

# Lawrence Parks & Recreation Department

## A Comprehensive Master Plan

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### INTRODUCTION

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The purpose of this comprehensive master plan is to provide the department and the community with a roadmap to continue to provide high quality park spaces, recreation facilities and programs in Lawrence. Leading communities around the country continue to support parks and recreation as a strong component in defining the quality of life issues for their community. In Lawrence it is no different. In the public survey and through the community meetings, the citizens of Lawrence value their parks, use their parks, and want more out of their parks. Seventy-six percent of those surveyed had a member of their household visit a Lawrence park in 1999. This is a very high percentage of use in a community. And of those who visited the parks, eighty-six percent believed they were in good to excellent condition. Again this is a very high number and a tribute to the staff.

This plan will address those desires stated by the public coupled with the recommendations of the parks and recreation professionals on staff and the ability of the system to integrate, fund and manage the change. This plan addresses the integration of the community's desires for parks and recreation with the business of parks and recreation. Unfortunately, planning many times loses its ability to stimulate change by recommending unrealistic solutions. The worst scenario any facility intensive agency can do is spend thousands of dollars on capital development and not have the infrastructure in place to manage it and or the cash flow in future years to maintain it at a level expected by the community. While the facilities may be showcases for the initial years after construction, the system will eventually erode from lack of resources (human and dollar).

The Lawrence staff planning team identified the following as the key principles with which to guide the plan:

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|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Honesty   | <input type="checkbox"/> High level of standards  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equity  | <input type="checkbox"/> Consensus building in the community                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teamwork  | <input type="checkbox"/> Politically empowering – provide the information to make decisions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program life cycle evaluations                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Information sharing between staff and public                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program relationships and partnerships                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff must trust those who are representing them at the meetings   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications - internally and externally                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use standards and equity access of property                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Realistic solutions (the intersection of desired with doable) | <input type="checkbox"/> Timeliness in implementation                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Performance measures  | <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptance of change   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Balancing a static budget with added facilities               | <input type="checkbox"/> Building self esteem of staff                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quantity vs. quality (want to keep quality at the forefront)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Meet the public demand   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cross training of staff                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Create employee recognition  |

All of these principles form the basis through which this plan has been developed.

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Lawrence has had the good fortune in its Parks and Recreation Department over the years to maintain this balance of capital development and business management. This plan will make recommendations on how to continue to sustain and enhance this balance for the next generation.

The plan incorporates feedback from the community from a variety of forums, the analysis of the existing facilities and recommendations for improvements, the development of recommendations for future parks and recreation needs, an organizational review to implement and sustain the changes proposed by this plan and a five year action plan with funding strategies.

*"Whenever an individual or a business decides that success has been attained, progress stops."*  
Thomas J. Watson Jr.

