

Platte County, Missouri

Park System Master Plan

MAY 2009

"...every county –and particularly those counties around large centers of population – is obligated to provide the best it can for the recreation and health of its citizens, a system of parks and lakes...." Harry S. Truman





Acknowledgements

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THE CONSULTANT TEAM

Dick Horton, BWR Scott Walters, BWR Gary Harden, BWR Ron Vine, ETC/Leisure Vision



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INTRODUCTION

The implementation of this update to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan of 2000 presents a number of intriguing opportunities that capitalize on the enthusiasm generated by Platte County citizens for their park system. This enthusiasm has fueled widespread support for the Guiding Principles of the Master Plan. These Principles that serve as the foundation are:



protecting our natural resources

providing health and wellness opportunities

creating safe recreation places for our children

This Master Plan is *citizen-focused; collaborative* with public, private, and notfor-profit partners; and intended to be a plan that is *sustainable* by protecting natural resources through the preservation of open greenspace and improving water quality. Partnerships will help leverage precious county resources for maintenance and planned improvements.

PLATTE COUNTY PROFILE

As a community, we continue to grow at a steady pace. During the life of this master plan (2010 to 2030), we will *grow by an additional 20,000 people*. It is fair to say that many of these new citizens will move to Platte County because of their preference for a lifestyle that features access to open spaces where wildlife and natural resources can be observed and enjoyed; where trails can be used to maintain one's health; and where recreation facilities provide families with fun and safe activities.

As we interact with our citizens we will continue to ensure that we are aware of community needs as Platte County becomes more *diverse*, ethnically, generationally, and socially. We will support special events and festivals in our parks as a great way to bring the community together. We realize we will need more community gathering areas, shelters, and diverse recreational opportunities in our parks and we look forward to meeting the special needs of County residents.

Recognized as a highly *educated community* whose *household income* is higher than the surrounding areas, we are aware that we should provide some services that are beyond the basic or entry level services that are typical of a county-wide park and recreation system. *Our services will be priced* according to the formula that *those who benefit should pay* on a sliding scale that recovers more revenue from those services *primarily benefiting the individual (specialized class)* to more support for those services *which benefit the community as a whole (special events/educational/youth)*. "We are seeinig g needs comining g out now that t we also cheard d 10 years saggo; these are e's econded generation' issues that in many now have come of age since a good base of parks is now in place."

– Michael Short, Community Recreation Focus Group, December 18, 2008



"I give Platte County a perfect 10 when it comes to the job you have done with our parks, I've got goose bumps just thinking about the future opportunities."

> – NE Area Focus Group October 7, 2008



Review Process of Park Facilities and Management Policies

To determine our current status, we critiqued the condition of our existing facilities and management policies.

Our *existing facilities* include two community centers, five parks, fifteen miles of trails, and one golf course. Evaluations and recommendations for each of these facilities are included in this report. Our recommendations are as follows:

- Continue to develop extensions to trails along priority corridors such as the Missouri River;
- Create an Open Space Plan that targets a percentage of land in the County for protection based on its location relative to streams, rivers and areas that are environmentally sensitive, or vital for protecting our natural resources;
- Study expansion of community centers to include amenities such as larger aquatics and gymnasium space and flexible meeting/programming space;
- study a new community center for underserved, high growth areas of the County to address crowding at the existing centers;
- Support more youth programs in the County by encouraging cooperation and diversity among County partners to meet the needs of our children;
- Continue improvements to the Shiloh Springs Golf Course; increase play and revenue by improving course conditions and programming;
- Evaluate new partnerships for facilities that adhere to the Master Plan's Guiding Principles

This report provides detailed comments about the importance of *partnerships* in Platte County. Tiffany Hills Park, the Springs Aquatic Center, and many other local park improvements were made possible through new collaborations with local cities and non-profit organizations. The review of management policies focused on the sustainability of these partnerships, including the Outreach and Partnership Grant Programs. The Plan contains important considerations that must be managed by the Park and Recreation Department as it allocates resources for future maintenance and planned improvements.

For the Plan to succeed, the County must:

- select partners who share a common mission;
- capture the critical elements of each partnership in a written agreement to be re-evaluated annually and meet regularly with partners to discuss opportunities to improve;
- ensure that partnership funds are used by the recipients to design, construct, and manage facilities at a level that meets pre-approved standards as stated in the agreements.



CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Following our review of existing facilities and management policies, it was apparent that a dynamic planning process should be implemented to reach out to all citizens who expressed an interest in getting involved to provide the feedback needed for **"informed decisions"** about the **"preferred future"** of the park system. To that end, we used not one or two citizen involvement venues, but **EIGHT**. The following is our procedure for ensuring a planning process that is *citizen-focused*:

- Create a *Citizens Committee and a Steering Committee*. Membership on these committees included elected officials, park board members, staff, and numerous citizens who have stepped forward over the years to profess their interest in anything that can be done to make Platte County a better place to live.
- Interview citizens identified as key stakeholders due to their positions as elected or appointed leaders, as a leader of a special interest group (partners), or who have special expertise in a field related to parks and recreation.
- Administer *statistically valid citizen surveys*, distributed to approximately 3,500 randomly selected households. From those surveys that were distributed, 773 were returned providing results that are at a precision of +/- 5.3% and a level of confidence of 95%. In other words, if the survey were distributed 100 times, the same results would be returned 95 times within a margin of error of +/- 5.3%.
- Meet with *26 focus groups* to "drill down" on current issues of importance including those issues in the statistically valid citizen survey. Participants in the focus groups were used to provide additional information that went beyond the responses to key questions and provide perspective on how our goals can be accomplished.
- Conduct two public meetings called **OPEN HOUSES**. These meetings were well attended and we were on hand with pad and pencil to record comments by those in attendance.
- Utilize our website, <u>www.platteparks.org</u> to extensively update citizens about the progress of the Master Plan and to solicit citizen comments on any matter of importance to them.
- Compose *newsletters* that were sent periodically to citizens who expressed an interest in learning more about the services provided by the Parks and Recreation Department to keep them informed about the development of the Master Plan.
- Distributed *comment cards* on the website and throughout the County to provide an additional opportunity for citizens to provide feedback. As with all other venues, comments were placed on the website for others to read and to stimulate additional discussion.

"Our citizens are telling us quality of life issues like better parks are of utmost importance to them"

> – Kathy Rose, Riverside Focus Group Member October 24, 2008





	Unique website visitorsYouTube visitorsResponses to first citizen surveyResponses to second citizen surveyAttendees at first open houseAttendees at the second open houseFocus Group participants	3,213 604 404 369 80 50
	Responses to first citizen surveyResponses to second citizen surveyAttendees at first open houseAttendees at the second open houseFocus Group participants	404 369 80
	Responses to second citizen surveyAttendees at first open houseAttendees at the second open houseFocus Group participants	369 80
	Attendees at first open houseAttendees at the second open houseFocus Group participants	80
	Attendees at the second open house Focus Group participants	
	Focus Group participants	50
		125
	Citizen Team members	12
	Comment Cards	49
	TOTAL	4,906
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Table: Citizen Involvement Statistics

Platte County Parks and Recreation

Executive Summary



Goals

After critiquing the condition of our existing facilities and management policies, and learning directly from citizens about their preferences for their future park system, our objectives are as follows:

- preserve Platte County open space by acquiring land for conservation and recreation;
- protect and improve water quality and stormwater infrastructure to promote a healthy, sustainable community;
- expand the greenway trails network;
- create new and diverse trail experiences like horse trails, backpacking trails, paddle (canoe/kayak) trails, and mountain bike paths;
- enhance community parks by:
 - creating new master plans for community parks at land-banked, countyowned sites and development of them with high value amenities such as trails, playgrounds, dog parks, picnic areas, fishing areas, unprogrammed open space, and special areas for music, arts, and cultural heritage sites while respecting the need for conservation
 - continuing the implementation of existing individual park site master plans at Platte Ridge Park, Green Hills Park, and Platte Purchase Park
- Study expansion opportunities for new community center facilities and amenities to address evolving needs and growth of community;
- improve Shiloh Springs Golf Club;
- create new recreational facilities designed especially for Platte County youth such as sports fields, and interactive playgrounds
- support positive sports and wellness programs that promote active learning and provide youth mentoring opportunities;
- create a sustainable park system by providing high quality maintenance, increasing levels of security by working with law enforcement, developing and implementing park planning, construction, maintenance, and operating standards;
- pursue partners who share a common vision for creating quality projects and programs such as by expanding the Outreach Grant Program and creating a volunteer corps;
- interact with citizens to ensure that community preferences are known and represented as resources are allocated.





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INTRODUCTION

The Vision of the Parks and Recreation Department was discussed, written, and adopted in 2000 when the Department was established. It has proven to be effective over that period of time by guiding the allocation of over \$60 Million of funding for planned improvements and Outreach Grants with partners.

Based on citizen preferences in 2009, the Vision is still on target and its pursuit will continue to guide the Department as new projects are implemented over the next 10 years.

VISION

To create community through people, partnerships, and an interconnected system of parks, greenways, and conserve natural resources, offering recreational opportunities for all citizens.

We will achieve our Vision by:

- Continuing to ensure that the Platte County parks system is well maintained and safe.
- Building awareness and promoting parks and recreational facilities in Platte County.
- Continuing to collaborate and partner for funding and facility use.
- Continuing to improve quality of life by funding a parks and recreation sales tax.
- Expanding existing indoor and outdoor facilities and creating a more diverse park system that reflects citizen desires.
- Continuing to make high priority land and water-based trail and greenway connections.
- Encouraging significant green space conservation and parks in development.

Relationship to Platte Profile

The Platte Profile, adopted in May 2008, is the most representative adopted document in Platte County that embodies the parks system vision. Highlighted in the table on the following page, the Parks and Recreation Department is uniquely *positioned* to support the County Commission by its allocation of resources toward planned improvements and partnership agreements to ensure that goals of the Platte Profile are implemented.



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

– Anthropologist Margaret Mead



Vision





Table: Relationship between Platte Profile and the updated Park System Master Plan

Platte Profile Goal	Parks System Master Plan		
Community Partnerships & Collaboration	Direct Support		
Economic Development & Tourism	Direct Support		
Environment & Sustainability	Direct Support		
Growth & Planning	Direct Support		
Parks & Recreation	Direct Support		
Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness	Support Role		
Transportation & Infrastructure	Support Role		







"The County can move into the future without destroying the past." - Ann Raab December 3, 2008

INTRODUCTION

In 2000, Platte County completed its first Park System Master Plan. As a result of that initial planning document, the County Commission determined that citizens should be asked to support a half cent sales tax, with a sunset of 10 years, to provide funding for the planned improvements that were stated in the master plan. In August 2000, citizens voted favorably for the sales tax initiative, thus the establishment of the Platte County Parks and Recreation Department in 2001. The Department's Director and staff worked with the County Commission and Park Board during the first ten years to implement the planned improvements which included:

- Acquisition of 880 acres of protected parks and open space
- 15 miles of shared use trails
- 90,000 sq. ft. of indoor recreation
- 22,000 sq. ft. of outdoor aquatics
- \$1.8 Million awarded in Outreach Grants
- \$4.5 Million in clean water/flood control projects
- \$20.6 Million total partnership contributions from other sources to Platte County park projects

Department History





- Development of new, and management of, Strategic Partnerships
- Maintenance of the park system
- Pursuit of Grants and in-kind services from strategic partners that are used to leverage Platte County resources
- Development and management of the Platte County Park System which includes the following parks, trails, and recreation facilities.

