

WICHITA PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE PLAN

PLAN UPDATE
2016



BUILDING WICHITA'S FUTURE

Acknowledgements

Mayor & Council

Mayor Jeff Longwell

District 1 Council Member Lavonta Williams

District 2 Council Member Pete Meitzner

District 3 Council Member James Clendenin

District 4 Council Member Jeff Blubaugh

District 5 Council Member Bryan Frye

District 6 Council Member Janet Miller

Park Board

Ron Allen

Chris Clark

Cindy Claycomb

Tori Deatherage, President

Chris Highfill

Hoyt Hillman

Troy Palmer

Project Team

Troy Houtman, CPRE

Director, Department of Park & Recreation

Troy Hendricks, PGA

Golf Course Manager, Department of Park & Recreation

David McGuire, CPRP

Park, Forestry & Maintenance Superintendent, Department of Park & Recreation

Greg Olmer, CPRP

Recreation Superintendent, Department of Park & Recreation

Matt Townsend

Management Analyst, Department of Park & Recreation



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To all Wichitans,

As the director of the Wichita Park and Recreation Department, I am proud to present the 2016 updated Parks, Recreation and Open Space master plan (PROS plan). This plan is an update from the 2008 PROS plan that provided us with valuable information and direction. Since 2008 our city has experienced several changes and fluctuations. We are not the same city we were just 8 years ago. Much of our infrastructure has changed and how we operate and do business has also changed. However; much of the interest and passion for parks and recreational activities has not changed! There still is a huge desire to meet the needs of the community and provide the best park & recreation services that we can offer. That is where our P&R Department comes in to play. We touch more people across the City of Wichita than any other organization by providing services for all ages, all areas of the City and all demographics.

Our parks and recreation system is a reflection of the community and the community's long held values that support parkland, green space, recreational activities, golf, fitness and wellness. Today's system of urban parks, golf courses, pools, trails, plazas, recreation facilities and recreational programs is a major contributor to Wichita's nationally acclaimed high quality of life and the result of the community support and investment. For over 100 years, the City of Wichita has promoted the community's access to nature, parks and recreation. It is in this tradition that we are proud to submit the Wichita 2016 PROS plan. This plan presents the framework and policy that will assist and guide the department in the stewardship of our parks, recreation facilities and recreational programs. The master plan includes broad policies and initiatives that will help shape the services that the department will provide to the community over the next several years. The strategic direction is focused around six key themes that emerged from research and throughout the comprehensive community planning process:

- Community Health and Wellness
- Taking Care of What We Have
- Financial Sustainability
- Building Community and Relationships
- Youth Engagement and Activity
- Organizational Readiness

The plan also includes an outline of measurements that will ensure that the initiatives of the plan become a reality. It is in the implementation of the plan that the community will see a parks and recreation department that is modern, results-driven and collaborative. Reshaping parks and recreation services will require the focused energy and commitment of the department, as well as support from the community. Available funding will be focused on the highest community priorities and, through the support and collaboration of the community, the complete set of desired facilities and services can be achieved. The Wichita PROS plan is the culmination of public outreach with community members, user groups, staff,

experts in the field of Parks & Recreation and partners that help provide many of our community's services. These conversations with the community will continue as we work together to accomplish the ambitious but necessary steps to ensure the parks and recreation system continues to enhance the lives of Wichitans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Troy Houtman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "T" and "H".

Troy Houtman, CPRE

Director of Park & Recreation

"To accomplish great things, we must not only act but also dream. Not only plan but also believe." Anatole France

Park and Recreation

City Hall • 11th Floor • 455 N. Main • Wichita, Kansas 67202

T 316.268.4361 F 316.268.4447

www.wichita.gov

Wichita Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan

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2008 PROS Plan Technical Supplement (Under separate cover) includes details of the analysis and community input used to shape the initial direction of the PROS plan.

1. Introduction

Background

Over the past several years, the City of Wichita has continued to make major strides to maintain and improve community livability. Arkansas riverfront improvements complement the City's signature riverfront park system. Old Town and the Farmer's Market are vibrant resources and the Intrust Bank Arena is a major attraction that supports a growing tourist industry. The City's many cultural and historic resources create a sense of place and provide a venue for cultural tourism, while adoption of the Project Downtown Master Plan has provided inspiration and guidance for the City center, ushering new private investment including commercial, residential and educational development. The City has also continued to work with surrounding communities to build a strong economy, attract businesses and tourists and retain residents—especially young creative professionals.



Wichita's parks, recreation opportunities and open spaces are a primary contributor to this energy and a key ingredient to community livability and quality of life. It is clear that parks and recreation is important to Wichita residents, with hundreds of residents expressing their support for parks and recreation. Since the initial plan the City has made modest investments in the park system, which includes approximately \$55 million in capital improvements starting in 2015 and spread out over the next ten years. Though Wichita has some of the elements needed to become a great park and recreation system, new resources will be needed to meet future demand. Expansions and new parks are necessary to provide the quality of resources that Wichita residents expect in current and future growth areas. Despite fluctuations in the important aeronautics industry, Wichita has continued to grow, and approximately 101,000 more residents are projected to be added by 2035 based on an accelerated annual growth rate of 1.25% (Community Investments Plan 2015-2035). To accommodate this growth, remaining undeveloped land within the City will need to be developed, new efforts will be needed to promote infill development in the older, established areas of Wichita, and new development areas will need to be annexed into the City. The role of parks and recreation in newly developing areas must be determined or these opportunities will be forever lost.

Plan Revision Purpose

This Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan represents a vision of parks, recreation, and open space as central to building community, quality of life, and the local economy in Wichita. It builds on the City's long history of proactive park planning, and acknowledges the high standards that have been set in the past. The 2016 PROS Plan integrates recent local and regional planning efforts to focus on the City's central role in the region's success. But most of all, this 2016 PROS Plan is a call to action that will guide operational and capital public investment in park and recreation assets, facilities and programs over the next ten years. This call to action will be done in consideration of the following five Plan Guiding Policy Principles identified in the new Wichita-Sedgwick County Community Investments Plan 2015-2035:

“Please join us in creating a better future for our city through adequate investment in parks and recreation.”

1. Support an Innovative, Vibrant and Diverse Economy;
2. Invest in the Quality of Our Community Life;
3. Take Better Care of What We Already Have;
4. Make Strategic, Value-added Investment Decisions;
5. Provide for Balanced Growth but with Added Focus on Our Established Neighborhoods.

The 2016 PROS Plan identifies the need over the next 20 years for approximately \$750 million of capital renovations and new parks, recreation and open space facilities that would fully preserve existing resources and meet current and future community needs. The Plan also identifies maintenance gaps and recreation service needs that would increase operations costs related to parks and recreation by approximately \$4 million annually. Finally, the Plan proposes a number of ways to close the funding gap. These include opportunities to become more entrepreneurial; strategic integration with parks and recreation investments of the private sector, neighboring cities and Sedgwick County; generating more revenue through enhanced efforts of the Wichita Park Foundation; and reducing expenditures. In addition, the Plan identifies ways to expand existing funding sources and develop new funding sources.

Multiple approaches will be needed to approach the funding gap and implement this Plan. Some funding ideas presented in this draft may be enthusiastically adopted while others will be discarded. Ultimately, the types of projects that rise to the top of the priority list will help determine the best sources for funding. Although not all projects identified here are likely to be funded in the next 20 years, it is important to present this comprehensive vision and to detail community needs in order to be ready to take

advantage of appropriate funding sources which we cannot currently foresee – such as new partnerships -- as these become available in the future.

With this 2016 PROS Plan, the City must take appropriate action to support the future of parks and recreation in Wichita. These decisions will either lead to continued inequities in service and deterioration of existing park infrastructure or a reinvestment in parks and recreation. These decisions will also determine if Wichita's children will have the same opportunity to experience the natural environment as found in other top-tier communities. Furthermore, these decisions will determine whether the City will help support the physical, emotional and social well-being of its residents – especially those with disadvantages -- or just leave it to chance.

The Park and Recreation Department is committed to supporting the National Park and Recreation Association's three pillars for the betterment of all of our citizens:

Conservation—Parks are critical in the role of preserving natural resources that have real economic benefits for communities. You are the leaders, often the only voice in communities, for protecting open space, connecting children to nature, and providing education and programming that helps communities engage in conservation practices.

Health and Wellness—Agencies lead the nation in improving the overall health and wellness of communities. You are essential partners in combating some of the most complicated and expensive challenges our country faces –poor nutrition, hunger, obesity, and physical inactivity.

Social Equity—Universal access to public parks and recreation are a right, not just a privilege. Every day you are working hard to ensure that all members of your community have access to the resources and programming you offer. Very few – if any – can claim the same.

Benefits of Parks & Recreation

Parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities generate a host of benefits for individuals, neighborhoods and the entire City of Wichita. Some of these are quantifiable economic benefits, such as fees received through rentals and classes, the impact of fairs and festivals on tourism dollars, or the capacity of parks and open space to store stormwater and reduce flooding. Other benefits are harder to quantify but are still important when considering the value of parks, open space, and recreation to a community. These benefits include the importance of parks and open space in attracting businesses, improving individual physical health, or reducing crime. This does not account for the many social and individual benefits of parks and recreation, such as the sense of community derived through public spaces, the value of sports in youth development, and the role nearby nature and recreation programs play in providing opportunities for education and lifelong learning.



While it is difficult to estimate the total revenues and cost savings provided for each dollar invested in parks and recreation, below are some reasons why the City of Wichita should consider investing more dollars in their parks, recreation, and open space system:

- **City park systems yield a variety of economic benefits, including direct income, collective wealth, direct savings and environmental savings.** While not all aspects of parks systems can be quantified in economic terms, there are measurable economic benefits associated with property value, tourism, direct use, health, community cohesion, clean water and clean air in most communities (Harnick 2009). As noted in a research scan compiled by Active Living Research, many studies conducted through the last decade have confirmed the monetary and economic value of open space, recreation facilities and even walkable community designs (Shoup and Ewing 2010).
- How much are parks worth? According to the results of a 2015 survey, nearly 4 in 5 Americans (79%) believe their **local parks are well worth the average amount of \$70 per person paid in local taxes every year, with over 30% believing they are worth even more.** Remarkably, two-thirds of both non-program users and non-park users also believed that these services were worth this level of investment (Mowen, et. al. 2016).
- People commonly use park and recreation services in ways that involve physical activity and contribute to their mental and physical health. What's interesting is that the health value of parks and recreation facilities often exceeds the investment in them. Research has shown that small additional **investments in parks and recreation facilities provide substantially more health benefits and health cost savings.** Even an increase as small as \$10 a year per capita has been shown to provide significantly increased amounts of physical activity (Arria 2010), a substantial savings in comparison to what people spend on personal trainers and health care annually. Fitness and outdoor play may help reduce per-capita healthcare costs in the United States, which topped \$8,000 in 2009 and are projected to reach \$13,000 in 2018, as projected by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Godbey and Mowen 2010).

- By promoting physical activity, parks and programs are one of the most direct ways to begin to curtail the approximately \$147 billion direct and indirect costs related to the obesity epidemic. **Spending on parks departments is one of the most cost-effective ways to lower long-term health expenditures**, particularly in low-income communities that often rely on Medicaid (NRPA 2010).
- Research has shown that the **economic impacts of local and regional public park agencies are much larger than their operations and capital investments**. In a recent study of 1,169 park systems, the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University noted the nation's local and regional public park agencies spent nearly \$54.7 billion in 2013. That level of investment in capital programs and operations nationwide generated nearly \$140 billion in economic activity, nearly 1 million jobs (with a generated labor income of \$43.8 billion) and just under \$68.0 billion in contributions to the GDP. In Kansas in 2013, parks and recreation agencies generated \$964 million in economic activity and over 9,100 jobs in 2013. (George Mason University 2015).
- **Active outdoor recreation contributes \$646 billion annually to the economy**, supporting 6.1 million jobs, as well as generating nearly \$40 billion in federal tax revenue (Outdoor Industry Association 2012).
- **Parks provide a sizable economic impact related to the environment**. It is estimated that the carbon dioxide storage of urban trees in the continental United States is worth approximately \$16 billion. Urban trees in the lower 48 states are estimated to remove 783,000 tons of pollution per year, with an estimated annual value to society of \$5.6 billion. (NRPA 2010).
- **Youth who participate in recreation programs are less likely to engage in criminal behavior**. Several studies have shown how youth sports in particular reduces local crime rates. Since some jurisdictions spend 70% of their youth crime funds on incarceration, which can cost \$100,000 a year for each young offender (2008 data), youth sports and mentor programs could create sizable cost savings (Carmichael 2008).
- Tourism is an important source of revenues for many communities. In Kansas, travelers spent \$6.2 billion in 2014, generating nearly \$10 billion in total business sales including indirect and induced impacts. **Nearly 16% of these tourism dollars were spent on recreation and entertainment**. Spending associated with recreation and entertainment tourism in 2014 was estimated at \$ 644.2 million, which supported 10,993 jobs. Kansas' tourism industry has been growing, and traveler spending on average has increased 5.7% per year since 2009, a total change of \$1.5 billion. Besides the direct revenues, local governments received \$308 million in tax receipts from travel-generated activity (Tourism Economics 2014).

Plan Development and Updating

The prior version of this Plan set the guidance for the system with an extensive public input and analysis process. In 2016, the City updated the Plan with current information about the system, park users and the resources committed to the provision of parks and services. The update process included refreshing data about the community and the system while retaining the broad direction of the past Plan. The Park Board reviewed the issues, priorities and needs identified in 2008 and confirmed that they remain relevant today.



The initial PROS Plan development process included the four major phases. During the update process, the City updated each of the document chapters related to these phases of work.

Phase I: Where Are We Now?

During Phase I, the planning team analyzed the planning context, reviewed the existing inventory of parks, recreation, and open space in Wichita, and evaluated issues that could impact the future direction for park and recreation services. Key products developed during Phase I included the Planning Context and Existing Resources documents, which provided sound basis for planning.

Phase II: Where Do We Want to Be?

The planning team continues to assess community needs through a combination of public involvement and technical analysis. Public involvement activities took place during the original Plan adoption and included interviews, focus groups, workshops, a scientific survey, community questionnaires, community meetings, and intercepts that were designed to reach a broad range of Wichita residents. Through these forums, community members identified key park and recreation issues, priorities, and needs. Key findings from the public involvement process informed a technical analysis of parks, recreation, and open space needs. The results provided the foundation for the Community Resources and Needs Assessment report. This report included two volumes, Part I addressing Park Land, Recreation Resources and Trails and Pathways and Part II addressing Recreation Program Needs. The reports are included in the Technical Supplement to the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

Phase III: How Do We Get There?

In Phase III, the planning team worked with members of the community to develop a vision for the future of parks, natural areas, trails, and recreation in Wichita. This vision, a central component of this Plan, is part of a larger planning framework that sets the direction of this Plan. Specific strategies and recommendations within the Plan are designed to implement the vision and planning framework.

Phase IV: Plan Adoption

During Phase IV, the draft Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan was reviewed by the public, City and County staff, citizen boards and commissions, and the City Council. The City adopted this revised PROS Plan, creating a guide for parks and recreation service delivery for the next 20 years.

Public Involvement

The City collected feedback from City staff and residents regarding their needs and preferences to develop a solid foundation for the City of Wichita Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. Public involvement activities were planned to ensure the participation of a diverse cross-section of the City's population. Building on the initial outreach conducted in 2008, the City revisited community needs through more recent outreach activities leading up to the PROS Plan update.

Initial Outreach

In 2008, staff has used public feedback and developed surveys and questionnaires to garner additional feedback on the Plan and in inform the Plan update. In total, more than 2,900 residents participated in the public involvement process that developed the direction of this Plan. A sampling of some of the initial and the ongoing initiatives are listed below.

- **Survey:** A total of 456 participants completed the Wichita Community Survey, which was designed to obtain statistically valid results representative of households throughout the Wichita city limits.
- **Questionnaire:** In addition to the mailed survey, a shorter, readily accessible questionnaire was used to gather input on park and recreation needs from all other interested citizens. An adult and a youth questionnaire were available in paper form and online. A total of 1,194 residents completed the questionnaire. Questionnaire findings were mostly consistent with the survey, and served to support those findings.
- **Focus Groups:** Eight focus groups, including approximately 55 participants, were held—each targeted towards specific parks and recreation users and stakeholders. The groups consisted of: ADA; business community; development community; conservation, activist and users; health and wellness; maintenance; recreation providers; and other municipalities.
- **Intercepts:** At Riverfest, more than 500 residents participated in a series of interactive displays designed to inform the public about community resources and invite them to identify current use patterns, community needs, and priorities. Over 300 more residents were able to participate at other community events such as district meetings. City staff also worked with groups of youth during City-run summer programs. Approximately 60 youth provided input.
- **Community Meetings:** Meetings were held in each of Wichita's six districts, as well as one downtown event hosted by the mayor, and a Latino outreach session -- totaling eight community meetings. Members of different districts and neighborhoods were invited to share their views related to city parks, recreation, and open space. A total of 253 residents participated.

- **Stakeholder Interviews:** Interviews were conducted with nine local leaders, including the Mayor and City Council members.
- **Advisory Committee:** Three Advisory Committee meetings were held during the first two phases to guide and assist the planning process, as well as provide assistance in keeping the community informed of the public involvement efforts.
- **PROS Technical Advisory Group (TAG):** Three TAG meetings were held during the first two phases to discuss technical details of the PROS Plan and obtain feedback from community representatives and experts.
- **Visioning:** A Visioning Workshop was held to gather public input on the vision, mission, and key strategy areas for the Wichita Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. The discussion was organized around three key discussion areas: core values, vision and mission, and goals and strategy areas.
- **Staff Workshops:** Three workshops were held with staff in order to get input in regards to community needs.
- **Plan Adoption:** The 2008 PROS Plan was reviewed by the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC) and Wichita Park Board; and adopted as an element of the Wichita-Sedgwick County Comprehensive Plan by both the, the Wichita City Council, and the Sedgwick County Board of County Commissioners.



Recent Outreach

In addition to the initial outreach efforts, the Department has conducted several recent surveys in the last two years to garner additional public input on our programs and services. A sampling is listed below. Full results from each of these public outreach efforts are available from the Park and Recreation Department.

- Aquatics Master Plan Surveys
- O.J. Watson Park Master Plan
- Recreation Surveys
- Staff Program Evaluations
- Public Surveys
- Activate Wichita
- Golf Plan Update
- Revenue Policy Update

With this continued outreach, community members have helped identify ways to attract and retain residents and businesses, create a healthy community with strong families and support for youth, and opportunities and engagement for diverse community members. Frequent interaction with City Council, Park Board and other stakeholders has driven policy changes, as well as future planning expectations.

2. Where Are We Now?

The City of Wichita has a history of visionary planning for parks and recreation, dating back to the official platting of the City in 1870. With the establishment of the Park Board in 1922, Wichita completed its first Parks Plan in 1923 under the direction of Mayor L.W. Clapp and the Park Board. The 1923 Plan was based on the concepts of Frederick Law Olmsted and envisioned a park system connected by linear parks and greenways. The City's 1923 Comprehensive Plan continued to develop this concept by outlining a network of neighborhood and community parks connected by linear parkways and boulevards.



In the period between 1968 and 1980, the City again pursued an intensive park development effort when it developed its system of neighborhood recreation centers. More recently, both the City of Wichita and Sedgwick County have undertaken many planning efforts that have addressed parks and recreation, including the Bicycle Master Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan and the Wayfinding Plan, Community Investments Plan, Arkansas Corridor Access Plan (ARCAP) and the 2008 PROS Plan. The 2016 PROS Plan builds on the City's past efforts to implement a vision for Wichita parks, recreation, and natural areas that contributes to a better future for the City and its residents.

Wichita Today

This section summarizes the status of Wichita today, providing an overview of the City's planning context and its parks and recreation services. Spanning a total of 163 square miles, Wichita is surrounded by rural farmland and small pockets of more densely settled towns and cities. Wichita abuts the cities of Valley Center, Park City, Kechi and Bel Aire to its north; Derby and Haysville to the south; Goddard and Maize to the west/northwest; and Andover to the east.

Wichita is divided into six City Council Districts and the mayor is elected at large. District Advisory Board (DAB) citizen advisory groups are appointed in each Council district and meet monthly to provide local input on important matters and serve as a forum for citizen comment.

Demographics

The planning area addressed by this 2016 PROS Plan is the Wichita 2035 growth area, as depicted in Map 1. Within that planning area, trends in Wichita's demographic characteristics and development patterns as projected by the joint Wichita-Sedgwick County Community Investments Plan 2015-2035 set the context for planning the future.

- **Population Growth:** As of December 2015, Wichita's most recent estimated population is 385,518 (ACS, 2014). Wichita will experience a population and employment growth rate and development pattern (suburban and downtown) typical of the last several decades, but with a slightly higher percentage of

Wichita area population growth being captured by surrounding smaller cities. One-fourth of Wichita's total dwelling units will continue to be multi-family.

- **Pattern of future growth:**
 - Future Wichita residential growth will be predominately located in suburban West-Northwest Wichita and in suburban East, Southeast and Northeast Wichita.
 - Future employment growth will occur within existing, established commercial and industrial areas/corridors and along emerging suburban corridors in west and east Wichita. Continued employment growth and residential redevelopment will occur in the Downtown area.
 - Wichita's city limits will expand by 7% from 162.8 sq. mi. to 173.8 sq. mi. supporting a 17% growth in total population.
 - Wichita's overall population density will increase slightly from 2,359 people/sq. mi. in 2012 to 2,578 people/sq. mi. in 2035

- **Wichita population growth forecast (accelerated growth forecast):**
 - 101,458 additional people - 2035 total population of 485,483 (countywide growth rate of 1.25% per year)
 - 66,000 additional dwelling units - total of 205,000 dwelling units in 2035 (overall city average of 2.25 people/dwelling unit in 2035)
 - Wichita employment growth forecast: 51,271 additional jobs - total of 262,911 jobs by 2035 (new job growth rate of 1.01% per year)

- **Age:** The median age has increased slightly from 33.4 (2000 U.S. Census), to 34 in 2014. In 2014, 41% of the City's population was adults between the ages of 25 and 54. The age group with the most significant growth since 2000 is 54-65-year-olds. By 2030, the U.S. Census projects that one in five residents in the nation will be 65 years or older.

- **Family Composition:** Wichita is experiencing an increase in single parent households. In 2015, two-thirds (62.3%) of Wichita households were family households (ACS). Almost half (45%) of households included married couples, 17.3% consisted of single parent families, and 33% of households contained residents living alone. Household trends have generally been consistent over time.

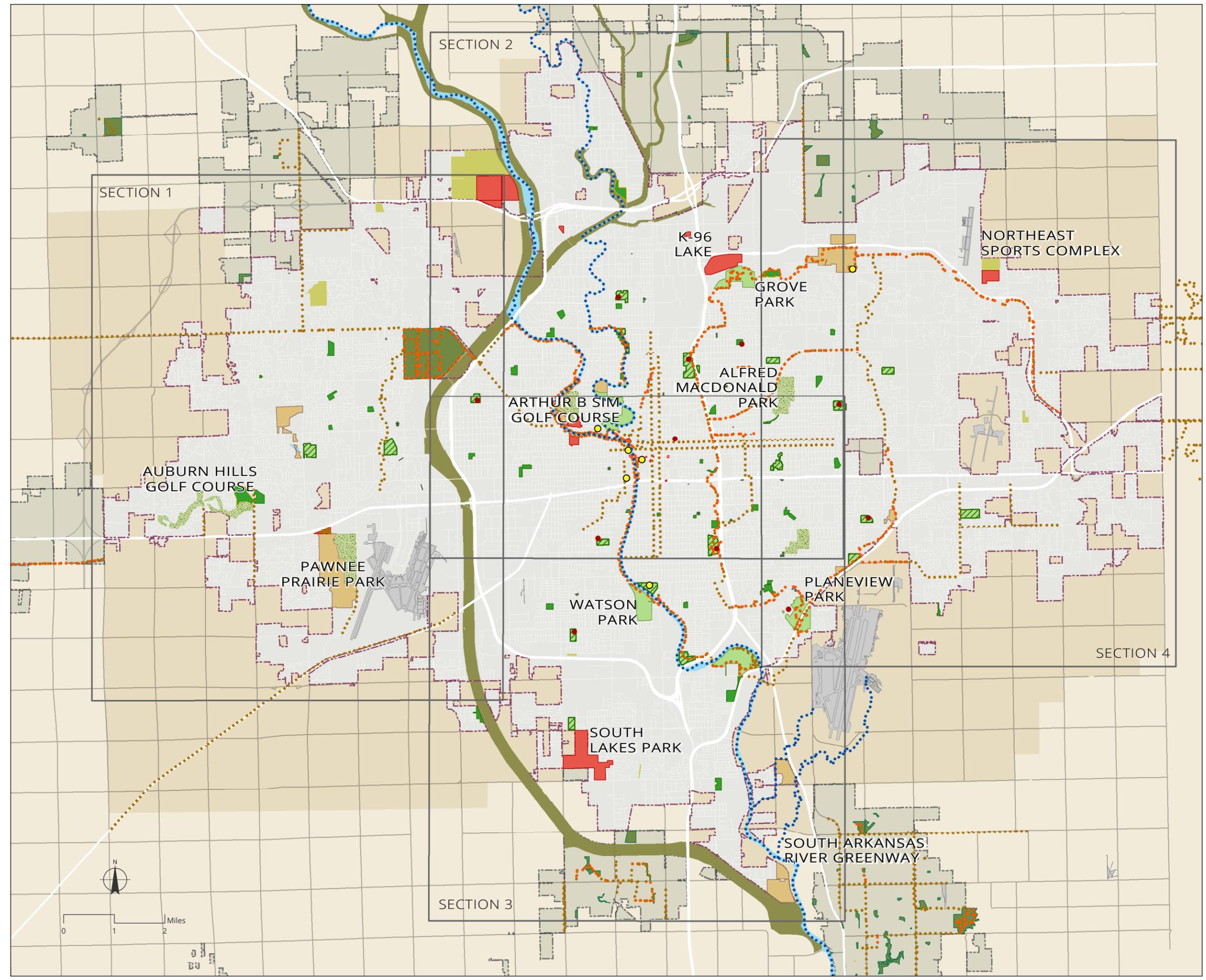
- **Income:** The estimated median income in Wichita in 2014 was \$46,218. This figure falls below the state median income of \$52,504 and well below the median for the country as a whole.

- **Race/Ethnicity:** In 2014, Wichita's residents were 79.1% White, 13.6% Black or African American, 5.6% Asian, 2.7% American Indian and Alaska Native and 15.7% Hispanic/Latino (of any race). Wichita has not grown significantly more ethnically diverse over the last decade. However, the City has experienced the greatest growth in diversity among its Hispanic and Latino residents who were 9.6% of Wichita's population in 2000 (US Census) and were 15.7% of the population in 2014 (ACS).



