



CITY OF WICHITA

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLANNING PROCESS

PROS TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP (TAG) MEETING # 1
FEBRUARY 15, 2007

MEETING SUMMARY

The meeting was called by Doug Kupper, Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Wichita. Mr. Kupper explained that the planning process is just beginning, and the City will look to this committee for technical help as well as assistance in keeping the community informed. Mr. Kupper then introduced Sally McIntyre, of MIG, Inc., who will lead the planning process. The meeting included a brief presentation of the planning process, and an introduction of the staff and consultant team followed by an extended brainstorm session about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities of the Wichita parks system.

Strengths

Wichita has particular strength in providing varied opportunities to connect with and learn about nature and providing large scale facilities for sports (soccer, baseball, golf, etc.) Other strengths included:

- Riverfront parks
- River access
- Urban fishing
- Wichita Wild
- Trails (opportunity to expand)
- Small dispersed parks/playgrounds
- Recreation programs
- School facilities
- Street beautification
- Large regional facilities
- Athletic complexes
- Varied opportunities
- County Zoo
- Great Plains Nature Center
- WATER Center
- Colleges, Universities and other institutions
- Botanica
- Public Golf Courses
- YMCA
- Collaborative efforts
- Visioneering, Parks and Recreation Alliance

Weaknesses

There was general agreement that funding parks at an appropriate level was a weakness in the system. Partly because of this, the parks were not seen as serving current needs, being exciting to residents and visitors and taking advantage of opportunities to meet multiple goals (such as recreation, environmental restoration and flood control.) Other weaknesses included:

- Adequate funding
- Over emphasizing cost recovery
- Multiple use facilities/ sharing facilities
- Meeting multiple goals
- Safety
- Lack of trail connections
- Water play
- Use of "Big Ditch"
- Specialized parks
- High School sports facilities
- Understanding of what people want
- Equity across the city

- Inclusion of youth
- Property use conflict between City and park authority
- Follow through on vision
- Public-Private collaboration
- Excitement about parks
- “Active City” image

Opportunities

Many opportunities were seen in capitalizing on existing resources, such as the river and neighborhood park locations, to generate excitement about parks and recreation and create an active identity for Wichita. Opportunities mentioned in the meeting include:

- Leadership
- Establish identity
- Emphasis on health and wellness
- Showcase recreation opportunities
- Supporting visitors
- Community building through parks and recreation
- Economic development
- Look at all transportation options
- Open/undeveloped spaces
- Adopt-A-Park program
- Parks forum
- Innovative funding research
- Capitalize on water access
- White water course
- Bike trails
- Have fun!

Needs

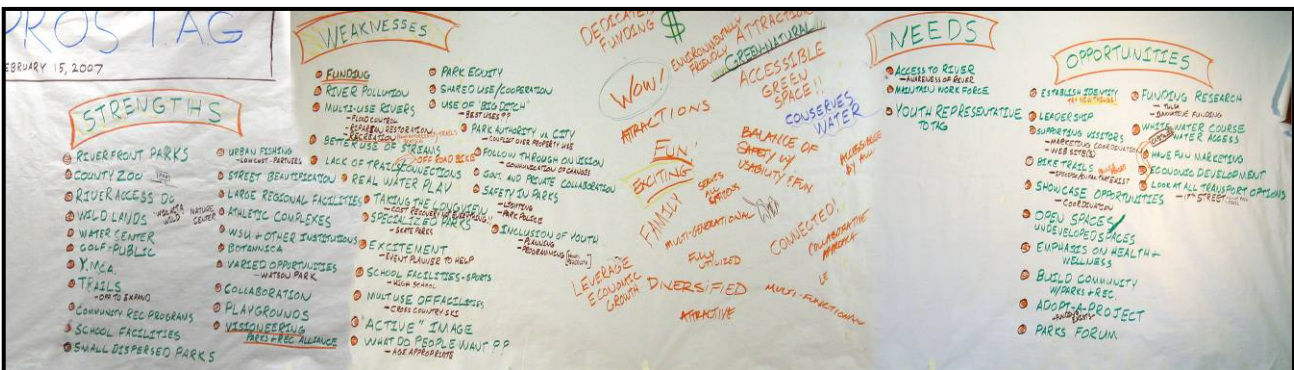
A few specific needs were discussed as well, including:

- Better access to the river
- Maintain workforce
- Youth representative to TAG

Conclusion

At the conclusion of the meeting the group was asked for final thoughts on a vision for Wichita’s park and recreation system, these are summarized below:

- More fun
- Parks should serve all citizens
- Connected park and trail system
- Use parks to leverage economic growth
- Dedicated funding for parks
- Environmentally friendly



Graphic Recording of 2-15-07 PROS TAG Meeting