



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

RECREATION PROVIDERS FOCUS GROUP

FEBRUARY 15, 2007

On February 15, Wichita recreation providers were invited to participate in a focus group to discuss strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for parks and recreation in Wichita. During this session, the group discussion highlighted issues with existing recreation opportunities in the City (provided by both the City and others), and attending recreation providers agree that a gap in affordability is a barrier to wide recreation participation in Wichita. There is a lack of both programs and facilities oriented to the specific needs of youth and older adults. Inadequate transportation also prevents many youth and older adults from taking part in community recreation activities. Other factors that limit participation include:

- Safety issues – perception and real
- Lack of awareness of activities/facilities
- Limited access to the river
- Need for youth employment opportunities
- Lack of diverse activities
- Inequities in locations
- Lack of sports for girls
- Lack of summer programs- especially for low income families

So how can Wichita's parks and open system be improved? Building improved community centers is one important step. Providers also see the need to change the image of Wichita Parks and Recreation, repositioning it as the place to go for fun and recreation. Other strategies for improvement include:

- Adding an amphitheater to Riverside
- "Arts in the Park"
- Improving communications, i.e. TV spots, website, newspaper inserts
- Improving walking and biking trails
- Providing packages of information to major potential users (such as Big Brothers Big Sisters)
- More summer and latchkey programs for youth
- Promoting safety and addressing related issues
- Partnering with other agencies, such as the YMCA and United Way