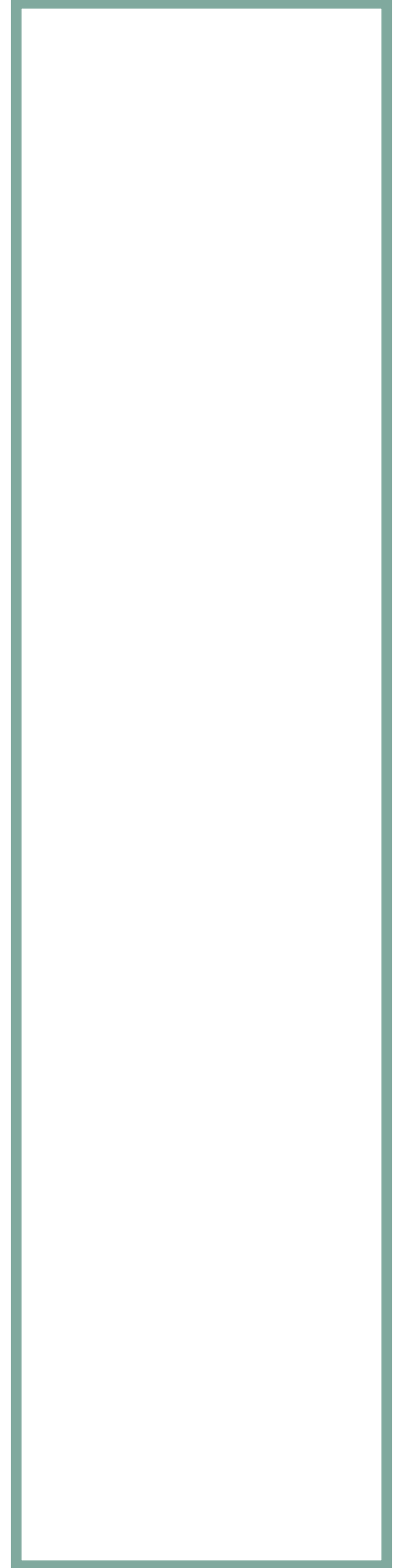




# Appendix F

## Focus Group Summaries



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# Parks System Master Plan Update Project FOCUS GROUP Meeting Summaries

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June 18 <sup>th</sup>	Shiloh Springs/Golf
October 7 <sup>th</sup>	Kansas City Area
	North Platte R-I Area Communities
October 9 <sup>th</sup>	Platte County R-III Area Communities
October 10 <sup>th</sup>	Parkville Area
October 21 <sup>st</sup>	West Platte R-II Area Communities
October 24 <sup>th</sup>	Riverside Area
November 12 <sup>th</sup>	Partnerships and Sustainability
November 14 <sup>th</sup>	Business Leaders
	Developers Roundtable
November 17 <sup>th</sup>	YMCA and Indoor recreation
	Dog Parks
November 18 <sup>th</sup>	Youth Sports & Programmers
November 19 <sup>th</sup>	Senior Groups
	Environment & Sustainability
Nov. 25 <sup>th</sup> -Dec. 15 <sup>th</sup>	Student Groups
December 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Trails (multi-use)
	Water Trails and Blueways
	Equestrian Trail Riders
	Performing and Visual Arts
	Public Safety Organizations
December 3 <sup>rd</sup>	History & Cultural Ed./Preservation
December 19 <sup>th</sup>	Community Parks/Recreation

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## Priority Rankings by Focus Group

