



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

VISIONING WORKSHOP
OCTOBER 25, 2007
MEETING SUMMARY

A Visioning Workshop was held on October 25th, 2007 to gather public input on the vision, mission, and key strategy areas for the Wichita Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. The meeting was led by Lauren Schmitt and Sally McIntyre of MIG, Inc, who began by giving community members a synopsis of major findings regarding the planning context and existing conditions of the Wichita parks, recreation, and open space system, as well as a synopsis of key public involvement findings identified to date.

The discussion was organized around three key discussion areas: core values, vision and mission, and goals and strategy areas.

Core Values

During the core values discussion, participants were asked to identify the values that Wichita residents consider most important and that should form the plan's foundation. Core values participants identified were:

- Community
- Diversity
- Sense of place
- Protection of the environment
- Connectedness
- Safety
- Stewardship
- Cost effectiveness
- Wellness
- Youth development
- Human scale
- Education
- Reservation of unbuilt areas
- Functionality
- Sustainability
- Fun/Quality of life

Vision

Participants were asked to identify elements that should be included in the vision for the future of parks, recreation, and open space in Wichita. Elements identified during this exercise include:

- Available to all!!
- Geographic dispersion of resources
- Connected
- Central to our lives
- Variety of opportunities
- Natural
- Essential public service
- Key community assets
- Multiple benefits (stormwater / water quality)
- Beautification
- Safe
- Wildlife/Plant habitat
- Inclusive -- all ages, cultures, geographic areas
- Well-Maintained -- high quality
- Dedicated funding
- Complimentary, no duplication
- Promotes Wichita as a great place
- Accessible (ADA, neighborhood)
- Forward thinking

Mission Elements

The mission statement describes the business that Wichita is in, in terms of providing parks and recreation services. Mission elements that the participants brainstormed are listed below.

- Opportunities for learning and togetherness
- Run, laugh, play
- Integrating community
- Preserving/Protecting open space
- Regional in scope
- Balanced
- Leadership/Mentorship of youth
- Maintenance
- Community health (physical and mental)
- Cultural awareness
- Celebrating the Arkansas River
- Park Board autonomy
- Supporting economic development
- Demonstrating sustainability best practices

Strategy Areas

The participants were asked to identify areas where strategies are needed to achieve the vision. The strategy areas identified were:

- Parks
- Natural Areas

- Trails
- Recreation Facilities
- Recreation Programs and Services
- Maintenance
- Funding

Potential Actions

Participants brainstormed ideas about potential strategies and actions in the different strategy areas in small groups. The potential actions identified are listed below, by strategy area.

Overall Themes

- Establish a parks/trails watch
- Improve visibility throughout the park system
- Improve communication and public awareness
- Increase marketing - Sell parks and recreation to the public

Parks

- Understand the inventory
- Evaluate needs
- Target high impact parks to get more resources
 - Tourism
 - River Parks
- Design parks for sustainability from an ecological perspective
- Add special features to old/aging parks to revitalize them
- Provide historical preservation/interpretation
- Provide unprogrammed grass areas in the parks

Natural Areas

- Sensitive maintenance management for natural areas
- Sensitive development in natural areas
- Provide public access
- Naturalize medians to reduce water and pesticide use
- Acquire riparian edges and naturalize them
- Educate people about wild areas
- Excite people – plan events, fund a volunteer coordinator as staff support for volunteers
- Establish land use/development fees

Trails

- Retain historic neighborhood character
- Follow existing corridors
 - Railroad /rail trails
 - Streams
- Develop transportation corridors
- Provide varied surfaces
- Provide mileage signs along trails and in paths

- Use public facilities for trails
- Add security and lighting
- Connect trails to bus stops
- Consider sidewalks as part of the trail network
- Imagine life without a car!
- Use opportunities while they exist
- Develop Safe Routes to Schools programs
- Place trails along wildlife corridors
- Add learning stations

Recreation Facilities

- Understand inventory
- Provide access to facilities within 2-5 miles
- Develop neighborhood oriented facilities – sense of local ownership
- Provide facilities with versatility/multiple uses
- Find a niche/coordinate with other providers
- Establish facilities that foster community understanding
- Provide a diversity of opportunities-drop-in, as well as scheduled activities
- Coordinate schools with city recreation
- Provide a positive place for youth
- Offer geographically dispersed facilities
- Look at flood areas as potential field sites

