

Adopted November 2020

River Trails Park District Strategic Plan for 2021-2025



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

River Trails Park District Board of Commissioners

Ed Rechner	President
Gail Dieterich	Vice President
Jack Cerniglia	Treasurer
Nancy Parra	Commissioner
Jen Rezek	Commissioner

Park District Administrative Team Members

Bret Fahnstrom, CPRE	Executive Director
Stephen Cummins	Superintendent of Finance & HR
Michael Posch	Information Technology Manager
Kate Erickson	Communications and Marketing Manager

Recreation Services

Patricia Mitchell, CPRP	Superintendent of Recreation
Vance Violante	Program Manager
Katelynn Putkonen	Program Manager
Eileen Meyers	Office supervisor
Katie Halverson	Program Supervisor
Josh Mulholland	Program Supervisor
Alex Snyder	Program Supervisor
Justin Slade	Program Supervisor
Robin Conrad	Program Supervisor

Parks Services

Thomas Pope	Superintendent of Parks
Mike Hanley	Grounds Manager
Tom Kearns	Tradesman
Bob Nicioli	Tradesman
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Project Support

Greg Petry Consulting LLC

RIVER TRAILS PARK DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

The River Trails Park District updated its Strategic Plan in the fall of 2020. This Plan will be aligned with the start of the budget year, beginning January 2021, and updated annually. The Strategic Plan's intent is to:

- Establish direction for the District
- Fulfillment of the District's mission
- Align the organization around a common vision
- Reinforce the culture, demonstrated through values
- Create action toward accomplishment, including measurement of progress
- Provide priorities for resource allocation
- Continuous improvement of operations
- Strengthen organizational competencies related to management of change and innovation

This process included a review of the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan as well as the 2017 Comprehensive Park and Recreation Master Plan. Board members and staff participated in a survey to provide input as well as meetings to review ESRI marketing data based on the district's community. The survey findings identified many of the district's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats as well as clarify future priorities.

The mission, vision, values were reviewed and updated. Work sessions engaged the board and employees to create a more concise vision, strengthen alignment and create actions to execute. Staff discussed and updated goals and objectives using the core guidance from the 2017 plan.

- **Maintaining Financial Strength and Sustainability**
- **Providing Programs and Services which reinforces the mission**
- **Developing and Maintaining Community Relationships**
- **Improvements in the Internal Processes and Systems**
- **Employee Excellence through Learning and Growth Opportunities**

Additionally, the three NRPA Pillars of Health and Wellness, Social Equity and Conservation were incorporated into the objectives which helps the district align itself with the NRPA mission. Lastly, the outstanding goals and objectives from the 2017 Comprehensive Master Plan were identified and merged in with this strategic plan goals and objectives. This merge will allow the district to be more focused and poised to be successful on completion of goals and objectives.

This document is intended to be succinct and to build on the previous strategic plan. Its purpose is to guide a highly engaged and innovative agency committed toward continuously providing the highest level of service opportunities to our diverse population.

MISSION

To responsibly enrich the lives of our diverse community

*Adopted by the board November 2020



VISION

To become the Recreational Choice in everything you do

*Adopted by the board November 2020

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

Sustainability

We dedicate ourselves to the stewardship of the district’s physical, financial, personnel resources and the conservation of our environment.

Social Equity

We are committed to social justice, equity and creating a community of belonging.

Ethical

We ensure a high level of trust and respect within the community through integrity, reliability, honesty, accountability, and compassion.

Innovation

We develop new ideas for community health and wellness through fun, creative and critical thinking.

Service Oriented

We provide a high level of service and safety in our parks, facilities, and programs

Teamwork

We strive to develop positive relationships and partnerships through collaboration with community stakeholders and organizations.

Continued Learning

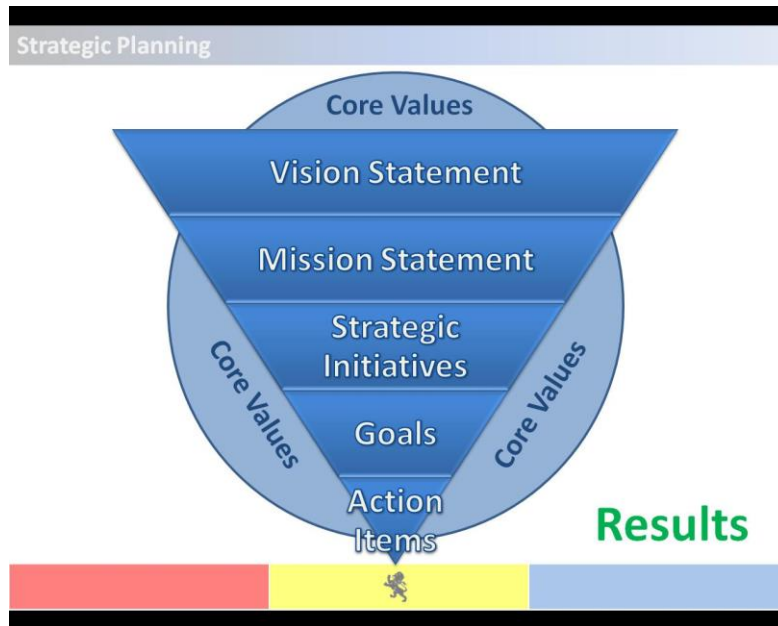
We recognize the importance for professional growth, continued learning, mentoring and empowerment for the agency’s team.