		High Community	Developers/Investors	Youth Sports	Sustainability	Senior Citizens	Dog Parks	West Platte students
HIGH	10	Youth Sports (outdoor)	Community Centers	Indoor Sports Centers	Community Parks	Community Centers	Dog Parks	Natural Resources
	9	Indoor Sports Centers	Swimming Pools	Youth Sports (outdoor)	Natural Resources	Natural Resources	Trails	Indoor Sports Centers
	8	Trails	Trails	Community Centers	Trails	Community Parks	Natural Resources	Swimming Pools
MEDIUM	7	Community Parks	Indoor Sports Centers	Natural Resources	Community Centers	Swimming Pools	Community Parks	Youth Sports (outdoor)
	6	Dog Parks	Community Parks	Community Parks	Indoor Sports Centers	Trails	Swimming Pools	Community Parks
	5	Extreme Sports	Natural Resources	Extreme Sports	Youth Sports (outdoor)	Youth Sports (outdoor)	Youth Sports (outdoor)	Trails
LOW	4	Community Centers	Youth Sports (outdoor)	Swimming Pools	Extreme Sports	Indoor Sports Centers	Tennis	Community Centers
	3	Natural Resources	Tennis	Trails	Tennis	Dog Parks	Indoor Sports Centers	Extreme Sports
	2	Swimming Pools	Extreme Sports	Dog Parks	Swimming Pools	Tennis	Extreme Sports	Dog Parks
	1	Tennis	Dog Parks	Tennis	Dog Parks	Extreme Sports	Community Centers	Tennis



# Focus Group Overview

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## Purpose of Focus Group Meetings

The purpose of focus groups in the parks master planning process is threefold:

- to **engage** citizens in the process and *create ownership*;
- to update attendees about the status of the master planning process with emphasis on the citizen survey results; and
- to **learn** about current projects that are going on *around the county* and to **listen** to their ideas and preferences regarding future parks and recreation **needs** in the community

## Basic Format

The following key elements were consistent for each group meeting:

- **informal** in nature to create more inviting environment for interaction and sharing
- **short** in duration, no longer than ninety minutes
- **small** in attendance (4-8 persons), to allow multiple interactive opportunities and time for everyone
- facilitated by county staff or consultants with minimal involvement, other than to ask questions and provide base information; few if any opinions are shared by facilitators

## Key Expected Outcomes from Each Group

The key expectations from each meeting include:

- *active listening* on the part of the county/consultant to create an interactive **experience** for the attendees
- an opportunity to reach out to citizens and **key stakeholders** to send the message that their ideas and preferences are **important** to the planning process and the future of Platte County
- some assurance that important projects and individual *visions are not overlooked* in the master plan
- the likelihood that the master plan will be **supported** by this group because of their increased awareness and participation in the planning process

# Shiloh Springs Golfers

**Date:** 6/18/08

**Moderator:** Larry Flatt (BWR sub-consultant)

**Participants:** Dennis Corcoran, Bobby Crockett, Sharon Canina, Rick McGinniss, and Judy Game. (participating via letter or phone interview: Hank Brickman, Mike Maasen, Jack Coots, and Karen Waggoner)

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status – Things that are happening now

- Credit to current staff, very professional, friendly, and doing a good job, great potential for future of course because of growth in county
- Junior program is going well as are the tournaments that are offered
- Acknowledgement that golf course condition is improving and it is fun place to play
- Concerns with overall course design and lack of adequate acreage for 18 hole course
- Concerns with basic deferred maintenance on course, such as level tees and greens, drainage, turf condition on certain holes (such as weed control and sparse coverage)
- Concerns with non-golfers making policy decisions and perception that past promises for course improvements have not been kept
- Concerns about image: that non-golfers in community complain that the golf course is the reason their taxes are so high; project started poorly and has struggled every year financially, and other courses in the area are better

## Future Needs/Key Issues

- county needs to commit to successful course or get out of golf business
- quality of the golf experience at Shiloh needs to improve,
- advertise more, get more coverage and publicity in local newspapers, and promote improvements being made; promote junior and family programs
- improve playing conditions, maybe toughen up a little,
- focus on customer service

## Priorities

- maintenance and attention to existing conditions, especially turf and drainage issues
- capital improvement program, funded by course revenues and parks tax
- promote benefits of golf and opportunities at Shiloh in community

# KCMO Area Group



**Date:** 10/7/08

**Moderator/County Reps:** Dick Horton, Brian Nowotny

**Participants:** Councilman Ed Ford, Tim Kristl, Margie Maasen, Andy Smith, Stephanie Sheiber, Kim Skinner, Jill Ronk, Chris Quinn, Nan McManus, Gia McFarlane, Mark McHenry, Michael Herron, Cheryl Thorp, Lisa (Patti Banks), Pat Kline, Jim Shoemaker, Nina Ehlers, Abe Shirazi, Laura Lymer, Megan Conger, Jeanette Cowheard (PHSD)