Maintenance

- Maintain parks and open space to a standard acceptable to the public
- Provide adequate resources for maintenance of new facilities
- Promote an attitude of pride
- Provide safe playgrounds that are inspected regularly
- Budget for an acceptable mowing cycle
- Provide the staffing and equipment to support the desired level of service
- Prioritize asset preservation and preventative maintenance
- Establish a quick response program to respond to complaints
- Develop a public information program to publicize maintenance issues
- Naturalize some areas to free up resources for focused maintenance in other areas
- Provide varying maintenance levels

Funding

- Dedicated MIL levy % or increased levy (with or without a sunset)
- Dedicated sales tax (could have exemptions) (sunset)
- Reallocation of resources toward public priorities
- Sell assets
 - Golf courses
 - Century II
 - Hyatt
- Change state law to allow impact fees
- Workplace giving-maximizing fundraising for special projects

- Establish a regional park funding taxing entity
- Identify a cost of service and budget accordingly

Recreation Programs and Services

- Survey assets and needs
- Emphasize public/private collaboration for service provision
- Pursue dedicated funding
- Budget for promotion/public information
- Develop state and national support
 - KRPA
 - NRPA
- Provide accessibility
 - Hours
 - ADA
 - Geography
- Partner with big organizations

At the close of the meeting, the ideas and strategies generated were reviewed. The MIG Team explained how the workshop results would be used in the development of the mission, vision, and goals for the plan, and encouraged participants to stay involved with the process.

VISIONING WORKSHOP
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CORE VALUES

- COMMUNITY
- DIVERSITY ■ SENSE OF PLACE
- PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT
- CONNECTEDNESS
- SAFETY ■ STEWARDSHIP
- WELLNESS ■ COST EFFECTIVENESS
- YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
- HUMAN SCALE
- EDUCATION
- RESERVE UNBUILT AREAS
- FUNCTIONALITY
- SUSTAINABILITY
- FUN / QUALITY OF LIFE

VISION ELEMENTS

- AVAILABLE TO ALL!!
- DEDICATED FUNDING
- GEOGRAPHIC DISPERSION
- CONNECTED
- CENTRAL TO OUR LIVES
- COMPLEMENTARY, NO DUPLICATION
- VARIETY OF OPPORTUNITIES
- PROMOTES WICHITA AS A GREAT PLACE
- NATURAL
- ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICE
- ACCESSIBLE ^{AT} neighborhood
- KEY COMMUNITY ASSETS
- FORWARD THINKING
- MULTIPLE BENEFITS (stormwater, water quality)
- BEAUTIFICATION
- SAFE
- WILDLIFE / PLANT HABITAT
- INCLUSIVE - ALL AGES, CULTURES, AREAS
- NEW-MAINTAINED - HIGH QUALITY

MISSION ELEMENTS

- OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING, TOGETHERNESS
- RUN, LAUGH, PLAY
- INTEGRATING COMMUNITY
- PRESERVING / PROTECTING OPEN SPACE
- REGIONAL IN SCOPE
- BALANCED
- LEADERSHIP / MENTORSHIP OF YOUTH
- MAINTENANCE
- COMMUNITY HEALTH (physical & mental)
- CULTURAL AWARENESS
- RIVER - CELEBRATING
- PARK BOARD AUTONOMY
- SUPPORT ECON. DEVELOPMENT
- SUSTAINABILITY BEST PRACTICES

STRATEGY AREAS

- STABLE FUNDING ✓ PARKS
- DUAL PURPOSE PARKS ✓ NATURAL AREAS
- ✓ TRAILS
- ✓ RECREATION FACILITIES
- ✓ RECREATION PROGRAMS & SERVICES
- ✓ MAINTENANCE
- ✓ FUNDING

Wall graphic 1 from 10/25/07 Visioning Workshop Meeting

VISIONING WORKSHOP
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PARKS

- ▶ UNDERSTAND INVENTORY
- ▶ EVALUATE NEEDS
- ▶ HIGH IMPACT PARKS GET MORE RESOURCES
- ▶ TOURISM RIVER PARKS
- ▶ DESIGN PARKS FOR SUSTAINABILITY / FROM AN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE
- ▶ ADD SPECIAL FEATURES TO OLD / AGING PARKS TO REVITALIZE
- ▶ HISTORICAL PRESERVATION / INTERPRETATION
- ▶ UNPROGRAMMED GRASS AREA

- PARKS/TRAIL WATCH
- VISIBILITY
- COMMUNICATION / PUBLIC AWARENESS IMPROVEMENT
- MARKETING SELL IT TO THE PUBLIC!