Park, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan

City of Wichita, Kansas



- Recreation Center
- Other Facility
- Existing Trails
- Existing Bikeways
- Other Park Jurisdiction
- Community Park
- Golf Course
- Linear Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Pocket Park
- Regional Park
- Natural Area
- Special Use Park
- Undeveloped Site
- Urban Plaza
- Waterbody
- Floodway
- High School
- Middle School
- Elementary School
- Private/Other School
- Airport
- City Limits
- Other City
- 2035 growth area

Note: Only a few parks are labeled for reference.

Map 1: Planning Area

Wichita's Park Land

Wichita has 138 public park sites of varied size containing over 5,000 acres of park land that provide opportunities for playing, exercising, socializing, and recreating outdoors, as well as participating in sports and appreciating nature. Different types of parks serve different functions and offer different recreation opportunities.

Separately, each park type may serve a limited function, but collectively the parks

and open spaces serve the entire range of community needs. Wichita's parks are organized into ten park classifications which are defined below. In Wichita, many classifications of parks are co-located (golf course near a nature park etc.). The classification system presented below has been developed to enhance management and planning for park lands in Wichita.



- **Playground/Pocket Parks:** Playground/pocket parks are small parks with basic play facilities or a small green space. These parks are smaller than two acres in size and located within a short walk of the majority of users.
- **Neighborhood Parks:** Neighborhood parks are neighborhood-serving parks that provide easy access to basic recreation resources such as playgrounds, open fields, and picnic areas. Neighborhood parks are typically between five and ten acres, but can be as large as 15 acres or more. Neighborhood parks are located within biking and walking distances of users.
- **Community Parks:** Community parks are larger-scale parks with concentrations of major recreational facilities such as recreation centers, sports fields, and swimming pools, along with necessary support facilities such as parking. Community parks can also serve the neighborhood park needs for residents within walking distance.
- **Regional Parks:** Regional parks are parks that attract users from throughout the region, have a wide variety of facilities, and are usually large in size. Regional parks include supporting facilities, such as restrooms and parking.
- **Special Use Parks:** Special use parks are sites that contain unique features or facilities designed to support particular activities. Many special use parks will focus on providing enhanced opportunities for specific recreational uses, such as a complex of sports fields or a fishing lake. These parks will likely draw users from throughout the City and may have a regional draw. Special use parks that have a community or regional draw may require supporting facilities such as parking or restrooms.
- **Urban Plazas:** Urban Plazas are hard-surfaced or landscaped areas that provide social gathering space within higher density urban areas. These sites may include performance space, public art or fountains and serve both residential and commercial uses. Urban plazas should be located in areas of dense urban activity.

- **Golf Courses:** Golf courses are eighteen-hole courses with a clubhouse, which include supporting and associated facilities such as two driving ranges, parking and equipment storage. Golf courses in Wichita are stand-alone facilities used exclusively for golf.
- **Linear Parks/Pathways:** Linear parks/pathways are corridors of land that connect parks and resources, providing public access to trails and their surrounding areas. These corridors may include developed or natural areas where the primary facility is a pathway or trail connecting community destinations or segments of the trail system. Linear parks are important resources to the local community, but as part of a larger trail system, these corridors may have a city-wide or even regional draw.
- **Natural Areas/Wichita Wild:** Natural areas/Wichita Wilds is park land that is managed to protect and preserve its natural resources. This includes large parcels of land preserved for habitat, including the designated Wichita Wild sites. Uses on these lands are typically limited to passive or low impact activities, such as wildlife viewing, hiking, jogging, bicycling, and nature photography.

Wichita has 1015.26 acres of park land that is undeveloped. In the future, it is anticipated that these sites will be developed in accordance with this PROS Plan. Crystal Prairie Park is currently under development. A summary of park land by classification is provided in Table 1. Appendix A contains maps of the existing park system, depicted citywide and in a series of 4 panel maps. Appendix B includes a detailed inventory of the existing park system.

TABLE 1: PARK LAND SUMMARY BY CLASSIFICATION

CLASSIFICATION	NUMBER OF SITES	ACRES OF PARKLAND
Pocket Parks	26	24.65
Neighborhood Parks	38	369.36
Community Parks	19	532.65
Regional Parks	7	661.40
Special Use Parks	11	490.98
Urban Plazas	6	6.9
Golf Courses	5	712.08
Linear Parks/Pathways	2	14.09
Natural Areas/Wichita Wild	13	1178.96
Undeveloped Sites	11	1015.26
Dog Parks	3	14.35
TOTAL	138	5,006.33

Wichita's Recreation Resources

A wide variety of recreation resources are contained within the more than 5,000 acres of park land managed by the Park and Recreation Department. Table 2 summarizes the recreation resources found within the park system. A detailed inventory by site is contained within Appendix B. In addition to the resources quantified in Table 2, Wichita's park system includes other outdoor features such as fitness stations, fishing lakes, and



a series of memorials within Riverside Park. The City of Wichita Park and Recreation Department also offers a number of miscellaneous recreation activities at its parks, including pony rides, train, kayak, haystack rides, and miniature golf. O.J. Watson Park is a major site for these activities.

There are also a number of buildings within the park system that support programming, provide gathering and event space, or provide user amenities. Table 3 summarizes the inventory of these structures.

TABLE 2: RECREATION RESOURCES

RESOURCE	NUMBER OF SITES
SPORTS FIELDS	
Baseball	7
Cricket	1
Football	10
Rugby	1
Soccer	46
Softball	46
SPORTS COURTS	
Basketball	39
Tennis	73
Volleyball	38
Pickleball	12
BMX Course	3
Disc Golf Course	2
Horseshoe Pit	26
Skate Park	4
Shuffleboard Area	1
Playground	82
Swimming Pool	9
Interactive Water Feature	5
TOTAL	405

TABLE 3: RECREATION BUILDINGS

BUILDING	NUMBER OF SITES
Recreation Center	8
Shelters ^A	48
Restroom Buildings	81
Clubhouses	6
TOTAL	138

^A Includes all shelters and gazebos.

Recreation Services

Recreation services delivered by the Park and Recreation Department are generally place-based, offered through recreation centers and major recreation facilities. Programming is offered in the following major areas:



- **Dance:** Dance programs supported by the Park and Recreation Department target adults, youth, and preschoolers. Classes are held at many of the City's recreation centers.
- **Exercise/Fitness:** Fitness activities offered by the Department include aerobics, yoga, Pilates, kickboxing, and weightlifting, 'Fitness for Fifty', boot camps, Zumba, and Barre Fitness. Classes are held at many of the recreation centers, and several centers include small weight rooms with scheduled open hours for drop-in use and memberships.
- **Martial Arts:** The Park and Recreation Department provides martial arts training in kung fu, judo, tai chi, tae kwon do, and Chinese boxing. Programs are targeted towards youth and adults, and are located at most of the City's recreation centers.
- **Special Interest Classes:** Special interest classes offered by the Department target all age groups and include languages, cooking, finance, bee keeping, genealogy classes, and limited arts and crafts instruction. Offerings vary by recreation center.
- **Aquatics:** Aquatics programs are offered at each of the City's 9 outdoor swimming pools. Programs include recreational swim, swimming lessons, diving lessons, water aerobics, lifeguard training, pool rentals, swim teams, interactive fountains, and swim team. The season generally lasts from late May or June through late August or early September.
- **Special Events:** The Department sponsors special events throughout the year, including a summer concert series, dances, Easter Egg Hunt, Night with Santa, Wichita Play Day, mobile recreation stations and holiday celebrations. Many of these events are hosted at Watson Park. The Department also organizes an annual Summer of Discovery, an 11-week educational licensed day camp which operates at recreation centers around the City.
- **Sports:** Much of the Department's existing programming is focused towards adult and youth sports. These activities include leagues in all traditional sports. Winter and gymnasium-based programs are held at each of the recreation centers. Outdoor programs are generally held in the City's community parks. The majority of tennis programs are held at the Riverside Tennis Center.

- **Wichita Ice Center:** The Wichita Park and Recreation Department also offers programming through the Wichita Ice Center, a hockey and skating rink developed by the City in 1996. The Wichita Ice Center provides open skates, figure skating lessons and hockey clinics, and also supports the Figure Skating Academy, hockey leagues, figure skating groups and special events. The Ice Center is currently operated through a contract with a private operator.
- **Golf:** Wichita's park system offers five golf courses. In a typical year, these courses host 166,000 rounds of golf. The Wichita Junior Golf Foundation, First Tee of the Greater Wichita Area, and Hook a Kid on Golf work with the Park and Recreation Department to offer lessons and tournaments to golfers under the age of 18.
- **Tennis Center:** The Tennis Center at Riverside Park offers 9 outdoor courts, 3 indoor courts and 2 quick start courts offering multiple tennis opportunities, including lessons.
- **Botanica:** The Wichita botanical gardens offers adult and youth programming focused around nature, gardening, and wildlife. Also included in Botanica's program offerings are birding sessions, lunchtime lectures, and summer day camps themed around nature and gardening.
- **Outdoor/Nature:** The City of Wichita Park and Recreation Department offers opportunities for Wichita residents to experience nature. The programming opportunities include nature walks, tours, fishing, kayaking and special events. The majority of these programs are offered through the Great Plains Nature Center, with many involving partnerships with the State of Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks.

Other Service Providers

In addition to the City, there are a number of public, private and nonprofit providers of land, recreation facilities and programs for Wichita residents. While some of these sites are limited to members, residents, or customers, many still serve a significant population.

- **School Districts:** Area school districts (primarily USD 259, but also surrounding districts) are important providers of recreation opportunities. In many cases, the school grounds of the local elementary school function much like a neighborhood park or playground. There are over 100 school sites in and immediately surrounding the planning area.
- **Neighboring Cities:** Many of the cities adjacent to Wichita, including Derby, Maize, Andover, Haysville, Bel Aire, and Park City, have park systems of their own that serve both their residents and nearby Wichitans.
- **Home-Owner Associations:** As part of the platting and development approval of residential subdivisions, land is often set aside for open space, private parks, and other purposes. These properties range from a small parcel with a playground to open space to fully developed golf courses. Other association-owned lands include buffers for creeks and riverfront or other local natural areas. Based on a search of property records, over 2,300 acres of home-owner association reserves exist inside of the city limits.

- **YMCA:** The Greater Wichita YMCA operates seven facilities with a wide range of recreation programs around the City. Programs include fitness, aquatics, dance, gymnastics, martial arts, and sports. The YMCA also provides after-school programming at area elementary and middle schools. With more than 275,000 participants in 2014, the YMCA served nearly 50% of all residents in Sedgwick and Butler counties. In 2014, the Wichita area YMCAs had more than 108,500 participants in youth programs.

Regional & National Trends

A variety of trends are changing the ways communities view their parks and public lands.

Reuse, Redevelopment & Revitalization

Parks and recreation have long been recognized for their role in economic development. They also play an important role in neighborhood and downtown revitalizations—both as cities redevelop vacated properties following the recession and as cities seek new land for park development. Since land is at a premium in most cities, creative solutions such as redevelopment of former industrial sites, landfills, rights-of-way and military sites into new park land are becoming more common. These types park development efforts have many benefits. The Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy Greenway in Boston is a prime example of this type of creative park development. After burying a congested freeway, the land above the tunnel was reshaped into a series of parks and open spaces that created social space, enhanced views and increased adjacent property values. On a smaller scale, the City of Pittsburg created a pilot program to turn vacant properties into community gardens and greenspace, bringing parks and locally-grown food to formerly underserved neighborhoods.

Green Infrastructure

Cities pride themselves in protecting parks, open space and natural areas providing a green respite from developed land uses in the city. Besides a visual and recreation benefit, these areas are increasingly recognized as “green infrastructure” because of the many environmental and ecological benefits they provide.

Parks and natural areas play important roles in stormwater management, carbon sequestration, air quality improvements, urban heat control and cooling, and even water storage benefits. Parks and greenways are also important wildlife areas, corridors for migration, and critical areas for plant and animal species protection. They also protect sensitive areas, such as wetlands, riparian corridors and slopes. Many cities invest in parks as green infrastructure as well as recreation space. For example, New York City has actively purchased open space for over 150 years to protect the sources of the City’s water. This strategy has resulted in 2,000 square miles of protected watershed and saved the City billions of dollars in water treatment costs and reduced water-borne disease.

In comparison to other cities, Wichita has less green infrastructure than many other cities. It provides less parkland than other low-density cities when looking at park acreage as a percentage of the city area. As reported in the Trust for Public Land’s 2015 City Park Facts, only 4.7% of Wichita City acreage is park land. In comparison, the median for all low-density cities is 5.9%, and the median for all major cities nationwide is 8.2 %.

Trails & Pathways

Throughout the country, trails and trail-related activities are among the most popular recreation activities in terms of participation across most demographics. Of course, trails are also an important to cities for non-motorized transportation, in providing alternatives to driving, reducing congestion and air pollution, and fostering “active” transportation such as walking and biking. In addition to these benefits, well-placed trails improve access to and use of other parks and recreation facilities. They build social networks by connecting different groups of people. They protect natural resources by channeling trail traffic in appropriate places. They increase recreation tourism and help brand communities as healthy, interesting places that attract residents and businesses and support education. Therefore, linear parks are important for the roles they play in supporting access, connectivity, active transportation, health, recreation, environmental protection, community livability and economic vitality.

The 2015 Kansas Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) reports on the popularity of walking and other trail-related activities, citing that these activities enjoy the highest levels of participation and that participation has increased. The SCORP also notes that walking is popular because it is low cost and there is little need for equipment or special skills. A survey that was conducted as part of the SCORP found that observing wildlife and use of jogging, hiking, and walking trails were ranked among the top three most popular outdoor recreation activities. The SCORP also reported that trail construction/renovation is the second highest outdoor park and facility need (following upgraded amenities such as parking and restrooms) (KDWPT 2015).

Recognizing the importance of interconnectivity among trail systems, many transportation authorities are also focusing on regional trail planning to ensure that the many agencies planning trails coordinate on the most important routes for traveling through or into an area. The Wichita Area Metropolitan Planning Organization has completed a Regional Pathway System Plan recognizing the importance of interconnected and coordinating trail systems in the region.

Complete Streets

The “Complete Streets” movement is another national trend. Complete Streets is designed and operated to enable safe, attractive, comfortable access and travel for all users. Cities are adopting complete streets policies due to the demand for walking and bicycling. For example, Chicago’s complete streets policy states:

The safety and convenience of all users of the transportation system including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, freight, and motor vehicle drivers shall be accommodated and balanced in all types of transportation and development projects and through all phases of a project so that even the most vulnerable—children, elderly, and persons with disabilities—can travel safely within the public right of way.

Trends in Recreation Participation

The provision of recreation facilities, programs and services are affected by participation trends. Some activities have had relatively consistent popularity over the years, such as picnicking and playing on playgrounds, and some traditional activities are growing in participation, such as walking and biking. There are also new activities that have emerged in the past 10-20 years, such as skateboarding, disc golf, lacrosse, and geocaching; entirely new ones just beginning to spread, such as Pickleball, foot golf, and stand-up paddle boarding; and older activities re-emerging among different age groups, such as adult dodgeball and kickball. In addition, some activities such as racquetball, tennis and baseball are declining.



Changing participation trends have led to the development of new facilities in park systems around the country. For example, increased pet ownership has led to a strong demand for off-leash dog areas, including larger dog parks, off-leash dog trails, and smaller dog runs. It also changes the types of services provided in parks and in cities, such as an increase in bike sharing and rentals. The reduction in popularity for some activities has led to a need to retrofit parks to make them relevant to existing users. For example, former roller hockey rinks and tennis courts in some communities are being repurposed as futsal, (five-player indoor soccer) courts.

Communities must find the right balance in supporting traditional and emerging activities, sometimes providing flexible and multi-use facilities to support different activities or facilities that can be cost-effectively renovated to support changing trends. They must also adjust policies to support changing trends, such as updating a sport field allocation policy that favors traditional youth sports to one that provides for youth and adult play in sports including lacrosse, rugby, Ultimate Frisbee, and cricket. To know what's best in any one community, many agencies conduct periodic user surveys and satisfaction surveys to help gauge changing community priorities and interests.

Additional trends related to the provision of recreation centers are described in Chapter 4, Vision for Recreation Services.

Team Sports & Fitness Activities

As noted in the 2015 Kansas SCORP, participation statewide is declining in many traditional youth sports. Most affected in Kansas are sports such as recreation baseball, fast pitch, flag football, select baseball, swim team and recreation soccer. Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) data indicate that since 2008, team sports have lost 16.1 million participants nationwide, or 11.1% of all team participants. It notes an increase in specialization participation (e.g., competitive and select sports) and a continued decline in casual (more recreational) participation. On the other hand, fitness activities of an individual nature are increasing, both for youth and adults. In Kansas, there has been a notable increase in youth participation in exercise walking, hiking, kayaking, running/jogging, working out at a club and aerobic exercise. Similarly, fitness and trail running are the fastest growing outdoor pursuits for adults (KDWPT 2015).

The Value of Play

Play is not only important for a child's cognitive, emotional, and physical development, it is also essential for teens, adults, and seniors. Engaging in play helps people of all ages build relationships, reduce stress, generate optimism, foster empathy, take risks, solve problems, increase creativity, and practice mastery. Trends show that more cities are supporting opportunities for people of all ages to engage in play. Rather than providing only traditional play structures for children ages 2-5 and 5-12, cities are striving to create multifunctional, open-ended gathering spaces that encourage young people to bike, skate, climb, swing, free run (parkour), dance, play music, play games, play sports, and have small group meet-ups. Play areas for teens provide physical challenges, as well as social spaces to perform and observe other teens. There are even special play areas for adults and seniors to encourage them to play games, dance, run, climb, swing, exercise, and engage in spontaneous, joyful activities that have no extrinsic goal associated with them – activities that are done simply because people feel inspired to do them.

These play areas take many forms. More communities are providing parks and facilities with different types of play opportunities, such as thematic play, universal play, nature play, water play, and adventure play especially in community and regional parks. Some are individual "activity spots" that are small-scale active or playful recreation features, such as uneven shooting hoops, outdoor ping pong, giant chess board, chess table, skate spots, slack lines, viewing platform, outdoor fitness equipment, etc. New trends mix temporary play opportunities with more permanent facilities. Temporary, pop-up play installations can be fun, artful, educational, and inspiring and can help encourage intergenerational interactions and community-building where it may not currently occur. Features such as bus stop swings, inflatable plaza seating, temporary parklets, interactive art displays, lighting displays, and movable game equipment can help transform any public space into a playful one. These play experiences are being developed throughout cities, including in its public and private parks, plazas, schools, open spaces, and along its trail systems.

Wichita provides 2.1 playgrounds per 10,000 residents, slightly less than the median (2.3) for cities across the nation (TPL 2015). Addressing new trends in play isn't necessarily about providing more playgrounds as much as it calls for providing different types of play options.

Nature-Based Recreation and Education

The need to connect residents to the outdoors is reflected in several goals of the 2015 Kansas SCORP that propose enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities closer to where people live (KDWPT 2015). Kansas is also one of 15 states nationwide that passed the Children's Outdoor Bill of Right that asks agencies to support the rights of children, youth and families in playing and participating in outdoor recreation activities (Outdoor Alliance for Kids 2015).

Wichita has a number of park sites that could help it support these goals. While approximately 56% of Wichita's parks are designed, developed park land, the other 44% are natural areas managed for their ecological value with limited recreation activities beyond walking, running, and cycling (TPL 2015). Wichita currently provides fewer nature centers per 100,000 residents (0.3) than other cities nationwide provide on average (0.4 per 10,000) (TPL 2015). New trends show that there are many ways—beyond the traditional nature center—to facilitate a connection to nature. Outdoor classrooms, interpretive trails with viewpoints and wildlife blinds, community gardens, and nature play areas are growing in popularity and availability.

Several park agencies are striving to take nature-based play and learning to the next level. For example, the Bend Park and Recreation District in partnership with the Children's Forest of Central Oregon is leading a new initiative to create NatureHoods to address what Richard Louv coined as the "Nature Deficit Disorder" (Louv 2008). Modeled around the neighborhood park concept, a NatureHood park or natural area is located within walking or biking distance of most residents and provides special features to learn about and explore nature and healthy living. Schools and community partners are actively involved in designing and programming these sites. NatureHoods not only facilitate educational lessons that expand upon learning done in a school classroom, they also encourage student-created projects that change, protect or enhance the area identified as their NatureHood.

Access to Recreation, Fitness and Healthy Living

To increase recreation participation, many communities are increasingly investing in programs, facilities and park improvements that increase access to healthy living, fitness and recreation for all ages, all abilities and all incomes. While new park and facility access requirements have come online as per the 2010 updates to the ADA Standards for Accessible Design and ABA Standards for Outdoor Developed Areas, there also is a growing number of agency-led initiatives to bring facilities and programs closer to targeted residents.

One example of this trend is the rise of adult outdoor fitness parks. Research has shown that more people prefer to exercise outdoors than indoors, with older age groups showing the strongest preference for being outdoors (Leisure-Net Solutions 2012). Parcourse equipment, which was introduced to the U.S. in 1973, met this need by featuring a number of exercise stations along a jogging path. However, parcourse stations



declined in popularity in the early 1980's with the proliferation of indoor health clubs (PlayCore 2013). By 2010, the CDC State Indicator Report on Physical Activity showed that 80% of U.S. Census Blocks did not have workout option within a ½ mile. In addition, most health clubs and recreation centers charged fees for use. Outdoor fitness parks are growing in popularity as a way to support nearby fitness opportunities, no-cost fitness options for people who cannot afford club fees, and all of the health benefits of exercising and playing outdoors.

Some agencies have begun providing mobile recreation programs and equipment to transport recreation opportunities, and more recently healthy living messages, to community events and underserved areas or groups in the City. In Baton Rouge, "BREC on the Geaux" is a traveling recreation program designed to combat obesity and provide recreational activities in EBRP's socioeconomically deprived communities. The program is operated from two colorful, 14-foot box trucks loaded with a variety of active equipment and games for all ages. The program serves up to 40 communities per week during school breaks. BREC on the Geaux is also available for school recess and afterschool activities as well as health related community events with priority given to events held in underserved communities. Parks and Recreation Department staff in Apple Valley, California, have a similar VANTastic and Healthy Beginnings programs to bring education, active recreation, sports and healthy snacks to preschools, private day cares, neighborhood parks and community gardens, where the programs could reach

economically disadvantaged children and their families. Working with dieticians and local health providers, nutrition and fitness were incorporated into a three-pronged youth development curriculum. Follow-up surveys showed that the program was highly successful in getting children and their parents to try new activities and foods and continue to make healthy lifestyle changes based on what they learned. Wichita Park and Recreation has embraced the advantage of having a mobile recreation station and instituted Barry's Recreation Station in 2015.

Programming for Seniors and Older Adults

The population in the United States is aging, and the growing senior population in some areas has been so substantial that it has been described as a Silver Tsunami. With healthier lifestyles, people are living longer and many tend to have more active lives than ever before. Many seniors have no interest in the leisure services offered in traditional stand-alone senior centers. As a result, agencies quickly realized that "seniors" could no longer be lumped into a single category and be effectively served. Parks and recreation providers instead have begun to consider the diverse interests and multiple life stages of older adults and seniors in developing facilities and programs that support:

- Fostering health and fitness;
- Developing new skills;
- Learning new activities;
- Engaging in volunteerism;
- Helping those with more serious health issues, mobility concerns and service needs;
- Providing passive and contemplative activities;
- Offering intergenerational interactions; and
- Providing affordable activities.

Most agencies are doing so by integrating senior spaces and programs such as Silver Sneakers into multi-generational recreation centers. Some have partnered with health services to provide facilities that support the health and wellness of more fragile seniors. More and more, agencies are making small changes throughout their park system in signage, pathways, and facilities to address the increasing numbers of people with some type of visual or mobility impairment, which makes the system more accessible to everyone. An evaluation of current recreation programming with Wichita Park and Recreation has identified this as an area of opportunity that will need to be addressed.

Revenue-Generating Facilities

Many agencies are looking to develop parks and recreation facilities to generate revenues and support recreation tourism. For example, multi-field sports complexes with synthetic or natural turf are being developed across the country to serve entire cities, attract regional use, and function as an economic generator by hosting tournaments that attract out-of-town participants. Tournaments at these facilities are heavily marketed with "stay and play" packages, working with local hotels and motels to increase room-night bookings.

Some of these facilities are operated directly by park agencies, while others bring in private operators, such as the Big League Dreams Sports Parks. Working with local economic development agencies, Big League Dreams has a site program that includes scaled down replicas of famous stadiums, multiple amenities, and restaurants. While the City funds facility construction, Big League Dreams operates the sports parks after they are built.

Revenue-generating facilities are not confined to sports. In some communities, large outdoor amphitheaters, performing arts facilities, special event and festival venues, and waterparks are designed as economic generators, but they also serve as place making and social gathering places that are centralized. The challenge for many communities is that few destination facilities generate a profit in early years of operation. Even over time, some generate just enough revenues to recover costs, and others require an annual subsidy to support the recreation opportunities offered. Some cities invest in facilities that require large annual investments because of the larger economic impacts these venues may bring to other businesses in the community. Financial feasibility and market studies, operational pro formas, and business plans are critical in ensuring the long-term operational success of destination facilities.

Aquatics

Swimming is a popular activity nationwide. In most communities, the question is not whether there is interest or a need for swimming; rather, it is whether a city can afford to build and operate aquatics facilities. Cities across the country are striking a balance between the attraction, needs, and willingness to pay for a range of resources from multi-purpose aquatic centers to water playgrounds or interactive water features and fountains.

Trends in developing swimming pools favor the provision of water play elements and more shallow water where the majority of water recreation and pool programs (e.g., swimming lessons and water fitness) takes place. Because swimming pools typically do not fully recover the cost of their operation, cities are trying to maximize revenue generation from these resources through the addition of water slides, rope swings, water play elements, party rooms or pavilions, and other features. Swimming pools are also being provided as part of larger, full-service recreation center. Leisure facilities may be provided in conjunction with separate tanks to support competitive swimming, given the lower cost recovery for competitive pools.



Recreation trends have also shown an increase in the numbers of interactive water features, a resource Wichita has incorporated at several parks. These features attract high use, especially from children and families. They can be integrated into a wide variety of park settings, including urban plazas. Once built, interactive water features are relatively inexpensive to operate (compared to a swimming pool) because they typically do not require lifeguards since there is no standing water. Unlike water parks, entrance fees are typically not charged for interactive water features because there is no access controlled gate. In recent years, droughts affecting many states are leading communities to consider water-saving features such as pump-operated water play elements and spouts rather than continuous flow fountains.

Golf

Across the country golf courses have been looking to new ways to attract users, particularly younger users, to courses and to the game of golf. This is a direct response to the aging of the primary user group and a need for these large, maintenance intensive assets to serve multiple purposes. New types of programming can be a key to bringing potential golfers to existing courses, attracting interest and shifting the perception of the game. Starting New At Golf (SNAG) is a program and equipment set designed for youth to teach fundamentals and emphasize the fun in playing golf. The adaptive equipment, and even courses, are more accessible and rewarding to young players. The equipment includes oversized clubs, inflatable and stand-up targets as well as science-based training and event programming to teach technique and promote awareness of golf. Other programming trends include foot golf, played with soccer balls by enlarging holes temporarily and events at courses designed to draw new users. A popular event at some courses is bringing golf-themed movies to the fairway, including Caddyshack, Tin Cup, Happy Gilmore and more, drawing on the appeal of outdoor movies and the beautiful setting of golf courses.

