



Executive Summary

Strategic Business Plan for Parks and Recreation 2015-2020

Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department
October 2015



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In the time since the development of *Traditions & Trends*, the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department (KCMOPRD), many changes have occurred throughout the community in terms of a changing demographic profile, economic challenges, enhanced needs for open space and protection of natural resources, and the growing demand for quality parks, facilities, and services. To meet these needs and to remain ahead of projected development and before expiration of the *Traditions & Trends* Plan, the Department chose to update the master plan and create *Traditions & Trends 2020* to address the needs of the next five years.



OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives associated with this *Traditions & Trends 2020* include the following:

- Engage the community, leadership and stakeholders in a public input process to build a shared vision for parks and recreation that supports the economic and community goals of Kansas City;
- Utilize a wide variety of data sources and best practices to predict trends and patterns of use and how to address unmet needs in the City;
- Determine unique Level of Service Standards to project appropriate and prudent actions regarding program services, parks, open space, amenities, trails, cultural and natural resources;
- Shape financial and operational preparedness through innovative and “next” practices in revenue generation to achieve the strategic objectives and recommended actions, and implementation strategies outlined in the plan;
- Develop a dynamic and realistic strategic action plan that can ensure long-term success and financial sustainability for the City’s parks, recreation programs and open spaces.

KEY UPDATES

Tradition & Trends 2020 includes the following key updates to the previous *Traditions & Trends* plan:

- Re-examination of both national and local recreation trends and user interests;
- Updated demographic analysis of the Kansas City community;
- Multiple new opportunities for public engagement specific to *Traditions & Trends* including public meetings, a web survey, and focus group meetings;
- Custom benchmark analysis of KCMOPRD to similar systems;
- Re-assessment of all parks within the KCMOPRD system to revise condition ratings and develop site-specific recommendations;
- Updated evaluation of recreation programming in light of recently implemented operational changes;
- Revised Level of Service standards and updated equity maps to illustrate projected future needs;
- Vision statements for Parkland, Recreation Facilities, Recreation Programs, and Operations & Financial Sustainability;
- Comprehensive Action Plan for implementation of the master plan.



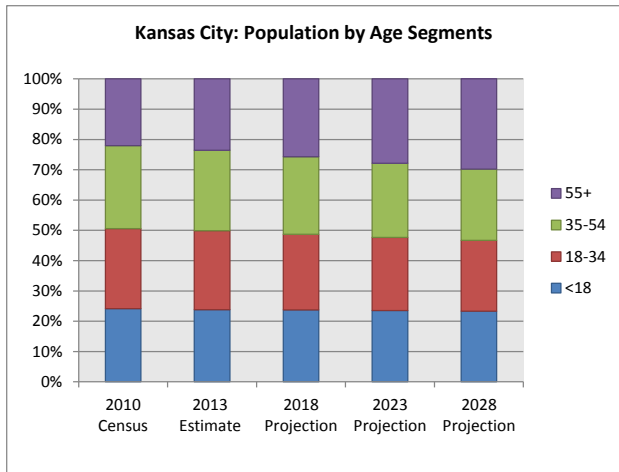


CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY PROFILE

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The population of Kansas City is growing. By 2028 the total is projected to grow to 509,439 at an annual growth rate of 0.58%, faster than the annual rate for Missouri (0.31%) but lagging behind the rate for national population growth (0.81%).

The population in Kansas City is also aging. From 2010 to 2028, the segment of the residents age 55 or older will move from representing 22.1% to 29.8% of the population.



RECREATION TRENDS

The most popular sport and recreational activities across the country are Fitness Walking, Running/Jogging, and using a Treadmill. Team sports with the highest participation are Basketball, Tennis, and Baseball.

Overall, Kansas City residents have participation rates above the national average in the following:

- Sports activities: Basketball, Football, Soccer
- Fitness activities: Running/Jogging, Weight lifting, Yoga
- Outdoor recreation: Backpacking, Hiking, and Bicycling
- Commercial recreation: going to College Basketball games, NFL games, and the Zoo.

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

KCMOPRD was compared to systems identified as industry leaders comparable in size: Austin, TX; Denver, CO; Minneapolis, MN; Little Rock, AR; Springfield-Greene Co., MO; St. Louis, MO; and Wichita, KS.