Parks

- Barry-Platte Park
- Platte Ridge Park
- Green Hills of Platte Wildlife Preserve
- Parma Woods Park (county owned- MDC operated park project)
- Platte Purchase Park (partnership project co-owned by Kansas City, Missouri)
- Tiffany Hills Park (partnership project owned by Kansas City, Missouri)
- Land banked future parkland areas near Parkville, Riverside, and Weston
- Local park partnerships with the cities of Dearborn, Edgerton and Camden Point
- Benner Park in partnership with the West Platte School District

TRAILS

- Missouri Riverfront Trail—3.5 miles
- Weston Bluffs Trail—3.5 miles
- Southern Platte Pass—4.0 miles
- Prairie Creek Greenway 4.0 miles

Recreation Facilities

- Platte County Community Center North a 30,000 sq. ft. contemporary indoor recreation facility featuring wellness areas, a family aquatics center, gymnasium and walking track.
- Platte County Community Center South a 60,000 sq. ft. contemporary indoor recreation facility featuring wellness areas, a family aquatics center, gymnasium, walking track and generational center.
- The Springs Aquatic Center a 22,000 sq. ft. contemporary outdoor aquatic center featuring a 13,000 gallon family aquatics center with water slides and an eight lane 50 meter competitive pool that was developed in partnership with the Kansas City, Missouri Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners.
- Shiloh Springs Golf Course an eighteen hole golf course featuring a full service clubhouse and sports grill, practice tees, and driving range.



INTRODUCTION

Platte County is projected to grow by approximately 20,000 people in the next 20 years. This growth will result in increased demands for parks and facilities provided by the Parks and Recreation Department that is related to demographic characteristics such as age, ethnicity, household income, and education.

Information is also provided below which benchmarks Platte County with other peer Missouri counties regarding their current level of service for per capita expenditures for all parks and services, acres of parks, miles of trails, sources of funding, etc.

MARKET ANALYSIS: POPULATION TRENDS

73,781

654,880

85,998

184,066

18,979

57,867

633,232

83,083

153,411

16,595

1990 2000 2006 2020 5,117,073 5,595,211 5,842,713 6,199,882

83,061

664,078

84,955

206,957

20,671

104,054

690,999

_

239,606

% Change

1990-2000

9.3%

27.5%

3.4%

3.5%

20.0%

Sources: Mid America Regional Council – Metro Dataline. Last Update: Feb. 10, 2006. U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Interim State Population Projections, 2005. Table A1: Interim Projections of the Total Population for the United States and States: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2030. Intermet Release Date: April 21, 2005.

% Change

2000-2006

4.4%

12.6%

1.4%

-1.2%

12.4%

% Change

2006-2020

6.1%

25.3%

4.1%

15.8%

Observations

Missouri

Platte County

Jackson County

Clay County Clinton County

Buchanan County

Over the past 16 years, Platte County has grown at a much higher rate than the counties near it and the state of Missouri as a whole. Based on its recent growth trends, its total population is expected to exceed 104,000 by 2020.

Implications

- Population growth will place an increased demand on existing facilities and programs.
- Platte County can expect to see increased use of existing facilities as well as increased demand for new ones.
- New facilities will need to be strategically located in areas of high population growth to meet new and previously unaddressed demands.
- Population growth will increase the demand for land, which will simultaneously reduce the amount of available land and drive up costs for land acquisition. As a result, future park land acquisition may become increasingly difficult.
- Platte County can anticipate greater demands on its natural resources and clean water.















Observations

With regard to age, Platte County's age distribution is similar to the surrounding areas and has been historically. As the graph shows, the percentage of the population 45-59 years old in these counties has increased since 1990, while the percentage of younger people in the counties has decreased slightly and the percentage over 65 has remained almost the same for the same period of time.

Implications

Much of the research regarding age preferences for parks and recreation has been done by Texas A & M University for activities that can be offered in an outdoor setting. Nonetheless, their research provides hints about what different age groups might prefer in Platte County.

Older Adults

- By 2030, 20% of the population is likely to be over age 65.
- Older adults in this era will be characterized as healthier, more active, and longer living than previous generations. Their activity and facility preferences

Market Analysis



will not be much different than younger age groups; however, activities will need to go at a slower pace for this age group and facilities may be desired at slightly different times than the younger age group.

- Use of parks and participation in outdoor recreation tends to go down with age.
- Older adults are more likely to cite personal constraints (fear of crime, lack of companions and family members and/or self are in poor health) as factors which limit their use of outdoor recreation facilities.
- Perception of park safety is enhanced by lighted park areas, accessible trails, and visible park rangers.
- Older women feel more secure in groups and may be attracted to parks to participate in interpretive programs, walking clubs or other group related activities.
- We need to understand the needs and interests of an aging population and those factors that stymie participation in later life.

Younger Adults

Younger adults are far more likely to cite information and access constraints (parks and recreation areas are too far away) and time constraints.

- Other providers tug at the discretionary time of younger adults and include television and the media.
- Platte County and its partners can attract more young adults to activities by improving and expanding opportunities to make advanced reservations so patrons can use time more precisely.
- Platte County and its partners must provide shorter and more self-directed opportunities. For example, ski areas, amusement parks and golf courses now provide half day tickets or nine hole rounds of golf in recognition of the time constraints faced by many young adults.
- Platte County and its partners can attract more young adults to activities and facilities by providing complete information concerning time requirements.





MARKET ANALYSIS: POPULATION BY ETHNICITY





Observations

The population in Platte County is greater than 90% white. The Hispanic population in Platte County is growing rapidly and has nearly tripled since 1990, from 1,161 people to 3,237 people, according to the US Census Bureau.

Implications

Research indicates that there are more similarities in the leisure patterns of diverse ethnic groups than there are differences. Any differences that do exist may actually reflect differences in other areas, such as household income, rather than differences in ethnic background and need for recreation facilities and programs.

Research also indicates that as Platte County becomes more diverse our parks will become more heavily utilized. This will create a need for more amenities in our parks such as shelter houses and picnic areas to accommodate large group gatherings. More un-programmed open space will also become more important as our parks are more heavily utilized.

From a programming perspective, a more diverse Platte County population will create good opportunities for new festivals and events that celebrate different cultures and create new educational opportunities.



Market Analysis

\$70,000 🗖 Missouri \$62,402 Platte Jackson \$60,000 \$55,849 Clay \$53,448 Clinton \$48,347 Buchanan \$50,000 44,211 \$42,84 \$41,629 \$41,048 <mark>\$</mark>39,277 \$38,173 \$37,934 \$40,000 \$34,704 \$34,370 27,853 \$30,000 \$26,36 \$26,306 \$23,019 \$20,000 \$10,000 \$-Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey. U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000. 1989 2006 1999

MARKET ANALYSIS: POPULATION BY INCOME

Observations

Platte County's median household income has surpassed that of all of the surrounding counties in Missouri as well as the State of Missouri as a whole since the 1990 US Census was taken.

Implications

- In Platte County, the citizen survey indicated that there are three primary reasons that lead to less use of program and facilities. Those reasons, in order, are:
 - do not know what is being offered 36%
 - do not know the locations of parks 36%
 - not enough time 32%
- Generally, higher wage earners demand more specialized recreation amenities and are willing to pay for them.





2006 4



% of Households That Are Married Couples

% of Households In Which Householder Lives Alone % of Households That Are Blood-Related Families





53.3% of households in Platte County are married couples. While this percentage is better than the state average and surrounding counties, it still suggests that there is a significant number of single parent households.

- Generally, single parent households have lower incomes, less mobility and less free time than do two parent households.
- Generally, single parent households will benefit from recreation opportunities that are close to home.





Market Analysis: Population by Educational Attainment

No High School Diploma I High School Diploma or GED Some College Bachelor's Degree or Higher



Observations

Platte County has a significantly higher percentage of college graduates than the State of Missouri and the counties that surround it, while its population without a high school diploma is very small.

Implications

From a planning perspective, there is research which concludes that leisure services are selected, in part, based on one's educational achievements. The Parks and Recreation Department should be aware of the choices that one will make for services, based on their educational level and corresponding higher income earning power and provide choices for services; for example:

- Offer services that are priced for those who do not earn a lot of money, but also, provide services that are priced for those who can afford to spend more on those services that are important to them.
- As shown on the Pricing Pyramid graphic on the following page, the Parks and Recreation Department will need to adopt a pricing strategy that recovers a greater percentage of costs according to those who benefit from services provided and relative to whether those services benefit the individual or the community-at-large.



Market Analysis







MARKET ANALYSIS: PEER REVIEW (2008 DATA)

Benchmark	Platte County	St. Louis County	Jackson County	Springfield/ Greene County	Johnson County, KS	Clay County
Unincorporated Population (2000)	20,376	327,000	21,687	232,487	526,319	13,067
Expenditure Per Person (Unincorporated)	\$277	\$82	\$632 includes some municipal expenses	\$148	\$82	\$505
Acres of Active Park Land	424	7,830 (63%)	8,000	1,707	5,283	1,067
Acres of Undeveloped Park Land	740	4,574	14,000	1,300	4,300	3,200
Bicycle Trails	0	110	0	Included in multi use	Included in multi use	0
Multi-Use Trails	15	48 (hard surfaced)	23	63.2	35.7	23
Equestrian Trails	0	67	25	10	18.4	0
Exercise Trails	2	8.3	0	0	0	0
Nature Trails	2	80	10	3	12.5	0
All other trail types	3.5 cross country	0	20 mountain bike	8.8 mountain bike	8.5 mountain bike	12 mountain bike
Average Annual CIP	\$5.65 M	\$7.42 M	\$400,000	\$50.0 M	\$4.0 M	\$300,000
Source (s) of CIP Funding	¹ / ₂ cent sales tax	Sales tax – 57% Property Tax – 25%	Property Tax	County Sales Tax	Property Tax	Use Tax
What Sales Tax Initiatives	¹ / ₂ cent sales tax for CIP	1/10 mil Regional Sales Tax	None	County Sales Tax	None	None
Why provide Recreation Facilities	Fill the unmet demand	Provide unique facilities to unincorporated areas	Revenue Generation	To meet citizen demands	Fill the unmet demand	To meet citizen demands
Policies for City/ County Cooperation	Yes	None	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Environmental Policies	In Process	Yes	Yes – Recycling Program	Yes	In Process	Yes
Integrated into County General Plan	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes



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INTRODUCTION

The park system in Platte County has grown to 880 acres of protected parks and open space since the initial master plan was adopted in 2000. Although still evolving, the core emphasis of the system's expansion has been to:

- acquire land to develop the trail system
- acquire land to preserve natural resource areas
- assist cities with Partnership Grants and Outreach Grants to develop, and/or, improve local facilities so that close-to-home opportunities are available
- apply resources toward active recreation facilities

As the 2009 Master Plan is implemented, it is clear that *citizens are supportive of past efforts* and ready to build on them. There is strong support for more trails, more protected open space, and more recreation facilities that are geared toward children and family activities.

The *one new point of emphasis* in this plan relates to the maintenance of the parks and facilities that have been built since 2000. The contrast between now and 2000 is that the County did not have many parks and facilities in 2000 that citizens used; however, that has changed dramatically since that time and users expect a high standard of care out of respect for the effort it has taken to generate the revenue to construct and operate the system.

