



CITY OF WICHITA

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE PLANNING PROCESS

SUMMARY OF DISTRICT 2 OUTREACH MEETING JULY 7, 2007

Residents of City Council District 2 were invited by Council Member Sue Schlapp to share their views related to city parks, recreation and open space on Saturday morning, July 7, at Via Christi Hospital – Our Lady of Lourdes. A total of 23 residents participated, most of whom were from District 2.

The purpose of the outreach meeting was to:

- define the importance of the Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan;
- highlight current park assets in Wichita at large and in District 2;
- solicit observations, and learn ideas for parks in the future and how to pay for them; and
- communicate what happens next in the planning process.

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

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

- Good public golf courses
- Excellent Summer of Discovery program – children enjoy activities that are structured and fun including exercise, socialization and community trips
- Upgraded facilities and playground equipment, e.g., at Riverside and College Hill Parks
- Botanica is fabulous!
- The Arkansas Rivers and public access to them
- Skate park – appreciates that the City responded to requests and built it.
- Public safety is secure in city parks
- Diversity of parks and activities offered at them
- Park improvements spread throughout the city and not just in selected areas. Example: new water feature at Lincoln Park is very popular
- Keeper of the Plains improvements very special – has given a whole new level of access to rivers
- Chisholm Creek Park, including its bicycle path
- In general, parks accessible for persons with disabilities
- Recreation centers offer a good diversity of programs and safe environment
- Solar calendar in Riverside Park

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

- Frequent maintenance functions including trash pick up, cleaning of restrooms and mowing
- Routine building maintenance at recreation centers
- Disconnectedness of bicycle trails creates safety problems and limits biking enjoyment
- Where connection of trails does exist, there is lack of signage to direct bicyclists
- Dog owners who don't clean up after their pets and the lack of bins to dispose of dog waste

- Serious time lag in development of park land and lack of maintenance/mowing on undeveloped park land (specific concern about undeveloped park and Greenwich and Central)
- Trail that leads to the Keeper of the Plains bridge too narrow
- Serious threat to safety, especially for young children, exists around base of Keeper of the Plains – insufficient guards to prevent children from falling into the river.
- Shortage of indoor recreation activities for use in inclement weather (indoor walking trails especially noted)
- Lack of restroom facilities – Tennis Center, Buffalo and Chisholm Creek parks noted
- No off-road facility for motorcyclists and too few for cyclists
- Lack of an off-leash dog park
- Lack of raises for park department employees – life guards and recreation staff particularly noted.

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

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

- Place highest priority on development of eleven acres of donated land at Greenwich and Central into a park (9)
- Connect bicycle trails to each other and also complete the 17th Street trail (rail corridor) (7)
- Create a “Friends of Parks” organization to advocate for parks, recreation and open spaces (6)
- Update park facilities that are located in the core areas of the city (e.g. McAdams and Fairmount parks) (6)
- Create new partnerships with private, nonprofit and public sectors for creating and maintaining park land and facilities (6)
 - Botanica mentioned as a model to replicate
- Build a boathouse that is actually for boats, complete with boat shelves, fencing and security protections (5)
- Develop dirt-bike facility at the Brooks Landfill site (5)
- Develop off-leash dog park that includes water access, a pond, double gate, fence and trees (5)
- Create new recreation facility for seniors in northeast Wichita (4)
- Redefine and market spending on parks as a quality of life investment in community (3)
 - Go for excellence!
- Initiate stronger action to promote message that parks support children and families, and contribute to environment that makes Wichita a great place to raise a family (2)
- Create more youth-oriented park facilities in all areas of Wichita (2)
- Enhance existing skate park and construct additional skate parks at other locations (1)
- Move/realign park resources to match areas with the highest need/demand (1)
 - Gather park-use data to drive decisions about location of park facilities

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

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

- More public/private partnerships (16)¹
- Increased user fees (15)²
- Dedicated sales tax (9)
- Dedication of infrastructure development dollars for green space (8)
- Dedicated property tax (5)
- General sales tax (4)
- Impact fees on new development ³ (2)
- Realignment of resources (2)
- General property tax (2)
- More non-federal government grants (1)

¹ Participants noted that staff should be dedicated to soliciting financial contributions and volunteers.

² Several participants noted they did not want to make user fees cost prohibitive for persons with low incomes.

³ Participants were advised that this is presently not a park financing option under Kansas law.