Kansas City was among the largest jurisdictions with the most acreage (12,135 ac), but ranked last in terms of percentage of developed acres (32%).

In terms of budget, KCMOPRD ranked near the middle of all benchmarks in terms of operating expenses and earned revenue, but the Department’s capital expenditures (\$34M) led all other agencies. Kansas City ranked next-to-last in Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) when measured in terms of both population (0.62 FTE per 1,000 pop.) and acreage (0.08 FTE per developed acre).

System	Jurisdiction Area (Sq. Mi.)	Current Population of City/ Jurisdiction	Population Per Square Mile	Total Number of Parks and Greenways	Total Acres Owned or Managed by System	Total Developed Acres	% Acres Maintained to Total Park Acres	Total Park Acres Per 1,000 Pop.
Kansas City	319	463,202	1,452	220	12,135	3,823	32%	26.20
Austin	318	824,205	2,592	254	19,511	12,585	65%	23.67
Denver	153	634,265	4,146	250	5,900	n/a	n/a	9.30
Minneapolis	58	392,880	6,774	182	6,749	2,700	40%	17.18
Little Rock	117	196,537	1,680	72	6,315	4,009	63%	32.13
Springfield-Greene Co.	677	287,000	424	103	3,037	2,000	66%	10.58
St. Louis	62	318,069	5,130	111	3,250	3,250	100%	10.22
Wichita	166	382,368	2,303	123	11,173	4,391	39%	29.22

NOTE: Total developed acres not available for Denver

CHAPTER 3: COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Public engagement served as an important and critical part of the master planning process and the development of the community needs assessment. Conducting public engagement is not only necessary to effectively deliver a community-oriented park and recreation system, but also to ensure that a balanced, open, and collaborative approach is used to build public trust in the plan and the process. Engagement activities included interviews with community representatives, meetings with key departmental leaders, public open houses, and a city-wide web survey. Findings from these efforts are summarized below.

STRENGTHS OF THE SYSTEM

- Excellent history of parks, boulevards, and parkways
- Residents' appreciation of park system
- 'KC Parks' brand recognition and appreciation
- Ability to do well with limited resources
- Sales tax provides sustainable operational funding
- Large land base and good distribution of parks throughout city



SHORTCOMINGS AND AREAS FOR ATTENTION

- Need to promote health and wellness opportunities more
- Gaps in trail system
- Sales tax only for operations, not capital improvement
- Variance in maintenance standards
- Lack of awareness in community of all that KCMOPRD has to offer
- Additional community center and recreation facilities needed on east side
- Need additional community services in urban core

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Engaging residents more, especially youth and seniors
- Expanded marketing with more segment-oriented approach
- Additional interaction and planning with neighborhood associations
- Staff development and cross-training for enhanced department coordination
- Working with similar providers to reduce overlap and fill gaps
- Coordination with other planning efforts

THREATS TO SUCCESS

- Keeping up with development north of the river
- Protection of historical system as a whole
- Maintaining equity and balance throughout system
- Staff retirements in coming years
- Ensuring leadership succession
- Understanding institutional memory
- Combating threats to health and wellness
- Funding care of new parks and facilities over the long-term





CHAPTER 4: PARK, FACILITY, AND PROGRAM ANALYSIS

RECREATION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

The Program Assessment identifies existing core program areas, programmatic service gaps within the community, and requirements for new program types for residents in Kansas City. It also evaluates the effectiveness of program delivery and management, including how programs are developed, conducted, and evaluated.



CORE PROGRAM AREAS

KCMOPRD operates ten community centers and provides programs in the following core program areas:

- **Aquatics** -programs that teach youth to swim; provide quality, affordable, accessible opportunities for seniors; and offer opportunities to enjoy open swimming at community centers.
- **Athletics** - includes both youth and adult recreation, from competitive leagues to sports clinics.
- **Health & Fitness** - provides fun, affordable, high quality fitness options through a wide range of individual and group fitness classes, affordable personal training, and wellness instruction.
- **Creative Outlets** - diverse group of arts and crafts activities for all ages, with a focus on youth and seniors.
- **Education & Leisure** - includes programs geared toward youth and seniors that provide opportunities to socialize, learn new skills, and explore new activities and interests.

