

**Missoula Parks & Recreation
Strategic Plan 2019 – 2021
*Adopted by the Parks and Recreation Board January 8, 2019***

Mission

Missoula Parks and Recreation provides places, programs and services essential to our quality life; reflects community values; fosters a sense of place; and develops and preserves infrastructure and lands critical to supporting a healthy community.

Guiding Principles

- Recreation develops social capital and all Missoula citizens have a right to quality recreational opportunities and facilities. Everyone should be formally introduced to Parks and Recreation services.
- Everyone should feel safe, welcome and valued in Parks and Recreation lands, facilities and programs.
- People should have convenient, active transportation options and be able to travel in a safe and efficient way throughout Missoula.
- Parks, trails and open spaces contribute to a feeling of well-being by providing opportunities for releasing tensions; helping combat obesity through exciting, attractive facilities; getting citizens of all ages outdoors connecting with nature and having FUN; and helping define the character of Missoula.
- Access to natural areas grows a sense of wonder, reflection, understanding and stewardship and everyone should have access to natural environs.
- As stewards of our conservation lands, we share responsibility for preserving and maintaining the natural character and environment of Missoula.
 - Healthy riparian areas and wetlands are essential to clean water, wildlife, flood plain storage, and for providing recreational and education opportunities.
 - Healthy urban forests contribute to clean air and water; cool the urban area and contribute to slowing climate change; add beauty, color and historic context to the urban environment; and for the conservation of those Forests, should be diverse in species and age class.
 - Open space provides a sense of place.
 - Conservation lands are public lands protected for the benefit and enjoyment of all.
- Quality parks and recreation opportunities are drivers of economic development and vitality in the community.
- Missoula should be a recreation destination and a regional sports capital.
- As Parks and Recreation Board and Staff, we engage in conducting research and asking critical questions to determine priority goals.
- We continually assess, adapt, innovate, partner, and advocate with appropriate fiscal resources and efficient and effective resource allocation – as important strategies for stewarding and sustaining Parks and Recreation lands, services and facilities.
- We inform Council and educate citizenry so they are more likely to understand and support shared responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of their public assets (lands and facilities).
- We believe that a well-informed, educated and empowered citizenry will be better stewards of their public lands and facilities and advocates for the visions and guiding principles of Parks and Recreation.

Strategic Priorities

(Pertinent parts of the current Strategic Plan appear in italics in each Strategic Priority goals.)

A. Inclusion, Social Equity, and Wellness for all Ages

Vision

Parks and Recreation values and encourages inclusion, social equity, and wellness for all ages across the community's social and economic demographics. The Department works with partners and providers to engage with citizenry in identifying, measuring and meeting their needs. The Department is recognized as "being there and being present" by City leadership, by partners, and by the community.

Goal #1: Work to increase staff diversity to reflect the public we serve.

Goal #2: Reinvest resources to continue our relevance and promote inclusion in today's operating environment (parks, facilities, bond dollars, etc.).

Directing Objectives from the current Strategic Plan

- *Plan for changing demographics in the community. Identify and build understanding around needs and potential results of changing demographics (i.e., increasing numbers of aging citizens; values and attitudes of millennials; individuals with disabilities including veterans; different ethnic backgrounds, etc.) - as those needs are connected to Parks and Recreation programs, services and lands.*
- *Revise and strategize on how best to implement the revised Master Park Plan with focus on those most at need and to encourage social equity.*

Goal #3: Clearly define the Department's partnership with Missoula County Public Schools – recognizing Parks and Recreation's evolving role related to academics, wellness, and inclusion.

Directing Objective from the current Strategic Plan

- *Continue to work on inter-local agreements related to use of gyms, fields, and education programs with Missoula County Public Schools and other Schools in the area.*

Goal #4: Explore program, service and organizational infrastructure options to support the 2019-2021 Strategic Priorities including:

- Consider creating a citizen board (like "CLAC") to build consensus and a sense of value of Department services and programs.
- Explore a "CCC"-like program.
- Explore a "safe blocks" program.
- Implement a "summer curriculum".

Goal #5: Based on identified needs, begin planning for additional indoor facilities.