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status – Things that are happening now

- Corps of Engineers – working on study of Missouri River corridor in Platte County/KC area
- Ball field upgrades at Platte Purchase Park
- Tiffany Springs Off-Highway Vehicle Study by KCMO Parks
- Programmer evaluation by BofA at Tiffany Hills Park
- Dog Parks have been identified by a KCMO Study for Vaydik and Tiffany Springs Parks

## Future Needs/Key Issues

- Possible demand for a OHV Facility, either private or public
- A 3<sup>rd</sup> wheel of ballfields at Tiffany Hills
- Field upgrades and new playground at Tiffany Springs
- Perhaps the KCMO Committee should be contacted to determine if additional areas within the County would be good spots for a dog park, if needed
- Affordable programs and facilities are important to many families
- A central scheduling system would benefit many users
- Accessibility/ all inclusive facilities are important
- Outdoor Education Programs
- Close to home parks should be considered to provide opportunities to get outdoors and exercise so that partial solutions to problems such as obesity are addressed
- Safe routes to school
- opportunities to partner with the Missouri Department of Conservation
- Indoor Facilities

## Priorities

- Maintenance of Existing Facilities and Safety (7)
- Trails, both land and water for recreation and to create more community connectivity (6)
- New Land Acquisition & Open Space/Habitat Preservation (5)
- Indoor Facilities (3)
- Affordable programs and facilities
- Development of the Missouri Riverfront (Kansas City to the Northwest Corner of the State)
- A Fountain (s)
- Small parks and playgrounds
- Excess capacity to accommodate tourism



# North Platte R-1 Area Group

**Date:** 10/7/08

**Moderator/County Reps:** Dick Horton, Brian Nowotny, Jim Plunkett

**Participants:** George Heoffner (Edgerton), Jeff Sumy (Supt. of Schools at North Platte and resident of Dearborn), Bob Ray (Dearborn area), Karen Seckel (Dearborn), Lloyd Bressman (Edgerton), James Snook (Mayor, Edgerton), Dave Trimmer (Camden Point)

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status – Things that are happening now

- The Edgerton Pioneer Days Festival
- Edgerton acquired land adjacent to City Park and may acquire additional land
- Edgerton has made upgrades to City Park

## Future Needs/Key Issues

- Acknowledgement that each community is unique and has different needs
- Consider continuation of Partnership Grant Program, it was very successful and is rated as a nine or ten (on a ten point scale) by all attendees
- Very long term, large regional park in area should be considered

## Priorities

- With County assistance, communities should consider these priorities
- Edgerton area issues:
  - have indoor meeting space (community building)
  - develop a park area near the Middle School
  - improve drainage on the city ball field
  - install lighting in City Park
- Dearborn/R-1 High School area issues:
  - pave park parking lot with asphalt
  - acquire land where the storage bins are located near park entrance
  - improved access to the high school track while recognizing the need for security measures
  - construct restroom facilities in park
  - expand the trail around the creek area
  - beautify the creek area
  - construct a shelter house on newly acquired land across highway
  - construct tennis court
- Camden Point area issues:
  - consider a park between the school and existing park



# Platte County R-III Area Group

**Date:** 10/9/08

**Moderator/County Reps:** Dick Horton, Brian Nowotny,  
Betty Knight, Jim Plunkett

**Participants:** Mayor Frank Offutt, Mike Reik, Zach Keith, Kenneth Brown

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status – Things that are happening now

- Platte City is improving Settlers Park at the end of Main Street using Outreach Grants
- The soccer league had a very successful fall league in October at Platte Ridge
- Schools have no firm plans at the current time to develop new athletic facilities

## Future Needs/Key Issues

- The R-3 School District is very interested in future partnership assistance with:
  - tennis courts (8)
  - an indoor competitive pool
  - gymnasium space
  - supportive of a community skatepark
- Platte City is in favor of:
  - a community skatepark, perhaps reuse of the old swimming pool
  - land acquisition
  - maintenance of existing parks and facilities
  - expansion of the community center, especially for gymnasium space and an indoor pool with lap lanes
  - connecting trails
  - waterways
  - portage ramp at Settlers Park on Main Street