KEY PROGRAM ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

- Over 10% of programs are losing participation or have extreme competition from other providers. They should be evaluated and re-designed to maximize effectiveness and participation.
- Business plans for each community center have been recently developed.
- While cost recovery is tracked by community center, it should also be tracked by program area.
- Use of program quality management standards are increasing but there is still inconsistency.
- Recommended standards to measure and set targets for include program cancelation rate, cost per program, cost per participant, and geographic program availability.
- Marketing is currently focused on citywide events. Additional segment-based marketing needed.
- To meet user demand, the following programs should be expanded:
 - Aquatic aerobics
 - Athletic leagues
 - Adult fitness
 - Education/life skills classes
 - Senior travel
 - Senior fitness/wellness
 - After school/teen
- Facilities to add or expand include:
 - Fitness trail loops
 - Outdoor aquatics
 - Playgrounds
 - Flexible use sports fields



- Community gardens
- Indoor flexible use recreation space



PARK ASSESSMENT

Parks and facilities within the KCMOPRD system were assessed to establish an understanding of existing park conditions and to identify areas for attention and improvement in the future. Every park received a condition rating as well as descriptions of strengths, weaknesses, and site-specific recommendations.



Overall, the range of “Excellent” to “Poor” parks throughout Kansas City is typical of many large urban systems. A significant percentage of parks have improved in condition since completion of the 2007 plan:

- The percentage and number of “Poor” parks has decreased by roughly half;
- The percentage and number of “Good” parks almost doubled; and
- The number of “Fair” and “Excellent” parks has remained about the same.

Rating	2015 Master Plan Update		2007 Master Plan
	#	%	%
Excellent	4	2.0	3.0
Good	121	60.2	37.7
Fair	61	30.3	42.6
Poor	15	7.5	16.7
TOTAL	201	100.0	100.0

Number and Percentage of Parks by their Condition Rating

KEY PARK ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

- Play equipment varies in condition. There have been several recent installations, but many are older and in need of updates.
- Restrooms and concession buildings are in fair condition overall, but several are dated or suffer from vandalism.
- Asphalt drives and parking areas in many parks are in need of improvement.
- There is inconsistent signage throughout the system, but new standards being implemented.
- Park landscape and maintenance management standards vary from park to park.
- Erosion control is needed in many areas, including ones in or near high-traffic areas.
- Park master plans will be needed for several parks, particularly those in ‘Fair’ or ‘Poor’ condition.



KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI - PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT



Park Inventory and Analysis

Park Name: Hidden Valley Park
Location: N.E. Russell Rd. & N. Bennington Ave.
Classification: Community Park
Acreage: 174.43
Overall Park Rating: Good
Last Updated: July 2014
Regions: North
Councilmanic District: 1



Park Description:

The park's character is a mix of suburban and natural, while its surroundings are predominately urban. It is highly developed with constructed amenities but also includes some open space. The park's topography is mostly gentle with some steep slopes.

Observations

Strengths:

- Master plan has been completed within last 10 years
- There is adequate vehicular access & parking
- Park facilities are in good condition
- Visibility into and throughout park is good
- Park is well-used by community

Weaknesses:

- Pedestrian connectivity is poor
- A large quantity of invasive plant material is present
- Undesirable activities occur regularly

Recommendations:

- Improve pedestrian connectivity to surroundings
- Implement master plan development of new improvements
- Plant new trees of varied species

Example Park Assessment page. The Master Plan Appendix contains assessments of all parks.



