



CITY OF WICHITA

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLANNING PROCESS

SUMMARY: MAYOR'S PROS PRESENTATION MEETING
SEPTEMBER 27, 2008

City residents were invited by Mayor Carl Brewer to review and provide feedback on the City's draft plan for parks, recreation and open space on Saturday morning, September 27, at City Arts gallery. Approximately 35 residents participated.

The purpose of the outreach meeting was to:

- Highlight key components of draft plan
- Respond to questions of clarification
- Receive feedback about what residents like and also what they believe should be changed
- Generate "green" excitement for Wichita parks, recreation and open space.

After the Mayor's welcome and remarks, and introductory comments by Park Board President Janet Miller, highlights of the draft plan were presented. Participants' responses and feedback about the plan are identified below in order of those that received the strongest support in a subsequent "straw" poll. (Comments with the strongest support are listed first.)

- **Use City resources to be good stewards of our existing park assets before developing new parks. We need to maintain what we have first. (6)**
- **Facilitate creation of cooperative gardens in parks. (6)**
 - Benefits would include building relationships with neighbors and making healthy food available at affordable costs.
 - Also suggested convening "trade" fairs where residents could swap services and a produce market.
- **PROS plan should stress necessity of involving neighborhoods adjacent to parks early in planning stages, and taking their needs and interests into account. (6)**
 - Affirmation for plan's emphasis on developing recreation programs desired by residents closest to neighborhood centers.
- **Agree with the draft plan that existing parks need more amenities such as restrooms, water fountains, picnic tables (5)**

- **Affirmation given for the strong emphasis on public/private collaboration in park development and maintenance, and delivery of recreation services.(5)**
 - The College Hill pool special assessment model should be promoted to neighborhoods as a method for achieving park improvements.
- **City leaders should consider and adopt innovative “green” technologies to reduce operating and capital costs. (4)**
 - energy efficient designs should be used for new facilities and renovations of existing buildings.
 - example of “compost” restrooms was offered.
- **More aggressive marketing strategies should be used to communicate the benefits of the City’s parks and recreation programs. (4)**
- **Location of facilities and programs, and green space should be placed so that residents in all neighborhood, and all ages, cultures and incomes have equal access. (4)**
- **We need to think about the needs and interests of young people when designing or renovating parks and developing recreation programs. Keep young people involved. (3)**
- **Affirmation for the emphasis on more hiking and biking trails, and the priorities identified in City’s current plans. (3)**
 - Suggest encouraging the creation of public art along trails.
- **Plan needs provision for more City lakes for swimming and boating activities. (3)**
- **Improve maintenance of existing bike paths. (3)**
 - Poor maintenance also the I-35 path south of Douglas Avenue was noted.
- **Place stronger emphasis in plan on the value of seeking grants and financial contributions from private foundations. (2)**
- **Plan should set goal of increasing Wichita’s park acreage per thousand population (more than the 13 acres per thousand that Wichita has at present). (1)**
- **Explore partnerships with private park space currently owned and managed by homeowners’ associations. (1)**
- **Implementation of plan should include specific benchmarks. (1)**
- **City should use greater debt financing for park improvements. (1)**

Other comments mentioned during discussion that did not receive additional votes

- Co-locate a park and library near Pawnee and George Washington Boulevard.
- Place stronger emphasis in plan on how parks contribute to economic development.
- Place question of dedicated sales tax for parks on the City ballot.