Private operators have also found ways to revitalize golf as a social activity, in similar ways to the modern bowling alley. Top Golf, a driving range provider with locations across the US and United Kingdom, has created a model that makes the traditionally practice-based activity of the driving range more of a game unto itself. Social seating for groups, televisions, music, food and beverages and a technology-enhanced, target-based range create an atmosphere that draws people to stay and enjoy the amenities.

3. Where Do We Want to Be?

The PROS planning process provided many opportunities to hear about the community's aspirations, values and needs. Wichitans provided input to all elements of this citizen-driven plan. Community members were involved in this updated Plan through surveys and interactive public meetings. The data gathered from community engagement during the 2008 has remained an important resource. Through the community involvement process, community members weighed in on their values and priorities for parks and recreation.



- Throughout all public forums, community members indicated that they highly value parks and recreation and believe these are important to quality of life.
- Residents recognize that the City is one of multiple providers, but they see a major role for the City in the provision of services.
- They would like to see more features in the parks they use most often, as well as better funded maintenance.
- Overwhelmingly, people would like to see improved trail connections that enable them to participate in the trail-related activities they enjoy and get to parks more easily.
- Residents see a role for the City in the provision of programs, and would like more options to participate close to home and at times that work with their busy schedules.
- Finally, residents support more funding for parks and see this as an important need.

Supplementing the community input was the planning team's technical analysis of the park system, which highlighted a variety of areas where improvement was needed in Wichita, including convenient access to parks, specific resources and services. Both the community's input and the technical analysis played an important role in developing the strategic planning framework which follows below.

Strategic Planning Framework

Core values provide the foundation for all services.

A **vision** for the City that illustrates its preferred future for parks and recreation.

A **mission** that articulates the business of the Wichita Park and Recreation Department.

Goals that describe the park and recreation outcomes the City and its residents will strive to achieve.

Performance measures provide a way to evaluate progress towards achieving the goals and overall vision.

Strategic Planning Framework

The Wichita Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan is built upon a framework distilled from the input, analysis and prioritization processes conducted during the planning process. This framework outlines the envisioned future of the City's parks and recreation system, serving as the foundation for the PROS Plan direction and its recommendations. It also reflects the five Plan Guiding Policy Principles contained in the Community Investments Plan that set relative priorities at the broadest and highest level for future public infrastructure/facility investment decisions in our community.

Core Values

Core values are the shared beliefs and qualities most valued by Wichita residents. These values will guide all strategies and actions included in the Wichita Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, and the facilities and services provided by the Wichita Park and Recreation Department.

1. **Integrity:** Park and Recreation inspires respect, trust, honesty and accountability through our actions.
2. **Wellness:** Park and Recreation recognizes the importance of enhancing the physical, emotional and cognitive health and development of all residents.
3. **Diversity:** Park and Recreation celebrates community diversity, and strives to provide facilities and services that embrace the needs of residents of diverse cultures, ages, and income levels.
4. **Stewardship:** Park and Recreation values ethical and responsible stewardship of the City's financial, physical, natural, environmental, historical and cultural resources.
5. **Connectivity:** Park and Recreation recognizes the importance of connections between public open spaces and other community facilities, such as schools, commercial areas and other destinations.
6. **Economic Driver:** Park and Recreation is an economic driver in the Wichita region and has a major impact on the community's quality of life.
7. **Create Fun:** Park and Recreation adds excitement and enjoyment to our community through recreational programs.

These PROS Plan core values are also consistent with the following seven core values of the Community Investments Plan: *common-sense approach; fiscal responsibility; growth-oriented; inclusiveness and connectivity; cultural richness; vibrant neighborhoods; and quality design.*

Vision

The Vision creates a picture of success for Wichita's community facilities and services. Chapters 4-7 describe how this vision relates to major functions of the City's system, including recreation services (Chapter 4), park land, recreation resources and trails (Chapter 5), park and facility maintenance (Chapter 6) and management services (Chapter 7). The following vision was described by the community during the 2008 planning process.

We envision an interconnected and accessible system of vibrant public spaces, friendly neighborhood parks, thriving natural areas and diverse recreation opportunities that make our city a healthy and active place in which to live, work and play.

In executing this vision for the system, the Parks and Recreation Department describes the preferred future for the organization.

To excel at what we do for the benefit of our community and generations to come.

Mission

The mission statement, developed by the Parks and Recreation Department, sums up the purpose of the organization.

Wichita Park and Recreation provides high-quality life experiences to the Wichita community through the enhancement of world-class amenities and activities.

Goals

Ten goals were developed to describe the park and recreation outcomes the City and its residents will strive to achieve. The recommendations within this Plan contribute to achieving these goals, and many recommendations contribute toward multiple goals.

- **Goal 1:** Provide safe and accessible parks, open spaces, recreation facilities and programs that help create healthy residents and a healthy community.
- **Goal 2:** Preserve and enhance our unique natural and cultural resources.
- **Goal 3:** Provide facilities that focus on user needs and desires, offer amenities that are appealing to the site specific community, and the facilities have participant safety as the top priority.
- **Goal 4:** Provide Community based education and leisure programs that are oriented for all ages, abilities and are not cost prohibitive.
- **Goal 5:** Preserve resources through sound management and best practices to create a legacy for future generations.
- **Goal 6:** Provide trails that connect community destinations, support alternatives to automobile transportation, and encourage active transportation.
- **Goal 7:** Support life-long human development by providing recreation and learning opportunities.
- **Goal 8:** Foster community ownership, encourage community participation, and promote volunteerism.
- **Goal 9:** Build partnerships and sponsorships in order to leverage resources and work cooperatively toward our vision.
- **Goal 10:** Provide golf facilities that are accessible and meet the needs of all generations, promoting active, healthy residents throughout the community.



Performance Measures

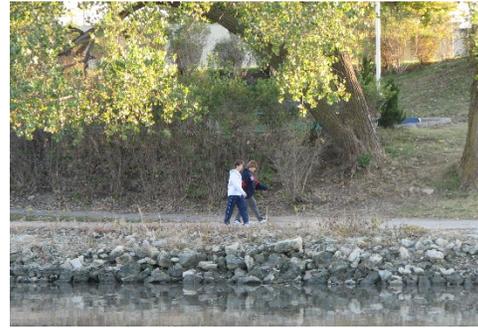
The performance measures set forth below will help the City and community members understand the progress made in meeting goals and implementing the Plan. As the City begins to measure its performance, baseline data will be collected and the goal for the next fiscal year will be set. The Department should track these measures on at least an annual basis, and use them in the development of the annual work plan.

TABLE 4: Measuring Performance of the Planning Goals

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	GOALS									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Percent of recreation program participants who report that their health has improved since participating in a City program or using a recreation center fitness facility.	●		●	●			●			●
Number of acres of natural and cultural resources preserved.	●	●			●					
Percent of residents who report that the City does a very good or excellent job of providing facilities and services that meet their needs.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●
Miles of trails provided by the City.	●		●	●	●	●				
Number of participants in City programs.	●			●			●	●		
FTE equivalent in volunteer hours achieved by volunteers in parks, recreation and open space.	●			●	●		●	●	●	
Number of partnerships in place to provide parks, recreation and open space opportunities to Wichita's residents and visitors.	●	●			●			●	●	

Strategic Directions

The Wichita PROS Plan provides a community-supported action plan for the future of parks, recreation, and open space services in Wichita. The strategic directions broadly define areas where the City and Park Department need to undertake planning and action in order to achieve the goals noted above. The recommendations, initiatives and policies within the Plan are all designed to move the City forward in the strategic directions, leading to achievement of the Plan's goals and vision. The strategic directions to achieve Wichita's vision for parks, recreation and open space include:



- Neighborhood-oriented services;
- Vibrant public spaces;
- A balanced and equitable system of services;
- An interconnected system that supports walking, bicycling, and other healthy activities; including Accessibility and access for all citizens
- Renovation, restoration and reinvestment;
- A well-maintained and sustainable system; and
- An adequately funded system

Neighborhood Oriented Services

Wichita will provide neighborhood-oriented services that build community connections, enhance neighborhood identity, and create community livability. Parks and open spaces will provide a place for community gathering and family activities. Parks and facilities will be distributed so that each neighborhood has access to a variety of recreation experiences, without having to go across town to meet basic recreation needs. Recreation services will also be designed to meet local needs, and neighborhood recreation centers will be the foundation of a system of recreation services that connects residents to one another and to the broader city and region. This direction is also consistent with Community Investments Plan Guiding Policy Principle #5. Provide for Balanced Growth but with Added Focus on Our Established Neighborhoods.

Vibrant Public Spaces

Vibrant public spaces will help build community identity and contribute to a healthy economy. Wichita's parks, urban plazas, special use areas and public spaces will serve a backdrop for healthy community activities and support downtown and neighborhood revitalization. Special use sites such as Botanica and the Ice Center provide unique amenities, making Wichita attractive to residents, visitors, and businesses. Special programs and events enliven community spaces and create activity in downtown and throughout the City. This direction is also consistent with Community Investments Plan Guiding Policy Principle #1. Support an Innovative, Vibrant and Diverse Economy.

Balanced and Equitable System

A balanced and equitable system of parks and recreation services provides a range of opportunities and experiences that meet the diverse recreation interests and needs of Wichita residents. The system of services provides opportunities for people of diverse ages, income levels, cultures and abilities.

Wichita's park system is composed of nine park types. Separately, each park type may serve a limited function, but collectively the parks and open spaces will serve the entire range of community needs. The park system of the future provides a neighborhood or community park easily accessible to most residents, and that has the basic elements needed to support healthy activity, and community and family fun. Other types of parks will provide opportunities to enjoy nature, to protect our unique natural environment for future generations, and to engage in a variety of recreation activities with our friends, family and community. The diverse park system will ensure a range of options and a variety of park experiences for Wichita residents, balancing active uses with passive uses and natural areas with more developed parks.

Services will be provided for all Wichita residents, and resources will be distributed equitably throughout the community to ensure that all have an equal opportunity. However, resources and services will be tailored to differing needs throughout the community, so that people from diverse income levels, cultures, age groups, and abilities all can find a place within the system of services. This direction is also consistent with Community Investments Plan Guiding Policy Principle #2. Invest in the Quality of Our Community Life.

Interconnected System

Community members consistently highlighted the importance of a more interconnected park system that provides safe places for biking and walking. The PROS Plan improves physical connections by expanding the linear park and trail system, providing connections within Wichita and to the broader region. The Plan calls for improved coordination between parks and recreation and the transit system, and builds on planning efforts such as the WAMPO Pathways Plan. This direction is also consistent with Community Investments Plan Guiding Policy Principle #4. Make Strategic, Value-added Investment Decisions.

Renovation and Reinvestment

Wichita residents place high priority on providing stewardship of existing parks, including the highly valued neighborhood and community parks. However, many of Wichita's parks are aging. Playground equipment, picnic facilities, and other park resources wear out over time. Landscaping becomes overgrown, turf wears out, and heavy use compacts soil. Human activity affects the quality of our natural landscapes. There is a substantial backlog of renovation and restoration needs throughout the park system, pointing to a need for reinvestment in the community. The PROS Plan places an emphasis on renovating existing sites to make them more responsive to community needs, reducing the maintenance backlog. Once renovations are completed, the park system will be easier to manage over the next twenty years. This direction is also consistent with Community Investments Plan Guiding Policy Principle #3. Take Better Care of What We Already Have.

The PROS Plan emphasizes the need for establishing a baseline level of support for park maintenance and for providing a tiered system of maintenance appropriate to each type of park. An expanded park system and the addition of highly landscaped street medians

have placed significant demands on park maintenance staff, and many more maintenance demands than can be accommodated given the current staffing, budget, and workload. For example, maintenance standards and cost thresholds should be different for a neighborhood park as compared to regional parks or urban plazas. If the maintenance budget per acre is reduced, the overall quality of maintenance will diminish. This leads to the eventual degradation of a park system that is now valued by citizens as a community benefit. This Plan recommends that maintenance funding be increased to protect our valued assets as our park, natural area, and recreation facility inventory expands.

Adequately Funded System

With the need for new parks and facilities as well as renovations, maintenance and program improvements, the City of Wichita will need to pursue diverse funding sources to realize its vision. This means investigating all available funding options, maintaining and expanding general fund support, aggressively seeking grants, partnerships and donations, and being prepared to act on opportunities when they arise. The



development of the PROS Plan is the first step in achieving this adequately funded system. The Plan identifies priorities and costs as well as a funding strategy to implement these priorities. Unfunded projects also will be identified and made ready should donors or unanticipated sources become available.

An adequately funded system will also reflect the following overall ranking of public spending and investment priorities as identified in the Community Investments Plan:

1. Maintain and replace what we currently have;
2. Make enhancements to what we currently have;
3. Expand our current system of infrastructure and facility assets.

Through this effort, the City of Wichita will continue to move closer to achieving its full vision for parks, recreation, and open space.

4. Vision for Recreation Services

It is well established that physical activity helps prevent obesity and related medical problems. And there is mounting evidence that providing places to exercise can improve health. Research is also uncovering physical and mental health benefits simply from interacting with nature: reduced levels of attention deficit in children, improved cognitive ability, and reduced aggressive behavior. Recreation programs have many benefits for



residents and the city. Recreation programs improve health and wellness, and strengthen connections between people, families, and neighborhoods. Through programs, youth, seniors, and other populations can gain lifelong learning experiences and cultural opportunities. Residents of all ages can experience and learn about nature, and help preserve natural resources. For the City, user fees can generate revenue and help sustain recreation facilities. Programs -- especially special events and sports tournaments -- attract visitors to Wichita and enhance the local economy.

Similar to other cities, the City of Wichita provides recreation centers and programming. The City is one among many diverse recreation providers. Other recreational service providers in the Wichita community include other public, private, and nonprofit organizations. A major challenge of the PROS Plan effort was to identify the future role of the City of Wichita in the context of those services provided by other agencies.

This chapter describes the City of Wichita's future role for recreation services and the planning process that supports this role. Key findings are presented from national trends research on the provision of recreation services, the evaluation of the City's existing services, and input from the public. A recommended recreation service delivery system was developed to meet the needs of residents for the next 20 years. This system makes optimum use of the City's existing recreation centers as well as the skills and resources of other providers, such as the YMCA, the County, and Genesis, to meet community needs.

Recreation Services Today

National Trends

National trends related to the provision of recreation services and community centers were evaluated as part of the recreation services planning process. These findings revealed that most cities like Wichita provide Recreation programs and recreation centers:

- A strong majority of city agencies provide recreation centers. On TPL's list of the 100 most populous cities in the U.S., Wichita is ranked 71st in terms of the number of recreation centers it provides per population. According to benchmark statistics, Wichita's 0.5 recreation and senior centers per 20,000 residents is slightly less than the median of 0.7 facilities per 20,000 residents (TPL, 2015¹). To reach the median number of facilities Wichita would need 14 recreation and senior centers.
- Comparing the numbers of facilities does not necessarily paint a clear picture for benchmarking. Some cities with many recreation centers are managing several smaller and typically older neighborhood-based community centers that were popular in the past. New trends favor the provision of multi-purpose inter-generational recreation facilities that are larger in size (e.g. 50,000+ square feet), easier to maintain, and more cost effective to operate and program.
- More than 78% of cities who participate in NRPA's PRORAGIS survey (a database for park and recreation agencies) report having recreation/community centers. More than 43% provide fitness centers, 42% senior centers, 27% nature/interpretive centers, and 43% performing or visual arts/community centers (NRPA 2015).
- According to PRORAGIS data, cities provide on average one recreation/community center per 35,092 residents (NRPA 2015). To meet this average, Wichita would need a total of 10 recreation centers.
- Over 95% of the cities surveyed through PRORAGIS provided some type of recreation programs and services in 2014. This is down slightly from 2010 when 97% of reporting agencies did (NRPA 2015).
- 2014 PRORAGIS data indicated that facility entry fees and program and class fees are the largest sources of direct revenues for reporting departments (at 21 and 43 percent respectively). NRPA notes that park and recreation departments have historically drawn equally from facility entry fees and programs and class fees (with both sources combined totaling about 80 % of revenues), meaning declining revenues following the recession can be associated with decreased fees as well as a decline in the numbers of residents purchasing passes and memberships for park-run facilities (NRPA 2015).
- The average cost recovery for recreation programs through fees and charges is 28% (NRPA 2015). Wichita's cost recovery rate for 2015 is 37%
- There is a trend toward designing programs to deliver specific benefits, such as reducing youth crime, promoting health and wellness, and keeping older adults active and independent.

Recreation Services in Wichita and Service Areas

Recreation services provided by the City, as well as other major agencies were identified, and the City's existing recreation centers were also evaluated. Wichita is uniquely positioned to provide neighborhood-based services. The City also has a number of very

¹ The TPL report counts nine City of Wichita Facilities

successful specialty centers, such as the WATER Center, Great Plains Nature Center, and school-based recreation centers, which it should continue to support. Findings include:

- The City of Wichita is a major recreation provider, and currently offers programs through its Park and Recreation Department and through other City entities, including the WATER Center and City Arts.
- Wichita offers two types of centers: Recreation Centers and Specialized Centers.
- One of Wichita's existing neighborhood recreation centers, Colvin, is a specialized center, located in a school district facility and focused primarily on before-and-after school programming.
- Neighborhood Resource Centers are located at the Evergreen and Atwater/Woodard neighborhood centers. These facilities provide a conduit for communication for neighborhood residents. These facilities provide access to meeting space for neighborhood groups, small computer labs for residents' use, notary services. Neighborhood Resource Centers do not have a cost-recovery goal and do not fall under the Park System.
- The City's Recreation Centers are in need of major renovations and/or replacement, and reinvestment of resources to meet modern day expectations.
- Youth programs, senior programs, fitness, community education classes and community rentals are the primary programs offered currently at Recreation Centers.
- The existing neighborhood recreation centers are almost perfectly distributed to serve residents within a 2-mile radius, with the exception of the west part of Wichita.
- The additional Specialized Centers in Wichita include the Great Plains Nature Center, the Wichita Ice Center, and Botanica. City Arts and the WATER Center (both operated by other city departments) are also Specialized Centers. These types of specialized centers are considered to have a citywide service area.



Other Providers

- Recreation services in Wichita are provided by the City, as well as many other agencies.
- One significant provider is the YMCA, which provides mega-centers that service the majority of the City.
- Other significant providers include: the Wichita County Senior Center, Boys and Girls Club, Planet Fitness, Genesis Health Club, Wichita State University Heskett Center, and many non-profit organizations, clubs, and organized sports groups. Other surrounding communities also offer competing recreation services.

Recommended Recreation Service Delivery System

The PROS Plan community outreach efforts revealed that recreation needs differ throughout Wichita and that programming interests and needs vary widely depending on the neighborhood. In addition, there are a variety of recreation providers in Wichita, offering a large range of programs and facilities. These providers are all part of the City's recreation delivery system. All providers must work together in order to most effectively and efficiently meet the full range of community needs.

Wichita's Service Delivery Policy

Wichita's role in delivering recreation services is threefold:

- RS Policy 1: Providing Recreation Center-based recreation services focused on health and wellness, community education and community building;
- RS Policy 2: Providing citywide recreation services focused on special interest areas; and
- RS Policy 3: Supporting tourism and economic development through partnerships, programs and services.

To fulfill these roles, the Park and Recreation Department will continue some current practices and develop new ones. Providing and operating Recreation Centers will be a major focus of the City of Wichita's future efforts in the area of recreation programs. The Department will also continue to operate its very successful existing specialty centers and associated programs, as well as other citywide programs. Finally, the Department will continue to be one of many departments and agencies collaborating on tourism and economic development. Recreation Services Actions that will help the City achieve this policy are numbered below.

Recreation Centers and Programs

The City of Wichita has historically offered Recreation Center-based programming as one of its primary services. The level and type of Recreation Center-based programs has varied over the years -- from the halcyon days in the 1970s when most of the existing Recreation Centers were constructed, to today when center-based programming is still provided but has less funding and is less robust.

The PROS planning process showed that residents would like access to nearby programming, but current options are not well-suited to their needs. The analysis showed that the City is well-positioned, given the existing facilities and strengths, to revive its neighborhood-oriented programming through Recreation Centers and serve a broad range of Wichitans. This section describes how the Recreation Center model can be reinvigorated. The Park and Recreation Department will increase its focus on recreation services.

Benefits of Recreation Centers

RS-1 Focus recreation services provided through the system of Recreation Centers on the following benefits to Wichita residents:

- Provide positive leisure experiences for all residents;
- Provide opportunities for youth development and mentoring;
- Build friendships, strong families and sense of community;
- Promote health, wellness and fitness;
- Provide opportunities for life-long learning and skill development;
- Connect residents with City and community services;
- Provide meeting space for community organizations; and
- Provide a safe place to play, learn and grow.

These are the benefits most suited to the Recreation Center model, and are also those identified as the highest priorities through the PROS Plan public involvement process.

Programs

The Department will create and deliver recreation programming that foster healthy decision making and outcomes. Facilities will offer programming based on specific community needs as identified in regular surveys. Programs will be designed with goals and objectives that are attainable and advance the health and well-being of each participant physically, socially, and emotionally.



RS-2 The following core program areas will be provided by Recreation Centers:

- Fitness and wellness programs;
- Out of school programs (before and after school, no school days, vacations and holidays);
- Socialization and drop-in opportunities;
- Youth development programs;
- Environmental education;
- Lifelong learning/Special interest determined by local desires;
- Rentals (meetings, parties and celebrations);
- Special events (indoor and outdoor);
- Food programs for low income residents (children and adults);
- Information and referral;
- Connection to City of Wichita services; and Volunteer programs.

A variety of individual programs could be offered in each of the areas described in RS-2. Programming will vary by center and be neighborhood-driven. Attendance and cost recovery will also be factors in determining the programs provided or continued, however the desire is to maintain a program mix that is not cost-prohibitive.

RS-3 The Park and Recreation Department utilizes district-based representation through the Board of Park Commissioners to advise on program, policies and facility management issues.

Tourism and Economic Development

The Park and Recreation Department is one of many departments and agencies within Wichita that support tourism and economic development. The Department's role is to be a partner in economic development, supporting the City's economic development and tourism promotion initiatives. This role includes providing support and venues for citywide events and activities organized by others, potentially providing citywide events and activities and actively partnering with others.

RS-4 Continue to be a partner in tourism and economic development initiatives Sports related services to promote travel and tourism to Wichita. The Department role is to be an economic driver in the Wichita region and has a major impact on the community's quality of life.

Citywide Recreation Services

Wichita offers citywide recreation services through its specialized centers and through events and activities at its regional parks, golf courses, and special use parks. These citywide programs are very successful.

RS-5 Continue the programming provided at the existing specialized centers, which are excellent facilities that fulfill specialized functions.

RS-6 Avoid developing additional specialized centers. Needed programs should be provided in Recreation Centers.

RS-7 The City should also continue to provide the events and activities supported by its regional parks, golf courses, and special use parks.

Transitioning to the New Service Delivery Model

In moving toward and testing the Recreation Center model, new facility development is crucial to maintaining programming needs in the community. Current facilities are limited by space restrictions and outdated designs. This drives the need for replacement plans for Recreation Centers that are not capable of meeting the needs of the community, including those that are non-compliant with ADA codes. The department will also work to maximize current usage with minor renovations to existing space to increase participant involvement in programs and services. This focus will ensure that in the Wichita will be able to enjoy facilities that focus on user needs and desires, offer amenities that are appealing to the site specific community, and have participation and safety as the top priority.

Finally, a long-term plan for center-by-center renovation should be developed and implemented to update existing Recreation Centers to meet community needs. While program improvements can begin immediately, recreation center improvements may span many years, depending on funding availability. Facility improvements to support this plan are described in Chapter 5 of this Plan.

Additional Recommendations

Based on the desired service delivery model for City of Wichita programs and the roles identified for the City, this section outlines key recommendations for recreation program improvements, and describes priority program and management improvements.

Program Management

Partnerships

AR-RS-1. Develop partnerships for operations, facility development, and renovation. For example:

- Partner with the medical community, e.g., hospitals, physical therapists, etc., in the development and programming of Recreation Center fitness rooms.
- Partner with local environmental and conservation organizations to provide programming about wildlife and the local environment. This type of partnership would bring existing programs into Neighborhood Centers.
- Partner with local restaurants or culinary programs to offer a café that serves as a community gathering space for all ages.
- Partner with area businesses and service clubs to expand program scholarships.



Staffing

AR-RS-2. Provide a Center CSR to greet and direct visitors and provide security within the facility.

AR-RS-3. Expand Recreation Supervisor responsibilities to address more than one Center, leveraging the professional training these staff members currently have.

AR-RS-4. As programming and participation expands, consider the feasibility of hiring specialty staff that would serve multiple centers, e.g., an art specialist or therapeutic recreation professional.

Performance Measures

AR-RS-5. Consistently track attendance, revenues, and cost recovery across all programs and Centers to ensure comparability.

AR-RS-6. Develop and implement a standardized program evaluation system to measure the achievement of benefits described in this Plan.

AR-RS-7. Meet overall cost recovery goals of 30-50% system wide for Recreation Centers. Some Centers may recover more costs than others, depending of the demographics of their surrounding neighborhood.

AR-RS-8. Similar types of programs should track attendance in a consistent manner Department-wide. Use the following guidelines for tracking participation:

- Track the number of attendees for special events, drop-in activities and facility attendance;
- Track participant hours for classes, leagues and workshops, as well as other program types that rely on registration for a scheduled activity; and

- Track the number of units for items sold, such as rounds of golf or swim passes.

AR-RS-9. Regularly review programs to determine whether they meet participation and revenue goals. If performance does not improve, low performing programs should be changed or discontinued.

AR-RS-10. Periodically evaluate local, regional, and national recreation trends and incorporate trends knowledge into program design. As part of this effort, track trends in sports and recreation activities and consider public outreach methods (questionnaires, surveys, etc.) to obtain public input on trends and preferences.

AR-RS-10A Release surveys after new programs are implemented and track results. Focus on releasing surveys to new participants to assist in participant retention rates.

Communications

AR-RS-11. As part of the departmental communications and outreach initiative described in Chapter 7, create a marketing plan to increase community awareness of Wichita's delivery system for recreation and the services available at Recreation Centers. This should include multiple methods of outreach, moving beyond the program guide currently provided on the City's website and social media outlets in-line with current best practices in the marketing community.

AR-RS-12. Continue to streamline registration processes, e.g., develop web-based registration, membership codes for activates, etc.

AR-RS-13. Research information about incorporation of transit routes in program guides and event announcements.

Program Provisions

Program Oversight

AR-RS-14. Develop informal methods for directions and improvements to each Recreation Center.

Variety of Programs

AR-RS-15. Provide programs in a variety of formats, including ample drop-in activities, one time and short term programs to provide recreation opportunities to residents with limited time availability.