LEVEL OF SERVICE AND EQUITY ANALYSIS

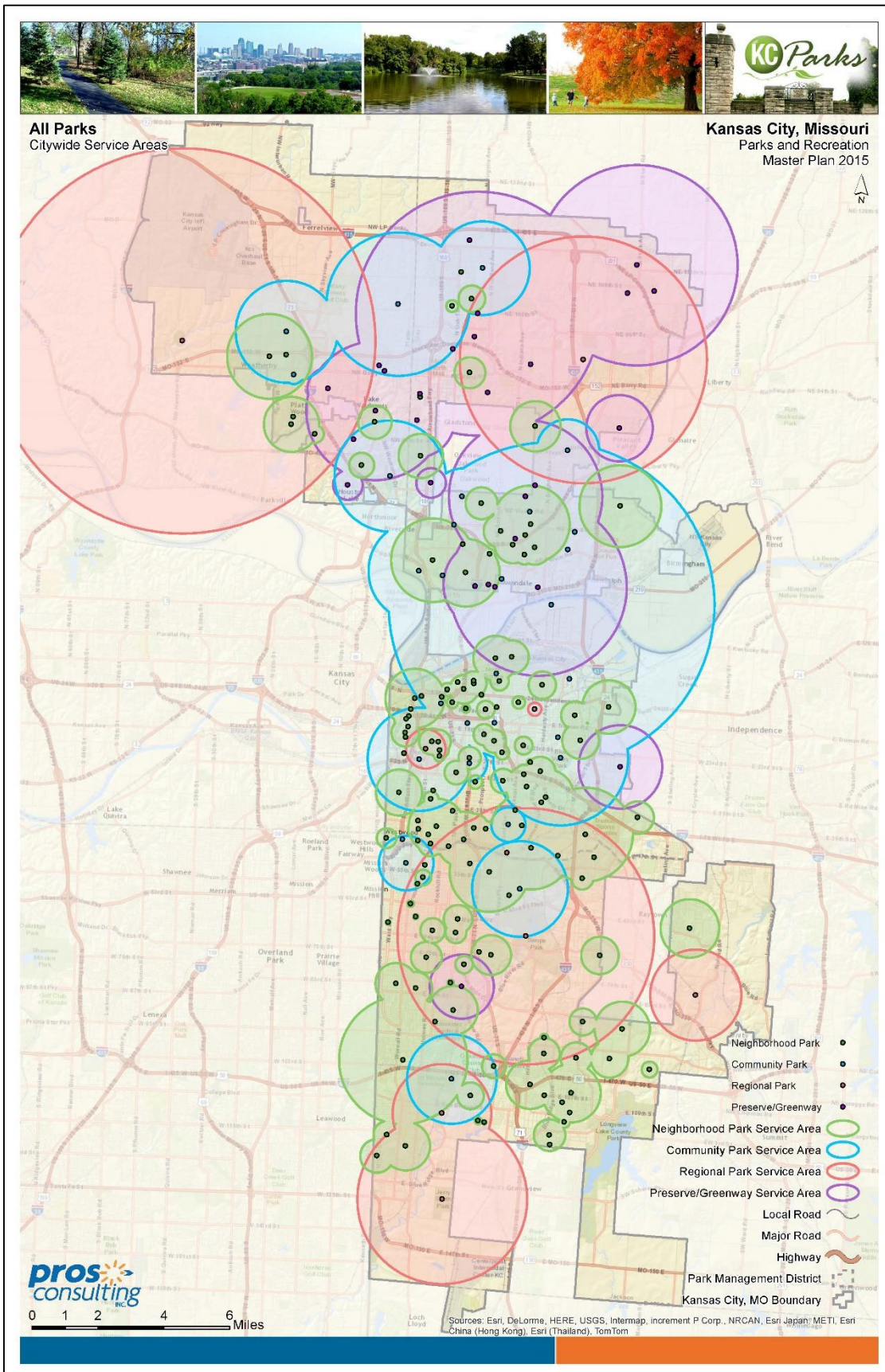
Level of Service (LOS) Standards are guidelines that support investment decisions related to parks, facilities and amenities. LOS Standards change over time as physical development, recreational needs, and demographics of a community change. These standards should be viewed as a guide and coupled with conventional wisdom and judgment related to the particular situation and needs of the community.

Considering national standards and best practices in conjunction with the specifics of Kansas City’s population projections, current inventory, and identified needs, the master plan includes the following specific recommendations for controlled growth of the system over the next five years.