General Observations

The park system has been evaluated in great detail during the development of this master plan. The details are provided in the Appendix of this report and an overview is detailed below:

Park Types and Locations – Generally, for a new department, the availability of park types and their locations are good with the understanding that the system will continue to evolve. At this time, the County has directly acquired and developed parks, it has partnered with others to acquire and develop parks through its Outreach Grant Program, and, of course, other providers such as the State of Missouri are actively involved.

Trails – With the development of 15 miles of trails, it is clear from all sources that those efforts have been on target. As shown on the map in this section, there are new high priority trail segments and the development of those segments are the highest priority in this master plan. New to this master plan will be emphasis on waterways.

Waterways – The County is in a unique position of being able to provide a unique park experience through the use of the Platte River and the Missouri River (designated as the Lewis & Clark River Trail) for float trips. People are making use of the rivers but must do so without the benefit of support facilities or personnel. It is possible to improve the use of the rivers and the enjoyment







of canoeing or kayaking through development of the infrastructure that would make the experience less difficult to organize. People who use the rivers now must provide all their own equipment, transportation to the access point, supplies, and support. Consideration should be given to offering an operator a *concession agreement* to provide those services if the County does not wish to build and operate them.

Recreation Facilities

Facilities include two community centers owned by the County with swimming pools, the Springs Aquatic Center at Tiffany Hills Park and athletic complexes at Platte Ridge Park, Platte Purchase Park (co-ownership) and Tiffany Hills Park (city-owned).

• **Community Centers/Aquatics Facilities** located at Parkville and Platte City have been used by approximately 40% of the citizens in the County according to tracking records that are kept at each Center and backed up by respondents to citizen surveys. Revenue generated from this number of users has resulted in zero operating expense subsidies for both facilities.

As interest in the community centers increases due to their popularity and rapid growth in the County which adds more potential users, there is a need to discuss an expansion of the north center and determine the feasibility of constructing a third center in the central part of the County. Expansion at the south center located in Parkville is not likely because it is considered to be "land locked".

Both centers have a leisure pool (includes a lazy river, whirlpool, and saunas) and lap lanes. Predictably, the leisure pools are most heavily used on weekends when families are available to use it while lap lanes are busiest during the week when exercise swimmers include a workout before and after work but choose to take weekends off to recuperate.

The level of interest expressed by documented reports in aquatics at the Springs at Tiffany Hills, at the south center at Parkville, and from the citizen involvement process that was made available to citizens during this planning process makes a case for the addition of aquatics at the north center in Platte City, in the discussion for a third center in the central part of the County, and in discussions with partners such as the school district for competitive swimming facilities.

- The Springs Aquatics Center at Tiffany Hills The Springs Aquatic Center is three years old. It is an \$8.0 Million partnership project with the Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Kansas City, Missouri for which capital funding was shared while operations and maintenance are the sole responsibility of Kansas City. The facility features three bodies of water a 50 meter competitive pool, a leisure pool, and a sprayground which are reasons it is visited by 788 patrons per day for an annual total this past year (2008) of 72,064. This is an increase of 9% from the previous year. Revenue from operations is currently recovering 100% of operating costs.
- The **athletic complex at Platte Ridge Park** includes four lighted baseball/ softball fields and four full-size soccer/football fields. The high level of its



initial design and development, its location in a high growth area, and room for expansion are key indicators of the potential for this facility. As expansion is considered at a future date, the County will need to carefully evaluate the life cycle of the program that is requesting new fields and the level of use at existing fields in the vicinity to ensure that all are being fully utilized before building new ones. Partnership opportunities to leverage County resources should also be evaluated along with the ability of the County and partners to maintain new facilities. Such opportunities may include continued upgrades to the existing facilities such as infield drainage and scoreboards and additional fields for youth football. In addition the adopted master plan for Platte Ridge Park should be consulted and updated as needed.

- The **athletic complex at Platte Purchase Park** includes thirteen baseball/ softball fields, one of which is currently lighted. Its location in a high growth area and room for expansion are key indicators of the potential for this facility. If expansion is considered at a future date, the County will need to again carefully evaluate the life cycle of the program that is requesting new fields, the level of use at existing fields in the vicinity, partnerships, and the ability of Kansas City and its partners, in this case the Clay-Platte Baseball Association, to maintain new facilities. Such opportunities may include continued upgrades to the existing facilities such as utilities, lighting, infield drainage and scoreboards and additional fields for youth programs. In addition the adopted master plan for Platte Purchase Park should be consulted and updated as needed in cooperation with Kansas City.
- The **Tiffany Hills Athletic Complex** has been well received. Records from 2007 and 2008 show that there were 620,000 visitors to the complex, making it the third largest destination in the KC Metro Area. Because this project is a partnership with the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners of Kansas City, Missouri and the Southern Platte County Athletic Association (SPCAA), the County will need to continue to advocate for good ongoing maintenance and improvements to the facility by project partners.

Outreach and Partnership Grants

To date, \$1.8 Million has been awarded by the County to recipients of its Outreach Grants and over \$1 Million through the Partnership Grant Program. Most, if not all, of the improvements would not have been completed had it not been for this program. The programs have also proven to be an effective tool for the County to stay in regular contact with community leaders and volunteers and stay abreast of current needs. Representative of the projects that have been funded are the following:

- Veteran's memorials
- Numerous local park improvement upgrades; e.g. shelter houses, lighting, playgrounds, basketball courts
- Athletic fields
- Trails and sidewalks
- Historic park and scenic outlooks
- Festivals and special events







There are several keys to the long-term success (sustainability) of these collaborative programs as detailed below:

- first, it is the reality that the Park and Recreation Department continue to manage it at a very high level to ensure that sales tax revenues are allocated in a manner that is consistent with the goals of the master plan
- second, recipients should have a master plan for the properties/projects for which they are seeking funding assistance to ensure an orderly development of planned improvements in pursuit of a goal that is comprehensive and well organized as opposed to random improvements that stand alone and not contributing to the whole.
- third, recipients must develop and maintain projects that are within guidelines provided them by the Park and Recreation Department
- lastly, the County should expand the programs, making more funding available and studying the inclusion of a limited amount of maintenance support in the program (e.g. equipment)

Facility Development Sustainability

In general, parks and recreation facilities are environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. They provide preservation opportunities for sensitive land and are crucial in implementing connected green systems. They increase positive social interaction opportunities and encourage healthy lifestyles. Quality parks systems are also known to create communities where positive economic growth is attracted and stimulated.

Low-Impact Development – Parks and recreation facilities should be designed with the concept of minimizing infrastructure elements such as buildings and parking facilities by combining activity use areas where feasible. Every effort should be made to implement the most sustainable design that can be managed by those who will care for the facility. County employees will be instructed in the use of sustainable practices. Below are specific practices that will be considered and implemented to decrease the impact of parks and recreation development on the environment. The County will develop a detailed plan of sustainable strategies that can be reasonably implemented.

Turf Management – Sports turf management practices should include amending soil with compost and other natural fertilizers, regular aeration to minimize soil compaction, field rotation, regular soil tests, minimizing the collection of grass clippings, and other best management practices that allow a healthy growing medium for turf. Where possible, the County will use low-emission maintenance equipment and limit the use of high-emitting maintenance equipment to necessary applications. Mowing cycles will be documented to encourage only necessary maintenance. For example, during a dry season mowing may need to occur less frequently.

Although it is often necessary to irrigate athletic fields to maintain a safe playing surface, the County will strive to implement efficient irrigation systems that



operate only when there has not been sufficient precipitation. The County will also evaluate and implement opportunities to use impounded and gray water for irrigation to decrease cost and environmental impact.

The County has a maintenance hierarchy for open areas within a park. Ball field turf is the most intensely managed followed by family recreation areas. Open space areas not directly impacted by recreation will be maintained as prairie or natural vegetation and infrequently mowed or "hayed" by private contractors. Emphasis for prairie restoration efforts will be placed on ground that has been disturbed, such as through the park development. This hierarchy results in decreased employee time, chemicals, water, and mower pollution for the less intensely managed areas and a small return potential for agricultural areas.

Water Usage – Avoid waste of potable water. This includes evaluating and implementing systems that use impounded and gray water for irrigation, flushing toilets, and other activities that do not require potable water. Options for using low flow fixtures for sinks and showers will also be reviewed and implemented. For swimming pool maintenance, the County will strive to use companies who use green standards.

Alternative Energy Sources – Where possible, parks and recreation facilities should be run by solar, wind, and other types of alternative energy. By disconnecting parks from the electrical grid money can be saved and clean energy will be utilized.

Also, with development of each new facility the location, orientation, and design should be considered and evaluated to provide the most energy efficient solution available that also meets the budgetary requirements.

Lighting - Where possible, for exterior lighting LED should be used. LED lighting is one of the most efficient light systems available now. An effort should also be made to decrease light pollution. Interior lights used should be fluorescent or compact fluorescent. Spent bulbs should be recycled.

For sports facility lighting where LED is currently not an option, the County will strive to use the most efficient lighting systems available. Also, light timers and computer-controlled systems will be used to allow the lights to be on only when needed.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle – At special events where refreshments are served, the County is committed to using compostable cups and plates as well as recycling bottles and cans. At all facilities where trash is collected there should be an option for patrons to recycle. At a minimum the recycling facilities should include containers for plastic bottles and aluminum cans. For County operations, every effort will be made to recycle paper, cardboard packaging and other items that will reduce the solid waste added to landfills. Options for implementing a County composting facility or delivering compostable materials, such as grass clippings and leaves, to an appropriate facility should also be considered. In selecting products and materials used at parks and recreation facilities, the











County will strive to evaluate each material based on its environmental impact. An emphasis will be placed on selecting products that are from previously used materials and/or with recycled content. The County will also strive to use products that can be recycled when they have served their useful life.

Transportation – Where possible, parks should be connected to a pedestrian/ bicycle route. Initially some of the large, regional parks may be isolated and opportunities for pedestrian/bicycle access may be limited. However, as development increases and is connected to existing parks it is important that these types of connections are provided. For community / local parks accessed by local roads it is necessary to provide pedestrian / bicycle accommodations. These connections allow access to parks through non-polluting methods. They also increase opportunities for physical activity and allow parks to be socially sustainable by providing access to all people. Bicycle storage racks will be provided where a recreation facility is accessible by bicycle.

Paving - Most high use areas, including athletic facilities, will require the use of paved surfaces such as asphalt for parking and roads. Green solutions such as porous pavements should be further evaluated and used when practical. During project design, every effort should be made to understand peak use times for parking areas and to provide only the amount of parking necessary to meet these needs. If peak use quantities vary considerably from normal use and are infrequent it may be possible to provide overflow parking on unpaved or less intensively paved surfaces. Where practical, incorporating use of recycled materials will also be included in new pavements and pavement maintenance operations.

Stormwater - The County has a goal of net zero runoff for newly developed park sites. Net zero runoff means that the quantity of water running from the site before development is not increased after development. This goal allows for development to have a minimal impact on the watershed and health of waterways. The County is also committed to minimizing the use of stormwater pipe systems. This includes opportunities for sheet flow and curb cuts to allow stormwater to drain to rain gardens, bioswales, or natural filtration areas. Design of stormwater systems should include opportunities to filter the water before it is allowed to re-enter the natural stream system. Where feasible, graywater collection facilities will be implemented to store water runoff and water generated from building systems other than toilets for irrigation reuse. Erosion control plans meeting the required local and state standards will be used for all construction sites and monitored throughout construction to eliminate erosion of land and sedimentation of water systems. Opportunities to use all types of best management practices from green roofs to bioswales will be evaluated and implemented where practical.