AR-RS-16. Offer Neighborhood Center programs at a variety of times, such as various times of the day, days of the week, and seasons of the year. Provide a variety of program delivery formats, including self-initiated drop-in activities, on-going or multiple week classes, short workshops, trips, and special events.

AR-RS-17. Provide programs with a range of costs, including free. Consider increasing some program prices and developing a scholarship fund to promote access to individuals with limited means.

Suggested Program Improvements

AR-RS-18. Expand fitness center hours to a minimum of 7 AM to 9 PM, Monday through Saturday.

AR-RS-19. Focus on health and wellness initiatives for residents as a programming model for Recreation Center fitness centers and offer opportunities for under-served populations in the community.

AR-RS-20. Market fitness programs through health care providers.

AR-RS-21. Partner with schools and non-profit organizations to provide local special events, such as concerts, plays, etc.

AR-RS-22. Expand recreation opportunities for families by providing programs and activities that are multi-generational, or by offering different age groups and interest activities during the same time slot.



AR-RS-23. Offer programs that foster cross-generational and cross-cultural interactions in addition to more traditional age group-oriented programming. Examples include a senior and preschooler walking or exercise program or an oral history project involving seniors with other adults and children of diverse backgrounds.

AR-RS-24. Focus Recreation Center youth programming on birth through young adults.

AR-RS-25. Provide senior programs focused on older adults (50-60), active elders (60+), and frail elders at each Recreation Center.

AR-RS-26. Integrate and include people with disabilities into programs, and provide adaptive programs.

AR-RS-27. Train recreation and customer service staff to be more aware of the needs and ability of people with disabilities to access parks and facilities.

AR-RS-28. Increase diversity in program participation by employing a variety of strategies:

- Involve people of diverse cultures in planning, designing and implementing recreation programs;
- Increase public awareness and outreach to diverse groups;
- Partner with cultural and ethnic organizations to reach underserved populations;
- Design some programs to meet the interests of different ethnic groups; and Provide program materials, brochures and flyers in different languages and provide guidance as to whether different languages are needed at some Recreation Centers.

AR-RS-29. Offer a variety of volunteer opportunities at each Recreation Center. Advertise through the Department wide volunteer coordinator discussed in Chapter 7, as well as locally.

- AR-RS-30. Increase outdoor and environmental programming. Consider nature-based activities for day camps, playground programs, and outdoor clubs with an emphasis on outdoor excursions and adventures, outdoor tours and activities for different age groups including seniors.
- AR-RS-31. Provide environmental education activities at Recreation Centers and parks using local volunteers, nature kits, and observations of neighborhood wildlife and native plants. For example, use the checkout kits available at Great Plains Nature Center to provide nature programs at the Recreation Centers.
- AR-RS-32. Provide field trips to larger natural areas, such as Wichita Wild areas.
- AR-RS-33. Collaborate with City Arts, operated by another City department, to bring arts programming out into the neighborhoods and into other City park sites.
- AR-RS-34. Provide urban camping and fishing experiences, at Recreation Center sites and through trips to local sites.
- AR-RS-35. Consider offering programs at other locations if needed to meet needs, especially in unserved areas or areas with populations that have a great need, e.g., outdoors in parks, in community buildings, in schools or facilities provided by others.

5. Vision for Park Land, Recreation Resources and Trails

Wichita has a strong base of parks and recreation resources to build upon. However, improvements such as preservation of existing assets, modernization, and renovation, as well as acquisition and development of new parks and trails will all be necessary to support the community vision.



This chapter highlights the improvements that will be needed, with policies, actions and additional recommendations that will guide the City in strategically investing in Wichita's parks, recreation and open space system. The vision for parks land, recreation resources and trails is long-term and may take longer than twenty years to implement. These improvements will take a strong commitment from residents, the Park and Recreation Department, partner agencies and organizations, and the Wichita City Council.

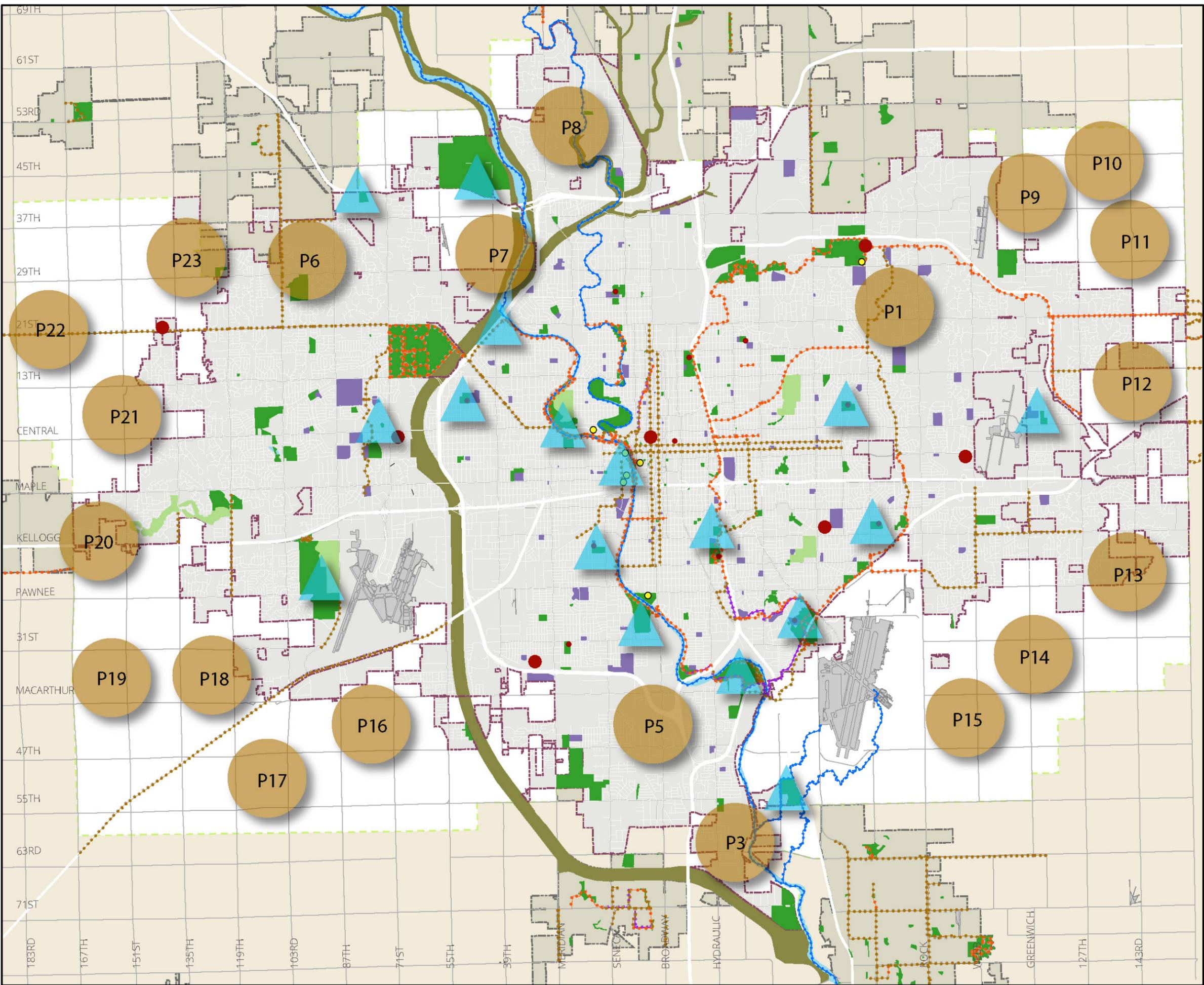
The System of the Future

Wichita's park system of the future builds on the City's legacy of parks as a central focus for community gathering and activities. Community will continue to be a key element of Wichita's park system of the future. The City's parks will contribute to the sense of community and provide places to relax, refresh, play and explore. The system of park land, recreation resources and trails will offer a diverse yet integrated network of places, activities and services that are widely valued and enjoyed. Future consideration and resources will be focused on downtown development and increasing downtown park infrastructure to create place making opportunities and enhance the vibrancy of downtown.

Map 2 illustrates Wichita's park system of the future. The system reinvests in existing park and facility resources to continue providing the assets people value most. In the long term, the park system of the future will extend the pattern of parks, resources, and trails that residents within current city limits enjoy out to the planned 2035 growth area. The system of the future also includes an interconnected network of trails and pathways, providing connections within Wichita and to the larger region, including systematic, opportunity-based integration of Wichita parks and open space investments with similar public investments made by Sedgwick County and other cities in Sedgwick County.

Map 2: Park System of the Future includes symbols depicting the following types of improvements:

- **Major Renovation or Development of Existing Site:** This symbol identifies existing parks in need of significant reinvestment. Mostly community and regional parks, these sites are targeted for significant upgrades.
- **Change of Use:** This symbol indicates that an existing park should be repurposed to meet community needs.
- **Proposed Park Target Area:** This symbol identifies an area where a new park is needed to meet future needs. Select sites are indicated to be home to future recreation buildings and aquatic facilities.
- **Priority Pathway Alignment:** This symbol depicts regional and citywide pathway alignments identified as priorities by either the Pedestrian Master Plan or by the City of Wichita.



-  Major Renovations and Developments
-  Proposed Park
-  Existing Park
-  Golf Course
-  YMCA Facilities
-  Recreation Center
-  Other Facilities
-  Priority Pathways
-  Blueways
-  Existing Trails
-  Existing Bikeways
-  Waterbody
-  Floodway
-  School
-  Airport
-  Wichita City Limits
-  2035 growth area
-  Other City

Map 2: Park System of the Future

Park Land

This discussion about park land is organized into the following subsections:

1. **Overall Policies, Actions and Recommendations:** discussing policies, actions and recommendations that apply to the entire park system or to entire categories of parks;
 2. **Design Guidelines:** presenting size, access, and resource guidelines for each park classification;
 3. **Recommendations Within City Limits:** addressing improvements at Wichita's existing parks and new parks needed to serve residents within current city limits; and
 4. **Recommendations Within Wichita's 2035 Growth Area:** discussing the new parks needed to serve future needs in the 2035 growth area.
-

Overall Park Land Policies

PRT Policy 1: Provide a public park within a reasonable distance for ease of accessibility to all Wichita residents.

PRT-1A Look to existing park land first, regardless of park classification, when trying to fill a community need. Consider repurposing a park or adding new uses to respond to community needs or fill deficiencies.



PRT-1B To meet the needs of underserved areas, acquire new sites or seek strategic partnerships that provide access to existing and planned open spaces; such as elementary school grounds.

PRT-1C Proactively target acquisition of new park sites in Wichita's 2035 growth area in advance of development.

PRT-1D Actively seek opportunities to coordinate new park locations with schools, libraries, and other public facilities.

PRT-1E Strive to provide a natural area park, or Wichita Wild site, within a reasonable distance of every Wichitan. When this is not possible (e.g., no natural resource sites are present in the areas), incorporate environmental features such as a rain garden, water quality feature or native plant demonstration area within a park in the area and provide interpretive signage about the feature.

PRT-1F Acquire or otherwise protect high resource value conservation areas and greenways, regardless of whether an area is already served by another site.

PRT Policy 2: Implement the design guidelines for each park classification to ensure that each park can fulfill its function within the park system. The resources present within a park define and support the park's function. The design guidelines are presented in Table 5.

PRT-2A Acquire only those sites consistent with the direction of this Plan, unless property is acquired for the purpose of trading or selling to generate revenue.

PRT-2B Ensure that park master plans are developed prior to making major improvements at existing park sites or building new parks. The design guidelines contained within this Plan should be used to develop a preliminary design program. The master planning and design process should engage the community and take into consideration community demographics, historical and cultural background, recreation trends, potential partnership opportunities, and resource deficiencies noted during the PROS Plan process.

PRT-2C Identify maintenance and operations impacts for each planned addition to the park system in consultation with parks maintenance and recreation programming staff to ensure that capital projects decisions incorporate an analysis of project impacts.

PRT-2D Promote conservation ethics and environmental sustainability by incorporating green building practices throughout the park and recreation system, especially those which will result in lower operations costs.

PRT-2E Support the use of reclaimed water for the irrigation of city parks, open space areas and golf courses, where economically feasible.

PRT-2F Provide interpretive signage about the historic, cultural and natural environment throughout the park system, where appropriate, to increase opportunities for self-directed education.

PRT-2G Allow new standalone partnerships, which includes memorials in regional or special use parks, such as those found in Veterans' Memorial Park and Botanica. Memorial trees, benches, and site amenities can be incorporated into parks of other types, if the City develops a gift program.

PRT-2H Continue to expand public private partnerships, such as the Ice Center, Wichita Park Foundation.

Additional Park Land Recommendations: Access

AR-PRT-1 Continue to assess transportation barriers affecting the ability of parks to serve neighbors effectively. Incorporate access efforts in conjunction with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans in order to promote the provision of sidewalks, multi-purpose pathways, curb cuts, and crosswalks to accommodate pedestrians and cyclists and to increase access to park resources.

AR-PRT-2 Continue to work with Wichita Transit on the location of bus routes and stops to promote access to parks and park resources.

AR-PRT-3 Continue to build on existing ADA transition Plans and conduct a more detailed accessibility review of outdoor recreation areas to remove barriers at parks. This effort will result in a project list, which will require capital project funding.

AR-PRT-4 Continue to provide internal pathways connecting park elements within all parks.

Additional Park Land Recommendations: Partnerships

AR-PRT-5 In the downtown redevelopment area, collaborate with other departments to create a connected system of urban parks by incorporating pedestrian linkages, boulevards, public amenities and art work to meet recreational needs and support livability.



AR-PRT-6 Continue the GPNC partnership

AR-PRT-7 Support the efforts of other departments and agencies to preserve natural resources through participation and input in planning and regulatory processes.

Additional Park Land Recommendations: Ongoing Reinvestment

AR-PRT-8 Plan for tree canopy replacement in City parks, which will be expanded with utility franchise fees.* Many of Wichita's parks have mature trees that contribute greatly to the park system's character. Residents have identified trees and shade as important park elements. Tree replacement plans should be developed and implemented so that young trees are planted and become established before older trees die off.

AR-PRT-9 Develop and implement a playground replacement program, which would include an annual budget to replace playgrounds on a scheduled basis to ensure that the system of playgrounds remains high quality. This would continue on the Department's recent initiative to replace playgrounds throughout the park system, many of which were aged and out of compliance with current safety standards.

AR-PRT-10 Include a budget annually for site amenities and facilities. This budget would fund new amenities and replacement of aged amenities and facilities. Regular investment in site amenities and facilities will keep up the assets in the park system.

* Utility franchise fees from Westar have been added to the Forestry budget as of the 2016/2017 Budget

Design Guidelines

In Table 5, design guidelines are provided for each park classification. The table lists the park classification, the definition of that classification, and considerations about size and access. It also includes information about resources to provide or avoid:

- The “Minimum Resources” column identifies the basic resources that should be provided in parks of that classification.
- The “May Include Additional Resources” column identifies resources that are also appropriate within parks of that classification if there is space, funding, or community interest.
- The “Does Not Include Conflicting Resources” column identifies resources that are not compatible with a classification’s function.

During the planning process, each park was evaluated using the design guidelines to determine if it was in compliance. Results of the evaluation were incorporated into the Community Resources and Needs Assessment Part I, contained within the Technical Supplement to this Plan. Improvements to bring all existing parks up to the guidelines are incorporated into the recommendations for existing parks.

TABLE 5: DESIGN GUIDELINES

CLASSIFICATION	DEFINITION	BENEFITS	SIZE AND ACCESS	MINIMUM RESOURCES	MAY INCLUDE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	DOES NOT INCLUDE CONFLICTING RESOURCES
Playgrounds/Pocket Parks	Small parks with basic play facilities or a small green space. These parks are smaller than two acres in size and located within a short walk of the majority of users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides access to basic recreation opportunities for nearby residents, particularly young children Contributes to neighborhood identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One acre or less Located on a local-serving street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground or play features At least one picnic table and one bench ADA-compliant internal pathway system Park identification sign Site furnishings (trash receptacles, bike rack, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open turf area Trees If space permits, sports courts (basketball court, tennis court, volleyball court) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Off-street parking Destination facilities or resources with communitywide draw Memorials (except for memorial trees or benches) Sports complexes Full-service recreation centers Swimming pools (indoor or outdoor) Floral plantings (annuals, perennials, display gardens)
Neighborhood Parks	Neighborhood-serving parks that provide easy access to basic recreation resources such as playgrounds, open fields, and picnic areas. Neighborhood parks are typically between five and ten acres, but can be as large as 15 acres or more. Neighborhood parks are located within biking and walking distances of users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides access to basic recreation opportunities for nearby residents of all ages Contributes to neighborhood identity Provides green space within neighborhoods Provides a space for family and small group gatherings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.5 acre minimum Street frontage on at least two sides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground or play features At least one picnic table and one bench ADA-compliant internal pathway system Perimeter path or sidewalks Open turf area (minimum 50' x 50') Trees Park identification sign Site furnishings (trash receptacles, bike rack, etc.) At least one active recreation resource (see "May Include" list) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice sports fields (baseball, football, soccer, softball, multi-purpose) Sports courts (basketball court, tennis court, volleyball court) Other small-scale active recreation resources (skate spot, horseshoe pits, bocce court, shuffleboard lane) Interactive water feature (small-scale) Community garden Shelter, shade structure or gazebo Restroom Off-street parking Lighting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destination facilities or resources with communitywide draw Memorials (except for memorial trees or benches) Sports complexes Full-service recreation centers Swimming pools (indoor or outdoor) Floral plantings (annuals, perennials, display gardens)

TABLE 5: DESIGN GUIDELINES

CLASSIFICATION	DEFINITION	BENEFITS	SIZE AND ACCESS	MINIMUM RESOURCES	MAY INCLUDE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	DOES NOT INCLUDE CONFLICTING RESOURCES
Community Parks	Larger-scale parks with concentrations of major recreational facilities such as recreation centers, sports fields, and swimming pools, along with necessary support facilities such as parking. Community parks can also serve the neighborhood park needs for residents within walking distance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a variety of accessible recreation opportunities for all age groups Provides environmental education opportunities Serves recreation needs of families Provides opportunities for community social and cultural activities and positive community identity for the surrounding community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 acres minimum Access from an arterial street Bus and transit access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground or play features Picnic tables and benches Enclosed or open shelter with BBQ ADA-compliant internal pathway system, including looped walking path Practice or game sports fields (baseball, cricket, football, rugby, soccer, softball, multi-purpose) Basketball and/or tennis court Restrooms Parking (on-street may substitute for off-street, in more urban neighborhoods where adequate on-street space is available) Open turf area Trees Park identification sign Site furnishings (trash receptacles, bike rack, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other active recreation resources (BMX course or facility, croquet court, disc golf course, fitness stations, handball court, horseshoe pit, skateboard park, shuffleboard lanes, volleyball court, etc.) Interactive water feature Swimming pool Full-service recreation center Sports complex Other facilities or resources with communitywide draw Community garden Off-leash dog area Model airplane or car facilities Fishing lake Concessions Stage/amphitheatre Upgraded utility service to support special events Natural areas Memorials Lighting Shrub beds Maintenance facilities Multi-use trails Pedestrian trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional-scale facilities (arboretum, botanical garden, zoo, regional sports complex) Floral plantings, except at entry signs

TABLE 5: DESIGN GUIDELINES

CLASSIFICATION	DEFINITION	BENEFITS	SIZE AND ACCESS	MINIMUM RESOURCES	MAY INCLUDE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	DOES NOT INCLUDE CONFLICTING RESOURCES
Regional Parks	Parks that attract users from throughout the region, have a wide variety of facilities, and are usually large in size. Regional parks include supporting facilities, such as restrooms and parking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a variety of accessible recreation opportunities for all age groups Provides environmental education opportunities Serves recreation needs of families Provides regional opportunities for community social and cultural activities Provides positive community identity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 acres minimum Access from an arterial street Bus and transit access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional-scale facilities or resources with regional draw ADA-compliant internal pathway system, including looped walking path Restrooms Parking Infrastructure to support large community events Park identification sign Site furnishings (trash receptacles, bike rack, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Game sports fields – complexes or stadiums (baseball, cricket, football, rugby, soccer, softball, multi-purpose) Specialized active recreation facilities (indoor tennis center, climbing wall, ice rink) Sports courts (basketball court, tennis court, volleyball court) Other active recreation resources (BMX course or facility, croquet court, disc golf course, fitness stations, handball court, horseshoe pit, shuffleboard lanes, skateboard park, volleyball court, etc.) Commercial ventures or features Concessions Large-scale interactive water feature Water park or swimming pool complex Interpretive center Botanical garden or arboretum Other facilities or resources with communitywide draw Community garden Off-leash dog area Model airplane or car facilities Fishing lake Stage/amphitheatre Upgraded utility service to support special events Natural areas Memorials, trees Lighting Shrub beds Floral plantings Maintenance facilities Multi-use trails, pedestrian trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No conflicting resources identified

TABLE 5: DESIGN GUIDELINES

CLASSIFICATION	DEFINITION	BENEFITS	SIZE AND ACCESS	MINIMUM RESOURCES	MAY INCLUDE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	DOES NOT INCLUDE CONFLICTING RESOURCES
Urban Plaza	A hard-surfaced or landscaped area that provides social gathering space within higher density urban areas. These sites may include performance space, public art or fountains and serve both residential and commercial uses. Urban plazas should be located in areas of dense urban activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides opportunities for public gathering and social activities Contributes to community identity Opportunities to experience public art and memorialize people and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Size is easily traversed on foot - About one acre maximum size Should be within or adjacent to a business district or high density housing area Is activated on the edges Maintains the street network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paved area of sufficient size to accommodate projected use Park identification sign Site furnishings (trash receptacles, bike rack, etc.) Lighting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turf area Playground or play features Interactive water feature Small-scale sporting facilities compatible with an urban site (bocce, basketball, croquet) Shelter, shade structure or gazebo Stage/amphitheatre Upgraded utility service for special events Concessions or vendor space Commercial lease space (restaurant, bookstore, coffee shop, etc.) Restrooms Memorials Trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Off-street parking Sports complexes Full-service recreation centers Swimming pools (indoor or outdoor)
Special Use Park	Sites that contain unique features or facilities designed to support particular activities. Many special use parks will have a single focus, such as a complex of sports fields or a fishing lake. These parks will likely draw users from throughout the city and may have a regional draw. Special use parks that have a community or regional draw may require supporting facilities such as parking or restrooms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides accessible, specialized recreation opportunities for all age groups Provides environmental/historical education opportunities Serves recreation needs of targeted user groups Provides the ability to host large regional or national scale special events, such as tournaments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Size is dependent on the special use and can vary from very small to many acres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Designated special use and necessary support facilities Park identification sign Site furnishings (trash receptacles, bike rack, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turf area Playground or play features Interactive water feature Sports courts (basketball court, tennis court, volleyball court) Parking Concessions or vendor space Commercial lease space (restaurant, bookstore, coffee shop, etc.) Restroom Natural areas Memorials Lighting Shrub beds Maintenance facilities Any resource or use that supports the primary special use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any resource that conflicts with the designated special use

TABLE 5: DESIGN GUIDELINES

CLASSIFICATION	DEFINITION	BENEFITS	SIZE AND ACCESS	MINIMUM RESOURCES	MAY INCLUDE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	DOES NOT INCLUDE CONFLICTING RESOURCES
Golf Course	A nine- or eighteen-hole course with or without a clubhouse, including supporting and associated facilities such as parking and equipment storage. Golf courses in Wichita are stand-alone facilities used exclusively for golf.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides activity that is appropriate for many ages and abilities Provides open space, breaking up other patterns of development Shown to have the highest impact on property values in surrounding area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Size is dependent on the number of holes in the course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Golf course Restrooms Parking Park identification sign Site furnishings (trash receptacles, bike rack, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clubhouse Commercial lease space (restaurant, pro shop, etc.) ADA-compliant internal pathway system Maintenance facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any resource that conflicts with the primary golf use
Linear Parks/Pathways	Corridors of land that connect parks and resources, providing public access to trails and their surrounding areas. These corridors may include developed or natural areas where the primary facility is a pathway or trail connecting community destinations or segments of the trail system. Linear parks are important resources to the local community, but as part of a larger trail system, these corridors may have a city-wide or even regional draw.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting parks and other community destinations Enhanced trail experience Increased access to parks and other community destinations Encourages active transportation with the health benefits of walking and biking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Size is dependent on corridor length 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Park identification sign Site furnishings (trash receptacles, bike rack, etc.) Trail or pathway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shelter, shade structure or gazebo Restrooms Off-street parking Trailhead or entry Lighting Natural areas Memorials, trees, or benches Lighting Trees Shrub beds Interpretive signage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any resource that conflicts with the trail use
Natural Areas/Wichita Wild	Park land that is managed to ensure an open, more natural state. This includes large parcels of land preserved for habitat, including the designated Wichita Wild sites. Uses on these lands are typically limited to passive or low impact activities, such as wildlife viewing, hiking, jogging, bicycling, and nature photography.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides opportunities for experiencing nature close to home Protects valuable natural resources and wildlife Contributes to the environmental health of the community including improving water and air quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Size should be based on natural resource needs and priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural areas Park identification sign Interpretive signage Site furnishings (trash receptacles, bike rack, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking Restrooms Trail or pathway system Trailhead or entry Viewpoints or viewing blinds Interpretive center or educational facilities or classrooms (indoor or outdoor) Shelter, shade structure or gazebo Amenities provided should be limited to the numbers and types of visitors the area can accommodate, while retaining its resource value and natural character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Turf areas Ornamental plantings Active use facilities (sports fields, paved courts, etc.)

Recommendations Within City Limits

The park-specific recommendations include a broad variety of improvements at many of Wichita's existing park sites. The recommendations are presented in Table 6, and were derived from numerous efforts during the planning process. The recommendations incorporate findings from a site-by-site condition evaluation, an analysis of design guideline compliance, the results of the park land and recreation resource needs assessment, and public priorities identified during the first two phases of the planning process. These recommendations were updated in 2016 to reflect progress in implementation.



The recommendation categories indicated in the table are defined below.

- **Maintain Existing Resources:** In many cases, the existing recreation resources at a park are doing a fine job of serving community needs and are in good condition. This is often due to the playground improvement initiative undertaken by the Department in recent years. The critical recommendation for these sites is to ensure a level of maintenance that preserves the assets and to keep up regular reinvestment in existing resources. This ensures that the parks continue to be a positive influence on the surrounding community. Some of these sites could accommodate additional resources in the future, if the community requested it.
- **Site Amenities and Signage:** This category captures the smallest, but not least important, improvements to park sites. Site amenities include a wide range of shelters, park furniture (benches, picnic tables, etc.), drinking fountains, trash receptacles and other features that make park visits more comfortable and pleasant. Signage at a park would typically include at least a park entrance sign that clearly identifies the name of the site so that residents understand it is a publicly owned site available for use. Additional signage might include wayfinding signs that indicate where important sites within or around the park are located, directional signs helping visitors find the park from major roads, or interpretive signage to tell an important story about the site or resources within it. Not all sites will have additional signage needs but larger parks and natural areas would include more than smaller neighborhood sites. After analyzing the park inventory and design guidelines, 26 sites have been identified as needing additional site amenities or signage.
- **Minor Renovation:** Wichita's parks are deficient in resources or have several features in need of major repair or replacement. This category includes parks that need a tennis court resurfaced or replacement of field equipment. Parks in this category may also need signage or site amenity improvements along with the other renovations. Buffalo Park is an example of a park that underwent a renovation in recent years that upgraded the play structure and generally improved the neighborhood park experience. The minor renovations category includes the level of improvements undertaken at Buffalo Park, and many of Wichita's parks are in need of innovative features. Many of the sites are in need of a new or renovated playground. Master planning or design consultation

should take place before minor renovations occur. In the case of Buffalo Park, the Department's in-house landscape architect designed the improvements.