2014 Inventory - Developed Facilities							2014 Facility Standards			2019 Facility Standards			
Park Type	Total Inventory	Current Service Level based upon population			Levels; Revised for Local Service Area		Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed		Meet Standard/ Need Exists	Additional Facilities/ Amenities Needed		
Neighborhood Parks	1,790.26	3.83	acres per	1,000	4.00	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	79	Acre(s)	Need Exists	137	Acre(s)
Community Parks	3,193.65	6.83	acres per	1,000	7.00	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	78	Acre(s)	Need Exists	179	Acre(s)
Regional Parks	13,644.81	29.20	acres per	1,000	15.00	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)
Special Use Parks	481.46	1.03	acres per	1,000	0.50	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)
Preserves-Greenways	733.86	1.57	acres per	1,000	2.00	acres per	1,000	Need Exists	201	Acre(s)	Need Exists	230	Acre(s)
Total Park Acres	19,844.04	42.46	acres per	1,000	28.50	acres per	1,000	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)	Meets Standard	-	Acre(s)
OUTDOOR AMENITIES:													
Non-Reservable Shelters	41	1.00	site per	11,398	1.00	site per	7,000	Need Exists	26	Sites(s)	Need Exists	28	Sites(s)
Reservable Shelters	42	1.00	site per	11,127	1.00	site per	10,000	Need Exists	5	Sites(s)	Need Exists	6	Sites(s)
Football Fields	25	1.00	field per	18,694	1.00	field per	5,000	Need Exists	68	Field(s)	Need Exists	71	Field(s)
Soccer Fields	52	1.00	field per	8,987	1.00	field per	5,000	Need Exists	41	Field(s)	Need Exists	44	Field(s)
Ball Diamonds	149	1.00	field per	3,136	1.00	field per	5,000	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)	Meets Standard	-	Field(s)
Basketball Courts	55	1.00	court per	8,497	1.00	court per	4,000	Need Exists	62	Court(s)	Need Exists	65	Court(s)
Tennis Courts	99	1.00	court per	4,721	1.00	court per	4,500	Need Exists	5	Court(s)	Need Exists	8	Court(s)
Playgrounds	114	1.00	site per	4,099	1.00	site per	2,500	Need Exists	73	Site(s)	Need Exists	79	Site(s)
Sand Volleyball Courts	8	1.00	site per	58,417	1.00	site per	5,000	Need Exists	85	Site(s)	Need Exists	88	Sites(s)
Off Leash Dog Parks	3	1.00	site per	155,779	1.00	site per	40,000	Need Exists	9	Site(s)	Need Exists	9	Site(s)
Skateboard Areas	2	1.00	site per	233,669	1.00	site per	55,000	Need Exists	6	Site(s)	Need Exists	7	Site(s)
Trails	240.71	0.52	miles per	1,000	0.75	miles per	1,000	Need Exists	110	Mile(s)	Need Exists	121	Mile(s)
Outdoor Pools & Spraygrounds	32	1.00	site per	14,604	1.00	site per	20,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)
Golf Courses	6	1.00	site per	77,890	1.00	site per	100,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)
Amphitheaters	5	1.00	site per	93,468	1.00	site per	100,000	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)
Ornamental Structures	119	1.00	site per	3,927	1.00	site per		Meets Standard	-	Site(s)	Meets Standard	-	Site(s)
INDOOR AMENITIES:													
Community Centers (Square Feet)	233,778	0.50	SF per	person	1.50	SF per	person	Need Exists	467,229	Sq Ft	Need Exists	489,024	Sq Ft

The following page depicts equity maps based upon the above LOS recommendations. Such maps help assess where services and facilities are offered and where gaps or overlaps occur. The master plan contains maps on specific park classifications and facilities including neighborhood parks, community parks, regional parks, preserves-greenways, community centers, and outdoor aquatic centers. The map on the following page provides an overview of all park classifications throughout the city.



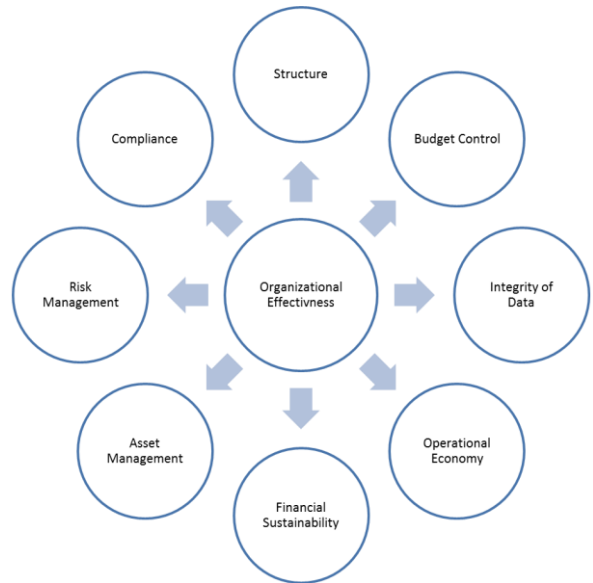




CHAPTER 5: OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

This analysis is a high-level review of current practices used by the Department to evaluate its operational and financial situation. It examines organizational effectiveness in terms of:

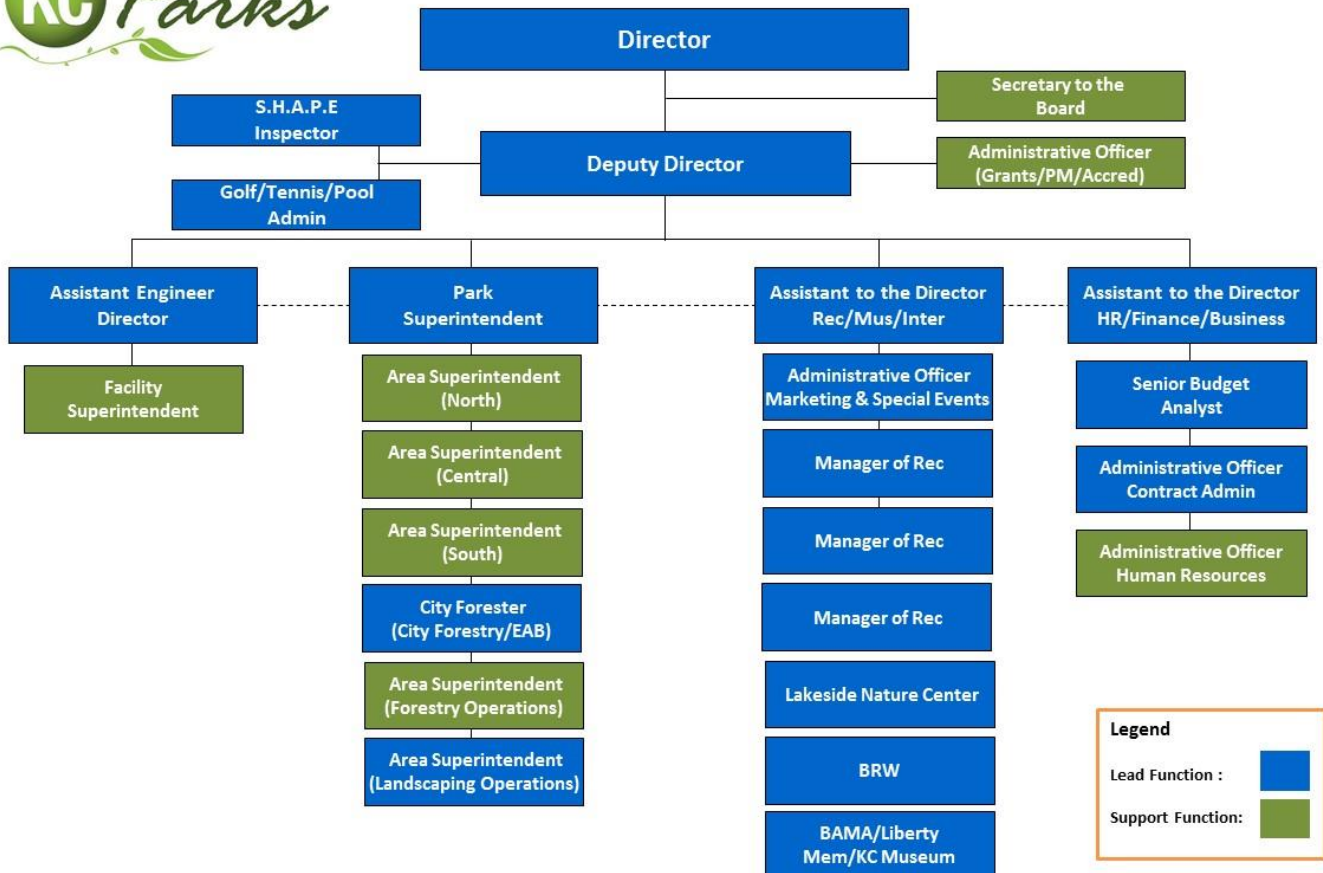
- Structure
- Budget Control
- Integrity of Data
- Operational Economy
- Financial Sustainability
- Asset Management
- Risk Management
- Compliance



The following functional organizational structure should be considered by the Department to maximize staff functionality and efficiency. The goal of this organizational design is to align services correctly and follow the three management districts already operating in the Department and coordinate recreation services/facilities to park maintenance operations.