## Priorities

- Maintenance of Existing Facilities and Safety (2)
- Tennis Courts (2)
- Swimming Pool with competitive lap lanes
- General improvements to Platte Ridge Park



# Parkville Area Group

**Date:** 10/10/08

**Moderator/County Reps:** Dick Horton, Brian Nowotny

**Participants:** Mayor Jerry Richardson, Andy Smith, Laura Lymer, Cory Miller

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status

- Parkville currently work on finalizing their own master plan for parks, P3; intend to hold off on final recommendations until more information is received on county-wide priorities
- No major projects currently in works, improvements to English Landing and extensions of trails receive most attention

## Future Needs/Key Issues

- From the Community Land and Recreation Board's perspective, there have been some discussions about the following:
  - wondered if a river side café/concession area would be feasible
  - a regional park that would have athletics and some passive park areas
  - a possible regional park location would be near the intersection of I-435 and Highway 45
  - the Board feels there is a need for three football fields and some soccer fields
  - would like to see the riverfront land used, mostly for natural purposes due to its floodway location
  - like the idea of connected riverfront trails
  - upgrading/completing English Landing Park
  - a Dog Park (s)
- indoor facilities to accommodate sports and suggested a large facility that would accommodate an auditorium, nature center, and active space programming (sports) would fill a big void in the Parkville area
- an arboretum/rose garden surrounded by community gardens; e.g. Columbia, MO has a facility of this type

## Priorities

- trails
- indoor sports facilities
- natural habitat preservation
- upgrade/completion of English Landing Park



# West Platte R-II Area Group



**Date:** 10/21/08

**Moderator/County Reps:** Dick Horton, Brian Nowotny, Jim Plunkett

**Participants:** Mayor Cindy Seward, Quint Shafer (School District), Bob Kincaid (Farley), Mel Beverlin, Julie Nelson, Jeff Elsea, Marie Mason, Marilyn Lindahl

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status

- The City and City Park Board are working on the following projects:
  - improving the tennis/volleyball court in City Park and cleaning up the creek
  - using a Tour of Missouri Grant to construct an outdoor climbing wall
  - working on an off-leash dog park
  - working on a trail plan including widening the downtown sidewalk
- The Corps of Engineers is acquiring land from Weston to the River for wetland restoration purposes
- The Corps of Engineers has some interest in acquiring the land north of 92 Hwy from the Bureau of Federal Prisons for wetland restoration purposes
- The sand/gravel area may develop for parks and facilities near Waldron

## Future Needs/Key Issues

- Would like a park area at the end of Main Street
- Need better access to the Bluffs Trail and better way-finding signage
- Big demand for more music in the park
- Would like a trail from Beverly to the Platte River
- Have dreams of acquiring/renovating a Tobacco Barn along P Highway for an indoor/outdoor theater
- Would like to consider a pool/sprayground and activities for young people
- Skatepark
- Would like to consider off-season uses of the Ski Hill
- Bike Services and eco-tourism would fit nicely with the development of the park area at the end of Main Street and trails
- Would like to see a change of use of the existing trailer park; such as for campground
- May consider the “bundling” of activities to draw people to town; e.g. eco-tourism, historical education, environmental education, special events, etc.

## Priorities

- Development of a park at the end of Main Street with native plants that would attract wildlife, accommodate bike services, etc. (3)
- Youth Activities (3)
- Maintenance of existing facilities (2)
- Improvements/expansion of Bless Park

# Riverside Area Group



**Date:** 10/24/08

**Moderator/County Reps:** Dick Horton, Brian Nowotny, Jim Kunce, Betty Knight

**Participants:** Mayor Kathy Rose, Skip Clinton (skating rink), Mike Odell (sand and gravel company and organizer of running events on the levee), Paul Kelly (school district), Bill Knight

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status

- Riverside currently working on the following trail projects: Line Creek Trail Connector, Indian Hills Trail, Jumping Branch Trail, Briarcliff Trail
- Working with County to improve West side of Levee Trail to English Landing
- Moving rentals from the Community Center to the Union Hall and opening the Community Center on weekends due to demand
- Park Hill School district has upgraded most playgrounds all elementary schools and is continuing to implement their CIP