Signage – Where beneficial, educational signage regarding these green practices will be provided for park patrons. This signage should help introduce these



"green" practices and hopefully encourage patrons to implement some of the practices at their homes and businesses. Additional educational signage to highlight natural and historical features will also be used where appropriate to aid in creating a socially sustainable culture where people are educated about their environment and history.

Facility identification signs will always include the County Park's logo or name. Currently, all park and facility signs provide a consistent message of the name and quality of the facility. This contributes to the message that County parks and recreation facilities will be well-maintained and sustainable.

Asset Management Plan – The County adopted and implemented an asset management plan (Standard Maintenance and Operational Procedures) that includes proper, scheduled maintenance practices for new and existing facilities. This plan includes all furnishings and facilities and their life expectancy. As this plan is followed, emergency repairs that could potentially cost more than routine maintenance should be avoided. Also, knowing the life expectancy of specific elements should allow the County to appropriately budget for times when an existing system will require a significant upgrade.

Park System Mapping

Ten maps have been developed which graphically portray valuable information about Platte County and its park system. The information is used for two purposes: a) to visually present planning data; and, b) to clarify the data used for the development of action strategies in the master plan that result in the allocation of resources for planned improvements. Following is the series of maps that tell the Platte County story:

- Map 1 the location of natural resources such as watersheds
- Map 2 the location of natural resource vegetation
- Map 3 the location of County parkland
- Map 4 parks provided by others
- Map 5 the location by density of the Platte County population
- Map 6 existing trail segments and published trails plans
- Map 7 water trails on the Platte River
- Map 8 water trails on the Missouri River.
- Map 9 the County's planned trail segments
- Map 10 potential river launching locations.









The most prominent natural features in the county are waterways, namely, the Missouri River, Platte River, and Bee Creek. The Parks and Recreation Department has already placed much emphasis on the development of water trails and land trails that parallel these rivers. This plan calls for the continuance of that development to create a more comprehensive system of trails throughout the county.







Platte ounty & Recreation Park System Master Plan Legend County Boundarie County Parks Tree-Covered Areas MAP **Natural Resources: Vegetation**

Many strategic locations in the county, especially along the principal rivers, are tree-covered. This vegetation is primarily deciduous type trees. This creates more opportunities for the Parks and Recreation Department to develop shaded trail routes, such as the one pictured below in the Prairie Creek Greenway.








Platte County currently has seven developed and operating parks facilities which offer a wide variety of active and passive recreational opportunities, including baseball, softball, youth soccer, basketball, tennis, shooting, multi-use trails, picnicking, as well as other activities. With its newly acquired land, the County plans to expand its services in response to citizen needs.









Platte ount Park System Master Plan Lenend Other Providers Parks by All Providers I DIGITION I

Additional providers of recreation in Platte County include the City of Kansas City, Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri State Parks and other local municipalities. The Parks and Recreation Department is partnering with these agencies to enhance recreation for residents of the county.









The majority of Platte County's population lives in the southern portion of the county, roughly defined by the MO Hwy 152 corridor.







The County currently has 15 miles of trails, including the Southern Platte Pass, the Missouri Riverfront Trail, the Prairie Creek Greenway, and the Weston Bluffs Trail. Connecting and adding to these trails is one of the Parks and Recreation Department's highest priorities during the life of this plan.











The Parks and Recreation Department is planning to increase the miles of trails in the county by 2030. The map above shows planned segments and their level priority. The highest priorities are connecting the Prairie Creek Greenway to the Platte River and completing the Southern Platte "Loop" by connecting the Missouri Riverfront Trail and Southern Platte Pass.







The Missouri River, designated as the Lewis and Clark River Trail, is an important waterway for recreation. The current access point from the Missouri side is English Landing Park in the City of Parkville. However, the County has acquired property along the river near English Landing Park that will be used for access in the future to replace the existing location. Access is needed in the future along other northern reaches of the river.





Park System Master Plan





"The 'short term' planning process should focus on dissemination of public information about water trail opportunities. This is the quickest and most cost effective method to increase public awareness and to encourage utilization of water trail resources. Lots can be done now with little money. The 'long term' planning process should evaluate and explore the needs for riverfront access acquisition, restrooms, parking, boat ramps and other site infrastructure requirements."

> – Don Breckon Water Trails Focus Group December 2, 2008

The Platte River is an important waterway in the county. The entire length of the river within the county can be floatable on a seasonal basis and depending upon water stages. It borders three parks that have ramp access, and there are an additional four access points distributed across the length of the river.

existing MDC boat launch at Humphrey's Access near Platte City



Platte County Parks and Recreation









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Community Involvement Process

INTRODUCTION

Important to the planning process is the feedback provided by citizens. In fact, as priority projects are considered in this report, emphasis will be given to those projects which were mentioned in each of the citizen involvement venues and high priority will be given to those needs that citizens said were most important to them in each of the venues; e.g. focus groups, public meetings, citizen survey, steering committee meetings, citizen team meetings, park board meetings, etc.

One of the most important *values* upon which the goals in the initial parks and recreation master plan were developed in 2000 and updated in 2009 was that it be *citizen-focused*. As stated by County Commissioners and staff, Platte County will continue to actively involve its citizens in the success of the park system and constantly communicate the benefits and services provided through parks and recreation.

The Approach

The approach to actively engage citizens in the 2009 update was very dynamic and included approximately 4,000 people. It included ten types of opportunities and options so that citizens could select the best way for them to express their preferences. Each of the opportunities and options is detailed below:

Individual Interviews of Key Stakeholders – The first step in the process was to interview County Commissioners and staff of the Parks and Recreation Department. The importance of these interviews as the first step was to ensure that the consultant team was knowledgeable of the key issues facing the Department. Awareness of the key issues was important as the consultant prepared for all subsequent community involvement meetings.

Statistically Valid Citizen Survey – A "Community Attitude and Interest Survey" was distributed to 2,000 randomly selected households in the summer of 2008. From that distribution, 405 surveys were returned. The results from the returned surveys provided decision-makers with statistically reliable data at a confidence level of 95% and a precision of +/- 4.9%. In other words, if the survey was done 100 times, the same results would be returned 95 times within a range of +/- 4.9%. All survey results are in the Appendix of this report.

Second Statistically Valid Citizen Survey – In April 2009 a second follow up survey was conducted to test the key goals of the preliminary master plan. Again, the survey was conducted to yield statistically valid results with a confidence level of approximately 95%. The survey questionnaire was sent to a combination of both citizens who had completed the first survey and a new sample pool of residents who had not previously participated. The results of the second survey indicated strong citizen support for key elements such as trails development, open space protection, and indoor recreation programs through the community centers. Citizens also expressed strong support for renewing the ½ cent parks and recreation sales tax, with 76% of residents either "very

"The number one question we get from prospective residents is: 'Where is the pool and amenities center?'"

> – Developers Roundtable Focus Group November 14, 2008











supportive" or "somewhat supportive", a 4% increase over the first survey conducted in August 2008.

Citizen Team Meetings – Members of the Citizens Team included active and knowledgeable stakeholders from all geographic areas of the County. The advantage of meeting with this group was to ensure that geographic preferences were made known to the consultant team.

Steering Committee Meetings – Members of the Steering Committee included County Commissioners and senior staff of the Parks and Recreation Department. The advantage of meeting with this group was to ensure that all phases of the planning process (the public involvement process, responsiveness to urgent issues, political ramifications, etc.) were in alignment with the vision of the group.

Public Meetings (Open Houses) – On two occasions, the public-at-large was invited to attend an Open House – one at the County Courthouse in Platte City and the other at the Community Center in Parkville. Each meeting was well attended by citizens who had an opportunity to visit with County Commissioners, Parks and Recreation Department Staff, Park Board Members, Citizen Team Members, Steering Committee Members, and Consultant Team Members. Comments were taken from citizens in a variety of ways; e.g. direct input into a computer, comment cards, and face to face communication.

Park Board – As appointed by the County Commission, members of the Park Board are entrusted with a very high level of responsibility as they work closely with Parks and Recreation Staff to develop policies which ensure that resources are being allocated in a manner which is consistent with the recommendations in this master plan update. The Park Board has been involved during this process as a "sounding board" as the plan has been developed.

Interactive Web Site – A web site (www.platteparks.org) was designed for the update of the master plan. The site was used to keep citizens informed by sharing meeting summaries from all meetings, by encouraging citizen feedback about their preferences, and for sharing various educational articles which served to educate the public about important elements of the park system.

Focus Groups – A very high level of emphasis was placed on focus group meetings. In fact, there were 26 during the planning process. Each focus group was carefully selected to ensure that special interest groups, existing partners, potential future partners, diverse age groups both young and old, and Federal and State Agencies were included. The three purposes for the focus groups were:

- to engage citizens in the process and create ownership
- to update attendees about the status of the master planning process with emphasis on the citizen survey results
- to learn about current projects that are going on around the County and to listen to their ideas and preferences regarding future parks and recreation needs in the community



Comment Cards – At each venue, Parks and Recreation Staff distributed comment cards for citizens to use to provide feedback. Comments were routinely placed on the platteparks.org website for review by those who submitted them and for others to be aware of.

Explorer Newsletter – The *Explorer* Newsletter is a tool used by the Parks and Recreation Department to directly email to those residents who choose to be on the distribution list. It is sent out four times annually to approximately 1,000 households in the County in addition to being posted on the website. Its purpose is to keep citizens informed about current events within the park system.



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CITIZEN SURVEY

Introduction

The Platte County Parks and Recreation Department conducted a Community Interest and Needs Survey during the summer of 2008 to establish priorities for the future development of parks and recreation facilities and services within the County. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results **from households throughout Platte County**. The survey was administered by a combination of mail and phone.

Leisure Vision worked extensively with Platte County officials and members of the BWR project team in the development of the survey questionnaire. This work allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future system.

Leisure Vision mailed surveys to a *random sample* of 2,000 households throughout Platte County. After the surveys were mailed each household received an electronic voice message and follow up phone calls encouraging them to complete the survey. Those who indicated they had <u>not</u> returned the survey were given the option of completing it by phone.

The goal was to obtain a total of at least 400 completed surveys from County households. This goal was accomplished, with a total of 405 surveys having been completed. The results of the sample of 405 households have a **95% level of confidence** with a precision of at least +/-4.9%.

Visitation of Platte County Parks, Trails and Recreation Facilities.

Seventy-three percent (73%) of households have visited at least one Platte County park, trail or recreation facility during the past year. This is higher than the national benchmarking average of 70%. The County facilities visited by the highest percentage of households are: Platte County Community Centers/YMCA's (40%), Springs Aquatic Center (29%) and Weston Bluffs Trails (23%).