- **Major Renovation:** In order to meet the design guidelines and fulfill their function within the park system, a number of parks require major additions or renovations. A major renovation is an effort that results in a major new resource being added to a park or the renovation of multiple existing resources. This type of project would generally cost \$1 million or more in 2016 dollars, and would result in a significant reinvestment in an existing site. Many of the park sites in need of major renovation are community or regional parks that lack restrooms for visitors coming from across town or from out of the area. Other major improvements include adding facilities such as picnic shelters, skate parks and recreation centers to meet access needs throughout the community. There are multiple parks that have been identified for major renovation, and are depicted on Map 2, Park System of the Future as well as being listed in the table. Master planning and design will be needed for each of these sites, and the level of effort required may be beyond internal Department staff workload capacity.
- **Park Land Acquisition:** For new park and recreation resource needs in locations where the City of Wichita does not currently own property, new park sites will need to be acquired. Multiple park areas throughout the City will need to be evaluated needed to address underserved areas, lacking parks or recreation resources. Map 2, Park System of the Future, which incorporates elements of the Downtown Master Plan, Bicycle Master Plan and Pedestrian Master Plan, depicts new sites within city limits as well as new sites in the 2035 growth area.
- **Development:** Several existing sites will require full development, as will additional new sites targeted for acquisition within city limits. The level of development can range widely, depending on the size of the park and on the design program. This might include only provisions of the basic resources required by the design guidelines but changes could be more extensive. New park development includes master planning and design, construction documents, site preparation work, utilities and infrastructure and the construction of the planned park design. This category of recommendation also includes the construction of a new neighborhood or pocket park area within an existing park of another classification, and in a few cases, complete redevelopment of an existing park, essentially starting from scratch. Within the city limits of Wichita, there are additional sites that will need to be either renovated or developed. In addition to listing in the table, existing parks requiring full development are depicted on Map 2, Park System of the Future.

PARK	PARK CLASSIFICATION	SIZE IN ACRES	COUNCIL DISTRICT	MAINTAIN EXISTING RESOURCES	SITE FURNISHINGS AND SIGNAGE	MINOR RENOVATION	MAJOR RENOVATION	MAJOR FACILITY: BUILDING	MAJOR FACILITY: SWIMMING POOL	PARK LAND ACQUISITION	DEVELOPMENT	Description of Improvements
BARRINGTON PARK	Pocket Park	0.7	District 5	•								Maintain existing resources.
CHAUTAUQUA PARK	Pocket Park	0.4	District 1	•								Meets minimum standards. Maintain existing resources.
COUNTRY ACRES PARK	Pocket Park	2.5	District 5				•					Pool removed, park in transition
EDGEBROOK PARK	Pocket Park	0.2	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
ELM NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	Pocket Park	0.2	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
EMPORIA PARK	Pocket Park	1.1	District 6	•								Meets minimum standards. Maintain existing resources.
GLENN VILLAGE PARK	Pocket Park	1.1	District 4		•							Update furnishings, add playground equipment.
GRANDPARENTS PARK	Pocket Park	0.6	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
GRANDVIEW HEIGHTS PARK	Pocket Park	0.9	District 3	•								Maintain existing resources.
HENRY PARK	Pocket Park	1.9	District 1	•								Meets minimum standards. Maintain existing resources.
HOPE PARK	Pocket Park	0.1	District 6	•								Maintain existing resources.
LONGVIEW NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	Pocket Park	0.6	District 3	•								Maintain existing resources.
MAYOR'S PINE GROVE	Pocket Park	0.8	District 6	•								Maintain existing resources.
MEADOWLARK PARK	Pocket Park	1.8	District 3	•								Maintain existing resources.
OTIS PARK	Pocket Park	0.8	District 6	•								Maintain existing resources.
PAT GARCIA VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK	Pocket Park	1.6	District 6	•								Maintain existing resources.
PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR PARK	Pocket Park	0.3	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
PHYLLIS HALL MEMORIAL PARK	Pocket Park	1.8	District 3	•								Maintain existing resources.
PIATT MEMORIAL PARK	Pocket Park	1.5	District 1		•							Add furnishings/signage.
PROSPECT PARK	Pocket Park	0.7	District 6	•								Maintain existing resources.
RIVERA PARK	Pocket Park	1.3	District 1	•	•							Replace fencing
SENECA PARK	Pocket Park	1.7	District 4	•								Maintain existing resources.
SKYLINE PARK	Pocket Park	0.4	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
SPRUCE PARK	Pocket Park	1.2	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
THIRD (3RD) AND PIATT	Pocket Park	0.3	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
VICTORIA PARK	Pocket Park	0.3	District 6		•	•						Renovate site furnishings

PARK	PARK CLASSIFICATION	SIZE IN ACRES	COUNCIL DISTRICT	MAINTAIN EXISTING RESOURCES	SITE FURNISHINGS AND SIGNAGE	MINOR RENOVATION	MAJOR RENOVATION	MAJOR FACILITY: BUILDING	MAJOR FACILITY: SWIMMING POOL	PARK LAND ACQUISITION	DEVELOPMENT	Description of Improvements
ALFRED MACDONALD PARK	Neighborhood Park	4.3	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
BIG ARKANSAS RIVER PARK	Neighborhood Park	6.2	District 6				•					Project in CIP for 2023-24
CLAUDE LAMBE PARK	Neighborhood Park	11.2	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
COLUMBINE PARK	Neighborhood Park	10.3	District 6	•								Maintain existing resources.
CYPRESS PARK	Neighborhood Park	11.1	District 2			•						Revise exercise trail with pathway.
EMERY MEMORIAL PARK	Neighborhood Park	30.5	District 3			•						Meet minimum standard. Renovate active resource.
FRIENDSHIP PARK	Neighborhood Park	12.1	District 3	•								Maintain existing resources.
GOLDENROD PARK	Neighborhood Park	2.1	District 1	•								Add playground.
HARVEST PARK	Neighborhood Park	10.0	District 5	•								Maintain existing resources.
HYDE PARK	Neighborhood Park	2.6	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
KIWANIS PARK	Neighborhood Park	6.8	District 4	•								Add furnishings/signage.
LEON ROBINSON PARK	Neighborhood Park	5.8	District 3	•								Maintain existing resources.
LINCOLN PARK	Neighborhood Park	2.5	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
LINWOOD PARK NORTH	Neighborhood Park	15.7	District 1				•					Project in CIP for 2016-2018
LYNETTE WOODARD PARK	Neighborhood Park	3.1	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
MCKNIGHT PARKWAY	Neighborhood Park	3.7	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
MERIDIAN PARK	Neighborhood Park	12.1	District 6	•								Maintain existing resources.
MINISA PARK	Neighborhood Park	9.6	District 6	•								Maintain existing resources.
MURDOCK PARK	Neighborhood Park	9.3	District 1		•							Add furnishings
PEACHTREE PARK	Neighborhood Park	18.0	District 3	•								
REDBARN PARK	Neighborhood Park	6.8	District 5	•								Meet minimum standard. Maintain existing resources.
REDBUD PARK	Neighborhood Park	6.1	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
RIVERVIEW PARK	Neighborhood Park	9.1		•	•							Maintain existing resources.
SCHELL PARK	Neighborhood Park	8.2	District 6	•								Meet minimum standard. Maintain existing resources.
SCHWEITER PARK	Neighborhood Park	8.7	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
SHERWOOD GLENN	Neighborhood Park	5.5	District 6	•								Maintain existing resources.
SLEEPY HOLLOW PARK	Neighborhood Park	5.3	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
STEARMAN PARK	Neighborhood Park	16.0	District 3	•								Maintain existing resources.
SUNSET PARK	Neighborhood Park	19.0	District 5	•								Meet minimum standard. Maintain existing resources.
SYCAMORE PARK	Neighborhood Park	12.9	District 6	•								Maintain existing resources.
TOWNE PARK	Neighborhood Park	4.3	District 2	•								Maintain existing resources.

PARK	PARK CLASSIFICATION	SIZE IN ACRES	COUNCIL DISTRICT	MAINTAIN EXISTING RESOURCES	SITE FURNISHINGS AND SIGNAGE	MINOR RENOVATION	MAJOR RENOVATION	MAJOR FACILITY: BUILDING	MAJOR FACILITY: SWIMMING POOL	PARK LAND ACQUISITION	DEVELOPMENT	Description of Improvements
WALL, ALICE MEMORIAL PARK	Neighborhood Park	12.5	District 4	•								Maintain existing resources.
WEST DOUGLAS PARK	Neighborhood Park	16.4	District 4	•								Maintain existing resources.
WEST MEADOWS PARK	Neighborhood Park	1.4	District 5	•								Meet minimum standard. Maintain existing resources.
WEST MILLBROOK PARK	Neighborhood Park	25.3	District 5	•								Meet minimum standard. Maintain existing resources.
WESTLINK PARK	Neighborhood Park	3.5	District 5	•		•						Parking lot renovation
WILDWOOD PARK	Neighborhood Park	10.0	District 4	•								Maintain existing resources.
WOODLAND PARK SOUTH	Neighborhood Park	8.1	District 6	•								Meet minimum standard. Maintain existing resources.
ALEY PARK	Community Park	15.9	District 4				•	•	•			Add active resource.
BOSTON PARK	Community Park	18.4	District 2				•	•	•			Athletic courts to be renovated
BROWNTHRUSH PARK	Community Park	41.9	District 5	•								Maintain existing resources.
BUFFALO PARK	Community Park	38.2	District 5	•								Maintain existing resources.
CESSNA PARK - EAST	Community Park	23.0	District 3	•								Meet minimum standard. Maintain existing resources.
COLLEGE HILL PARK	Community Park	23.0	District 2	•	•	•						Meet minimum standard. Renovate restrooms.
EASTVIEW PARK	Community Park	20.1	District 2	•								Maintain existing resources.
EDGEMOOR PARK	Community Park	25.7	District 1				•	•	•			Meet minimum standard. Renovate active resource. Renovate restrooms.
EVERGREEN PARK	Community Park	26.8	District 6			•		•	•			Meet minimum standard. Renovate active resources.
FAIRMOUNT PARK	Community Park	18.6	District 1			•						Meet minimum standards. Renovate active resources.
GARVEY PARK	Community Park	35.0	District 3	•								Maintain existing resources.
HERMAN HILL PARK	Community Park	31.5	District 3	•								Add active resource.
LINWOOD PARK SOUTH	Community Park	43.3	District 1				•	•	•			Meet minimum standard. Add active resource. Renovate restrooms.
McADAMS PARK	Community Park	57.5	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
ORCHARD PARK	Community Park	18.8	District 6				•	•	•			Meet minimum standard. Renovate active resource.
OSAGE PARK	Community Park	17.1	District 4	•								Maintain existing resources.
SOUTHVIEW PARK	Community Park	19.1	District 4	•								Maintain existing resources.
W. B. HARRISON PARK	Community Park	38.9	District 2		•	•						Add furnishings/signage. Add dog park and picnic shelter.
WOODLAND PARK-NORTH	Community Park	20.0	District 6	•								Meet minimum standard. Renovate active resource. Renovate restrooms.

PARK	PARK CLASSIFICATION	SIZE IN ACRES	COUNCIL DISTRICT	MAINTAIN EXISTING RESOURCES	SITE FURNISHINGS AND SIGNAGE	MINOR RENOVATION	MAJOR RENOVATION	MAJOR FACILITY: BUILDING	MAJOR FACILITY: SWIMMING POOL	PARK LAND ACQUISITION	DEVELOPMENT	Description of Improvements
CHAPIN PARK	Regional Park	180.0	District 3	•							•	Maintain existing resources.
DR. GLEN DEY (GROVE) PARK	Regional Park	125.9	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
PLANEVIEW PARK	Regional Park	120.6	District 3				•	•	•			CIP project in 2020 and 2021
RIVERSIDE PARK-CENTRAL	Regional Park	58.0	District 6	•								meet minimum standard. Renovate lighting and irrigation systems. Renovate structures.
RIVERSIDE PARK-NORTH	Regional Park	28.0	District 6	•								Meet minimum standard. Maintain existing resources.
RIVERSIDE PARK-SOUTH	Regional Park	30.0	District 6	•								Meet minimum standard. Renovate active resources.
WATSON, O.J. PARK	Regional Park	119.0	District 3				•					Major renovations outlined in Watson Park Master Plan
AIR CAPITAL MEMORIAL PARK	Special Use Park	14.4	District 4	•								Maintain existing resources.
BOTANICA	Special Use Park	22.3	District 6	•			•					Renovate active resources.
BRIDGEPORT SOCCER FIELDS	Special Use Park	7.5	District 6	•								Maintain existing resources.
GREAT PLAINS NATURE CENTER	Special Use Park	8.4	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
K-96 LAKE	Special Use Park	108.0	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
LAWRENCE-DUMONT STADIUM	Special Use Park	16.6	District 4				•					Renovate active resources.
NORTHEAST SPORTS COMPLEX	Special Use Park	58.5	District 2	•				•	•			Meet minimum standard. Add picnic shelter.
SOUTH LAKES PARK	Special Use Park	240.1	District 4			•		•	•			Renovate active resource. New neighborhood center. Add skate park. Add picnic shelter.
STRYKER SOCCER COMPLEX	Special Use Park	47.6	District 2	•								Maintain existing resources.
VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK	Special Use Park	3.4	District 6	•								Maintain existing resources.
WEST SIDE ATHLETIC FIELD	Special Use Park	21.8	District 4			•						Change of use. Meet minimum standard for special use park. Add active resources. Add restrooms.
WICHITA SKATEPARK	Special Use Park	0.9	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
A. PRICE WOODARD, JR. MEMORIAL PARK	Urban Plaza	4.2	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
CHESTER I. LEWIS (REFLECTION SQUARE) PARK	Urban Plaza	0.3	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
DELANO PARK	Urban Plaza	0.6	District 4	•								Maintain existing resources.
FINLAY ROSS PARK	Urban Plaza	0.5	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
HERITAGE SQUARE PARK	Urban Plaza	0.5	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
NAFTZGER MEMORIAL PARK	Urban Plaza	0.8	District 1			•						Renovate active resources.

PARK	PARK CLASSIFICATION	SIZE IN ACRES	COUNCIL DISTRICT	MAINTAIN EXISTING RESOURCES	SITE FURNISHINGS AND SIGNAGE	MINOR RENOVATION	MAJOR RENOVATION	MAJOR FACILITY: BUILDING	MAJOR FACILITY: SWIMMING POOL	PARK LAND ACQUISITION	DEVELOPMENT	Description of Improvements
ALFRED MACDONALD GOLF COURSE	Golf Course	144.3	District 1									Maintain existing resources.
AUBURN HILLS GOLF COURSE	Golf Course	158.0	District 5									Maintain existing resources.
L. W. CLAPP MEMORIAL GOLF COURSE	Golf Course	94.7	District 3									Reinvest in existing resources.
SIM PARK GOLF COURSE	Golf Course	118.3	District 6									Reinvest in existing resources.
TEX CONSOLVER GOLF COURSE	Golf Course	196.8	District 4									Reinvest in existing resources.
CHISHOLM GREENWAY	Linear Park/Pathway	10.0	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
INDIAN HILLS GREENWAY	Linear Park/Pathway	4.1	District 6	•								Meet minimum standard. Maintain existing resources.
CESSNA PARK - WEST	Natural Areas/Wichita Wild	14.4	District 3			•						Add disc golf course
CHISHOLM CREEK PARK - NORTH	Natural Areas/Wichita Wild	56.4	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
CHISHOLM CREEK PARK - SOUTH	Natural Areas/Wichita Wild	217.1	District 1	•								Maintain existing resources.
COTTONWOOD PARK	Natural Areas/Wichita Wild	20.7	District 2	•								Maintain existing resources.
COWSKIN GREENWAY	Natural Areas/Wichita Wild	27.1	District 5	•								Maintain existing resources.
HELLER'S PARK	Natural Areas/Wichita Wild	28.5	District 6	•								Maintain existing resources.
MEADOWS PARK	Natural Areas/Wichita Wild	55.1	District 5	•								Maintain existing resources.
OAK PARK	Natural Areas/Wichita Wild	33.3	District 6	•								Maintain existing resources.
PAWNEE PRAIRIE NATURE CENTER	Natural Areas/Wichita Wild	0.0	District 4	•								
PAWNEE PRAIRIE PARK	Natural Areas/Wichita Wild	420.0	District 4				•	•	•			meet minimum standard. Change of use. Add restroom. New neighborhood center.
SIM PARK	Natural Areas/Wichita Wild	55.2	District 6	•								Maintain existing resources. Implement ARCAP.
SOUTH ARKANSAS RIVER GREENWAY	Natural Areas/Wichita Wild	158.1	District 3	•								Meet minimum standard. Implement ARCAP.
SWANSON PARK	Natural Areas/Wichita Wild	93.2	District 5	•								Maintain existing resources.
BROOKS TRACT	Undeveloped Site	272.1	District 6								•	Develop and implement master plan consistent with special use park design guidelines.
CENTRAL & BRISTOL (DIST. II LAND)	Undeveloped Site	14.4	District 1								•	
CRYSTAL PRAIRIELAKE PARK	Undeveloped Site	443.8	District 6					•			•	Design master plan to meet special use park design guidelines.
MEAD ISLAND	Undeveloped Site	3.9	District 6	•								Maintain existing resources.
NORTH RIDGE VILLAGE ADDITION, RESERVE D	Undeveloped Site	16.9	District 5								•	Develop and implement master plan consistent with neighborhood park design guidelines.
PALISADE PARK	Undeveloped Site	4.6	District 4	•								Maintain existing resources.
PRACHT WETLANDS PARK	Undeveloped Site	91.3	District 5	•	•							Design master plan to meet special use park design guidelines.
RUSSELL DONATION	Undeveloped Site	102.0	District 6								•	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines.
SCHRAFT, 3RD ADDITION	Undeveloped Site	5.3	District 4									Develop and implement master plan consistent with neighborhood park
TRIANGLE PARK	Undeveloped Site	2.4	District 6	•								Maintain existing resources.

PARK	PARK CLASSIFICATION	SIZE IN ACRES	COUNCIL DISTRICT	MAINTAIN EXISTING RESOURCES	SITE FURNISHINGS AND SIGNAGE	MINOR RENOVATION	MAJOR RENOVATION	MAJOR FACILITY: BUILDING	MAJOR FACILITY: SWIMMING POOL	PARK LAND ACQUISITION	DEVELOPMENT	Description of Improvements
Proposed Park -1	Proposed Park									•	•	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines.
Proposed Park -3	Proposed Park									•	•	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines.
Proposed Park -5	Proposed Park									•	•	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines.
Proposed Park -6	Proposed Park							•	•	•	•	Design master plan to meet community park design guidelines. New neighborhood center. Add picnic shelter and sports field.
Proposed Park -7	Proposed Park									•	•	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines. Waterfront
Proposed Park -8	Proposed Park							•	•	•	•	Design master plan to meet community park design guidelines. New
Proposed Park -9	X-Proposed									•	•	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines.
Proposed Park -10	X-Proposed									•	•	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines.
Proposed Park -11	X-Proposed							•	•	•	•	Design master plan to meet community park design guidelines. New neighborhood center. Add sports field.
Proposed Park -12	X-Proposed									•	•	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines.
Proposed Park -13	X-Proposed							•	•	•	•	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines. New neighborhood center. Add skate park, sports field, and picnic
Proposed Park -14	X-Proposed									•	•	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines.
Proposed Park -15	X-Proposed							•	•	•	•	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines. New neighborhood center. Add picnic shelter and sports field.
Proposed Park -16	X-Proposed									•	•	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines.
Proposed Park -17	X-Proposed							•	•	•	•	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines. New neighborhood center. Add skate park and picnic shelter.
Proposed Park -18	X-Proposed							•	•	•	•	Design master plan to meet community park design guidelines. New
Proposed Park -19	X-Proposed									•	•	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines.
Proposed Park -20	X-Proposed									•	•	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines. Add dog park.
Proposed Park -21	X-Proposed									•	•	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines. Add sports field.
Proposed Park -22	X-Proposed									•	•	Design master plan to meet community park design guidelines. Add skate park, picnic shelter, and restroom.
Proposed Park -23	X-Proposed									•	•	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines.

Recommendations Within Wichita’s 2035 Growth Area

Wichita’s 2035 growth area will extend development beyond the current city limits, creating a need for new parks and recreation resources to serve new residents. There will be additional need for public park sites to be proposed within the 2035 growth area. These sites are depicted on Map 2, Park System of the Future. Map 3 depicts the proposed park sites with numbers corresponding to Tables 6 and 7.

The areas listed in Table 7 are envisioned to be at least the size of a community park, since each site will need a full range of resources and will serve a relatively large area. Table 7 identifies the new parks needed in the growth area.

TABLE 7: PROPOSED PARKS OUTSIDE OF THE CITY LIMITS

PARK SITE	RECOMMENDATIONS
Proposed Park -9	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines.
Proposed Park -10	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines.
Proposed Park -11	Design master plan to meet community park design guidelines. New neighborhood center. Add sports field.
Proposed Park -12	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines.
Proposed Park -13	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines. New neighborhood center. Add skate park, sports field, and picnic shelter.
Proposed Park -14	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines.
Proposed Park -15	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines. New neighborhood center. Add picnic shelter and sports field.
Proposed Park -16	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines.
Proposed Park -17	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines. New neighborhood center. Add skate park and picnic shelter.
Proposed Park -18	Design master plan to meet community park design guidelines. New neighborhood center. Add sports field.
Proposed Park -19	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines.
Proposed Park -20	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines. Add dog park.
Proposed Park -21	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines. Add sports field.
Proposed Park -22	Design master plan to meet community park design guidelines. Add skate park, picnic shelter, and restroom.
Proposed Park -23	Develop master plan consistent with design guidelines.

Recreation Resources

Individual parks range greatly in terms of the resources available at the site. The mix of resources can vary from those supporting more passive uses, such as a picnic shelter within a park, to those supporting highly active uses, such as a sports complex for softball or soccer. Different resources also have different levels of development and programming. Recreation resources can be designed to serve different audiences, geographic areas, and population sizes.

Community input throughout the PROS planning process indicated that some residents believe that recreation resources are not evenly distributed throughout the community, or that more resources are needed in parks, generally. The technical analysis conducted during the planning process corroborated that in some cases there is uneven distribution or a general lack of resources, including active resources such as basketball courts.

This section includes recommendations for resource improvements within Wichita's park system. It is anticipated that the resource improvements discussed in this section can be provided within existing parks or in planned new parks. Table 6 shows the recommended resource improvements for each park site.

The recreation resource improvements recommended in this section are organized into the following categories:

- Recreation Facilities;
- Aquatic Facilities; and
- Other Resources.

Recreation Facilities Policies

PRT Policy 3: Provide recreation centers to support the Recreation Service Delivery System described in Chapter 4. All Recreation Centers are currently functionally obsolete and are not meeting the needs of our Recreation Programming. To meet the needs of the public these centers are in need major renovation. However, it would be preferable and more cost-effective to have them completely replaced. Specific actions and recommendations for recreation centers are organized by center type.

Mega-Centers

- PRT-3A Do not pursue building mega-centers, a line of business that is not recommended for the Park and Recreation Department at this time. In Wichita, the YMCA serves as the primary provider of Mega-Centers, and most of the City is already served by the YMCA when the 5-mile service area radius is considered.
- PRT-3B Maintain and continue to invest in the existing specialized centers owned and operated by the Park and Recreation Department: Wichita Ice Center and Botanica. Both facilities are top quality and in good condition.
- PRT-3C Continue to support and provide the City's share of improvements to the Colvin Recreation Center, which are incorporated into school facilities, and the Great Plains Nature Center, a multi-agency partnership.

Recreation Centers

Most of Wichita's existing community centers are classified as Recreation Centers. These Centers provide information or access to other City services as well as recreation opportunities. Wichita's Neighborhood City Halls also provide information and City services to and are located adjacent to Recreation Centers, including the Evergreen Recreation Center and the Alley/Stanley and Colvin Specialized Centers.

PRT-3D Emphasize flexible multi-use spaces rather than highly specialized spaces in Recreation Centers

PRT-3E Strive to provide Recreation Centers within a reasonable distance for residents, but avoid duplication with other service providers.

PRT-3F In addition to indoor facilities, Recreation Centers should be located in a Community or Regional Park that provides the following outdoor facilities:

- Picnic areas
- Group picnic areas
- Walking paths
- Playgrounds
- Aquatics or interactive water features
- Turf areas for outdoor programs
- Small amphitheater area or outdoor performance stage
- Outdoor sports courts and fields
 - potential opportunity for growth.



Rental Facilities

PRT Policy 4: Maintain the existing rental facilities. These serve an important function for the community and are currently rented for climate controlled party and event space.

PRT-4A Consider using existing rental facilities to provide some programs in areas unserved by Recreation Centers. Rental facilities may be used to provide additional space for programs that cannot be accommodated in Recreation Facilities or to provide additional program space in targeted areas, such as very low income or high density neighborhoods.

PRT-4B When existing rental facilities require major renovation (where renovation would cost \$200,000 or more, in 2016 dollars), consider whether the building should be fully renovated or replaced with a new facility or if a combination of other facilities would better meet community needs. For example, in some cases a community building could be replaced by a picnic shelter and a freestanding restroom, possibly in combination with an interactive water feature, and the new resources would fulfill the same function as the existing facility.

PRT Policy 5: Consider developing additional facilities if the proposed building is located in an area unserved by an existing Recreation Center and could be expanded in the future to meet Recreation Center requirements.

Additional Recreation Facility Recommendations: Existing Facilities

AR-PRT-11 Wichita's existing Recreation Centers were built between the late 1960s and the early 1980s. Buildings of this age typically should have had several rounds of major maintenance and upgrades, and will have adapted better or worse to the current programming needs of the communities, depending in part upon the flexibility of the original design. Analysis conducted during the PROS update process indicated serious problems with the buildings, including issues related to HVAC, roofing, flooring and ADA access. Additional issues at all Recreation Centers are a lack of advanced security systems and sightlines, which impede the ability to monitor entrances and activity areas throughout the building. In some cases, the inability to monitor entrances and activity

areas at the same time necessitates additional staff, which increases operating costs or results in fewer hours of operation.