## Future Opportunities/Key Issues

- City may want to organize skating events on the trails
- skatepark expansion
- may want to evaluate paved trails vs. gravel surfaces
- the Linear Trail at Riverside seems to be dark – even during the day
- need more opportunities to get near the water
- rails to trails opportunities on the old Interurban line
- indoor sports facility
- School wants to complete more playground upgrades; playgrounds for ages 3 to 5 may be underserved
- upgrade existing ball fields on school sites for community use and perhaps more fields
- the 2006 Park Hill C.I.P. Plan called for an aquatic center on the south end and a middle school running track

## Priorities

- trail connections (2)
- renewing the parks sales tax
- value for the dollar
- communicate the success of the parks program
- outreach grants

# Partnerships and Sustainability

**Date:** 11/12/08

**Moderator/County Reps:** Dick Horton, Brian Nowotny, Noel Challis

**Participants:** Steve Rhoades of Patti Banks, Scott Cahail KC Water Services Dept, Mark Nelson of the Missouri Department of Conservation, Jim Reed of the Nature Center, and Michael Herron KCMO Parks and Recreation (not Present but submitting written comments: David Dodds, Environmental Engineer from Parkville)

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## General Comments/Background

- Missouri Department of Conservation
  - core mission is fish, forest, and wildlife and make sure that spaces are inviting to the public
  - not likely to be any future land acquisition unless it would be near Platte Falls or another MDC property that needs to be polished off. This is due, primarily, to funding
  - MDC owns approximately 1 million acres in the state, thus the maintenance of those areas is priority number one
  - MDC strives to balance the need to invite the public in versus high standard of care for keeping areas natural and sustainable for wildlife
  - MDC 1/8 sales tax is both for acquisition and maintenance; total budget is \$170M for the state; tax does not sunset



## Future Opportunities/Key Issues for Successful Partnerships and Sustainable Parks

- Opportunities for County partnerships on MDC land, such as for trails: Mark said, yes, with restrictions. In certain instances, primary purpose is fishing and hunting, thus trails at Platte Falls, for example, must be secondary to primary purpose, thus there are certain times when the trail would have to be closed due to hunting season. Other needs are for potable water, flush toilets, and security lighting.
- the County should consider a formal partnership agreement that is appropriately scaled with mutual goals, objectives, and scope
- important to promote existing opportunities, such as the duckhead water trail at Platte Falls where it is easy to float for an hour and not have to rely on an outfitter to transport the participants from the starting point to the ending point
- another existing canoe/kayak floating opportunity is from the Humphrey Access to Farley and may be a 4 to 5 hour trip
- need to work with KCMO to protect water along streams and rivers with a buffer area; Line Creek Valley should be protected/acquired
- MDC has partnerships with Earthriders, this group is supportive of an asphalt spine trail that provides access to their dirt bike trails, Earthriders will maintain their trails
- We need a way to classify the waterways experience so that users know what type of trip to expect
- Partnerships with OHV groups may present some natural resource challenges. In order for partnerships to be sustainable with OHV and other groups they must be well organized for maintenance and programming. Kansas City is considering approaching these types of partnerships by allowing the most organized groups first priority.
- Partners need to have a vested interest in the goals and objectives of the partnership and conduct their activities responsibly.
- It is important to choose partners well. Know your criteria for partnership selection. Know how much time you have to supervise partners. All partnerships have risk, evaluate these and have a plan B.
- Don't exclude partnerships just because they are small. Even the citizen who reports weekly on the condition of a park is an important asset and partner.
- Partners also need to take ownership for their actions and be self-policing.
- Define the resource commitment of partners and make sure that all partners are bringing a resource to the table.
- Partnerships should be guided by agreements that include, contact information for partners, who the partnership is serving, goals, dollar value of contributions, maintenance standards & expectations, and an agreed upon method of communication.
- In partnerships it is important to track their value in time and materials to know what value is lost if the partnership were to end.
- With partnerships, you must be committed to put forth time to manage them. At least twice yearly have a meeting for partnership accountability and renewal.
- A potential future partnership may be working through the stream buffer ordinance to allow public access to waterways.
- What should be the County land acquisition goal for water quality – it was suggested that we use the MARC Natural Resource Inventory and the Kansas City Climate Protection Plan (goals for tree canopy increase) as resources.
- Platte County has an important role to play in leading sustainability efforts.