NATURAL AREAS

- SENSITIVE MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT
- SENSITIVE DEVELOPMENT
- PUBLIC ACCESS
- NATURALIZE MEDIANS TO REDUCE W/D & PESTICIDE USE
- ACQUIRE RIPARIAN EDGE, NATURALIZE
- EDUCATE ABOUT WILD AREAS
- EXCITE PEOPLE - EVENTS
- LAND USE / DEVELOPMENT FEES

TRAILS

- RETAIN HISTORIC N'HOOD CHARACTER
- FOUND CORRIDORS RRS / RAIL TRAILS STREAMS
- TRANS CORRIDORS / VARIOUS SURFACES
- MILEAGE SIGNS
- PUBLIC FACILITIES
- SECURITY & LIGHTING
- CONNECT TO BUS STOPS
- CONSIDER SIDEWALKS
- IMAGINE LIFE W/O A CAR
- USE OPPORTUNITIES WHILE THEY EXIST
- SR2 SCHOOLS
- WILDLIFE CORRIDORS
- LEARNING STATIONS

RECREATION FACILITIES

- UNDERSTAND INVENTORY
- 2-5 MILE ACCESS TO FACILITIES
- NEIGHBORHOOD ORIENTED & OWNERSHIP
- VERSATILITY / MULTIPLE USES
- FIND A NICHE / COORDINATE W/ OTHER PROVIDERS
- FACILITIES THAT FOSTER COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING
- DIVERSITY OF OPPORTUNITIES - DROP-IN, AS WELL AS SCHEDULED ACTIVITIES
- SCHOOL / CITY REC COORDINATION
- PROVIDE POSITIVE PLACE FOR YOUTH
- GEOGRAPHIC DISPERSAL
- LOOK AT FLOOD AREAS FOR FIELDS

MAINTENANCE

- MAINTAIN PARKS & OG TO A STANDARD ACCEPTABLE TO THE PUBLIC
- ADEQUATE RESOURCES FOR NEW
- ATTITUDE OF PRIDE
- PLAYGROUNDS SAFE & INSPECTED REGULARLY
- ACCEPTABLE MOWING CYCLE
- STAFFING & EQUIPMENT TO SUPPORT LEVEL OF SERVICE
- PRIORITIZE ASSET PRESERVATION AND PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE
- QUICK RESPONSE PROGRAM
- PUBLIC INFO PROGRAM TO PUBLICIZE
- NATURALIZE SOME AREAS TO FREE UP RESOURCES
- MAINTENANCE LEVELS - VARYING

FUNDING

- ▶ DEDICATE MIL LEVY % OR INCREASE LEVY (W/NO SUNSET)
- ▶ DEDICATED SALES TAX (could have exemptions) (SUNSET)
- ▶ REALLOCATION OF RESOURCES
- ▶ SELL ASSETS golf courses Century II flight
- ▶ STATE LAW TO ALLOW IMPACT FEES
- ▶ WORKPLACE GIVING - MAXIMIZING FUNDRAISING FOR SPECIAL PROJECTS
- ▶ REGIONAL PARK FUNDING TAXING ENTITY
- ▶ IDENTIFY A COST OF SERVICE AND BUDGET ACCORDINGLY

RECREATION PROGRAMS & SERVICES

- SURVEY ASSETS / NEEDS
- PUBLIC / PRIVATE COLLABORATION
- DEDICATED FUNDING
- PROMOTION / PUBLIC INFORMATION
- STATE + NATIONAL SUPPORT KRPA NRPA
- ACCESSIBILITY HUES ADA GEOGRAPHY
- PARTNER W/ BIG ORGANIZATIONS WSW AEROSPACE COMPANIES

Wall graphic 2 from 10/25/07 Visioning Workshop Meeting