Replacement Budget to Maintain Existing Facilities by the end of 2016.

Responsible Parties- Parks, Forestry & Maintenance Superintendent, Recreation Superintendent, Principal Planner

- Public Works is developing the requirements for replacement this year
 Met Not Met
- Develop a renovation and Replacement plan for all recreation centers by 2017
 Met Not Met

Minor Renovations- Adoption of Green Design and Sustainability Practices

The residents of the City of Wichita identified that they would like the City to adopt more “Green” Design and Sustainable practices. These terms are often used casually to describe a general desire for environmentally friendly products and practices; however in practice these terms are sometimes vague and too general. Many of the tenets of this plan are implicit in the concept of making the department more livable and sustainable. The Park and Recreation Department itself is an integral part of a sustainable community, however it is also a large consumer of resources. In light of this the Department, has recently implemented a sustainability policy to monitor its use of resources and to reduce its waste stream to minimize its impact on the environment.

One of the big issues for the Park and Recreation Department is the very real

potential for water shortages in the future. The Department is large consumer of water and future water restriction could seriously affect the viability of some facilities. Efforts should be made now to reduce water consumption in the Parks by a measurable objective of one percent per year. This can be accomplished by incorporating native plants and xeriscaping principles in landscape plantings and could also include the conversion of some athletic field to synthetic turf. Additionally, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles should be used to reduce the need for pesticides. Finally all general practices should be evaluated to assess means of reducing the carbon foot print of the department.

Integrate Sustainability Practices in Park Planning and Design.

Responsible Party- Principal Planner

- Reduce water consumption and maintenance through the use of reclaimed water through projects that are being initiated in 2016
 Met Not Met
- Buffalo Park Renovation to be completed with interactive water feature in 2016
 Met Not Met
- Use native plants in active and non-active park areas starting in 2016
 Met Not Met
- Pracht Wetlands Park design phase complete by end of 2016- 404 Permit already obtained
 Met Not Met
- Use of AstroTurf on new baseball field at McAdams Park in 2016
 Met Not Met
- Use of solar lighting in Aley and Pawnee Prairie Park in 2016
 Met Not Met
- Re-use of asphalt as trail material in Chisolm Creek Park bike path in 2016
 Met Not Met
- Redesign stormwater retention ponds at MacDonald Golf Course in 2016
 Met Not Met
- Development of Prairie Sunset Trail to connect Goddard and Wichita by 2016
 Met Not Met

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM AND BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Capital Improvements Program Recommendations

The Department currently conducts a capital improvements planning process that is based on individual requests and departmental identified priorities. This process is internal to the City and does not include the capital improvement planning of other critical partner agencies. As the Department moves forward there will be an ever increasing need to develop facilities in partnership with other agencies and organizations.

The Capital Improvement recommendations begin with premise that the City needs to first maintain what investment it has prior to committing to any new facilities. The Park Department currently receives approximately \$2.2 million annually in capital improvement funding. Of that amount \$400,000 is for the recurring renovation of facilities with predictable life cycles. The first recommendation is to develop a recurring life cycle replacement budget to provide for the predictable replacement of existing park facilities, which is a process that is currently being undertaken by the Department of Public Works. Further recommendations are intended to meet the expressed needs of the City and advance the overall vision.

The priority capital improvement projects that are derived from this master planning process are:

- **Maintain Existing Resources:** This provides a budget for ongoing reinvestment over the next 10-20 years, based on a cost of \$30,000 per acre for developed parks and \$15,000 per acre for natural areas.
- **Site Amenities and Signage:** Costs are based on an allowance of an average of \$30,000 per site. It is assumed that some sites will require less budget and others will require more.
- **Minor Renovation:** Costs are based on \$70,000 per acre, derived from the cost of Buffalo Park improvements applied to the entire site acreage.
- **Major Renovation:** Costs are based on \$225,000 per acre, also derived from the cost of Buffalo Park improvements applied to the two acres of the site that were most heavily renovated.
- **Park Land Acquisition:** Costs are based on \$125,000 per acre inside of city limits and \$15,000 outside of city limits.
- **Development:** Costs are based on \$300,000 per acre, assuming a moderate level of development at the sites.

- **Recreation Center:** Costs are based on \$10,000,000 for a 50,000sq. ft. facility
- **Aquatic Facilities:** Costs are based on \$4,000,000 per outdoor pool
- **Trails:** costs are estimated at \$1.35 Million per mile.

SUMMARY

The Implementation Plan for the Park and Recreation Department PROS Plan sets forth a course of action for bringing the City's vision plan to reality. The City is very fortunate that a great deal of the proposed plan can be accomplished through the implementation of strategic initiatives and does not require the usual large capital investments that are usually associated with such plans. The plan is not a "buy and build" plan that requires the acquisition of large tracts of land or the construction of numerous expensive facilities. The Implementation Plan is more of a guide to repositioning the Department to more effectively serve to broader interests of the residents of the City and to better accommodate the evolving trends of an urbanizing community.



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