



**CITY OF WICHITA**  
PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLANNING  
PROCESS

**SUMMARY OF DISTRICT 3 OUTREACH MEETING**  
**JUNE 11, 2007**

Residents of City Council District 3 were invited by Council Member Jim Skelton to share their views related to city parks, recreation and open space on Wednesday evening, June 11, at the Wichita Water Center. A total of 26 residents participated.

The purpose of the outreach meeting was to:

- define the importance of the Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan;
- highlight current park assets in Wichita at large and in District 3;
- solicit observations, and learn ideas for parks in the future and how to pay for them; and
- communicate what happens next in the planning process.

Four questions used to elicit participants' observations and preferences for the future are listed below, along with a summary of responses:

**1. What are the best features of Wichita's parks, recreation programs and open spaces?**

- Excellent bicycle trails and recreation programs exist – mostly north of K-54.
- Playgrounds have safer, more modern equipment.
- Parks in general are well maintained.
- Most areas of city have access to community and regional parks.
- Attractive nature trail is at Chisholm Creek Park.
- Diversity of services and facilities exists.
- Park department is professionally managed.
- Water foundations are safe, functional and more cost efficient than pools.
- Although there is a shortage of bicycle trails south of K-54, the ones that exist are good.

**2. What are the limitations of Wichita's parks, recreation programs and open spaces?**

- District 3 lacks park resources in comparison with other areas of Wichita:
  - Lack of facilities in the center areas of district 3 (facilities tend to be on the perimeters of the district)
  - A specific shortage of neighborhood parks (only 3 neighborhood parks in District 3 out of a total of 22 city-wide)
  - River south of Kellogg is under-utilized due to lack of facilities and access
  - No river access at all south of Garvey Park
  - Shortage of bike trails
- Inaccessible services
  - Services are not accessible to low-income persons due to fees and location of parks.
  - Many accommodations have not been made to afford access to persons with disabilities.
- Shortage of parking spaces at Linwood, Emery and Herman Hill parks limits their use.
- Seasonal restrictions on park usage limit full use of assets.

- Bike trails that are available in south Wichita are unconnected to each other.
- Serious shortage of facilities and activities for young people exists. (e.g. skate parks, BMX)
- Lack of security leads to vandalism of park facilities.
- Poor lighting is in Herman Hill and Osage parks.
- Street conditions in Riverside and Sim parks are poor.
- Restrooms are a problem, both due to lack of cleanliness and overall shortage at park facilities.
- Moss in the water limits fishing opportunities.
- Residents are unaware of many existing park resources.

### **3. What would you like to see changed, added or eliminated in the way of parks, facilities recreation programs or open spaces in the future?**

Responses that were generated by individual participants are listed in order of priority as expressed by participants during a concluding exercise. The number to the right indicates how many participants identified it as one of their top three priorities.

- Build a bridge for bicycles and pedestrians to connect Herman Hill and Watson parks (16)
- Provide for improved security, including better lighting, at parks in District 3 (16)
- Create biking/hiking trail on east side of river, south of Kellogg ((14)
- Develop new park at the southeast corner of George Washington Boulevard and Pawnee (This undeveloped land is on the market.) (10)
- Integrate the location of other public facilities, especially schools, in or near parks <sup>1</sup> (9)
- Expand public access to the Wichita/Valley Center Flood Control channel (8)
- Build a heated, handicapped accessible fishing dock along the river south of Kellogg (7)
- Expand other recreation amenities along the river south of Kellogg (7)
- Create a dog park (7)
- Improve maintenance of bicycle paths (7)
- Build a new nature trail in south Wichita (5)
- Create new “pocket” parking at Herman Hill park (4)
- Build new nature trail near Meridian and I-235 (where other public facilities are located) (4)
- Establish ATV park for young people to keep them safe and to keep ATVs out of neighborhoods (4)
- Develop more park facilities for youth (3)
- Expand more opportunities for walking in Wichita area (3)
- Develop more interactive water fountains (3)
- Initiate strategies to manage geese at Watson Park (2)
- Implement an eradication program for weeds (with stickers) and Sumac in parks (2)
- Create a ski slope at the old Brooks Landfill site (1)

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<sup>1</sup> The advocate of this change reported that public schools no longer provide transportation for field trips; thus, access to parks by children during the school day is seriously curtailed.

#### 4. How should the City of Wichita pay for park and recreation services?<sup>2</sup>

Participants were asked to indicate the funding sources they would consider from a list of options offered by the facilitator. Options are listed in order of favorability, with the most favorable option listed first. The number to the right indicates how many participants are favorable to considering it as a funding option.

- Impact fees on new development<sup>3</sup> (22)
- More public/private partnerships – solicitation of private contributions (12)
- Increased cooperation with other local governments in development and operation of parks<sup>4</sup> (12)
- Dedicated sales tax (11)
- More non-federal government grants (6)
- Dedication of infrastructure development dollars for green space (5)
- Realignment of resources (4)
- Increased user fees (4)
- General sales tax (2)
- Dedicated property tax (1)
- General property tax (0)

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<sup>2</sup> A recurrent theme among participants was that south Wichita (south of K-54) has been short-changed on park resources over many decades, and that their tax dollars have been disproportionately spent on services and facilities for the benefit of residents in northern areas of Wichita.

<sup>3</sup> Participants were advised that this is not a legal option under Kansas law at this time, although it was legal in the recent past.

<sup>4</sup> This option added by Council Member Skelton.