Replacement for the existing Recreation Centers is recommended in lieu of renovation. The cost-benefit analysis indicated that renovations would not be an efficient allocation of financial resources. Replacement of the centers would also better reflect current trends in design, that include more space, more natural light, better line of sight and more square footage (50,000 sq. ft.), which can accommodate current program requirements.

AR-PRT-12 In the short-term, implement major renovations at existing Neighborhood Centers that would substantially improve program provision opportunities. For example:

- Provide showers
- Renovate fitness centers
- Provide room dividers to divide gymnasiums into two program areas where possible
- Develop community information spaces
- Provide internet service for staff and the public, including wireless internet service
- Make ADA improvements, that reflect 2010 ADA Standards for accessible design
- Evaluate outdoor space and determine how it could better meet program needs according to guidelines provided in this document

AR-PRT-13 When building new Recreation Centers or undertaking major renovations, provide flexible use spaces that support the program areas identified in Action RS-2. Table 8 outlines an ideal package of indoor facilities to provide at Recreation Centers and their estimated square footage requirements.

TABLE 8: IDEAL NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER INDOOR FACILITY REQUIREMENTS

ROOM TYPE	ESTIMATED SPACE REQUIREMENTS (SF)
Small Multi-Purpose Room	4,000
Kitchen Facilities	2,000
Classrooms @ 1000 sf/ea.	2,000-10,000
Arts & Crafts Room	2,800
Game Room	2,800
Computer Lab	2,000
Dance/Exercise	4,000 – 10,000
Weight Room	3,000
Gymnasiums	25,000
Locker Rooms	2,000
Social Lounge/Café	3,000
Lobby/Hallways/Information	2,000-3,000

ROOM TYPE	ESTIMATED SPACE REQUIREMENTS (SF)
Reception Desk/Office	1,000-1,500
Other Office Space	600-2,000
Restrooms	1,200-2,600
Storage/Supplies	2,000-3,800
Misc./Mechanical Rooms	2,000-3,800
APPROX. SQ FOOTAGE	50,400-101,000
APPROX. # OF USERS	800-2,000

AR-PRT-15 Develop a long range plan (10-15 years+) for complete center-by-center replacement to meet the ideal center model and reflect contemporary design practices.

Additional Recreation Facility Recommendations: New Recreation Facilities

AR-PRT-16 The following steps describe the recommended approach to providing new Recreation Centers, once the service delivery model (described in Chapter 4) is tested and is a success:

- Assess the need for Recreation Centers in areas that are not well served by existing facilities. This assessment should be based on the demand for Recreation Centers in those unserved areas, and should take into account the recreational choices already available and utilized by residents of those areas.
- Areas that do not lie within reasonable distance of another provider, such as the YMCA, should be a higher priority.
- Acquire community or regional parkland of adequate size in central residential areas that lie within Wichita's 2035 growth boundary to accommodate future Recreation Centers.
- Co-locate future centers with other community facilities, such as libraries, schools, and police or fire facilities when feasible.
- Create community partnerships to develop and operate specific facilities within each Recreation Center when possible (see Chapter 4 for examples).
- When areas that lie within Wichita's 2035 growth boundary reach a significant population density, a Recreation Center should be developed to serve these areas.
- Recreation services facilities should be constructed in areas that have the need, based on the needs assessment.

Aquatic Facilities Policy

There are both swimming pools and water playgrounds in Wichita, all of which are seasonal outdoor facilities. As of 2016 there are 10 swimming pools in Wichita, 9 of which are operational. Most are located in conjunction with a community center, whether a

Recreation Center, Specialized Center or other facility. During the PROS planning process, the Aquatics Master Plan was also developed and identified changes to existing structures and the nature of aquatics recreation service delivery for the area.

There are other swimming pool providers in Wichita, most significantly the YMCA, Genesis Health Clubs and Wichita Swim Club. In addition, the City of Derby operates the Rock River Rapids, a regional water park. The City of Goddard is in the process of developing a regional aquatics facility with multiple amenities. The PROS planning effort identifies Wichita’s niche in aquatics in order to plan for facilities that are not redundant with other providers’ facilities.

PRT Policy 6: The City provides a distinct service— outdoor aquatics— throughout Wichita. The City should retain this service niche and continue operations where feasible and supported by attendance and revenues. The City should strive to provide an outdoor swimming pool within a reasonable distance of most residents. This is consistent with public involvement results, where residents indicated a willingness to travel of between 5 and 20 minutes to a swimming pool.

PRT 6-A Additional pools will be needed in the future in order to provide swimming pool service to Wichita’s 2035 growth area. The needs of the Wichita residents have been assessed with the Aquatics Master Plan. Those areas outside of the service area of any provider (including the YMCA and other cities) should have a higher priority for new water playgrounds.

PRT 6-B Continue partnership with the Wichita Swim Club and continue efforts to support the Kansas Area Water and Streams.

Additional Aquatic Facilities Recommendations

AR-PRT-17 Make short term improvements and plan for long-term improvements at Wichita swimming pools.

Table 9 identifies the schedule for openings and closings for the existing City pools for the next seven years. All swimming pools, except for College Hill and Harvest, are recommended for a major renovation in the coming years.

TABLE 9: OPENINGS AND CLOSINGS FOR EXISTING CITY POOLS

Pools	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Aley	Open	Open	Renovation	Open	Open
Boston	Open	Water Playground	Water Playground	Water Playground	Water Playground
C. Hill	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open
Edgemoor	Renovation	Open	Open	Open	Open
Evergreen	Open	Renovation	Open	Open	Open
Harvest	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open

Linwood	Open	Open	Open	Water Playground	Water Playground
McAdams	Open	Water Playground	Water Playground	Water Playground	Water Playground
Minisa	Open	Open	River Launch	River Launch	River Launch
Orchard	Open	Open	Open	Open	Water Playground

Other Recreation Resource Recommendations

Through the PROS planning process, the planning team identified recreation resources that should be provided throughout Wichita’s park system. Ongoing community input and City analysis will continue to identify specialized or unique features or amenities desired by stakeholders. The vision, goals and prioritization criteria provided in this plan will help guide the inclusion of these emerging ideas.**

**The Aquatics Master Plan is contingent on approval by City Council. The Park & Recreation department will continue to explore all options, to include reducing aquatic facilities to avoid duplication of services, possibly abandoning all aquatic service within the City. The Park & Recreation Department has, and will in the future continue to have, dialogue with the YMCA and other stakeholders on what are the best opportunities to meet the needs, and the community’s desires, for aquatics activities.

Attractions

The development of regional attractions to bring visitors to Wichita is important to the continued growth of the park system and the Park and Recreation Department’s contribution to the City’s economic vitality. Botanica has become a major attraction over the last several years with nationally recognized Downing Children’s Garden and Chinese Garden of Friendship.

PRT Policy 7: Provide regional attractions that offer residents and visitors destinations for recreation and leisure activities and serve as an extension of the park system. Area attractions include: Botanica, Crystal Prairie Lake, Pracht Wetlands.

Additional Recreation Resource Recommendations: Neighborhood Recreation Resources

- AR-PRT-18 Strive to meet the guidelines for neighborhood resources provided below. Certain resources, beyond the community centers and swimming pools already discussed, should be provided throughout the park system. These meet the everyday needs of residents for recreation and active living. Neighborhood resources are intended to serve the smallest geographic area, typically within walking or nearby driving distance from most homes.
- AR-PRT-19 Provide basic park resources within a reasonable distance of all Wichita residents. These are the basic components that every developed park should include: a playground, drinking fountain, an open grass area adequate for the site dimensions and other needed amenities.
- AR-PRT-20 Provide a picnic shelter that fits within the dimensions of a park.
- AR-PRT-21 Restrooms are an important recreation resource because they allow park users to stay longer at a site. Consider changing the access at some of the enclosed shelters in areas where there are no restrooms, so that the existing

enclosed shelter restrooms can be opened to the general public even when the community room is closed.

- AR-PRT-22 Provide an un-programmed active resource, such as a tennis court, basketball court, or skate park, within a reasonable distance of all Wichita residents. These resource types are important for the kind of casual play that many youth and adults participate in regularly, and they support active living. The un-programmed nature of these resources means that they are generally available at any time without prior arrangement.
- AR-PRT-23 Provide practice sports fields within a reasonable distance of residents. In addition to providing a place for organized sports practice close to home, these sports fields can be used informally to support emerging sports and to provide places where residents can engage in a wide variety of activities from field sports to playing Frisbee. A joint use agreement with the School District could provide additional service as well.
- AR-PRT-24 Provide game sports fields within a reasonable distance of residents. For more effective league management, game fields are often grouped and access is more controlled to maintain playability. A 2-mile travel distance target balances convenience with league management needs. Fields not in citywide sports complexes will be scheduled by the City, with preference given to groups that do not have an exclusive use agreement at a complex. The Needs Assessment identified the needs for sports fields beyond local parks in regional sports complexes.

AR-PRT-25 Provide a water playground, also called spray grounds, within a reasonable distance of Wichita residents. Currently, interactive water features are mainly available in central Wichita, at Osage, Fairmount, Lincoln, Riverside, Buffalo and Old Town Parks. The highest priority for interactive water features should be those areas that are not served by other aquatic resources reflected in the Aquatics Master Plan

AR-PRT-26 Provide resources to support nature and outdoor programming and access to natural areas, such as trailheads, viewpoints, interpretive signage and gathering areas. These particular parks provide important educational resources for the community in teaching the public the importance of conservation, sustainability and safeguarding natural systems that are important to our environment.

AR-PRT-27 Provide a centrally located amphitheater or outdoor performance stage. These resources can be considered for inclusion at non-centrally located park sites, if compatible with the design guidelines.

Additional Recreation Resource Recommendations: Citywide Recreation Resources

AR-PRT-28 Strive to provide diverse citywide recreation resources. Citywide resources are developed at a size and scale to serve multiple neighborhoods. These resources serve a larger audience and attract people from longer distances, and some citywide resources even function as regional resources that attract users from the broadest geographic or population base.

AR-PRT-29 Maintain the existing sports complexes, and consider additional sports complexes if tournament demand warrants it in the future. Sports complexes should be lighted and designed to support high use, potentially even a regional draw. Field complexes may be assigned to a primary sports group, which will be responsible for scheduling. Conditions about public use may be placed in the use agreement with the sports group.



AR-PRT-30 Provide destination skate parks within all quadrants of the City, taking into account the nearby Park City skate park and any future public skate parks built by other agencies. The citywide skate parks should be similar to the existing Wichita skate park in size and scale, but be integrated into parks of other classifications.

AR-PRT-31 Maintain the existing fishing lakes. If the opportunity arises, incorporate additional fishing lakes into new parks within Wichita's 2035 growth area in partnership with state agencies.

AR-PRT-32 Maintain the additional specialized recreation resources already existing within the park system, as long as use warrants. Located outside of special use parks, these resources are an important part of the municipal park system and make it unique. These specialized resources include:

- Equestrian trails and facilities;
- Disc golf course;
- BMX track;
- Radio-controlled car facilities;
- Model airplane facilities; and
- Amusement rides (pony rides, model train, paddle boats at Watson Park).

AR-PRT-33 Consider adding new sites if demand for these specialized resources increases.

AR-PRT-34 Provide an off-leash dog area within a reasonable distance of each Wichita resident. Off-leash areas should be incorporated into parks, and a total of 10 would serve the entire Wichita 2035 growth area if appropriately spaced.

AR-PRT-35 Consider adding additional mountain bike courses or trails into several parks, where this use is compatible.

AR-PRT-36 When requests for specialized recreation resources are made, these requests should be evaluated by the Board of Park Commissioners and City staff to determine if there is enough interest to support a new resource type. New specialized resources should generally be incorporated into community, regional or special use parks. Community access should be balanced with interest group needs, and the responsibilities of the City and the interest group should be spelled out in a formalized agreement with an expiration date.

Trails

The development of trails and pathways continues to be a vital factor in the future growth of Wichita's recreational opportunities and park system. Trails are one of the highest priorities for residents, specifically as means for increasing travel connections and accessing natural areas.

PRT Policy 8: Provide a trails and pathways network that offers users an off-street alternative mode of transportation and recreation, and serves as an extension of the park system while enhancing recreational experiences. Additional recommendations for trails are provided below, and incorporate the priorities identified by Wichita residents through the public involvement process. The following recommendations also highlight alignments identified in existing plans completed by the Wichita Park and Recreation Department and also in the Wichita Bicycle Master Plan. The recommended trails and pathways drawn from these plans are mostly multi-use trails, which accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians, with a few on-street connections when needed to complete a pathway alignment. The Park System of the Future Map (Map 2) depicts the future trail and pathway system.



Additional Trails Recommendations

Wichita's Priorities

AR-PRT-37 Provide trail improvements that support citizen priorities, including the following:

- **High Use and Demand Activities:** The majority of residents use pathways and trails. Many of the most popular recreation activities in Wichita can take place on trails, including bicycling, walking for pleasure, nature walks and dog walking.
- **Connections:** Residents noted that it is difficult to cycle or walk to most of Wichita's parks, which is addressed in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans. Existing trails are highly valued, but residents find them less useful for transportation.
- **Signage:** Residents commented that they do not know where trails are or how to get from one trail segment to another. Trail users need signs to direct them to the on-street and sidewalk connections to nearby trails. In addition to these way finding signs, there is a need for interpretative and mileage/route signs.
- **Extended Trail Routes:** Community members want longer trail routes, and identified several existing corridors that could provide major long distance trail routes. Trail access to the Big Ditch (Wichita-Valley Center Floodway) and along former rail corridors were mentioned frequently as desirable locations for trail routes.
- **Natural Experience:** Residents want more natural trails to complement the urban, multi-use transportation trails and on-street routes. Natural trails, such

as those in Chisholm Creek Park, are a highly valued facility. Access to the Arkansas River on trails is also important, according to public input responses.

AR-PRT-38 Provide links across barriers. As noted by the public, critical components needed for the trail system are links across barriers such as freeways, busy streets, or watercourses. Because bridges and over/under crossings are expensive structures, these links should only be provided where there is a high demand and when funding becomes available.

AR-PRT-39 Future trails should be designed and existing trails should be enhanced to include the following recreation resources:

- Trailheads with:
 - parking
 - restrooms
 - bicycle parking
 - pet waste stations
 - drinking fountains
 - trash containers
- Picnic facilities
- Orientation and way finding signage including information about the trail (distance, points of interest, nearby parks),
- Safety elements
- Lighting at critical points
- Traffic calming devices
- Pedestrian/bicyclist controls where trails intersect with busy streets.
- ADA accessibility

Regional Trail System

AR-PRT-40 Support WAMPO Regional Pathway System Plan off-street multi-purpose trails.

The WAMPO Regional Pathway System Plan (WRPSP) incorporates the existing and planned trail systems of all of the jurisdictions within the metropolitan planning area boundaries with the goal of creating a cohesive regional system. From the more than 400 miles of proposed off-street trail projects, the plan identifies 24 primary corridors that provide a reasonable, integrated first step toward a comprehensive system that will serve a wide variety of users. Of these 24 corridors, 19 projects were identified as alignments that would fill key gaps in the existing system. The WRPSP recommendations primarily address transportation demand and need, but acknowledge that trails also serve more casual recreation needs.

The WRPSP identifies a number of corridors within the 2035 growth area that are priority projects for the region. The top priority trail segments identified in the WRPSP as the missing off-street multi-purpose trails have been selected as the priority pathway alignments for the PROS Plan. The priority connections are described below. For cross-reference purposes, the “missing link” identification numbers noted in the WRPSP are used in these descriptions:

- Links 1-5 to complete the 45-mile off-street trail loop around the east side of Wichita.
- Link 6, an extension of the Prairie Sunset Trail from the existing portion in Goddard to Pawnee Prairie Park.

- Links 9 and 16 completing portions of the Redbud Trail following the 17th Street/BNSF rail line.

A number of additional community-to-community links were noted in the WRPSP. The City should continue to look for opportunities to create links in the pathway system that can provide connections to other communities within Wichita's 2035 growth area and the region. The City should prioritize the development of links identified in the WRPSP and within the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans.

City Pathway Connections

AR-PRT-41 Support the July 18, 2011 Wichita Pathway priorities identified by the Board of Park Commissioners.

Previously the Wichita Park and Recreation Department in coordination with Wichita-Sedgwick County Metropolitan Area Planning Department reviewed the Bicycle Master and Pedestrian Master Plans to identify proposed pathways addressed in both of the plan documents. The effort resulted in the identification of similar pathway segments.

There are currently seven priority projects for pathway connections. The City also has a partnership with the Prairie Travelers for development and maintenance of a trail segment from Garden Plain into Wichita ending at Hoover Rd.

- **Priority 1.** Delano Neighborhood Pathway. The 0.6 mile pathway extends east and west through the former railroad corridor located just half a block north of the Delano Business District along Douglas Street.
- **Priority 2.** K-96 Pathway to Harry Street Pathway Connection. The 3.0 mile section of pathway starts at the current south terminus of the K-96 Bike Path and travels south along 127th to Harry Street, where it tracks west to connect to the existing off-street multi-use pathway on the south side of Harry Street.
- **Priority 3.** Arkansas to Haysville Pathway Connection. The proposed 5.5 mile corridor connects the City of Wichita and City of Haysville pathways systems.
- **Priority 4.** South Central Neighborhood Pathway. The 2.78 mile pathway would occupy the east bank of the Arkansas River and connect the Arkansas River Corridor to multiple existing pathways.
- **Priority 5.** Redbud Trail Segment. - Existing trail to K-96. This 3.0 mile pathway would follow the former Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) 17th Street railroad corridor and connect the segment from Woodlawn to K-96.
- **Priority 6.** Redbud Trail Segment - K-96 to county line. This 1.5 mile pathway alignment would follow the former Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) 17th Street railroad corridor and connect the segment from K-96 to the Butler County line.
- **Priority 7.** Prairie Sunset Trail Connection to Goddard. This 7.5 mile pathway along an abandoned rail-banked corridor would connect the exiting trail improvements just east of Goddard at 167th Street W. with the trail terminus at the Arkansas River.

This Plan supports the seven pathway priorities selected by the Wichita Board of Park Commissioners. Completion of these projects will enhance the recreational experiences and transportation connections for Wichita residents and reinforce the connections the pathways have to existing park network.

Park Pathway Connections

- Locate primary access points to the existing and proposed trail network at Wichita's existing park sites. The City should assure that their existing and future regional and community parks link to or provide information on accessing the citywide pathway system.
- Several parks not connected to the existing trail network are large enough to contain trail systems internal to the park. These parks serve the need for exercise and leisure trails, but do not provide the transportation links to the City and regional trail system. As the citywide trail and pathway system develops, opportunities for creating pathway connections to these parks should be explored.
- Local access to trailheads in parks is lacking in the east, south and north edges of Wichita. As trail improvements are implemented, trailheads should be designed to include vehicle parking and bicycle racks, restrooms, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, pet waste stations and picnic facilities.
- Where existing trails intersect with neighborhood street systems, traffic calming devices, signage and pedestrian/bicycle controls should be incorporated at high traffic crossings—with lighting at critical points. Lower traffic crossing should have crossing signage and traffic calming devices.
- Wichita's trails need a clear wayfinding system. The City is currently developing a wayfinding system through the Planning Department. The system should include signage with information regarding trails (distance, points of interest, nearby parks), signage that safely direct users to the trail system and informs others of its presence. In addition, all of Wichita's regional and community parks should have information pertaining to the available trail system and how to access it.
- Outside of the city limits but within the 2035 growth area, there are currently few parks. Where regional trails are planned and no parks are anticipated, the City should consider developing full service trailheads in order to increase access to the existing and future trail system.



Water Trails/Blue Ways

Continue to support the water access recommendations of the Arkansas River Corridor Access Plan. Provide a network of non-motorized boat launches to develop a water trail. A water trail is a route along a river or across other bodies of water, such as a lake for people using small non-motorized watercraft (e.g., kayaks, canoes, rowboats). Water trails are most often identified by the land facilities that support water travel. These include launch and landing sites. Rest areas and other points of interest can also be incorporated.



To some degree, the development of non-motorized boat launches is opportunity-based. Some shoreline areas are more conducive to launches than others. Sensitive habitat areas may preclude launch sites, and may need to be identified as prohibited landing points. Wichita currently has five non-motorized watercraft launches within the City Limits. There is a lot of opportunity to use the river as a water trail/blue way, and the City has parks already located along the river that could potentially support launches. Water trails are appropriate for any of the major waterways in the Wichita area. The waterways appropriate for water trails/blue ways are illustrated on Map 2.

To support the use of the Arkansas River as a water trail, additional watercraft launches are needed. The general guideline for non-motorized launches is to provide these facilities every three to five miles along the waterway, a comfortable distance for paddling or rowing. Additional watercraft launches are needed along the river to achieve the five-mile spacing.

In addition, trip lengths of varied distances should be identified, along with put-in and take-out points, as well as any portage areas where boats must be carried for safe passage around areas where water passage is not possible. A variety of launch site amenities should be provided, including parking and unloading areas. Other potential amenities include boat racks, equipment storage, canoe/kayak rental or other concessions, viewpoints, and restrooms. Where possible, launches should be considered within parks or near other supporting recreation resources, such as playgrounds and picnic areas.

6. Vision for Park and Facility Maintenance

This chapter addresses the maintenance needs of park land and recreation resources. Maintenance plays an important role in the experience of the park system and the benefits it provides. For example, if a particular resource remains broken due to inadequate repair or replacement, that resource actually becomes a negative in the public's perception of the system. Further, research has shown that a well-maintained park enhances the economic value of a nearby home, but that a neglected park can become a drain on that same property's value.



Wichita's park system is extensive and there is a large maintenance backlog. Initiatives such as the playground replacement program undertaken recently have helped to reduce that somewhat, but the amount of deferred maintenance due to aging structures and resources is still significant. This chapter identifies policies, actions, and recommendations to ensure adequate maintenance to protect the City's existing resources as well as the expanded park resources that are anticipated in the future. Maintenance Actions that will help the City achieve the PROS Plan vision are numbered below.

Recommendations for closing the funding gap for operations, including maintenance and recreation programs, are provided. These recommendations include:

- Increasing revenues; and
- Manage costs

Maintenance Service Levels

The Park and Recreation Department has adapted to constraints on the operating budget for park services by assigning maintenance frequency for individual park sites. The existing breakdown of maintenance levels is based primarily on the frequency of mowing and the presence of certain facilities, such as restrooms, that require more regular maintenance. Grounds maintenance is generally broken down into four levels, described below.

TABLE 10: CURRENT MAINTENANCE LEVELS

CURRENT MAINTENANCE LEVELS	% OF SYSTEM
Mode 1 (1-14 day)	24.1%
Mode 2 (15-28 day)	23.0%
Mode 3 (>28 day)	42.4%
Mode 4 (2-3/year)	10.5%

This system acknowledges that some portions of the park system require more attention than others. For example, Mode 1 sites represent the highest used sites in the city, though they are only a small percentage of the system. Many of the Mode 4 sites are natural areas, which enjoy significant use and which require less maintenance. However, most of the local sites represent the majority of the system and, according to the levels, are being visited by maintenance crews approximately once a month or less.

Service Level Policy

The following is the recommended PROS Plan policy for maintenance level of service in Wichita:

Wichita will adequately fund park and facility maintenance to balance neighborhood needs with those of higher profile citywide signature facilities.

This overall policy is reflected in the Park Maintenance and Forestry Division Goal:

To preserve and maintain the City's parks and recreational facilities in an efficient and cost effective manner, providing safe and clean facilities for the pleasure and use of current and future generations of Wichita residents

A number of actions will be required to transition from the current system to maintenance services to the preferred system. These include:

- Condition assessments of existing park sites,
- Instituting a tiered maintenance system for developed parks; and
- Establishing a basic maintenance standard for natural areas and all parks.

Institute a Tiered, Developed Park Maintenance System

To balance citywide and neighborhood needs, the tiered maintenance system would build on the existing concept of the maintenance rotation levels described above, shifting the emphasis from mowing frequencies to a performance-based and service level standards.

The first tier of service includes all basic maintenance activities that should be performed at every park on a regular schedule. Parks served at this tier should be optimized for efficient maintenance and would not include high maintenance surfaces or plantings. Generally, all parks in the following categories should be included in this first service tier:

- Pocket Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Park
- Urban Plazas

Bringing all of the local service parks up to the same standards will reinforce the importance of these in relation to regional serving facilities.

The second service tier would be reserved for the highest traffic athletic fields, regional and special use parks that require elevated standards of maintenance, in line with the larger range of facilities and heavier use. Approximately 24% of existing parks fit in this category.

In addition to the two maintenance tiers outlined above, supplemental maintenance should be provided to game-quality sports fields, regardless of whether they are in a tier 1 or tier 2 park. These fields will require additional upkeep, such as over seeding and aeration. They will also need additional maintenance dollars attached to these tasks on a per field basis.

In summary, the following actions are needed to institute the tiered maintenance schedule for developed parks:

- M-1 Adopt a two-tiered maintenance system for developed parks.
- M-2 Adopt a per acre maintenance allocation for each tier based on community expectations of the park system as a whole and the financial resources available. FTEs per acre, hours per acre, expense per acre.
- M-3 Provide supplemental maintenance for game-quality sports fields.

Establish a Basic Maintenance Standard for Natural Areas

Natural areas, and particularly habitat areas, require a different type of maintenance attention. These sites, at minimum, may need infrequent mowing to reduce fire danger and review for hazards along trails. The level of maintenance may need to be augmented to accommodate specific habitat needs in Wichita Wild sites. Actions related to natural area maintenance include:



- M-4 Adopt a basic maintenance standard for natural areas.
- M-5 Adopt a per acre maintenance allocation for natural areas.
- M-6 Provide supplemental maintenance for specific habitat needs.
- M-7 Prescribed controlled burns

Operating Efficiency

In addition to establishing an adequate level of service, Wichita can enhance its maintenance funding by increasing its operating efficiency. The PROS Plan provides four recommendations for increasing efficiency:

- M-8 Emphasize capital projects that reduce current operating costs;
- M-9 Reinvest in staff and equipment;
- M-10 Increase work tracking.
- M-11 Training

Because of their importance, these recommendations are described in more detail below.

Emphasize Capital Projects That Reduce Current Operating Costs

Operations funding is, and will likely continue to be, stretched. Capital projects that can reduce operating costs should be high priority. An example of this is the centralized, computerized climate control systems put in place by Building Services—which allow heat and cooling to be turned on at remote sites from a centralized location—reducing staff “windshield time.” Install low-flow flush systems to reduce water usage. Other possibilities are projects that reduce or eliminate turf maintenance, including mowing strips and alternative surfaces where grass is not adding to the essential functions of the park. (Xeriscape Landscaping)

Reinvest in Staff and Equipment

Many of Wichita's existing maintenance staff have been working for the Department for 10, 20, or 30 years or more. Over the years, these individuals have been trained in the many tasks and special skills needed to maintain Wichita's parks and recreation resources. With many of these members of the workforce approaching retirement age, replacement of staff positions and skills will be an important issue for the park system in the coming years. New staff will require experience and additional training before they will be able to achieve the performance standards set by the experienced workforce.