## Priorities

- Jim Reed – Partnerships have to be good for both partners
- Mark Nelson – Important to recognize volunteers
- Steve Rhoades – Need to continue working with partners; help promote the needs of strategic partners by linking to them on the County's website so more people get interested and involved. Platte County is setting a high standard relative to regionalism and that others are monitoring what we are doing and wanting to catch up.
- Scott Cahail – From a sustainable perspective, listen to what people want and do it
- Michael Herron – Use the original plan as a basis for updating the old plan. Do not forget the good things that were supportable by citizens in the first plan – where its



# Business Leaders

**Date:** 11/14/08

**Moderator/County Reps:** Dick Horton, Brian Nowotny

**Participants:** Dave Knack of ADT Security Services, Rosemary Salerno of Zona Rosa, Mike Fisher of Harley Davidson, Debbie Heiser of Citi Bank, Shani Porter of the Platte County Economic Development Council, and Sheila Tracy of the Northland Chamber

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status

- County Parks are great, keep it up
- Tiffany Springs Park has made a big impact on retail activity in the surrounding area (Zona Rosa)
- Opportunities for youth are an important issue for economic development; number one question prospective employers get: "what is available for my kids to do?"

## Future Opportunities/Key Issues

- Trails should connect everything in the county: jobs, homes, schools, parks, shopping
- Seasonal options should be considered such as a large sledding hill in a park, cross country skiing, etc...; could Snow Creek be a partner?
- Important to protect greenspace in county
- Paths around lakes and ponds are important
- Consider underserved populations, like skateboarders and extreme sports groups
- Need to find ways to impact rising health care costs; create better quality of life through active lifestyles
- Need bike friendly signage on some commonly used roads where bikers tend to be
- Maintenance, very important for county parks and trails
- Ideas for Communications & Outreach:
  - email, calendars, and newsletters good way to communicate to Platte County employers
  - Northland Chamber magazine could include articles related to county parks on health and wellness issues
  - Platte County staff could attend major events by Zona Rosa and others with a table for marketing, etc.

## Priorities

- Youth indoor and outdoor sports rank as 1A
- Trails and community parks rank as 1B





# Developers Roundtable

**Date:** 11/14/08

**Moderator/County Reps:** Dick Horton, Brian Nowotny, Dan Erikson

**Participants:** Scott Cargil of Lutjen, Greg Walker of MD Management (real estate development), Aaron Schmidt of Hunt Midwest

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status

- Number one question developers get from potential residents: “where is the pool and activities center?”; trails are second
- Although more people use trails, the most preferred amenity is a swimming pool.
- Findings in the Platte County Survey for citizen preferences are exactly like what they are seeing in their developments relative to preferences for amenities
- There are some roads where cyclists are in great danger and would be nice to have a trail to get them off the road.
- Trails may be helpful to get to neighborhood retail areas but not to larger retail areas. Most trail users are for recreational purposes.
- Patty Noll is a key contact person with City Development Office for more information regarding sewer district project in an area north of Highway 152.
- Many of the developers are on board with improvements that will improve the quality of life in the County; however, there are a number of them who are not involved, perhaps not interested. Would be a challenge to get them all on board with plans
- Need to fulfill existing Platte Purchase Park master plan

## Future Opportunities/Key Issues

- There should be a regional recreation center in KC where most people live similar to the existing ones which have become an “anchor” in each community
- We need 15 more parks like Barry-Platte
- A lot of floodplain area in the Line Creek Valley is undeveloped and is the prettiest land in the County according to many. Owners may be willing to discuss a partnership for recreational use of some of that land. The old interurban also good opportunity
- Neighborhood partnerships, use subdivision policies and developer collaborations to develop “medium” sized parks
- Would be great to connect Platte Purchase to Line Creek and may be able to use the parkway that is planned for that area.
- Trails off of streets are preferred; bike lanes too dangerous for too little usage; most trails best in green corridors
- Should concentrate trails/parks north of 152 first before area completely develops