*Adopted by the board November 2020

STRATEGIC PLAN HIERARCHY

The framework for the plan includes a hierarchy of elements that start with the most macro level of strategy to a more micro level (moving from strategic to actions). The starting point for any strategic planning process is the review of the mission, vision and organizational values. The 2015 Mission Statement was condensed slightly in order to make it easier for everyone in our community and organization to understand and properly enact within the expectations created. The Vision Statement and Organizational Values were updated in order to be more on point with the future direction of the organization.



TOP THREE PRIORITIES OF THE DISTRICT MOVING FORWARD

1. Enhance facilities
2. Build more programs
3. Engagement/Partnership with community organizations

TOP THREE PRIORITIES OF THE DISTRICT FOR SPENDING

1. Update facilities
2. Update parks
3. Update programming

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND GOALS 2021-2025

The following are the Park District's Strategic Initiatives, Goals and Objectives moving forward. A work plan and timeline will be assigned to each objective

- Short-Term Goals (S): To be accomplished between January 2021 and December 2022
- Mid-Term Goals (M): To be accomplished between January 2021 and December 2024
- Long-Term Goals (L): To be accomplished between January 2021 and December 2025
- Ongoing goals (O): Goals which are always engaged and repeated during the entire time period

Dedicated staff time will be required to complete the goals, initiatives, and actions. Before each year begins, the list of short-, mid-, and long-term goals will be evaluated according to current workload demands to ensure realistic pursuit in the number of goals and objectives attempted and completed.

Each year, staff will organize and present, for board approval the actions it will undertake. Included in the annual goals may be specific programs, activities, projects, and financial targets the organization will undertake through action plans.

To continue to build and maintain the district's Financial Strength and Sustainability

- Create and Maintain a Sustainable Operations Plan
 - Review and improve the overall financial model (S)
 - Develop a 5-year financial projection (S)
 - Implement cost recovery plan (S)
 - Develop green initiatives in programs and services which lessen environmental impact (M)
 - Develop The Zone into an enterprise fund (L)
 - Transfer positive fund balances to capital projects as available (O)
 - Operate facilities and programs in a financially positive and an environmentally friendly manner (O)
- Align Resources with Community Needs / Desires
 - Review financial allocation of resources and align with community needs (S)
 - Apply ESRI market indicators (S)
 - Create a funding source to help accommodate community members in need (e.g. Fee Reduction Program) (M)
 - Align financial decisions with community health and wellness opportunities (O)
 - Develop and implement a Capital Replacement and Improvement Plan (S)
 - Identify amenities to improve pool marketability (S)
 - Refurbish (staged) Willow Trails Park (M & L)
 - Enhance the natural environment features within the parks (O)
 - Capital Projects feasibility study (M)
 - Research and consider outdoor a synthetic turf field with lights (S)
 - Research and consider adding a spray feature in a park (M)
 - Identify areas for land acquisition (O)
- Maximize Regular and Alternative Funding Sources
 - Seek alternative funding sources (O)
 - Further enhance the sponsorship program (S)
 - Identify and develop shovel ready projects for grant opportunities for both parks and facilities (S)

To continue to provide Programs and Services that reinforce the mission

- Identify and consider eliminating competitive and duplicative programs and services offered in the private sector (S)
- Expand E-Sports programming (S)
- Increase health and wellness offerings (S)
- Identify a demand for adult activities and programming (S)
- Modify pool schedule to maximize innovative programming (S)
- Continue virtual programming where beneficial to the community and district (S)
- Create and expand outdoor and environmental programs (M)
- Identify indoor and outdoor space for programming (M)
- Research and consider youth drop-in programming (M)
- Evaluate the need for and implement low/zero cost programs (O)
- Incorporate social equity into seasonal and annual program planning decisions (O)

To continue to develop and maintain Community Relationships

- Innovative operational excellence:
 - Identify and adopt best practices in all areas of operations (O)
 - Routinely identify and integrate unique program opportunities into the offerings (O)
 - Expand partnerships with other park districts to improve programming (S)
 - Identify local industries to promote our parks, programs, and services for their use (S)
- Leverage technology to improve systems:
 - Identify and plan for technology improvements to be used for sports leagues communications (M)
 - Identify and plan for technology improvements to be used to improve District services (M)
 - Investigate incorporating technology into park signage (e.g. QR Codes) (M)
- Maintain harmony with the community:
 - Continue building and strengthening partnerships, and use a collaborative approach within the organization, to become the recreational choice within the community
 - Evaluate effectiveness of Kiosks (S)
 - Engage in dialogue with community groups (S)
 - Create a liaison with local police departments (S)
 - Dialogue with NWSRA about offering transitional programs (M)
 - Improve our readiness for times of community duress (L)
 - Improve presence on social media (O)
 - Communicate park district amenities and services (O)
 - Participate in local governmental informational / social gatherings (O)
 - Serve as a resource to state legislators as to the impact of legislation and State mandates (O)