City of Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department

Functional Organization Chart



CHAPTER 6: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The Departmental Vision and Mission Statements provide a framework for all of the strategic recommendations of the master plan. If it becomes necessary to make trade-off decisions about when to implement certain tactics given limited resources, items that most support the vision and mission statements should be prioritized.

Vision Statement

The City of Kansas City, Missouri, aspires to be a local, regional, national, and international leader in providing a world class quality of life through its parks, recreation, boulevards, greenways, and fountains.

Mission Statement

To improve the quality of life, health and wellness of our community by providing socially equitable, community-driven programming and environmentally sound natural resource management.

Strategies are organized by **Parkland, Recreation Facilities, Recreation Programs, and Operations & Financial Sustainability**. These strategies represent the major ideas or philosophies required to implement the master plan. The plan is intended to serve as a dynamic document, reviewed on a regular basis, to plan work tasks and support decision-making. By reviewing progress on action items quarterly or annually, accomplishments can be noted, adjustments can be made, and new items can be added.

STRATEGIES FOR PARKLAND

- Implement existing or develop new standards for parks, greenways, boulevards, and outdoor amenities throughout the system.
- Update the existing parks classified in 'poor' or 'fair' condition as identified in the master plan to support neighborhood revitalization, to generate a higher level of participation, and to enhance community satisfaction with parkland.
- Acquire park and open space property in underserved areas of the City to support the appropriate types of parks that are needed based on the Level of Service and equity goals for neighborhood parks, community parks, regional parks, and greenway-preserves.
- Strategically plan trail development throughout the city to promote connectivity and public health.
- Acquire or cooperatively protect sensitive natural areas within the City to preserve natural communities in perpetuity.
- Coordinate with Kansas City Public Schools and other school districts within the city limits to support school parks and recreation facilities.
- Prevent encroachment from adjacent private landowners onto park land to protect public spaces and mitigate the risk caused by the unauthorized use of park land.
- Establish a tree canopy goal for the city and decrease the mortality rate of trees.
- Enhance the community gardens program working with schools, churches, clinics, nonprofits, and other partner organizations.



STRATEGIES FOR RECREATION FACILITIES

- Develop community centers and recreation facilities in underserved areas of the City that are needed based on the Level of Service and equity goals.
- Determine and continually update true cost of service for all facilities to inform targets for cost recovery rates.
- Annually update mini business and marketing plans for each recreation center and special use facility in the system.
- Develop performance measures at recreation facilities and community centers to demonstrate outcomes desired.
- Establish an updated pricing policy and cost recovery goal for each recreation facility and community center.
- Develop a cost benefit assessment for each improvement planned for recreation facilities, and prioritize these improvements to achieve the financial goals desired for the Department.
- Update outdoor pools to make them stronger program spaces and well as open swim spaces to support a variety of aquatic experiences.
- Improve the road and street signage to get to parks and recreational facilities to help the community to understand the location and opportunities that exist for recreation services.
- Design recreation facilities to produce revenue and create larger spaces for fitness, aquatics, gyms, walking tracks, and wellness related rooms.

STRATEGIES FOR PROGRAMS

- Determine and continually update true cost of service for all programs to inform targets for cost recovery rates.
- Develop mini business and marketing plans for each core recreation program area.
- Develop performance measures for each core program area to demonstrate outcomes desired.
- Establish an updated pricing policy and cost recovery goal for each core program area.
- Develop Outdoor Recreation as a core program area and provide in city parks.
- Develop a stronger volunteer program for recreation programs.
- Develop more contractor related classes with a 60/40 split in revenue back to the department.

STRATEGIES FOR OPERATIONS AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Complete and maintain CAPRA Accreditation for the Department.
- Develop employee work plans and employee work teams to implement the goals and objectives listed in the 2015 Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update.
- Enforce operational standards consistently across the system.
- Improve the customer service standards across the system.
- Acquire the cost of service modules needed for tracking cost of service from RecTrac.
- Develop employee work plans and employee work teams to implement the goals and objectives listed in the 2013 Recreation Plan.
- Enhance marketing services at a district and neighborhood level for community centers and recreation programs.
- Develop a review schedule for each contract and partnership agreement in the system and update accordingly.
- Establish what role the Department will play in delivery of services as a direct program provider or as a facility provider.