In addition to training and certification in specific maintenance areas, existing maintenance crews have accumulated knowledge about the existing equipment, such as mowers. In 2008 the Department switched to contracted mowing services. Additional investments in equipment may be necessary to meet the maintenance service goals of this plan. Whether in-house or contract more resources will be required.

Increase Work Tracking

Tracking of the variety, quantity and quality of maintenance tasks performed should be a regular activity of supervisors in the field. Of particular importance are the hours spent at different types of sites that are being maintained. At minimum, time should be tracked for developed park sites, natural areas, and beautification areas. Since the golf courses run as enterprises, their maintenance costs are already separately tracked.

Right-of-way and median sites cared for by the parks maintenance crews have proliferated in recent years following major investment in beautification of arterials. Despite the addition of these high profile sites, the maintenance budget has remained basically constant. Careful tracking of the actual amount of staff time and other resources going to any one type of site will be critical to calibrating up and maintaining the tiered maintenance system and ensuring that each type of park site is getting the intended amount of attention and investment.

Training

Modernizing the types of training for park staff will be essential in order for the Department to keep abreast of current technological trends and provide efficiencies that will improve the quality of service. Other training opportunities will include writing skills, communication skills, customer service skills and computer skills

Chapter 7, “Vision for Management Services” also addresses the need for data collection that assists in management decisions.

Protecting Community Investments

Additional recommendations to improve operating efficiency include increasing preventative maintenance and resource replacement planning:



AR-M-1 Make preventative maintenance a higher priority to preserve City assets and ensure efficient operation. Ongoing investment in preventative maintenance can reduce the need for expensive emergency repairs to major building systems, as well as the loss of recreation resources that cannot reach their expected lifespan.

AR-M-2 Continue the ongoing program to replace parks and recreation resources and grounds maintenance equipment as it reaches the end of its useful life. The required resources should be included in the capital requests for the department, and should be regularly budgeted. For example, the playground replacement and site furnishing replacement programs recommended in Chapter 5 would be support this initiative.

Maintenance Cost Implications

Adjusting the maintenance standards for the park system as described above will require additional funding for operations. Public involvement results indicated support from the public for allocating more funding to park maintenance. Securing the appropriate amount of maintenance funding is important to the users of the park system, and it is critical for the long term health of the City's assets and investments in the park system. This section provides recommendations for cost per acre for developed parks using the tiered maintenance system. It also provides recommendations for building maintenance on a square foot basis.

Park Maintenance

The typical measure of maintenance cost is the calculation of maintenance dollars spent per acre of park land. The baseline cost for Wichita is based on the 2015 actual expenditure data from financial records and work order system (Lucity) and includes all of the costs applied to maintenance activities on park land, including maintenance administration, staff and contract personnel services, and supplies. The calculation of existing expenditures does not include the capital costs, the departmental administration, or the portion of maintenance applied to right-of-way or median strips. The park acreage includes all developed parks, excluding natural areas and greenways due to their generally light maintenance needs.

- Existing park maintenance per developed acre: \$1,854

This system-wide average cost per acre captures a wide range of maintenance reality, from the highly decorative and trafficked Riverside Parks to the least frequently visited neighborhood site. Applying the current resources (2015 actual expenditures vs. 2014 ICMA Performance Measures) to the tiered system proposed above allows for a breakdown for each maintenance tier as follows:

- Tier One Existing Resources: \$2,113 per acre
- Tier Two Existing Resources: \$2,332per acre

While this distribution of resources would meet the goals of the two-tiered system, technical analysis and public input during the initial planning process support the conclusion that Wichita is currently underfunding its park system, to the detriment of the assets within it.

These targets provide a starting point for adjustment based on local experience and available resources. The target should also be reevaluated as additional data becomes available. Applying the Tier One and Two targets to the park system, with athletic fields, regional and special use parks in tier two, would require a substantial increase of the parks maintenance budget.

Facility Maintenance

Maintenance of buildings in the park system, from restrooms to community centers, is the responsibility of Building Services, a division of Public Works. This arrangement between departments works well and avoids duplication of specialized maintenance personnel such as electricians and plumbers.

Budgeting and cost control regarding emergencies, repairs, and replacements is more difficult because these activities are often done on a time-and materials basis and without a clear understanding of requirements, facility repairs can end up costing more than total replacement. The Department of Public Works and Utilities has recently begun the process of changing how it evaluates and grades



existing structures to give a more accurate picture of the status of all City owned facilities. This move to a more data driven determination that will evaluate the cost or repairs, upgrades and energy costs versus the cost of replacement will assist the Park and Recreation Department in prioritizing ongoing maintenance and setting criteria for eventual replacement of existing facilities.

Filling The Operating Funding Gap

The City of Wichita covers about 95% of its Park and Recreation Department operations and maintenance costs using General Fund revenues, not including the Golf Enterprise Fund. Based on the estimates and targets above, Wichita is currently underfunding its park and building maintenance by approximately \$2.2 million dollars per year. This is magnified by any deferred maintenance which makes the system less efficient to maintain as staff move between short-term, emergency fixes. The planned growth of the City and expansion of park system infrastructure will result in an even larger system to maintain in the future. Funding also is needed to operate recreation programs, which are not fully self-supporting.

The City will need to increase revenues and/or reduce per unit costs in order to pay for a higher level of maintenance and for the operations and maintenance of expanded facilities and programs. This section identifies recommendations for accomplishing these goals. Revenue may be augmented by increasing General Fund revenues directed to the Department and increasing fees collected from program users. (Entrance fees, usage fees) The Department may reduce costs by decreasing expenditures per unit (per acre of

park maintained, per recreation program user, etc.), by upgrading facilities, or by identifying other specific savings areas.

Increase Revenue

One recommendation for covering the cost of expenditures to operate Wichita's parks and recreation facilities and programs is to increase annual revenues. The four primary options include General Fund expenditures, user fees, program utilization, and revenue collection opportunities as described below. List others as relevant to our needs.

Increase General Fund Expenditures

Table 11 illustrates two budget-benchmarks by which funding may be increased: funding for parks based on a per-capita basis or park funding as a percentage of total General Fund expenditures. As shown, the Department could be funded between \$20 million and \$23 million annually by 2035 if per capita funding is increased from the 2015 level of \$39 to between \$50 and \$53 by 2035. Per capita funding was \$51 in 2010.

Another way of analyzing this funding source is by evaluating the percent of total General Fund expenditures which support the Department. This proportion may be increased from 6.98% of total General Fund expenditures to between 10 and 12%, increasing funding to between \$21 million and \$26 million annually. In 2010, Departmental expenditures represented 9.71% of the General Fund total.

TABLE 11: GENERAL FUND: SCENARIOS FOR EXPENDITURES ON PARKS

ITEM	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
City Population	366,046	382,368	382,368	384,445	385,577	386,552	388,413
Total General Fund Expenditures	\$198,595,309	\$201,277,252	\$208,626,198	\$206,494,173	\$205,866,360	\$210,866,405	\$217,935,370
Park and Recreation General Fund Expenditure	\$14,302,420	\$19,546,166	\$19,070,432	\$13,014,031	\$12,524,510	\$12,979,270	\$15,207,334
Per Capita Expenditures on Parks	\$39.07	\$51.12	\$49.87	\$33.85	\$32.48	\$33.58	\$39.15
Park Funding in Portion to General Fund							
General Fund Exp per capita	\$542.54	\$526.40	\$545.62	\$537.12	\$533.92	\$545.51	\$561.09
Park and Rec. Share of Total General Fund Expend	7.20%	9.71%	9.14%	6.30%	6.08%	6.16%	6.98%

Increase User Fees

Fees are collected by the Department via user fees, rentals, class registrations, and other methods. They may be augmented as a revenue source by increasing rates, the utilization of paid programming, and options for generating revenue. In order to increase revenue to support additional programming, the Department may consider raising fees for existing programs. The Department collected \$2.3 million (15%) of the Department's total budget from fees (see Table 12 below). Recreation Programming is the most viable area to explore increased revenue from user fees as that division received 57% of its budget revenue from fees.

TABLE 12: PARK EXPENDITURES FUNDING SOURCES

PARKS AND RECREATION DIVISIONS	2015 REVISED BUDGET REVENUES *			
	GENERAL FUND	FEEES	TOTAL	% OF FUNDING FROM FEES
Administration	\$537,131	\$19,000	\$556,131	3%
**Forestry	\$4,616,403	\$0	\$4,616,403	0%
Park Management	\$6,378,623	\$31,619	\$6,410,242	0%
Recreation Programming	\$1,747,001	\$2,310,681	\$4,057,682	57%
Golf	\$0	\$5,732,540	\$5,732,540	100%
Total	\$13,279,158	\$8,093,840	\$21,372,998	38%
Total, Excluding Golf	\$13,279,158	\$2,361,300	\$15,640,458	15%

*From Wichita 2016/2017 Adopted budget.

** Westar Franchise Fees instead of General Funds.

Increased revenues may be generated by increasing the proportion of expenditures on Recreation Programming which are recovered. Detailed information is available on recreation centers, a subset of the Recreation Programming division, and is displayed on Table 13. Wichita's nine recreation centers collected about \$423,703 in revenues in 2015, recovering 37% of the \$1.1 million in expenditures. The Department may consider raising individual rates for particular programs or services, targeting those which are highly used or oversubscribed. This could mitigate against losses in utilization caused by a fee increase. Achieving a cost recovery rate of between 35 and 45% would result in a decrease of costs to support recreation centers from \$734,433 (at 35% cost recovery) or \$621,443 (at 45% cost recovery).

TABLE 13: RECREATION CENTERS - COST RECOVERY RATE FOR 2015

RECREATION CENTER	REVENUES	EXPENDITURES	DIFFERENCE	% OF COSTS RECOVERED
Boston	\$53,172	\$106,079	(\$52,908)	50%
Colvin	\$17,345	\$108,873	(\$91,528)	16%
Edgemoor	\$70,400	\$193,365	(\$122,965)	36%
Evergreen	\$29,047	\$197,582	(\$168,535)	15%
Linwood	\$82,822	\$168,915	(\$86,093)	49%
McAdams	\$26,700	\$51,843	(\$25,143)	52%
Orchard	\$91,221	\$194,475	(\$103,254)	47%
Osage	\$29,348	\$17,818	\$11,531	165%
Woodward	\$23,648	\$90,946	(\$67,298)	26%
Total	\$423,703	\$1,129,896	(\$706,193)	37%
Estimated Difference with 35% Cost Recovery	(\$734,433)			
Estimated Difference with 45% Cost Recovery	(\$621,443)			

In addition to increasing fees, the Department may consider expanding the range of services, programs, or facilities for which fees are collected. When more programming is offered, the costs are shared across more participants and cost recovery is improved.

Increase Program Utilization

Raising the utilization rate—the number of recreation program participants compared with the capacity in the program—is another avenue toward increasing revenue. Particularly, this effort may focus on increasing utilization of programs for which charges now exist. Attendance at recreation centers in 2014 is estimated at about 580,937. Annual class attendees were at 311,000, with an average daily of 2,333 per center for the 249 operating days the centers were open. Table 14 compares the number of participants and the total number of visitors for each center as an indication of the level of revenue generating programs at each center. It is important to note that these figures do not reflect drop-in users, meeting, cooperative and senior programs.

TABLE 14: RECREATION CENTERS – PERCENT OF REVENUE GENERATING VISITORS
(2015 ATTENDANCE¹)

RECREATION CENTER	CLASSES, CAMPS, LEAGUES	TOTAL	REVENUE PERCENTAGE PER PARTICIPANT
Boston	3,212	24,037	13%
Colvin	7,320	28,792	25%
Edgemoor	14,685	54,469	27%
Evergreen	8,292	53,561	15%
Linwood	9,930	47,503	21%
McAdams	3,388	65,378	5%
Woodward	4,454	64,355	7%
Orchard	14,221	60,516	23%

¹ It is important to note that this number only includes recreation users who have registered for a particular program. The number of drop-in users is not included here. (Drop in users represents free classes that are essential to the community i.e. before/after school programming)

Increase Revenue Collection Opportunities

Another alternative for increasing revenues is adding new programs or facility elements with opportunities for generating revenue. These new programs would also increase costs but, to the extent that revenues exceed these new costs, new recreation programs or facility-elements, such as climbing walls and zip lines, may increase the Department’s overall cost recovery rate.

Reduced Costs Per Unit

Recommendations for decreasing costs per unit include replacing facilities with high maintenance costs and examining elements of the Department’s budget which may be decreased without eroding the Department’s delivery of services.

Invest in Facilities with Lower Cost Maintenance

Depending on the availability of capital funds, replacing or upgrading facilities with relatively high maintenance costs with new facilities that are similar in function but require less maintenance should be examined. Examples include artificial turf, low-maintenance landscaping, xeriscape landscaping.

Examine Efficiencies in Variable Budget Items

The Department may also look within its existing budget to seek areas for cost savings. Aside from personnel costs, the largest expenditure category for the Department is "Contractuals." Savings identified here would represent a relatively small level of savings to the Department, but may be achieved without decreasing the level of service provided by the Department.



The Department will evaluate priorities with condition assessments to match with budget presented by the Finance Department. Expenditures for facilities and programs which advance City goals are compared with available revenues to support the expenditures.

7. Vision for Management Services

This chapter includes actions and recommendations for improving the delivery of park, recreation, and open space services through initiatives in the following categories:

- Organizational Structure;
- Communications and Outreach;
- Volunteerism;
- Partnerships; and
- Funding and Finance.



Management Services Actions that will help the City achieve the PROS Plan vision are numbered (MS-1, MS-2, etc.) below. Additional recommendations in each category are presented when appropriate. Actions and recommendations are not in priority order and should be implemented in a way that best moves Wichita forward in meeting the vision, goals and strategic directions of this Plan.

Organizational Structure

Currently, the Department is divided into several operating groups including Administration, Forestry and Maintenance, Recreation, Golf Courses and a number of groups responsible for particular facilities, including Botanica, Lawrence Dumont Stadium and the Wichita Ice Center.

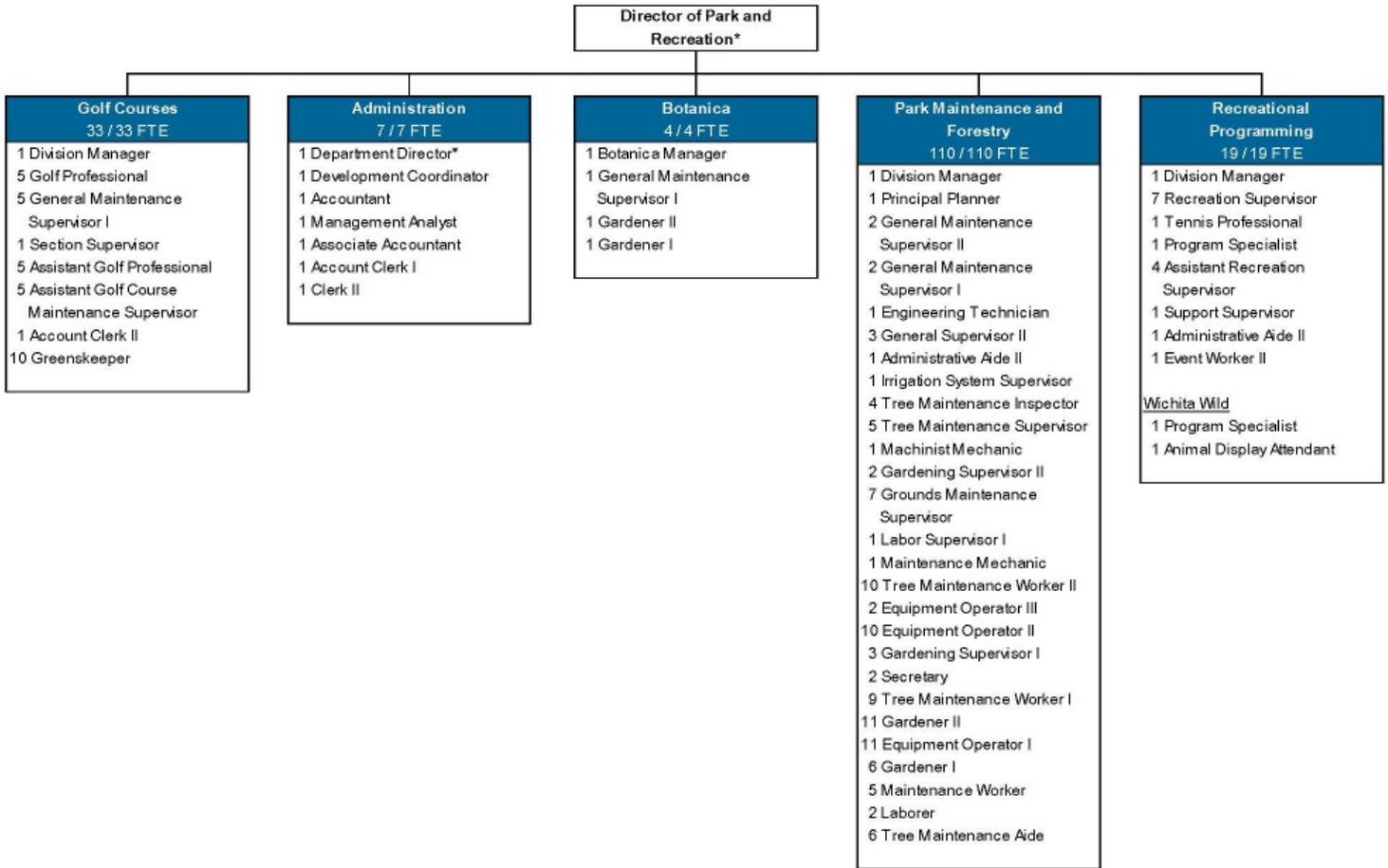
The current organizational structure was reviewed in 2015 and is indicated in Figure 1.

Staff Development

Continue to develop a work environment that promotes trust, respect, open communication and teamwork among all levels of staff. Increase staff cross-training and provide staff career development opportunities within the Department. Provide opportunities for training and skills building to ensure an effective and professional staff equipped with current best practices in the parks and recreation field.

MS-1 Foster staff development and training to build a stronger organization and promote innovation and customer service.

FIGURE 1: PARKS AND RECREATION ORGANIZATION



PROS Plan Implementation

Develop an annual work plan and annual report to track implementation progress. The work plan should focus on PROS Plan implementation actions, and the report should identify progress using the performance measures identified within this Plan. Using multiple planning documents such as the Golf Business Plan, Budget Plan & Enhancements, Recreation Strategic Plan, and Aquatics Master Plan staff creates a future development plan to better determine priorities and service delivery.

MS-2 Develop an annual work plan and an annual report to measure PROS Plan implementation progress.

Customer Service

Parks and recreation is an area of government services that provides the community with a positive experience. Most residents use parks, and many residents use other recreation services. The Park and Recreation Department should continue to emphasize customer service and regularly evaluate its internal practices, hours of operations, surveys, and interactive communication tools to ensure that it is responsive.

MS-3 Continue to emphasize customer service and promote great public relations for Wichita to create raving fans.

Communications and Outreach

During the preparation of the PROS Plan, public involvement results indicated that there continues to be a lack of awareness among Wichita residents about the parks, facilities and services offered by the Park and Recreation Department. The Department does focus on communications and outreach to increase awareness and encourage participation and use. Increase awareness and exposure not only for the Department, but the community as a whole which results in participation and use.



MS-4 Implement the communication and marketing plan to continue to increase public awareness and use of parks, recreation resources, programs and services.

While the Department markets its services through typical means (website, program guides, etc.), there is no consistent brand or a plan to guide communications. The communication and marketing plan should consider the following recommendations:

- AR-MS-1 Expand the brand for Wichita Park & Recreation based on the vision and mission of the PROS Plan.
- AR-MS-2 Continue to utilize positioning statements that reinforce the brand and use them in communications.
- AR-MS-3 Maintain the department identity that spells out how the Department should be named in communications and clarifies how the City of Wichita logo is used.
- AR-MS-4 Recognize in the communication plan that different methods of communication are suitable for different audiences.
- AR-MS-5 Continue to use online announcements to communicate parks, facilities and recreation service news and updates.
- AR-MS-6 Continue to strengthen relationships with all local media, including regular issuance of press releases.
- AR-MS-7 In addition to broad-based public outreach, identify strategies to market through existing community meeting places, such as churches, clubs and local organizations, and at existing events and activities. Expand upon cross-marketing efforts for higher level exposure throughout the community.

Community Involvement

The Park and Recreation Department should continue to expand community involvement in park and recreation planning and design. It should establish procedures for public notification regarding future park and facility development and master planning to ensure input from neighbors is considered. Participation from underrepresented segments of the community should be actively recruited.

MS-5 Continue to involve residents, the business community, local organizations, District Advisory Boards, and stakeholders in planning, park design and development.

Additional Recommendations

Additional recommendations for communications and outreach include:

AR-MS-8 Continue to maintain the communication channels developed through the PROS Plan process. The communication channels developed through the planning process should be maintained through strategies such as inviting PROS participants to weigh in on new projects or sending quarterly online announcements to contacts.

AR-MS-9 Continue to integrate new methods of outreach to stay on the forefront of communication technologies. New methods of outreach, particularly electronic communications, are needed to stay current, maximize impact of outreach, and communicate with professionals, young adults and youth.

- Improve the Department website.
- Reference the website in all communications.
- Continue on-line registration, and explore on-line reservation of parks and facilities.
- Use electronic communication in new ways, such as targeted communication based on web data.

AR-MS-10 Stay current through professional associations and publications to identify successful new outreach methods.

Volunteerism

Volunteerism offers benefits to individuals such as personal growth, building social relationships and meeting school or work requirements. Volunteers also leverage public resources, stretching tax dollars and supplementing available resources. Cities that establish even small volunteer programs can find that the hours volunteered are equivalent to



multiple full-time staff. The Park and Recreation Department should develop a formal volunteer program. This program should include formalized procedures, codes of conduct, training protocols and policies on volunteer recognition. It should identify specific volunteer opportunities, offering different levels of commitment (one-time opportunities, on-going opportunities, park or resource adoption) and catering to different areas of interest (e.g., trails maintenance, tree planting, coaching opportunities). Adding formalized Adopt a Park and Adopt a Trail programs as part of the volunteer program should be considered.

MS-6 Develop a Department-wide volunteer program. Program will incorporate developing volunteer opportunities, recruitment, training and tracking of hours.

Additional Recommendations

Additional recommendations to expand volunteerism include:

- AR-MS-11 Market volunteerism as a recreation program. A formal volunteer program will provide ways for residents to use their volunteer time to better the park and recreation system, while expanding on the Department's capacity and enhancing available funding for parks and recreation.
- AR-MS-12 Devote staff time to volunteer recruitment and management. Volunteers can do a lot for their community and require management and training. Assign staff time to volunteer recruitment to encourage community members to offer time and experience to support program development, program delivery, park, trail and natural area management. Assign staff to manage volunteers as needed.
- AR-MS-13 Develop additional volunteer opportunities for youth. Volunteer positions can provide youth with valuable experience and job skills, and also serve as youth development and mentoring programs. Develop opportunities specifically designed for youth and expand recruitment of youth volunteers.
- AR-MS-14 Budget a small amount each year for materials to support volunteer efforts. Establish a small budget to purchase materials, such as plants and trees, for volunteer efforts. Include funding for volunteer awards and recognitions, including but not limited to t-shirts, awards, and dinners.
- AR-MS-15 Track volunteer hours. Volunteer hours are tracked and reported, so that the impact of volunteerism on the park system is understood.

Partnerships

The PROS Plan is based on the concept that the City of Wichita and the Park and Recreation Department alone cannot meet all the park and recreation needs of the community. Partnerships will be critical to achieving the community's vision for the future.

The Park and Recreation Department should continue its successful existing partnerships, such as the Wichita Rowing club, League 42, etc. Another very successful example is the three agency partnership, which includes the Federal Government, State of Kansas and the City of Wichita, that developed and now operates the Great Plains Nature Center. There are many additional organizations within Wichita that contribute to parks and recreation. The Park and Recreation Department also should be proactive in fostering new partnerships. Non-profit organizations, health care providers and the local business community may offer potential new partnerships. An example would be the Wichita Park Foundation, which is a major contributor to scholarships, special events, promoting sponsorships, capital improvements and advocacy, which all support the mission and vision of the Park and Recreation Department.

- MS-7 Continue successful existing partnerships and foster new partnerships with private, non-profit and public organizations.

Additional Recommendations

Additional recommendations to maintain and expand partnerships include:

- AR-MS-16 Develop and maintain partnerships with local school districts, and especially USD 259, to improve access to school grounds and facilities. School sites can supplement neighborhood parks and provide needed recreation resources. School gyms and sports facilities at school sites are an important part of the community's recreation resources. Throughout the PROS planning process, community members expressed support for shared use of public facilities to maximize benefits, including public use of school sites and school use of parks and facilities.
- AR-MS-17 Formalize partnerships to identify responsibilities of each party, including financial responsibilities. In addition, staff involved in the partnership should monitor and evaluate partnerships periodically to assess success. These relationships are reviewed in formal process through Memorandums of Agreement or Understanding.
- AR-MS-18 Continue to communicate and collaborate with non-profit agencies. The Park and Recreation Department communicates regularly with non-profit agencies such as the YMCA, First tee of Greater Wichita, and League 42. This communication and collaboration should continue to ensure that the full range recreation needs in the community are being met without duplication of services.

Wichita Park Foundation

The Wichita Park Foundation is a non-profit organization founded in 2011. Its mission is to enhance the quality and maintain the heritage of Wichita's park system by assembling necessary resources through developing partnerships and fostering relationships in the community. The Foundation helps support the Park and Recreation Department by providing additional



necessary resources that are allocated to the various divisions within the system. This is achieved through fundraising, lobbying, soliciting donations, and advocating on behalf of the department for increased financial considerations throughout the community. As an advocate for the development of all city park properties, the Foundation's efforts further serve to enhance the quality of life for all residents. They also provide support for special projects (ICTrees, Fresh Air Baby Camp, Kansas Wildlife Exhibit Improvements and Watson Park Improvements), volunteer groups, which promote a sense of ownership through volunteerism.

Funding and Finance

Funding is a critical issue for the future of parks and recreation in Wichita. While the City has a strong foundation in its existing park system, analysis during the planning process indicates that the long-term sustainability of the park system is not possible given current practices and levels of funding. Therefore, in order to meet the needs of the community and enhance quality of life more consideration must be made for improvements of facilities and the funding of programs.

Current Challenges:

- Outdated facilities, with no replacement plans
- Deferred basic maintenance
- Lack of staffing
- Lack of technological improvements
- Lack of replacement equipment
- Lack of infrastructure maintenance
- Environmental constraints
- Security and policing constraints
- Land acquisition

Data Collection to Support Decision-making

The Department continues tracking financial performance of many program areas, but there are some inconsistencies in the cost analyses. More consistent allocation of costs and revenues will allow more effective evaluation of financial performance and increase accountability. A consistent procedure and assumptions should be developed and used across all Departmental cost analyses. In 2008 revenue policy was established to more effectively evaluate financial performance and increase accountability.

