

**P**lanning Process: To help focus efforts and energy, a framework for the planning effort was adopted early in the process. Although several tasks were identified, they fit into a three-step planning process that includes:

- **Findings**
- **Recommendations**
- **Implementation**

The principal purpose of the Citizens Park Master Plan is to establish a 5-10 year planning tool that will serve as a guideline for the development and improvement of the existing park facilities and the creation of new opportunities. The Master Plan is expected to be an achievable goal that will provide Joplin with a park system and recreation program that will enhance the quality of life in the City and one, which will meet, or exceed, citizen expectations.



## **Task 1: Project Initiation**

Dick Horton, Project Manager, met with the Citizens Steering Committee on March 24 for the purpose of reviewing the project Scope of Services. Discussed at the initial meeting were: specific goals/objectives, expected outcomes, barriers to success, opportunities, threats, insights about the current park system and speculation about why the recent ballot question for the family aquatic center failed, and time frame for the complete process.

Prior to the initial meeting, Dick prepared a checklist of specific information needed from the City to facilitate the process. Requested information included computerized mapping; demographic information; building permits; school district projects; private provider projects such as the new fitness facility on Rangeline; historical & environmental conditions which may affect the Plan; organizational chart for the parks and recreation department; existing partnership agreements; history of the department; ongoing, or recently completed plans for storm water management projects; and existing policies & regulations of significance for the park system.

Investment of time by staff and the Citizen Park Master Plan Steering Committee is critical to the success of the Plan. Its function will include input regarding the structuring & distribution of the citizen survey, identification & discussion of key issues, identification of key stakeholders in the community who need to be interviewed, and, always working with Dick Horton at Bucher, Willis & Ratliff Corp to ensure that the target has been identified and that the project is staying on track.

### **Task 1 Deliverables**

- Project calendar.
- Specific & Quantifiable project outcomes in report form.
- Refined Scope of Services.

## **Task 2: Inventory**

Park, Open Space, and Recreation Facilities – A review of City facilities by type, location, quantity, condition, etc. of existing open space, parks, hiking and biking trails, and recreation facilities will be conducted. A member of the Project Team who is trained to look at physical characteristics of the parks and facilities will conduct the review. Comparisons will be made to NRPA standards relative to the deficiency/surplus of available parks and facilities.

### **Task 2 Deliverables**

- Park & recreation facility inventory in matrix form compared with NRPA standards.
- Listing of surpluses/deficiencies of park land and recreation facilities compared with NRPA standards.
- Projected needs for the next 10 years will be provided.

## **Task 3: Community Involvement**

The Citizens Park Master Plan has its best chance for community support if opportunities for community involvement are provided. BWR suggests a variety of public sessions to solicit input and collect valuable information from stakeholders in the community, staff, and the Master Planning Steering Committee.

### **Task 3.1 Public Meetings**

Public meetings were held on April 24, June 27 and June 28 in addition to the City Council Final Report on July 17 and citizen survey during the month of May, which reached 600 households.

### **Task 3.2 Planning Charrette (workshop)**

A planning charrette held on April 29 was conducted to involve key stakeholders in the process and to capitalize on their special insights into the needs of the community. The charrette included discussions on needs in the parks and recreation system; uniqueness of the system; which resources can be improved; how can organizations better assist the system through partnerships; vision for the parks and recreation system; land acquisition sites, etc.

### **Task 3 Deliverables & Outcomes:**

- One planning charrette workshop.
- Written report to summarize key findings from the planning charrette.
- Invaluable information from key stakeholders to be included in the final report.
- Increase in public interest and support for the park master plan.



### **Task 4: Demographic Review**

Characteristics of the community were inventoried including population by age group, gender and income characteristics. A forecast of population growth through 2002 was also presented.

### **Task 4 Deliverables**

- Demographic information in table form accompanied with text for clarification.