To continue to improve the district's Internal Processes and Systems

- Develop and maintain Sustainable Practices
 - Enhance employee appreciation programs (i.e. Soaring Above) (S)
 - Complete updated ADA transition plan (M)
 - Conduct a Community Needs Assessment (M)
 - Create and implement a marketing and communications plan (M)
 - Identify and implement sustainability and cost saving measures (M)
 - Investigate and implement contractual services that could assist with preventive maintenance (M)

- Evaluation of Internal Systems
 - Identify key performance indicators (S)
 - Evaluate the lifecycles of District assets through a complete and up to date asset inventory (L)
 - Continually evaluate and improve processes to maximize productivity (O)
 - Assess employee work loads and time commitments to complete tasks (S)
 - Evaluate and consider an automated work order system (S)
 - Evaluate and consider employee timecard and benefit portal (M)
 - Identify opportunities to offer benefits and incentives for part time employees (M)
 - Identify, achieve, and maintain agency accreditations which may include but not limited to; PDRMA Loss Control Review, Distinguished Agency, NRPA CAPRA, NRPA Gold Medal and IGFOA (O)
 - Pursue arboretum status for Woodland Trails (L)

To Develop Employee Excellence through Learning and Growth Opportunities

- Foster a culture of Innovation:
 - Maintain a work culture that challenges the status quo and finds new ways of doing business, including industry trends, staff involvement, and management sophistication, all in support of improving services (O)
 - Retrain all customer service staff on registration methods and processes (S)
 - Communicate the ways the public can register for programs (O)
 - Actively recruit employees that reflect the community (O)
 - Provide additional customer service training to part time staff (O)
- Foster a culture of continuous Learning:
 - Develop opportunities for staff and board members to continuously learn about the District, the community, and about areas of importance to successfully perform their jobs (M)
 - Evaluate job descriptions for all employees (S)
 - Consistently operate cross training program (O)
 - Conduct a salary survey to remain competitive (O)
 - Encourage Board to participate in IAPD trainings (e.g. Boot camps) (O)
- Leadership and development of staff:
 - Create internal opportunities to gain important experiences to further professional development (O)
 - Develop and implement a succession plan (S)
 - Improve and expand training including the use of technology (O)
- Include employee health and wellness impact in all organizational decisions (O)

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

The following is a list of suggestions for successful implementation of the Strategic Plan. It represents the commitment and discipline required to properly engage the process.

- All employees will receive a copy of the 2021 Strategic Plan or electronic access to the Plan
- A summary of the Strategic Plan will be available on the District's website
- A summary may be included in the End-of-Year annual report and distributed to interested community parties
- Elements of the Strategic Plan will be incorporated into the District's New Employee and Board Member orientation process
- Every employee will use the Plan as a guiding tool while developing their individual goals
- Every Department Head will use the Plan as a guiding tool while developing the departmental goals
- The staff and board will review the Plan annually to update and/or improve the goals or processes
- The District will conduct meetings on a quarterly or semi-annual basis to review the Plan's progress and report results annually to the board or sooner if there are significant developments or changes
- The Plan will be reported upon annually as an ongoing work plan. Each objective should include a list of tactics which support's the goal's completion.
- The performance appraisal process should reflect completion of Strategic Plan Initiatives as criterion. These should be aligned with the Organization Values.
- Completion of objectives should be included in the All-Staff meetings as a way to show the importance of the Plan to the achievement of the Organization goals.
- Toward the end of each year, there should be a review of the Plan and to "re-tool" any parts which may need to be improved.

SUMMARY

The 2021-2025 Strategic Plan is a commitment by the River Trails Park District board and team members towards maintaining the established organizational plan of action as well as an atmosphere of excellence in every aspect of the District. The mission statement speaks directly towards enriching the lives of our community through many direct and indirect methods. This plan will work directly at advancing that mission.

The District's vision of becoming the choice for recreation in our area and working at the highest level in all areas to attain this vision, will be supported by the Strategic Initiatives.

- **Maintaining Financial Strength and Sustainability**
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The Strategic Plan will help identify and exemplify the strengths of the organization as well as identify the opportunities for growth and improvement. Going forward, the Strategic Plan will assist in the development and implementation of the Comprehensive Master Plan as the district identifies, with the community, what to develop and improve in an effort to maximize the Benefits of Recreation for the River Trails communities of Prospect Heights and Mount Prospect.

ORGANIZATIONAL 2021-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

SIGNED ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the River Trails District Strategic Plan Document. I agree and represent that I have read and understand this Document thoroughly and in its entirety. I agree that if there is any provision in the Document that I do not understand, I will seek clarification from my supervisor, department head, or Director.

I understand that this is an overall organization direction and I will work towards completion of the Initiatives, Individual, Departmental and Organizational Goals and Objectives within this Document. I understand that completion of these are a benefit to the community as well as the organization. I understand that this may be part of my annual evaluation process.

Please sign and date this acknowledgment and return it to the Finance Department.

Employee Signature

Date

Print Name

Supervisor Signature

Date

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