Recreation amenities within Platte County parks and recreation centers that have been visited by the highest percentage of households are:

- walking and hiking trails (48%)
- swimming pools/playgrounds (35%)
- fitness centers (30%)
- playgrounds (30%)

Need for parks and recreation facilities

The parks and recreation facilities that the highest percentage of households

"Your survey looks right on with our own beliefs"

– Developers Roundtable Focus Group November 14, 2008







have a **need for** are walking, hiking and biking trails (77%), picnicking areas and shelters (61%), nature trails and nature interpretive areas (61%), and indoor fitness and exercise facilities (60%).

Need for recreation programs

The programs that the highest percentage of households have a need for:

- adult fitness and wellness programs (54%)
- music and culture festivals (47%)
- family recreation outdoor adventure programs (36%)

MOST important department functions

Based on the sum of their top four choices, the function that residents feel it's most important for the Platte County Parks and Recreation Department to provide are:

- operating and maintaining County parks and facilities (62%)
- providing safe and secure facilities and programs (61%)
- providing opportunities for passive activities (45%)
- providing and maintaining nature areas and conservations areas (41%)

Options for open space

The most preferred options for acquiring and developing open space of County residents are: acquire open space along rivers and streams for recreation, conservation, and to protect water quality (59%), and acquire open space to improve for passive recreation use (48%).

Benefits of parks and recreation facilities that are most important to the Future of Platte County

Based on the sum of their top three choices, the benefits received from parks that are most important to the future of Platte County are: they make Platte County a more desirable place to live (50%), increases property values (36%), and preserves open space and the environment (31%).

Quick Looks

- The most frequently mentioned ways that residents learn about County Parks and Recreation programs and activities are from friends and neighbors (59%).
- The single *most popular* recreational facility in the County, visited most often, is Parkville's English Landing Park (51%).
- Eighty-six percent (86%) of respondents feel it's very important (62%) or somewhat important (24%) for Platte County to work in partnership with cities and non-profits in the County to provide parks and recreation programs.
- Future Funding: 72% of Platte County residents favor extending, in some form, the dedicated Parks and Recreation Sales Tax.



Citizen Input

Prioritizing Funding for Parks and Recreation Services

Residents would allocate \$33 out of \$100 to the maintenance/improvement of existing parks, trails and recreation facilities. The remaining \$67 were allocated as follows: build more walking and biking trails (\$21), development/improvement of indoor facilities (\$15), acquisition of new parkland and open space (\$14), development of new parks and recreation amenities (\$10) and construction of new sports fields (\$7).

Second Citizen Survey Results

In April 2009 the Parks and Recreation Department again worked with Leisure Vision and BWR to conduct a second citizen survey to "test" the results of the first survey and the preliminary goals of the plan that had been developed. The survey was sent to a combination of Platte County residents who had participated in the first survey as well as those who had not. The results were very similar between the two groups, both expressing continued strong support for the key goals of the plan.

- Trails & Open Space: 75% of Platte County residents were either "very supportive" (45%) or "somewhat supportive" (30%) of developing new walking and biking trails in the County. The greatest opportunities to develop these paths are along our waterways in Platte County, including the Missouri and Platte Rivers. 73% of residents were either "very supportive" (44%) or "somewhat supportive" (29%) of the county acquiring up to 500 acres of open space for parks and trails.
- Park Amenities: Passive recreational opportunities in parks continue to be a priority for County residents when asked about their preferences for new facilities for children. 63% believe more playgrounds should be built, while 61% of residents believe more family picnic areas and walking paths should be built at area parks.
- Community Centers: Residents continued to show strong support for enhancing recreation and wellness programs through the community centers. 76% of residents were either "very supportive" (43%) or "somewhat supportive" (33%) of expanding the existing centers and studying the development of a third center to address increased growth in Platte County.
- Funding: Residents were asked about their willingness to continue funding parks and recreation through the half-cent dedicated sales tax. Support was strong, with 76% reported being supportive of a 10 year extension.





"We need to keep Platte County kids playing here."

> – Chris Seibenmorgan Youth Sports and Recreation Programs Focus Group November 18, 2008

"Our parks help us build community."

– NE Area Focus Group October 7, 2008

"Our neighborhoods are only as strong as our parks."

– Mike Lacey, CT Member, May 28, 2008

Focus Groups

Groups who participated included the Business Community, Developers, Youth Sports, groups with special interests and expertise on the topic of sustainability, Senior Citizens, Dog Parks, West Platte Students, Park Hill South Students, Platte County Students, Water Trails, Trails, Equine, Performing & Visual Arts, Park Hill Students, North Platte Students, and Community Recreation.

Following the discussion by each Focus Group of potential new park projects that could be considered in the new master plan, each group was asked to rank in priority order their preferences.

The table below represents the park improvement types, the total points awarded by all participating groups, and the priority ranking.

Park Improvement Type	Total Points	Priority Ranking
Natural Resource Protection	123	1
Trails	113	2
Community Parks	112	3
Community Centers	106	4
Indoor Sports Center	105	5
Youth Sports (outdoor)	97	6
Swimming Pools	86	7
Dog Parks	58	8
Tennis	44	9
Extreme Sports	36	10

Table: Focus Group Priority Rankings



Citizen Input

FIRST OPEN HOUSE

Introduction

On September 30th, 2008, the Platte County Commission hosted an open house for the purpose of gaining feedback from citizens on the future of parks and recreation in Platte County.

Over eighty residents turned out to share their ideas and highest priorities with the Commission, parks staff, and members of the County Parks Board. In addition to sharing their comments, residents had the opportunity to note which potential future parks, trails, or recreation programs were most important to them (chart on right).

Summary

The input that was received was very diverse, from the need for new tennis courts, to more trails and programming for youth and seniors. The open house is one of many ways citizens are taking an active role in shaping the future of the parks system. For complete results and more information, visit the master plan website, www.platteparks.com.







Citizen Input







– Scott Schleisman Multi-use Trails Focus Group 12/2/08

Trails and Clean Water Issues...

Mega Themes:

- Seventeen citizens indicated the need to connect walking and bicycling trails around the County as their highest priority
- Thirteen citizens connected the need to protect our water quality and the opportunity to build trails along stream buffers for our creeks and rivers

Key Comments and Feedback:

- Feel good about water quality in streams today by Prairie Creek Greenway. Lots of water comes down the branch of I live by
- Country roads are dangerous for walking, biking, and running.
- Need Brush Creek Trail north to Tiffany Springs shared use path
- Maybe nature trail along bluffs near Farley
- Connection of trail system for safe biking and running
- Want to preserve streams because important to flood control.
- Connectivity of trials English Landing to Riverside West from English Landing along Missouri River – Parkville English Landing to Community Center South
- Platte River near Platte City would like to see walking trail along there
- Would like more nature trails like Prairie Creek Greenway scenic/wide
- Equestrian trails ride with other and do family rides coordinated rides
- Bee Creek Corridor preservation for trails and water quality since soybeans right up next to the creek
- Like the concept of streams doubling for floodways and trails
- Anytime you can get a trail near the river, it's great
- Line Creek trail for biking
- Want nature trail on west side of Parkville along the river towards 45 Hwy/ Weston. Bluffs are a great natural resource

Parks and Outdoor Recreation Issues...

Mega Themes:

- Nineteen residents expressed a priority need for new recreation amenities at local parks
- Five citizens commented on the importance of good MAINTENANCE and SAFETY at local parks

Key Comments and Feedback:

- Always like greenspace, trails and park for now and in future; very supportive of what you are doing
- If we have more open spaces set aside the other amenities will follow



- Minor improvements go a long way at Shiloh Springs.
- Maintain the ball field and walking trails that we have
- Small lake or large pond at West Platte Park
- New Parkville park soccer and boat areas
- Parkville river bottom would like to leave natural it could become a nature preserve/laboratory.
- Continue to maintain existing facilities at a high level. Promote new facilities to expand rec. options for families. We appreciate your concern and attention to have the best parks and rec. facilities and option of any county in the state
- Great job with the new facilities, keep pace with the growth of Platte County
- Average, but I've been to smaller communities with fewer financial resources that have much nicer parks with far more amenities. There is a huge need for facilities like tennis courts
- Nice parks but need football fields
- I like playgrounds more because you can climb on things
- and do more fun things
- Parks are good but they can be better; more restrooms
- I think we have excellent parks and facilities except we need an excellent skate park also. Every weekend, my friends and I meet with our kids and have to go to Penn Valley skate park

Community Centers, Health and Wellness Issues...

Mega Themes:

• Nine residents expressed strong support for expanding the northern community center and adding diverse indoor recreational amenities and facilities

Key Comments and Feedback:

- Indoor basketball and volleyball facility I-29 & 152
- more lap lanes at the community centers/YMCA
- Expand North Community Center
- Tennis courts & expand community center
- I enjoy the facilities
- Expand northern community center/ YMCA
- Indoor special needs facility inside and existing park
- It would be nice to have an indoor facility to be used by kids and adults. Young people in Platte County enjoy swimming.
- YMCA is too costly and wasn't built large enough to use in the busier times; want swimming lap lanes and there are just two.
- Great job with the new facilities, offer a variety of options (ice skating, trails, etc.)
- Shortage of ice sheets in Platte County and Kansas City metro area, hockey, figure skating and community public skating needs are underserved
- We need Hockey and Ice Skating. This is a sport enjoyed by people of all ages. Getting better every year. An Ice Rink would be an awesome and needed addition



Citizen Input

Citizen Input





Open House Attendees, in their own words...

"I would prefer the stability and assurance of a permanent tax to ensure the continued maintenance and development of a comprehensive park and trails system well into the future."

"Acquiring land for future park development and protecting the current park property would be my personal choices for resources."

"Would like to see the trails in place currently connecting up."

"Developing great emphases on water ways, their recreational value and value to the environment should also be a priority. Canoeing kayaking etc., protecting and enhancing these resources are a must."

SECOND OPEN HOUSE

Introduction

On March 3, 2009, the Platte County Commission hosted the second public open house for the update of the long range plan for parks and recreation. Over 50 residents turned out to see the draft goals and action strategies and give their comments.

"I was very pleased with the turnout" noted Platte County Commissioner Betty Knight, "we received many good comments on plans for things like trails and renewing the parks tax. I think we are on the right track".

Summary

At the meeting the County unveiled new "foundation principles" that will guide the future of the parks program. The top three areas under which all new initiatives will be based are:



providing health and wellness opportunities, and



creating new safe recreation places for children.

Specific action items such as increasing the miles of new trails (from 15 to 60) and expanding the community centers were also presented at the forum.

Surveys taken during the meeting showed strong support for a diverse set of goals for the Parks and Recreation Department. Out of thirty people responding to the survey, 97% agreed that the principles of the updated plan were on target (see next page) and 92% agreed that maintenance of county parks and facilities should be the absolute number one priority. Citizens attending the open house also agreed with the need to extend funding through the parks sales tax. 96% of responders said they were "very supportive" of a renewal of up to twenty years to continue the park program. This second open house is one of many ways citizens are taking an active role in shaping the future of the park system.





Question: Our foundational principles for the updated parks plan are to focus on protecting our natural resources, providing health and wellness opportunities, and to create safe recreation places for our kids. How much do you agree with these as the foundation for the parks plan?



Question: How important do you think it is for Platte County to make maintenance and safety at parks and recreational facilities our number one priority?







"Platte County Parks has totally changed the footprint of the Northland."