Directing Objective from the current Strategic Plan

- *Explore how Parks and Recreation programs, services, lands and possibly new facilities such as an indoor community center, might serve, integrate and meet changing demographic needs.*

B. Supporting Climate Resilience and Environmental Health

Vision

Our community recognizes the role of parks, trails, open spaces and other community facilities as essential to a climate-resilient and healthy environment.

Goal #1: Provide leadership and guide the narrative of why a resilient natural and built environment is important to our community.

Goal #2: Enhance quality of life through providing programs, infrastructure, and services to help people better withstand the changes in our climate.

Directing Objective from the current Strategic Plan

- *Continue to advance strategies that continue to preserve/protect agricultural lands.*

Goal #3: Develop park infrastructure that follows SITES guidelines and principles and other best practices to improve environmental and human health.

Directing Objective from the current Strategic Plan

- *Continue strategizing with Staff/Board about sustainability and environmental health.*

C. Caring for our People

Vision

Parks and Recreation is an employer of choice with minimal turnover. Parks and Recreation, elected officials and other Departments move together toward common goals including safety as a priority. Residents and Parks and Recreation partners are recognized and valued.

Goal #1: Facilitate implementing City Council adopted management plans and standards with City entities; tend the organizational relationship between the City Council and the Park Board.

Directing Objectives from the current Strategic Plan

- *Successfully manage expectations for implementing Plans, policies and fees.*
- *Advocate for creative City-wide efficiency strategies and intra-Department partnerships in an effort to do more with less (increase and sustain services through efficiencies).*

Goal #2: Provide staff with adequate resources to perform their duties; explore a useful balance between senior staff and middle management and the administrative staff to support them.

Directing Objectives from the current Strategic Plan

- *Advocate for operational funding and Capital Investment Program (CIP) funding.*
- *Continue to develop the “volunteer army”.*
- *Market the license plates statewide and move ahead with appropriate “naming rights”.*

Goal #3: Facilitate evolution of the Fort Missoula Management Plan including the ability to pay for staff and how donor and volunteer recognition is being done.

D. Planning and Managing for Growth

Vision

Parks and Recreation plans for inward growth for green space by taking flexible, adaptive, innovative approaches to improving or existing green spaces and encouraging social interaction on many different levels - spanning from group action activities to opportunities for individual serenity.

Goal #1: Grow the urban tree canopy throughout existing boulevards and parks.

Directing Objective from the current Strategic Plan

- *Foster the “Stewardship Network” to provide extra-budgetary support for Department Resource management including the Tree Trust Fund as part of this “Network” structure.*

Goal #2: Focus on Missoula’s River corridor, creating our own “Golden Gate” or “Central” Park.

Directing Objective from the Current Strategic Plan

- *Continue to work on a “Blueways” strategy for the Clark Fork and Bitterroot Rivers.*

Goal #3: Continue to increase community-wide connectivity and active transportation via trails and acquiring lands in key areas to better connect the parks, trails and open space system

Directing Objectives from the Current Strategic Plan:

- *Continue closing identified trail gaps. Work with partners to connect primary trail routes.*
- *Work with partners on connecting major cornerstones/areas to achieve trail circumnavigation of the Valley including partnering with the County.*

Goal #4: Maximize the green canopy along existing trail network so they are truly greenways.

Goal #5: Recognize and plan accordingly for increased maintenance needs with increased use.

Directing Objectives from the current Strategic Plan

- *Continue to evaluate increasing costs of recovery rate in terms of impact fees and admissions. Recover costs for use by other Departments/identified user groups.*
- *Implement the recently passed bonds; move to next phases of Management Plans.*

Goal #6: Create new parks, trails and open spaces and recreational opportunities in underserved areas.

Goal #7: Foster existing and create new partnerships and collaborative relationships to meet parks and recreation goals and objectives.

Directing Objectives from the current Strategic Plan

- *Ensure partnerships are aligned with strategic priorities in facilities, services, time, and efforts and enhance and leverage resources.*
- *Solidify the Parks and Recreation Partnership Policy that clarifies decision criteria and expectations for Board, staff and partners.*
- *Working with Friends of Missoula Parks, ensure agreement on annual as well as longer term goals. Expand the Foundation approach to include endowments as part of the process.*