## **Task 5: Citizen Survey**

Policy makers need reliable and statistically valid information to make informed decisions. A household survey by phone/mail was conducted of 600 residents and 150 non-residents. The survey was comprehensive in nature and addressed issues, which surfaced during citizen steering committee meetings, staff meetings, public meetings, the planning charrette and individual interviews with user groups and opinion leaders. Those issues related to perceived needs for park and recreation facilities, locations to acquire and develop open space, and unmet needs for such things as hiking and biking trails, support for funding alternatives, and priority services development. The survey was developed in association with the Citizens Park Master Planning Committee and was used as an instrument to develop action strategies and the implementation plan of the final report.

### **Task 5 Deliverables**

- 750 completed citizen surveys.
- Written analysis, which will summarize survey results.

## **TASK 6: Benchmarking Survey**

A benchmarking survey was conducted of five (5) similar park and recreation agencies to ascertain industry trends and best practices; those agencies are: Jefferson City, Columbia, Lees Summit, Blue Springs and St. Charles. The survey included information relative to budgets, staff, numbers and types of parks, trails, recreation facilities, programs, and open space.

### **Task 6 Deliverables:**

- Benchmarking data from other similar agencies.
- A written report to summarize and analyze data collected from other agencies.

## **Task 7: Funding Alternatives**

Alternative funding sources for plan improvements and citizen preferences were provided.

### **Task 7 Deliverables:**

Listing and explanation of various funding alternatives, which are best, suited for improvements requested by the citizens of Joplin.

## **Task 8: Analysis of Data**

In this phase of the planning process, the consultant team analyzed all data, which was developed during the project with an eye on existing and projected needs for the next 10 years.

Specific components of the detailed analysis included the following:

**Community Needs Assessment** – Results from the community needs assessment were presented regarding perceived unmet customer markets, current usage levels, priorities for facilities and programs, potential methods for funding projects, etc.

**Benchmarking Survey** – Results from the survey were placed into a data base for analysis and presentation regarding practices of other surveyed communities relative to industry trends, existing facilities and new facilities being developed, funding practices, community based partnering, and other customer based practices. Follow-up calls were made to communities regarding information requiring additional detail.

**Funding Alternatives** – An analysis of funding sources, including grants, was made with an eye on partnerships, which may benefit the City and the partner.

**Analysis of Conditions of Parks, Open Space, Facilities and Programs** – A comprehensive analysis of current parks, open space, trails, and recreation facilities was completed. The analysis included an assessment both of the physical condition of the facilities and their capacities to serve current and developing markets.

**Future Open Space and Park Opportunities** – Recommendations regarding opportunities and locations for the acquisition of open space was made. Special attention was paid to opportunities for linking existing and/or planned park and recreation facilities, both City owned, and in cooperation with the School District.

**Identification of Park, Open Space, Recreation Facility and Program Deficiencies** – Based on the previously developed information and analysis, and including applicable State and National Standards, a report was developed to show deficiencies and/or surpluses in parks, open space and facilities.

### **Task 8 Deliverables:**

- Written analysis to be included in the draft report.

## **Task 9: Draft Report**

Following the collection of data and community input in tasks 1 through 7, the consultant team presented a draft report to the Citizen Steering Committee on June 22 to ensure that the City of Joplin and the Citizens Park Master Planning Committee are on track with the expected outcome of the Master Plan and the information gathered to date.

### **Task 9 Deliverables:**

- Written report.

## **TASK 10: Action Plan**

Working in collaboration with the City of Joplin and its Citizens Park Master Planning Committee, an Action Plan was developed. The Action Plan is specific in detail as to:

- Financial impact for the public investment.
- Responsible parties for the components of the Plan.
- Real/potential barriers and strategies for the elimination of those barriers, which have been revealed during the planning, process.
- Timelines for initiation and implementation of elements revealed during the planning process.

## **TASK 11: Final Report**

A final City of Joplin Citizen Park Master Plan has been prepared.

### **Task 11 Deliverables:**

- Executive Summary.
- Base Map of the new park system, which shows facility and park locations.

The Final Report is provided as follows:

Narrative – Microsoft Word.

Tables/Charts – Microsoft Excel.

Graphics – MicroStation Compatible.