> – Business Roundtable Focus Group November 14, 2008

CITIZEN INPUT SUMMARY

The message sent by citizens in the citizen survey, focus groups, public meetings, and steering committees is clear and consistent. There is very strong support for three Guiding Principles; namely:

- protection of natural resources
- providing health and wellness opportunities
- creating safe recreation places for children

Representative projects which would respond to the three Guiding Principles would include:

- High level of maintenance for facilities
- land acquisition to protect natural resources while providing passive recreation opportunities such as trails and picnicking
- development of new trails (land and water based)
- expansion of the community park system
- expansion of indoor recreation opportunities

Citizens have expressed a willingness to invest financially in the park system as expressed in the statistically valid citizen survey and in the public involvement venues that were offered during the development of this master plan update.



INTRODUCTION

The culmination of the planning process has led to the development of a series of goals and action strategies that represent the County's Guiding Principles as shown below. Built on the premise that the Department of Parks and Recreation will provide leadership for the implementation of each goal by collaborating with others to leverage resources, by incorporating sustainable management and maintenance concepts into each project, and by continuing to actively solicit citizen input into the key initiatives that are spelled out in this master plan, the Platte County Park System in 2030 will represent the "preferred future" that has been envisioned since the initial master plan was developed in 2000.

The funding and development of projects included in the Park System Master Plan are about to become a reality. In that regard, we will:



Protect our natural resources



Provide health and wellness opportunities



Create safe recreation places for children









Guiding Principle: Protect Natural Resources

Goal: Protect Platte County open space by acquiring land for conservation and recreation

Action Strategies:



Protect a minimum of 400 acres of open space in perpetuity; work with community partners to protect more



Seek out best opportunities which promote the conservation of open space in areas under development pressure, are of unique natural value, and will help protect the clean waters of Platte County



Pursue land acquisitions that will enhance opportunities for community parks and passive recreation areas





Guiding Principle: Protect Natural Resources

Goal: Protect and improve water quality and stormwater infrastructure to promote a healthy, sustainable community

Action Strategies:



Seek opportunities to protect property along Platte County streams and rivers through acquisition and conservation easements



Incorporate water quality environmentally friendly planning and materials in new park projects



Continue Stormwater Program with funding through dedicated tax; continue the Stormwater Grant Program



Proactively seek to protect public infrastructure, public safety, public lands, and environmentally sensitive areas from damage due to flooding, stormwater erosion, and infrastructure failure



Actively seek multi-benefit parks, public works, and stormwater projects that protect our natural resources and utilize Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMP's)



Provide education and access to programs such as the Household Hazardous Wastes Collection Program, Platte County Green Build Program and other programs which seek to protect our water quality









GUIDING PRINCIPLE: PROVIDE HEALTH AND Wellness Opportunities

Goal: Expand greenway trails network

Action Strategy:



- Increase miles of new trails for walking, running, and bicycling through priority, interconnected corridors including:
 The southern Platte County "loop" of the Missouri Riverfront Trail, the Brush Creek Greenway, Southern Platte Pass (along 45 Hwy) and the Line Creek Trail
 - Platte River Greenway Trails
 - Prairie Creek and Bee Creek Greenway Trails





Guiding Principle: Provide Health and Wellness Opportunities

Goal: Create new trail experiences

Action Strategy:

- Collaborate with the private sector, cities and the State of Missouri to facilitate enhanced public access to priority trail locations and conservation areas to create a diverse network of pathways in the county including:
 - bridle (horse) trails
 - paddle (canoe/kayak) trails
 - backpacking trails
 - mountain bike paths



"Platte County residents that are equestrian trail riders have to trailer their horses to locations outside of Platte County in order to enjoy public equestrian trails."

– Leslie French Equestrians Focus Group December 2, 2008



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Guiding Principle: Provide Health and Wellness Opportunities

Goal: Enhance community parks

Action Strategies:



- Continue the development of large community parks with high value amenities:
 - Special areas for music and arts
 - Trails
 - Picnic areas
 - Playgrounds
 - Dog parks
 - Fishing areas
 - Un-programmed open space and special areas for music, arts, and cultural heritage sites

Continue to implement the existing individual park site master plans at Platte Ridge, Green Hills, and Platte Purchase

existing individual park site master plans will be revisited and updated as needed with new priorities identified in this master planning process

Evaluate opportunities and create new master plans for community parks at existing land-banked, county-owned parkland:

- new parkland west of English Landing Park in Parkville
- 52nd and Northwood Road near Riverside
- P Hwy and Spratt Road near Weston



"Maintenance has to be our number one priority."

> – Youth Sports and Recreation Programs Focus Group November 18, 2008

> > Platte County Parks and Recreation



Guiding Principle: Provide Health and Wellness Opportunities

Goal: Ease crowding at Community Centers and plan for long-term growth

Action Strategies:



Study expansion opportunities for existing facilities to address community growth and evolving needs

• Priority elements: dedicated aerobics rooms, flex/meeting room space, a larger gymnasium, and aquatics (family leisure and lap lanes)



Study the feasibility of new facilities to ease overcrowding at existing facilities and plan for long term growth

Priority Elements: wellness/cardio area, indoor family leisure pool with lap lanes, aerobics space, flex/meeting room space, walking track, gymnasium













"I think Shiloh Springs is good for the long term future of Platte County."

– Shiloh Springs Focus Group June 18, 2008

Guiding Principle: Provide Health and Wellness Opportunities

Goal: Improve Shiloh Springs Golf Club

Action Strategy:



Provide a value-oriented, well maintained golf facility offering high quality recreational programs which produces revenue to offset operating and capital expenses.

- Excellent customer service and diverse golf programs
- High quality maintenance and playing conditions
- A financial framework for long term success with funding for course improvements and a capital equipment replacement program





Guiding Principle: Create Safe Recreation Places for Children

Goal: Create new recreational facilities designed especially for Platte County youth

Action Strategies:



- Expand outdoor parks and recreational facilities for kids including:
 - Underserved organized youth sports such as soccer and football
 - Diverse interactive facilities that support lifetime learning and wellness (e.g. interactive playgrounds and lifetime sports)



Participate with partners to further study the need and feasibility of new indoor facilities which benefit children (e.g. sports centers, ice rinks, and competitive pools)





"Providing more opportunities for our children is the best thing we can do to improve economic development, from an employer standpoint, in Platte County."

> – Business Roundtable Focus Group November 14, 2008





Guiding Principle: Create Safe Recreation Places for Children

Goal: Support positive sports and wellness programs that promote active learning and provide youth mentoring opportunities

Action Strategies:



Collaborate with community partners to enhance a diverse network of opportunities for Platte County youth. Identify best opportunities for offering programs focusing on lifetime learning (e.g. sports, wellness, arts, culture)



Create a "sports commission" type cooperative and study new opportunities to share information, promote collaboration between community organizations, and the development of more enhanced opportunities for children





Sustainable

To achieve our goals, we will create a sustainable park system, providing maintenance and security of parks and facilities at levels that meet and exceed citizen expectations and incorporate green solutions into each phase of the park/facility development process

ACTION STRATEGIES

- Renew the dedicated parks sales tax
- Leverage other resources required to provide for the long term maintenance needs of the county operated parks and facilities
- Work with the Sheriff's Department and other emergency response agencies to continue patrols of park facilities and develop a safety audit and security program. Increase visibility of staff and security patrols in parks
- Develop and enforce adopted park planning, construction, maintenance, and operation standards which address citizen expectations for daily conditions and all possible types of energy saving measures
- Provide training and resources for maintenance staff and develop a five-year equipment budget



"Platte County is setting a high standard relative to regional leadership on green issues; others are monitoring what we are doing and wanting to catch up".

– Steve Rhoades, Partnerships and Sustainability Focus Group November 12, 2008







COLLABORATIVE

To achieve our goals, we will actively seek partners who share a common vision for the joint pursuit of quality projects and programs of which citizens are most supportive

ACTION STRATEGIES

- Expand the Outreach Grant Program
- Leverage sales tax proceeds with partner contributions and state, federal and private sector grants
- Establish standards for collaboration with partners for facilities and programs
- Create a volunteer corps and support programs to engage the community and create personal ownership in the park system





CITIZEN-FOCUSED

To achieve our goals, we will always stay citizen-focused and actively involve citizens in the success of the park system and constantly communicate the benefits and services provided through parks and recreation

ACTION STRATEGIES

- Promote the value and benefit of the park system to our quality of life
- Partner with the business community to promote health, wellness and quality of life benefits of parks and recreation and including the economic impact resulting from a strong park program
- Prioritize citizen involvement as a high need through the Parks Board and regular public participation and feedback opportunities and the development of performance measures to gauge satisfaction
- Increase visibility/awareness of County park facilities and programs through a comprehensive outreach/communications program taking advantage of such opportunities as quarterly park-specific newsletters and other print and photo media








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Platte County has made many accomplishments since 2000 in the parks program, including the acquisition of 880 acres of protected open space, construction of 15 miles of trails, a partnership for a 22,000 sq. ft. outdoor aquatics center, the development of 90,000 sq. ft. of indoor recreation space, \$4.5 Million in clean water/flood control projects, \$1.8 Million awarded in Outreach Grants, and \$20.6 Million total partnership contributions to parks projects in the County.

This updated Master Plan is based upon *citizen preferences and needs* for parks, trails, recreation facilities and open space in the County. The Plan will be a valuable tool to help guide the allocation of resources as the County strives to enhance livability for citizens and for attracting *future* residents and visitors.

The Park System Master Plan is a citizen-driven guide for the Parks and Recreation Department to follow and will provide a proactive approach for responsible development and management of the park system. The Master Plan identifies many needs and challenges. As in the past (since 2000), it will require an ongoing commitment by the County Commissioners, the volunteer Board of Park Commissioners, Parks and Recreation Department staff, and key stakeholders to advocate for the updated Plan. However, as has been seen and often noted in various meetings in the County, the benefits are enormous and worth the effort. Platte County is already an attractive destination and its exceptional quality of life will be reaffirmed and further enhanced when this Plan is implemented.

The citizens of Platte County have provided clear direction for the development of the updated master plan. Now is the time to advance the citizens wishes and to begin implementation of the new plan.

METHODOLOGY FOR PRIORITIZATION OF OUR RESOURCES

The Platte County Park System has evolved over a period of approximately nine years. Based on citizen preferences for taking care of the parks and facilities that have been constructed during that time and for new project needs, a method for evaluating and categorizing projects has been developed which will guide the allocation of resources as they are received from sales tax revenues, program fees, and other leveraged sources. Percentages and priority categories are used in this plan to maintain consistent allocation of resources, regardless of source. Project scopes developed within this plan are based upon citizen priorities, estimated costs to implement the plan, and projected funding over a ten year period from all sources, including renewal of the parks sales tax. Funding estimates are based on anticipated 2009 revenues with an estimated 3% growth rate, and an estimated future obligation to Tax Increment Financing of 12.5% annually. As new resources are identified they can be allocated in increasing amounts to the highest citizen needs such as trails and the protection of additional open space.







"The County needs to continue funding parks and recreation services as (cities) are not able to keep pace, own aumission, with amenities and quality of life services that are needed in Platte County."

