



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

SUMMARY OF DISTRICT 6 OUTREACH MEETING
JUNE 14, 2007

Residents of City Council District 6 were invited by Council Member Sharon Feary to share their views related to city parks, recreation and open space on Thursday evening, June 14, at Evergreen Park. A total of 14 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 6;
- 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?

- Modern, safe playground equipment
- Playgrounds constructed with safety surface
- Bike path along the Arkansas River
- Diversity of activities and diversity of parks available
- Clusters of other public facilities around parks
- Parks that have wildlife habitat, such as Pawnee Prairie and Oak parks
- The community's large, regional parks
- Walking paths
- Shade trees
- Water features, such as those as Osage, Fairmount and Riverside parks

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

- Absence of connecting links (bike or foot paths) between parks, e.g. no connection between Herman Hill and Watson parks
- The absence of any park facilities in the far northwest area of Wichita
- Perception among some residents that Wichita parks are not safe
- Multiple owners of Wichita park land (ownership by the city at large in some cases, in others, the Wichita Park Board) which causes confusion and can cause competing interests/values in the use of the land
- Lack of public access to the river and the under-utilization of the river for activities
- Insufficient number of adult sport leagues
- Poor maintenance, especially related to mowing
- Inadequate trash pick-up
- Insufficient budget to support parks and recreation services

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.

- Create a “super connector” walking trail along the Wichita/Valley Center Floodway (“Big Ditch”) extending from Valley Center to Haysville (12)
- Expand facilities and services tailored for young people, e.g., a skate park (10)
- Expand picnic tables and shelter facilities, especially smaller parks (7)
- Create a recreation center for senior citizens in far northwest Wichita (near 53rd Street and Seneca) (7)
- Create soccer and ultimate Frisbee adult sport leagues for adults (co-ed and women only) (6)
- Expand walking trails in District 6 parks (6)
- Develop trails along abandoned rail lines (rails to trails) (5)
- Add more interactive water features to Wichita parks (4)
- Plant more trees adjacent to playgrounds to offer more shade (4)
- Create dog parks (and include a water feature in each) in alignment with city population (3)
- Improve general handicapped access to Wichita parks and recreation programs (3)
- Create a new bicycle path to connect the Arkansas River trail to City Arts building (3)
- Provide new river access in the form of pocket parks (2)
- Upgrade the city’s swimming pools (2)
- Create a new park in northwest Wichita (type not specified) (2)
- Create an RV (recreational vehicle) park (2)
- Build a year-round boat dock along the river (1)
- Create a new pocket park in Delano neighborhood (McLean/Douglas Streets) (1)

4. How should the City of Wichita pay for park and recreation services?

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.

- More public/private partnerships (10)
- Dedication of infrastructure development dollars for green space (10)
- Solicit private donations of land and financial contributions for parks (9)¹
- Dedicated sales tax (8)
- Increased user fees (4)
- Impact fees on new development ² (3)
- General property tax (3)
- More non-federal government grants (3)
- Realignment of resources (2)
- Dedicated property tax (1)
- General sales tax (0)

¹ Funding option proposed by a participant.

² Participants were advised that this is presently not a park financing option under Kansas law.