Costs should continue be allocated by major line of business, major facility, or major program area, including:

- Program staff, including salaries, benefits and training;
- Contract staff and instructors;
- Supplies and equipment;
- Grounds or building maintenance costs for major facilities;
- Other costs such as marketing and registration.

Continue tracking revenues that should be allocated by major line of business, major facility, or major program area include:

- Revenues from user fees and charges, including class registration, league fees, etc.;
- Rental revenue;
- Concessions revenue; and
- Admissions revenue.

For example, the Summer of Discovery program is currently tracked as its own program even though this program is based in the City's recreation centers. The Summer of Discovery program could be tracked as part of the recreation center's revenues and expenditures.

MS-8 Continue to coordinate and unify data collection to support decision-making. This data should come from multiple sources in order to give the Department a clearer picture of ongoing operations and trends. Continuing analysis of these sources and the utilization of other tools for collecting, analyzing, and managing data to support financial decisions, including, but not limited to:

- Participation rates by program or facility;
- Cost of service / cost recovery level; and
- Per capita program costs.
- PRORAGIS data
- ICMA Performance Measures

MS-9 Develop a metrics based philosophy for developing budgets, asset management, growth, planning and organizational structure. Using performance measures, data from past performance, information from work orders, critical statistic from the community, evaluation of asset management data and needs assessment; the department we be able to provide analytical data to support decisions and plan for future needs. This information is defendable and provides Council members significant and quality data, and information to provide the best decisions for our community.



Implementation of Strategic Directions

Tax-based funding sources should be focused on implementation of the strategic directions of this Plan as described in Chapter 3, which represent broad community-supported directions.

MS-10 Direct tax-based funding toward implementing the strategic directions.

Additional Recommendations

Additional recommendations for funding and finance include:

AR-MS-19 Continue evaluation and consider in-house services versus outsourcing. The Department's philosophy on providing services should be to provide the desired quality of service in a cost-effective manner in order to be good stewards of public resources. Continue evaluation of functions that need to be performed in-house, and the Department evaluates whether in-house services or outsourcing are most cost-effective for both specific tasks and entire function areas.

Decisions on whether to use in-house resources versus outsourcing should be based on the following criteria:

- What is the purpose of the service being evaluated?
- What is most cost effective?
- Which will achieve the desired quality?
- Which will produce the desired level of service?
- What are the trade-offs?

AR-MS-20 Increase programming to generate more revenue and reduce service provision costs per capita. As presented in Chapter 6, increased programming can increase revenue for the Department and lower cost per capita, even if fees are not increased.

AR-MS-21 Increase General Fund support. General Fund support of the Park and Recreation Department has decreased since 2003. In 2003, General Fund support was \$54 per capita. In 2006, it had dropped to \$48 per capita. In 2016 the adopted budget represents just under \$42 per capita. Of the 100 large US cities captured in the Trust for Public Land's City Park Facts report for 2015, the median per capita spending is \$70.

AR-MS-22 Cultivate and build relationships with private and not-for-profit organizations to secure dedicated funding sources for the construction, operation and maintenance of Wichita parks, open space and recreation facilities.

8. Capital Projects

This chapter discusses funding levels for parks and recreation improvements and presents prioritization criteria for capital projects. It also reviews the baseline level of funding for parks and recreation capital improvements, based on the recent history of investment. Since this level of funding is insufficient to implement the PROS Plan, the chapter also describes possible ways of increasing funds. In the 2008 PROS Plan there was an



identification of a dollar amount that was considered to be necessary to elevate the park system standards to reflect the needs of the community. While the City understands the dollar amount referenced in the earlier version may not be attainable, this plan revision is mindful of the need to support park system improvements on a continuous level. In 2016, the Park and Recreation Department is seeing increased interest in funding, at a modest level, enhancements envisioned in this Plan. Setting the system up for success in the long term requires a focus on the most effective use of the available funding in the short term. The following prioritization criteria identify where the department will focus its capital investments over the next five to 10 years:

- **Existing Infrastructure:** Since 2008, a shift in economic consciousness has been more on redeveloping existing parks and infrastructure rather than adding inventory in the way of new parks. The City park system has suffered from deferred maintenance and it is imperative that we maintain and care for existing assets. At the same time, redevelopment of existing facilities and structures are a good way to reinvest in the current infrastructure and add value to aging neighborhoods and communities.
- **Downtown Parks:** The downtown area is experiencing a renaissance of new development. Downtown Wichita is growing with the new arena providing an important entertainment anchor. The St. Francis streetscape and Douglas Street areas are improving and businesses and residents are moving downtown. We need signature urban plazas and parks to reflect the needs of a community that is changing. Naftzger Park is a catalyst site that has been identified in the Downtown Master Plan and could play a significant role in the transformation of this area that is adjacent to both the downtown core area and the historic district.
- **Recreation Centers:** Our recreation centers are old and outdated. A reevaluation of these centers is needed to determine which centers can be retained and which others might be better suited for total redevelopment. It is likely more cost effective to remove an existing structure and build new ones that comply with current programming needs and are more energy efficient. The footprint of some facilities might be reduced while others might be increased based upon individual park needs. The location of the centers also

need to be addressed to maximize programming offerings to a larger number of citizens.

- **Aquatics:** Most of the aquatics facilities, with the exception of College Hill and Harvest pools, are out of step with current trends in aquatics. There is a national trend of moving toward water playgrounds in lieu of pools in order to provide better cost-effectiveness for municipal aquatics programs. Accordingly, modern facilities should focus on these current trends for better long-term value. The newer aquatics models display a greater variety of play opportunities and revenue producing potential, such as party rentals, swim lessons, etc.
- **Signature Parks:** In 2008, the City developed an award winning master plan for Crystal Prairie Lake Park in northwest Wichita. The park will be one of the largest parks in the system when complete and features the development of 225-acre lake, which will offer a variety of aquatic recreational opportunities. The park will be a legacy park for all citizens and is envisioned to host large recreational and entertainment events with excellent access from the highway system. The park features a future visitor center, outdoor amphitheater and festival lawn, and public swimming beach area. Crystal Prairie Lake Park represents the direction Wichita is headed, becoming a regional destination for recreation/outdoor activities.
- **Playgrounds:** The City will continue its efforts to update, maintain, renovate existing playgrounds, as well as, creating new play-scape facilities. In addition, an emphasis will be made to create destination playgrounds which will become major attractions close to, or in the downtown district.

Capital Funding

Capital projects in Wichita are funded via several main sources of revenue. Examples listed below illustrate the sources of revenue available to municipalities.

- **Enterprise fees:** Collected from City enterprises such as the airport, sewer, storm water, golf, etc. and bonded against to fund capital projects for those enterprise agencies.
- **Property taxes:** The City mill levy is calculated to include debt service on General Obligation Bonds (G.O. bonds) sold by Wichita; the use of local G.O. bonds leverage a significant amount of Federal and State grants.
- **Federal/ State grants:** Many types of improvements including arterial, freeway, bridge, and airport improvements receive Federal and State grants, typically matching local funds in the form of G.O. bonds put towards these projects.
- **Special assessments:** Infrastructure to support new development is often funded through special assessments on property owners. Groups of parcels



may also petition the City to form a special assessment district to fund specific improvements which would benefit the district.

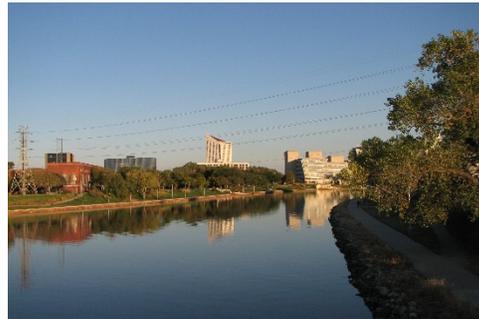
- **Local sales tax:** Since 1985, half of the sales tax revenue generated in Wichita is directed towards transportation improvements. For 2015, local sales taxes totaled \$57,576 million.
- **Tax increment financing:** A number of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts are located in Wichita. Property taxes generated in these districts, above a certain baseline or threshold, are diverted to fund improvements in the district.
- **Other:** A significant portion of revenues for Wichita's 2015-2024 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is identified as derived from "other" sources. These include private contributions, such as the Park Foundation, 501c(3) organizations, County funds, guest taxes, and unfunded portions.

The City's capital investments are determined by the City Council during the development of and approval of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The current capital budget for the Park and Recreation Department is approximately \$50 million and includes 17 projects to update existing parks and build new recreation facilities. These funds are allocated to be spent over the next 10 years as part of the current 2015-2024 Capital Improvement Program. This base case capital funding program represents about \$5 million in spending on parks projects per year.

PROS Plan Costs

Projected costs of implementing the PROS Plan recommendations were derived from costs for each recommendation type, defined in Chapter 5. The costs (adjusted for inflation to 2016 dollars) are as follows:

- **Maintain Existing Resources:** This provides a budget for ongoing reinvestment over the next 10-20 years, based on a cost of \$30,000 per acre for developed parks and \$15,000 per acre for natural areas.
- **Site Amenities and Signage:** Costs are based on an allowance of an average of \$30,000 per site. It is assumed that some sites will require less budget and others will require more.
- **Minor Renovation:** Costs are based on \$70,000 per acre, derived from the cost of Buffalo Park improvements applied to the entire site acreage.
- **Major Renovation:** Costs are based on \$225,000 per acre, also derived from the cost of Buffalo Park improvements applied to the two acres of the site that were most heavily renovated.
- **Park Land Acquisition:** Costs are based on \$125,000 per acre inside of city limits and \$15,000 outside of city limits.



- **Development:** Costs are based on \$300,000 per acre, assuming a moderate level of development at the sites.
- **Recreation Center:** Costs are based on \$10,000,000 for a 50,000sq. ft. facility.
- **Aquatic Facilities:** Costs are based on \$4,000,000 per outdoor pool.
- **Trails:** costs are estimated at \$1.35 Million per mile.

Appendix C contains a table with project costs by park type and individual park.

Capital Funding Gap - With \$5 million in capital spending on parks per year (based on just maintaining the current level of funding), it would take more than 65 years to accomplish the improvements at existing sites within the PROS Plan, without developing or acquiring any new ones. With land acquisition and development of proposed sites within the current city limits, it would take more than 120 years to implement the Plan.

Closing The Capital Project Funding Gap

The City has a number of financing options at its disposal which may be drawn upon to fund the PROS capital program (G.O. Bonds, Special Assessments, Sales Tax, and Federal, State, and Private grants). In addition, the City may consider advocating for State legislation which would allow development impact fees as an alternative or supplement to the existing financing mechanisms Wichita already uses. Approximate calculations are included throughout this section for illustration only.

It is important to provide some context and perspective to this challenge of closing the capital project funding gap, Public feedback received from a city-wide survey and numerous community meetings held over a three-year period (2013-2015) during the development of the Community Investments Plan consistently indicated that increased public investment in parks and open space facilities ranked as a low-medium priority relative to increased public investment in other categories of infrastructure and facilities.

Special Assessments

Individual park projects may also be funded through a Special Assessment. The City of Wichita uses special assessments to fund improvements, but there are no special assessments used to fund Park and Recreation services or maintenance in the City of Wichita at this time. Cities in Kansas are authorized to make municipal improvements, which provide special benefits to a definable area of the City, and they may levy and collect special assessments on properties in the definable area to fund those improvements. The process starts when developers or a majority of property owners within the definable area petition a city for financing for any improvements covered by the statute (includes new park development and improvements to park facilities). The City may also initiate the process by conducting a public hearing to explore the advisability of a proposed improvement project. A special assessment district is created by resolution of the City's governing commission. Once total project costs are estimated, a public hearing is held on the assignment of the improvement costs. In order to charge the benefiting property owners, a special assessment ordinance must be passed authorizing the assessment.

As an example of the level of capital funding special assessments may provide to Parks, Table 15 below provides illustrative calculations. It shows three scenarios: (1) special assessment across the entire City, (2) special assessment across half of the City, and (3)

special assessment for new, residential development expected to be built through 2030. Assuming that a 0.05 percent to 0.20 percent assessment is achievable, bonds of between \$3.4 million and \$27.7 million could be issued.

TABLE 15: POTENTIAL REVENUES FROM SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISTRICT, ANNUAL

TOTAL	TOTAL CITY (EST. RESIDENTIAL AV ONLY) ¹	HALF OF CITY	NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT, 2035 ²
Est.	\$2,294,783,300	\$1,147,391,600	\$795,173,250
Special Assessment for Capital Bond, assuming rate of:			
0.05%	\$7,530,076	\$3,765,038	\$2,601,507
0.10%	\$15,060,152	\$7,530,076	\$5,219,274
0.20%	\$30,120,303	\$15,060,151	\$10,438,548

¹ Estimated from CAFR and 2016-17 Adopted Budget, total assessed value in the City is \$3.1 billion.

² Assessed value of new units are conservatively assumed to sell for \$150,000 each, on average and assessed value is about 11.5% percent of market value.

Source: Wichita Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, Year Ended June 30, 2015; 2016-2017 Adopted Budget, City of Wichita; Wichita Housing Forecast 2016, Wichita State University; Community Investments Plan 2015-2035

Sales Tax

Since 1985, one-half of Wichita's sales tax proceeds have been directed towards funding road and bridge capital projects while the other half goes to the City's General Fund to reduce the level of property taxes required to fund government operations. The City may choose to put before the voters an initiative to raise the sales tax rate to fund public facilities such as those proposed in the PROS Plan. In 2009 the downtown arena was funded through the success of a half cent increase in sales tax over a period of three years. This model could serve as an example for a Park and Recreation sales tax referendum. Sales taxes typically vary depending on the health of the economy, however, the per capita sales tax collected in Wichita has increased from \$128 to \$149 between 2000 and 2015. This trend combined with Wichita's expected population increase indicates that sales tax revenues are likely to continue to grow in the coming decades. Table 16 below shows an illustrative calculation, assuming a \$0.005 additional sales tax rate, mirroring the approach of the downtown arena, about \$287,211 annually may be collected based on Wichita's 2015 population, with collections totaling \$2.9 million, assuming the tax sunsets ten years after its inception.

TABLE 16: SALES TAX REVENUE SCENARIOS

YEAR	POPULATION	SALES TAX REVENUE, AT \$149 PER CAPITA (2015)	ADDITIONAL ANNUAL SALES TAX AT 0.5% ADDITIONAL TAX RATE
2015	385,518	\$57,442,182	\$287,211
Total Add-on Sales Tax Collection, assuming Tax sunsets after 10 Years			\$2,872,109

Property Tax

Property taxes are the main source of funding for the City of Wichita. Wichita property owners are taxed 32.652 mills with properties assessed 11.5% of their appraised value. This results in the average Wichita residential property owner paying approximately \$398 dollars annually for the provision of municipal services in the City of Wichita. The City of Wichita has not raised the property mill levy tax rate in over 20 years.

One property mill levy rate increase in the City of Wichita, results in an additional \$3,195,052 generated citywide for municipal services. The cost to the average residential property owner in Wichita is an annual tax increase of \$11. A property mill levy increase of 12 mills could fund the approximately \$760 million of improvements identified in the Plan over a 20-year time span. The annual cost to the average Wichita property owner would be approximately \$132. While many areas of the country continue to feel the lingering effects of the great recession, more and more are choosing to increase taxes to pay for priority investments in their communities. Between 75% and 80% of all ballot measures tracked in the Trust for Public Land LandVote database (of parks and conservation funding) have been successful over the last five years. These measures resulted in over \$17 billion in new tax-based funding for the acquisition or development of public lands.

Development Excise Taxes and Impact Fees

Development excise taxes (DET) are fees imposed typically on developers on the act of platting real property. Senate Bill 55, enacted in 2006, prohibited all cities not levying development excise taxes as of January 1, 2006 from imposing these taxes. At that time, approximately seven cities in Kansas (not including Wichita) had ordinances imposing DETs. This funding option, while not currently authorized, is explored here to illustrate the potential and recognizing the support for quality of life initiatives and parks and recreation generally.

The amount of park development taxes the City may collect in the coming decades depends on the amount of new development in the City. For the purposes of providing an illustrative calculation of total development taxes, only residential development is evaluated. The Community Investments Plan for 2015-2035 estimates 49,900 new units of housing within Wichita (under the Baseline scenario) from 2012 to 2035. Historic housing data from the Wichita State University's 2016 Housing Forecast indicates approximately 3,800 units have been constructed since 2012, leaving 46,100 in the projection to 2035. Table 17, below, illustrates three scenarios of excise taxes between \$500 and \$1,500 per unit. The resulting income is between \$23 million and \$69 million in excise taxes would be collected through 2035.

TABLE 17: DEVELOPMENT EXCISE TAX

ITEM	AMOUNT
New Housing Projection 2012-2035 Wichita	49,900
Units Constructed 2012-2015	3,800
Anticipated New Units 2016- 2035	46,100
Total Fees by 2030, assuming fees of:	
\$500 per unit	\$23,050,000
\$1,000 per unit	\$46,100,000
\$1,500 per unit	\$69,150,000

Land dedication or developer fees (often referred to as impact fees) operate on a similar basis, as property is either platted or as building permits are issued, these fees are charged to fund the expansion of a system (such as parks, streets, or water) in response to the new residents that new development represents. The primary difference between developer fees and excise taxes is the requirement that developer impact fees be tied to a measure of the nexus (connection) between the number of residential units and amount of the fee. Wichita currently does not charge an impact fee for parks and recreation, but other cities in Kansas, including Lenexa and Lawrence, do.

State, Federal and Private Grant Opportunities

Table 18 illustrates a variety of State, Federal, and Private grant opportunities that may be available to support funding for expanding the Departments programs and facilities. For example, the Department currently is supported by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, a Federal funding source administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Since 2010 the City has received \$2.6 million in grants, donation and awards. Significant projects that have demonstrated success are: The Lincoln Street Safe Boat Passage project, which included over \$1 million in federal and local grants. In addition, Federal Lands Access Program grant was awarded through the FHWA for the Chisolm Creek Park Bike path renovation and connector to the GPNC. Funds for the FLAP grant totaled more than \$938,000.

The amount and timing of funding from these sources illustrated is difficult to predict a priority and would require a concerted effort by City officials to secure. In addition, the status and funding levels for the programs listed in Table 22 and others can vary significantly from year to year. In addition, grants, even if very successful, can only address a small portion of the funding need.

Decision-making Criteria

While the City moves forward with its initial priorities, and explores how to expand the available funding, the reality is that there are more projects than resources available. The criteria outlined below are intended to inform future Capital Improvement Program decisions in a manner that best aligns with the community values, visions, needs and priorities set forth in this Plan.

- **Meets PROS Plan needs:** Projects should be prioritized based on their ability to meet park, recreation and open space needs as identified in the Community Resources and Needs Assessment (i.e., their ability to fill existing geographic gaps or satisfy relevant facility or program needs).
- **Expands recreation opportunities:** Priority should also be determined based on the projects' ability to expand the capacity of the City's recreation opportunities (i.e., their ability to accommodate new activities in high demand or those that have the potential to serve many participants). Develop programs with a higher return on investment to increase revenue for recreation activities.
- **Protects natural or cultural resources:** Priority should be determined based on the ability of the proposed project to protect natural or cultural resources for future generations or to improve environmental quality, including accommodations for active transportation.
- **Improves existing recreation resources:** Priority should be determined based on the ability of the proposed project to connect, maintain, or enhance existing City recreation resources.
- **Enhances partnerships or volunteerism:** Projects should be prioritized on their capacity to create new partnerships or strengthen existing partnerships (i.e., their ability to forge cost-sharing, joint development, or programmatic collaborations), or for the project's capacity to involve volunteers in planning, construction, or programming.
- **Strengthens the community:** Proposed projects should be prioritized based on their ability to strengthen community identity. For example, projects that would serve a diverse cross-section of the community, projects that would renovate downtown or neighborhoods, or projects that have a positive economic impact or attract tourism should be ranked high in priority.
- **Reflects community willingness to pay:** Project scope/scale and associated funding levels should be aligned with the willingness of our community to pay for it.
- **Provides meaningful and up-to-date information** to the public regarding financial needs and expectations to meet the current and future demands of the system.

TABLE 18: FEDERAL, STATE, AND PRIVATE GRANTS

Agency	Program	Description	Eligibility
Federal EPA	Environmental Education Grants	Financial support for projects that design, demonstrate or disseminate environmental education practices or methods	Eligible applicants must fall into one of the following categories: local education agency, state education or environmental agency, college or university, not-for-profit organization as described in section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, noncommercial educational broadcasting entity, tribal education agency
National Park Service	NPS Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program	Staff support for projects involving open space protection, greenway planning, river conservation, and urban greening. Aims to protect important natural resources or enhance outdoor recreation opportunities.	Nonprofit organizations, community groups, tribal governments, local or State government agencies.
National Park Service	Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Program	Urban Park & Recreation Recovery (UPARR) program grants provide recreation opportunities for all ages, all ethnic groups and to people with and without disabilities, senior citizens, at-risk youth, latchkey children and young adults.	Three types of grants are available through the UPARR program: rehabilitation, innovation, and planning. Additionally, eligible entities are required to maintain a current Recovery Action Program plan, which serves as a guide to local action planning and as a statement of commitment to the UPARR program's revitalization goals.
US Fish and Wildlife Service	North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA)	Grants increase bird populations and wetland habitat, while supporting local economies and American traditions such as hunting, fishing, birdwatching, family farming, and cattle ranching. Wetlands protected by NAWCA provide valuable benefits such as flood control, reducing coastal erosion, improving water and air quality, and recharging ground water.	The NAWCA program provides matching grants to wetlands conservation projects in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. There is a Standard and a Small Grants Program. Both are competitive grants programs and require that grant requests be matched by partner contributions at no less than a 1-to-1 ratio
US Fish and Wildlife	Urban Bird Treaty	Urban Bird Treaty project proposals should have an emphasis on enhancing urban habitats for birds,	Projects where there are Fish and Wildlife Service lands or offices nearby (within

Agency	Program	Description	Eligibility
Service	Grants	engaging citizens in bird conservation and connecting diverse and youth audiences to birds and bird conservation as well as an activity that contributes to the Fish and Wildlife Service's 2016 Centennial recognition celebration of the signing of the first Migratory Bird Treaty (1916).	approximately 25+/- miles). Requires a 1:1 match of funds.
Department of Housing and Urban Development	Community Development Grant Block Program (CDBG)	Must meet one of the following national objectives for the program: benefit low- and moderate-income persons, prevention or elimination of slums or blight, or address community development needs for which existing conditions pose a threat to the health or welfare of the community.	The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to 1180 general units of local government and States.
State Kansas Department Wildlife, Parks and Tourism	Land and Water Conservation Fund	The Land and Water Conservation Fund provides funding for acquisition or development of outdoor recreation areas and facilities. Priority development projects include trails, campgrounds, picnic areas, natural areas, and cultural areas for recreational use. The match is at a minimum one applicant dollar to one federal dollar for all LWCF grants, and no more than 25% of the total grant amount can be spent on non-construction costs. In the Past, Santa Clara County has obtained funding for HBR Flat Perimeter Trail and Los Gatos Creek Day Use Trail connections and improvements	Cities, countries, and districts authorized to acquire, develop, operate and maintain park and recreation areas.
Kansas Department Wildlife, Parks and Tourism	Local Government Outdoor Recreation Grant Program	Project should provide new outdoor recreational opportunities to a significant population or geographic area, or enhance existing outdoor recreation facilities and improve facilities for users with a wide range of physical abilities.	Local governments
Kansas Department	Recreational Trails	The recreational trails program (RTP) provides funds	Cities, countries, Districts, State agencies,

Agency	Program	Description	Eligibility
Wildlife, Parks and Tourism	Program	annually for recreational trails and trails-related projects. There is no maximum or minimum limit on grant request amounts.	federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations with management responsibilities over public lands are eligible.
Kansas Health Foundation	Health Equity	To reduce health disparities related to social and economic factors, the Kansas Health Foundation will implement initiatives at three levels: social determinants of health, prevention and access to care.	Non-profits, schools and public agencies working to improve health in Kansas
Private Wichita Community Foundation	Traditional Grants, Community Venture Grants	The Wichita Community Foundation supports a wide variety of charitable purposes and responds to the needs of the Wichita/ Sedgwick County area. Grants are made within the areas of Arts/ Humanities, Environment/ Conservation, Health, Education and Human & Social Services.	Applications are welcome from tax-exempt, not for profit organizations certified by the Internal Revenue Service under Section 501(c)(3). Grant requests up to \$25,000 will be considered. WCF does not expect to make recurring grants for the same program.
REI	Grants Program	Grants to promote conservation and outdoor recreation. Grant applicants must be nominated by an REI employee. Awards range from \$20,000 to \$50,000.	Nominated organizations
Bikes Belong Coalition (sponsored by members of the American Bicycle industry)	Grants Program	Grants for facilities, education, and capacity building by organizations that encourage bicycle use. Awards are generally \$10,000 or less.	Non-profit organizations and public agencies are eligible for facilities and education grants. Capacity building grants available only to bicycle advocacy organizations. Available funding unknown at this time. [Note: No known program funding since 2007, so there may not be funds available]
Annenberg Foundation		The Annenberg Foundation provides support for projects within its grant-making interest areas of education and youth development; arts, culture and humanities; civic and community; health and human services; and animal services and the environment.	The foundation only considers organizations defined as a public charity and tax exempt under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Agency	Program	Description	Eligibility
The Starr Foundation		The Starr Foundation makes grants in the following areas: education, medicine and health, human needs, public policy, culture, and the environment.	Non-profit organizations are eligible. The Foundation makes grants on a national and international basis and solicits specific organizations to submit proposals for funding.
Candle Foundation		The Candle Foundation provides grants for community investment, education and information disseminations and has funded watershed education for inner-city students.	
Conservation Fund	Kodak American Greenways Grant Program	The Conservation Fund that provides small grants to stimulate the planning and design of greenways in communities throughout America. Grant awards are made according to such criteria as the importance of the project to local greenway development efforts.	
Knight Foundation	Knight Foundation Fund	The Knight Foundation Fund invests in civic innovators who help cities attract and keep talented people, expand economic opportunity and create a culture of engagement.	Kansas non-profit organizations

Source: Economic and Planning Systems, Inc., MIG Inc.

Summary

The Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan is viewed as a strategic document that is flexible and adaptive to the needs of the Park and Recreation Department, the community and City Council priorities. The plan will be updated periodically as conditions and situations change. This document is dependent on community engagement and is supported by other planning documents, such as the Community Investments Plan, Downtown Master Plan, the Bicycle Master Plan and Pedestrian Master Plan; therefore, truly reflective of the community and its needs.

Park staff recently convened to update our mission and vision statements to more accurately reflect our priorities and overall direction. These initial meetings were instrumental in developing a new direction for the Department and where the citizens of Wichita have indicated to us that they would like to be in the next several years. We feel that it is our shared responsibility to ensure that this Plan revision is fully utilized in both our current and ongoing operations, as well as our future initiatives. Our vision is “To excel at what we do for the benefit of our community and generations to come”. This vision is achievable with the continued commitment of citizens, the Park and Recreation Department and city leaders. By working toward this common vision, we can transform the park and recreation system into a signature asset for the City.

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