– Community Recreation Focus Group, December 18, 2008



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community (County) whose profile is represented by:

- a rapidly expanding population base that is projected to increase by 20,000 people during the life of this Plan making it one of the fastest growing counties in the Midwest
- a household income that is capable of financially supporting the sales tax required to implement the Plan
- a community who consistently expects high standards from their government, dictating that the proposals and projects in this Plan are representative of their expressed needs for recreational options
- a community whose support for protecting the environment is clear, especially for clean water
- a community whose support for providing opportunities for individual citizens to be healthy is clear
- a community whose support for providing opportunities for children to grow in an environment that is safe, fun, and educational is clear

Implementation



EVALUATION FILTERS AND FUNDING CATEGORIES

Evaluation Filters

The evaluation filters through which all project-related discussions, prioritization, and funding should flow are listed below. At the core of these filters is the *GUIDING PRINCIPLE* of the Parks and Recreation Department that each be *citizen focused, sustainable, and collaborative*. It is clear from the planning process that each of these filters represents the vision that citizens share for their park system. The filters are:

- <u>Citizen preferences</u> As expressed and supported in the statistically valid survey, focus groups, public meetings, steering committee meetings, Park Board, and the political process.
- <u>Geographic considerations</u> Relationship between the project and the location where the majority of users live, with balance across the county so that all shall benefit
- <u>Life cycle of the program</u> Evaluation of the popularity of the program to determine if it is growing, stable/mature, or declining.
- <u>Demographics</u> Assessment of demographic characteristics that will affect the success of the project, including age, household income, ethnicity, education, and gender.
- <u>Facilities provided by the County and others</u> Availability of facilities provided by the County and others such as the private sector, churches, schools, and not-for-profits (YMCA). For new initiatives requiring substantial investment, the project or program meet established standards for county participation.
- <u>Best practices in the park and recreation profession</u> Consideration of the successes of others who are highly regarded in the profession throughout the United States.
- <u>Quality of life</u> Consideration for equitable citizen access to quality parks and facilities. Evaluation of proposed projects or programs to significantly contribute to our quality of life.



Implementation





Funding Categories

A series of four categories have been developed which are used to segment projects according to their priority and alignment with the importance placed by citizens on the maintenance of existing facilities before building new ones and meeting current and future needs for open space protection, health and wellness and opportunities for children.

The four project categories are listed below:

- Category 1 Funding to maintain and improve what we have and continue partnership programs
- Category 2 Funding for more open space protection and development of highest priority facilities including extension of greenway trails network and indoor recreational opportunities
- Category 3 Funding to expand the existing parks system and create new opportunities for children and families
- Category 4 Funding to respond to trends and new visions

Principle Correlation

Each new or continued effort by the Platte County Parks and Recreation Department recommended by this Master Plan must be consistent with the stated foundational principles of the Plan. Therefore, as the Plan is implemented, it will be important for staff and elected leaders to track the progress of each area to keep new initiatives consistent with what the citizens of Platte County have said is most important to them. The following key will be used to track each project/program back to the principle (macro area) in the Master Plan it will support and advance.

NR – Natural Resource Protection Principle

HW – Health and Wellness Principle

YO – Youth Opportunities (Providing Safe Recreation Places for Children Principle)

Su – Sustainability Principle

Co – Collaborative Principle

Ci – Citizen Focus Principle



Table: Funding Priorities by Category

Project, Priority, Primary Master Plan Principle(s) Served, and Resource Allocation %

Category 1 – Funding to maintain and improve what we have

(existing parks, trails, community centers, and stormwater programs)			
Maintenance and operation of existing parks and trails	Very High	Su/Ci	14.5%
Community Center capital maintenance & replacement	Very High	Su/ HW	3.25%
 Stormwater Program Stormwater Infrastructure Grants to local communities & organizations 	Very High	Su/ Co	8.5%
Outreach Grant Program, expanded to include maint.	Very High	Co/ YO	3.25%
Shiloh Springs capital maintenance & replacement	High	Su	1.5%
Catagory 2 Euroding to protect more open space and for development of			

Category 2 – Funding to protect more open space and for development of highest priority facilities including extension of trails network and indoor recreational opportunities

(next segment/phase and new opportunities; land acquisition)

		- /	
Trails and Open Space (30+ trail miles; 400 acres protected open space)	High	NR/ HW	24%
Acquire additional 350 acres (minimum) along streams through Stormwater Program can also accommodate passive recreation	High	NR/ Su	1.5%
Expand/enhance existing Community centers	High	HW/ YO	16.5%

Category 3 – Funding to expand the existing parks system and create new opportunities for children and families

(new parks, diverse trails, youth facilities, an	d high value p	orograms)	
New community parks and amenities (land			
banked)	.		
West of English Landing Park	High to Medium	HW/ Ci	4%
• 52nd & Northwood Road near Riverside	Wiedlum		
• P Highway and Spratt Road near Weston			

Implementation





Implement next phase at existing parks; e.g.			
 Picnic areas and shelters Amphitheaters & areas for music and arts Dog Park (s) Diverse trails & natural areas Children's playgrounds Sports areas 	High to Medium	NR/ YO	4%
New outdoor youth parks and facilities Soccer/football complex Playgrounds & outdoor educational facilities 	High to Medium	YO/ HW	6.75%
Partnership Grant Program renewed	High	Co/Ci	1.5%
Complete Purchase/Development Shiloh Springs	High	HW	4.75%
 (partnership projects with potential county and established criteria) Reserve/New Opportunities Fund Competitive aquatic facilities & leisure pools Indoor ice rinks 	Must be High for County to	6%; Funds sit in reserve until unique, highly leveraged opportunities are available; funds can be reallocated to existing	
 Indoor ice mixs Tennis complexes Extreme Sports; e.g. skatepark, BMX Bike Track/cycle park, In-line skating Facilities unique to Missouri/region 	participate; Low if no partnerships are available meeting established	leverage opportu are avai funds ca realloca	highly ed nities lable; an be ted

ESTIMATE OF PROJECT COSTS

The Appendix of this report contains cost estimates for planned improvements, MINUS the infrastructure costs.

For some of the planned improvements, it is possible that infrastructure costs will be the most expensive component and those costs cannot be calculated until a specific site is selected. Upon site selection, the designer can determine the proximity of utilities, grading requirements, etc.





Protection of natural resources is a Guiding Principle of this master plan and fully supported by citizens in Platte County. It is the intention of the strategies in this plan to achieve balanced and sustainable growth by the actions that are recommended.

Vision

The future of the Platte County Open Space System is envisioned as a series of natural, interconnected landscapes that protect environmental resources that are critical to the well-being of county residents and most importantly the creeks and rivers that supply fresh water. The Plan establishes four important and inter-related activities for open space conservation:

- identify key parcels of land and corridors that should be acquired and protected as open space
- recommend, and/or, recognize regulatory programs that improve the protection of resources that safeguard public health, safety and welfare
- establish a land stewardship program to manage open space resources

Goal

One goal of the plan is to eventually protect areas within the **"locations of importance"** and the **"priority opportunities"** as defined below. To accomplish this target, the County will need to partner with cities and the State of Missouri to reach agreement on its importance, intent, and cooperation as a basis upon which a consolidated county-wide open space plan will knit together the resources of each partner to form an interconnected greenprint.

Conservation Strategies

A **first step** in the approach to this conservation strategy is to prioritize land for acquisition. Using Platte County's Geographic Information System (G.I.S.) and previously completed work done by the Mid America Regional Council (MARC), it is possible to identify the most highly desired open space lands in the County. Criteria used to prioritize land acquisition includes areas that protect water supply, limit exposure to flooding, support water contact recreation, improve access to outdoor resources, and protect wetlands and unique species of plants and animals native to the County.

A important second step is already in place in Platte County. Managed by the Planning & Zoning Department, there is a Land Use Policy which was adopted to protect land that is already subject to flooding from rainstorm events. Using data from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), it is possible to regulate future development and building within these flood prone lands. This action would conserve more important natural resource areas as protected open space in Platte County.

"The good Lord is makin' more people, but He aint makin' no more land." - Will Rogers





PROTECTED OPEN SPACE TARGET

As the County and its partners embrace this Open Space Strategy, the target will be achieved by the accumulation of land in several categories as detailed in the table below.

Table: Existing and Future, Public and Private Platte CountySystem of Protected Open Space

Open Space Category	Existing Acreage	Future Acreage (40-50 year plan)
Platte County owned parks and open space areas	1,293	1,000 (min)
	MDC – 4,861	
Other Public Parks and	MDNR – 1,133	To Be Determined
Conservation Areas (city/state)	KCMO – 1,724	by Partners, but likely very limited
	Other Cities - 225	
Stream Buffers/Open Space protected through private development	242	9,333
Parklands protected through private development	255	288
Sub-total	9,733	10,621
Total Platte County Acreage		273,188
Percentage of Total Acreage	3.57%	7.5% (combined)

Source: Platte County Planning and Zoning Department

LOCATIONS OF IMPORTANCE

Identified as areas of importance to the protection of natural resources are:

- Floodplain of the Missouri River and tributaries
- Areas identified by municipalities or MARC for trails and open space corridors
- Woodland dominated land

PRIORITY OPPORTUNITIES

Current opportunities that should be explored to advance the Open Space Plan have been identified below. In many of these instances, the preferred scenario would be for partners to acquire land while the County implements its Open Space Plan with outcomes that are detailed in this chapter; e.g. trails, development of passive parks to protect natural resources and habitat for wildlife.



- The Line Creek Corridor with the City of Kansas City, MO
- The Highway 45 corridor with land acquisition assistance from MODOT
- In Parkville, privately owned land Brush Creek that parallels I-435
- The Tiffany Springs Corridor with assistance needed from the Kansas City Aviation Department
- The Platte River and Missouri River west of Parkville
- The Missouri River floodplain on the south side of Parkville from the English Landing Park to I-435
- The Prairie Creek Corridor
- The Bee Creek Corridor

Definitions

As resources are applied through 2020 and beyond to the land acquisition component of the Open Space Plan, it is important to recognize and define the uniqueness of Platte County's Open Space Vision. Detailed below are definitions that are applicable to the intentions of this planning document:

- **Greenways** are corridors of linear open space managed for conservation, recreation, and alternative transportation. They follow linear landscape features such as rivers, streams, canals, railroads, utility easements or country roads. The purpose of a greenway is to link parks, nature preserves, cultural features, historic sites and other known destination attractions with each other and with communities, while improving air and water quality. Furthermore, it is to link these places or destinations together through a system of trails at both a local and regional scale, when possible.
- **Trails** are paths used for walking, bicycling, rollerblading, horseback riding or alternative transportation. Greenways often include trails, pathways, boardwalks, bicycle paths and bicycle lanes from rural to urban areas. As a greenway transitions from the suburbs to the town it may change from a dirt path to an asphalt trail to a bike lane that is part of existing roadway. All of these can be segments of the same greenway.
- Natural Resource Protection/Environmental Conservation The conservation of natural resources is of great importance to the people of Platte County. Development in parks that are set aside for the protection of natural resources should be minimal with at least *two thirds* of the land designated as conservation areas. Preserving this land will protect riparian habitats and may possibly ensure survival of several vulnerable species of plants and animals.
- Active Parks are intended to either be a special use park such as a sports complex like the one at Platte Ridge Park; or, an Active Park may be 20% to 30% of a passive park/environmental conservation area. Typical amenities in an active park, other than an athletic complex, might be a *trail, small or large pavilion, playground, and sprayground.*
- **Passive Parks** will be synonymous in this master plan with Natural Resource Protection/Environmental Conservation Areas. It is the intention that **none of these parks will be developed more than 70% for active purposes** as described above in the definition of Active Parks. An acceptable amenity in land adjacent to a passive park is a *Dog Park*.





Open Space Plan







Value and Importance - The value and importance of partnerships has been recognized by virtually every author and practitioner in the park and recreation profession as well as the "father of modern management", Peter Drucker, who once was quoted as saying that long term solutions to problems will only be possible through effective partnerships.

Partnerships are in their infancy - A relatively new concept in the profession, its importance, issues, and opportunities were only officially analyzed by leaders in the National Recreation and Park Association in 1995 when an article was published in the *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*.

Definition - Partnerships have become a widespread component of park and recreation service systems, just like Platte County. One definition cited by many authors is that a partnership is an umbrella term that includes agreements, cooperative ventures, joint arrangements, alliances, collaborations, coalitions, and work forces.

Partnership Types - There are three basic types of partnerships:

- public/private
- public/public
- public/not-for-profit

Best Practices – At the most basic level, good partnerships are possible when the two parties share a common vision, a vision which is clearly defined, and a vision that is perceived as a priority to all of the participating organizations. If this initial "filter" has been met, there must be a *formal contract* as detailed below and acknowledgement of the *four characteristics* that must be present to have a successful long-term arrangement:

- Formal Contract If it has been determined that the participating partners share a common vision, a formal contract must be signed by each. The contract will include key information such as:
 - contact information
 - age group served
 - official start/end date of the agreement
 - desired outcomes, how measured, by whom, and when by each partner
 - dollar value contributions by each partner
 - expected revenue by each partner
 - ongoing communication method
 - insurance requirements
 - other general agreement terms
- Personal Characteristics Although most partnerships are designed at the organizational level, they are implemented at the personal level. It is critical to have the right mix of people and must include strong leaders who are committed to the partnership cause.



Partnerships





- Interpersonal Characteristics The success or failure of partnerships hinges on interactions between individuals. Each partner must participate in the sharing of information, be an active listener, and be direct rather than vague. From these characteristics, a level of trust should develop over time.
- Organizational Characteristics The commitment must be expressed by each partner by ensuring that staff is available when needed and that other resources are also made available within the structure of the formal agreement that has been signed by each party.
- Operational Characteristics All partnerships must be managed. To that end, it is important that a regularly scheduled meeting between the participants be held to make sure that everything is in order; namely, that the agreement has resulted in a win/win situation for each.

FINDINGS

Formal Contracts – The Parks and Recreation Department does have a formal partnership agreement that is signed by both parties.

Project Results – Since the creation of the Parks and Recreation Department in 2001, the use of bond revenue has resulted in:

- 880 acres of protected parks and open space, mostly funded by the County and significant assistance by partners for supervision, maintenance, and management
- 15 miles of shared use trails, that are mostly funded by the County and often maintained by partners
- 90,000 sq. ft. of indoor recreation space which was funded by the County and managed by the YMCA
- 22,000 sq. ft. of outdoor aquatics which was partially funded by the County and managed by the Kansas City, Missouri Department of Parks and Recreation
- \$1.6 Million in Outreach Grants to cities in the County for a variety of parks and athletic facilities
- \$20.6 Million in partnership contributions

Current Partnership Opportunities – The success of the projects detailed above has sparked significant interest in the completion of many of those projects and for new projects. Often mentioned during the planning process are:

- trails of all types in collaboration with the private sector, cities, and the State of Missouri
- positive sports and wellness programs that promote active learning and provide youth mentoring opportunities such as sports, wellness, arts, and culture
- creation of a "sports commission" type organization and new opportunities to share information, to promote collaboration between community organizations, and the development of more enhanced opportunities for children





- development of new recreational facilities that are designed for children such as underserved youth sports of soccer and football
- development of diverse interactive facilities that support lifetime learning and wellness such as interactive playgrounds and lifetime sports such as tennis
- possible need for signature indoor facilities which benefit children such as sports centers, ice rinks, and competitive pools
- the need for safety and security by partnering with the Sheriff's Department and other law enforcement agencies to continue patrol of park facilities and develop a safety audit and security program while increasing visibility of staff and security in the park system
- the need to partner with the business community to promote health, wellness, and quality of life benefits such as economic benefits resulting from a strong park program
- the need to leverage sales tax proceeds with partner contributions and state, federal, and private sector grants

Specific Partner Conditions – Many partners have specific conditions that must be met prior to entering into an agreement with the County. For example:

- The Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Conditions stated by this partner include:
 - the agency must have an interest in the project
 - the project must have a high natural resource integrity
- The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) Conditions stated by this partner include:
 - core mission is fish, forest, and wildlife and make sure that spaces are inviting to the public
 - due to current budget constraints, it is not likely there will be any future land acquisition unless it would be near Platte Falls or another MDC property that needs to be completed
 - MDC strives to balance the need to invite the public in versus high standard of care for keeping areas natural and sustainable for wildlife
- Developers In priority order for developers, their greatest needs are partnerships which result in:
 - a pool and activity center
 - trails
- School Districts Generally, the first condition that must be met in partnership agreements with school districts is that they have access to the facility during school hours and for school-sponsored events.
- Cities Generally, agreements with cities will require significant capital funding requirements by the County and less, if any, capital funding by the city. Second, city partners will want primary access to the facility for their events.
- Not-for-Profits Generally, agreements with not-for-profits will require the County to provide the capital funding required for the project. The typical role of the not-for-profit is for management and operations.

"Park and trail public safety should be "seamless" between jurisdictions. Park and trail patrons generally do not know or care when they have crossed between jurisdictions, but they still should have quality public safety services available to them regardless of their location."

> – Mike Shelton Public Safety Focus Group December 2, 2008

Partnerships





SUMMARY

While each partnership opportunity is unique, there are basic similarities that are common to each. Of extreme importance are the following:

- each partner must share a common mission with the Parks and Recreation Department
- there must be a formal partnership agreement that is reviewed annually
- projects funded by the Parks and Recreation Department must be designed, maintained, and operated at a standard that is approved by the Department and detailed in the partnership agreement
- of the current partnerships in Platte County, the apparent key issue is that some of the *partners have not had the organizational capability* that is required to maintain the facilities at an acceptable level. Predictably, in those instances, the partnership deteriorates and significant effort is required to re-establish the original intent of the partnership
- important partnerships as the master plan is implemented will be those who contribute to the County's Guiding Principles and planned improvements that are required to make the Principles become a reality; namely,
 - community center partner YMCA
 - trail partners Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, levee districts, cities, Corps of Engineers, developers
 - recreation opportunities youth sports associations, cities, not-for-profits such as the YMCA, business community, volunteers

Partnership Opportunities for New 'Signature' Recreation Facilities in Platte County

As new opportunities present themselves, these guidelines will be used in conjunction with the other evaluation filters detailed above to determine if the opportunity warrants further consideration. The guidelines are as follows:

- must have a significant need for County "finishing" funding
- must have significant, majority, resource support from applicant agency/ organization to be used as match
- must serve a significant Platte County population and be open to the general public; must include affordability and accessibility program
- must complement other existing Platte County Parks and Recreation resources
- must provide new recreational opportunities or work cooperatively with other similar providers, public or private
- must have business plan or documented feasibility study indicating need, population to be served, and plan of action/implementation
- must provide protection for public investment through public capital ownership or payback clause (should mission or disposition of facility change in nature)
- must meet a need identified in the most recent Platte County Park System Master Plan





Volunteer Programs

The County will implement a community volunteer program that allows park patrons to learn about the sustainable practices being used in the parks. Use of volunteers also helps to stretch budgeted dollars and increases the social sustainability of the community by increasing the investment of community members into the park system. Volunteer programs may also be used to evaluate the implementation of sustainable systems by implementing groups such as stream teams to test and improve water quality.





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Shiloh Springs Golf Course was acquired by the County in 2005. Since its acquisition, an aggressive approach has been taken to evaluate and address the key issues facing the facility with an eye on positioning it to recover its operating expenses.

This master plan update reviews and assesses the Strategic Plan developed in 2006 and recommends a 2009 Strategic Plan Vision, Goals, Objectives and Action Plans to guide policy makers and staff over the next 30 years.

The proposed strategic plan takes a realistic look at the current local golf market, local and national trends and projections for public golf, and the ability of the existing Shiloh Springs Golf Club to effectively compete in the local public golf market, now and in the future.

Input from local focus groups and individuals, a recently completed communitywide leisure services survey and a golfer satisfaction survey completed by 230 Shiloh Springs golf patrons contributed perspective to the strategic plan and its implementation.

Likewise, the commitment of the Platte County Commission's previous actions of:

- acquiring all the existing golf course property
- making \$500,000 worth of improvements to the golf course infrastructure in the last two and one-half to three years
- refinancing all golf course debt through 2018, and
- determining in 2006 to own, operate and improve the Shiloh Springs Golf Club reflected a strong interest on the part of elected officials to move Shiloh Springs from where it is now to a reasonably priced and attractive public golf asset for Platte County citizens and golfers

Analysis and Recommendations

The 2009 Strategic Plan proposes a new vision of a high-quality recreational public golfing facility at Shiloh Springs Golf Club that would ensure adequate and appropriate public golfing opportunities and promote a strong sense of pride for the County. The purpose for operating the golf course shall be to contribute positively to a broad mix of services available to maintain and enhance the quality of life in Platte County. The daily operation of the golf course shall serve the public golf aspirations of Platte County golfers with the highest commitment to customer services in every aspect of recreational public golf. These ultimate customer services shall be exemplified by a superbly managed and maintained, reasonably priced, public golf course that is equal to the best public golf courses in the Metropolitan area.



Shiloh Springs Golf Course







This vision would be accomplished via a Short-term Goal (5 years), a Mid-term Goal (year 5-15 years) and a Long-term Goal (year 15-30 years).

Five Year Goals - Over the next five years, Shiloh Springs Golf Club would succeed by:

- continuing to offer and expand customer services
- by improving the playing conditions and playing surfaces of the golf course
- by establishing a realistic financial framework that can facilitate the long term success of the golf operation

Fifteen Year Goals - Over the next 15 years, Shiloh Springs shall meet and begin to exceed the expectations of Platte County recreational public golfers by:

- continuing to offer and expand customer services
- by improving the playing conditions and playing surfaces
- by making modest changes in the design of the current golf course
- by upgrading the golf course infrastructure; and
- by developing a master plan to determine the feasibility of acquiring additional property and developing an exceptional public golf course in the future as financial opportunities become available

Thirty Year Goals - Over the next 30 years, Shiloh Springs would continue to provide an improving public golf experience for Platte County residents at Shiloh Springs Golf Club by acquiring and developing:

- additional property for expansion of the golf course would be acquired
- additional golf holes on the new property would be developed; and
- existing holes on the present property would be renovated to provide superb practice facilities, a nine hole junior course and new regulation golf holes to create a golf course that is equal to the best public golf courses in the metropolitan area

SUMMARY

The 2009 Strategic Plan lays out a realistic approach to achieve the Vision. A time frame has been proposed, but the timing will be dependent on many factors that are beyond the scope of accurately predicting with any element of certainty. The time frame proposed is not necessarily critical to the eventual achievement of the Vision. However, completion of the initial steps proposed in generally the order they are suggested is critical. They are necessary accomplishments to provide the opportunity to succeed in the later steps as the local and national economies improve, as Platte County continues to grow and prosper, and as the golf market regains some of its balance and viability.