## Priorities

- 1A are community centers, indoor sports programs, and swimming pools/spraygrounds
- 1B are trails, natural resource protection, and community parks



# YMCA and Indoor Recreation



**Date:** 11/17/08

**Moderator/County Reps:** Betty Knight, Brian Nowotny

**Participants:** M. Hulet, G. Linn, Angie Mutti, Michelle Ford, Paul Smith, Sherry Ford, Allan Blair

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status of Community Centers

- Membership has stayed relatively consistent despite downturn in economy
- More financial aid has been given by Y at centers than ever before
- Rates are staying same for Platte County residents this year thanks to strong community support (rates are going up at other Y facilities in metro)
- New Spinner bikes for Spinning program have been big hit and classes full
- Fall Halloween program had over 2,000 participants between two facilities

## Key Future Issues and Opportunities

- Need to plan for growth now; convenience of access for people will be big issue as population expands in Platte County; people will patronize good facilities closer to where they live and work
- Good opportunities are out there for new facility in central part of County and expanding existing North facility; someone will serve this market area (citizens) and it should be us
- South Capacity: close to max., but membership is at a good level now (11K members or so); most people have now been exposed to facility and know what it has to offer
- North Capacity: room for growth, especially in wellness/fitness areas; gymnasium is overbooked with programs and open use.....desperately need dedicated aerobics room and meeting space
- North Aquatics: Y open to discussions with Schools about possible natatorium partnership; wants them to be fair for all with serious contributions from all "partners"; capital costs for new pool must be contributed along with cost-share on maintenance; priority for School use probably would not be a problem....greater challenge would be finding other programs to fill six or eight lane pool to balance operating costs. Costs to build and operate stand alone facility much higher than if done in conjunction with complementary facility. Estimated construction costs: \$300 to \$500 sq./ft.....estimated operational costs: \$200 to \$300K/ yr.
- Youth Sports: biggest challenge is lack of facilities; Y very open to "helping" and "partnering" with other agencies if they can
- Challenger Field: still in fundraising stage for facility at 152 Hwy and Platte Purchase; approximately \$1.7M still needs to be raised for full completion of all phases; phase one with ballfield, parking and concessions is to be completed for summer 2009 use
- General Programs: Y very interested and sees need to expand programs to existing parks and trails, i.e. walking club or guided nature hikes

## Priorities

- Study feasibility of third, new, community center in Platte County
- Look at expansion options for North, including in priority order aerobics space, flex/meeting room, gymnasium, and aquatics (family leisure and lap lanes).

# Youth Sports and Recreation Programs



**Date:** 11/18/08

**Moderator/County Reps:** Brian Nowotny, Jim Kunce

**Participants:** Andy Smith, Kim Skinner, Gary Linn, Terry Nolan, John Kurtz, Chris Seibenmorgan, Steve Getling

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Key Future Issues and Opportunities

- Make safety more of a priority at Platte Purchase Park; more lighting and better maintenance of trail.
- Expand trails at PPP and get utilities to site and new lights.
- A new indoor sports center remains a high priority for the NSA; new gymnasiums are not being built the way the County's original 20/20 plan identified a need for; a four to six court layout is preferred with flexible flooring to accommodate basketball, volleyball, Futsol, and other activities.
- "If we build a new indoor sports center it will create lots of new ways for all of the existing service providers to cooperate with each other" A.S.
- Indoor sports center will provide economic development for county; keep a national perspective in mind when designing it.
- "Maintenance needs to be our number one priority, even before the new center." A.S.
- Utility costs are hurting the NSA budget, we need relief.
- Platte County kids are now going south of the river to participate in other youth sports programs, like 30 to 40 teams this year in YMCA programs due to lack of facilities
- Indoor sports center good idea, needs six courts minimum, "the bigger the better" T.N.
- Need to have serious collaborations to make an indoor sports center work; it likely will need a non-profit manager and some form of subsidy from somebody to keep the doors open.
- Indoor sports center needs to be able to expand in future, should have designed South Community Center in this way for expansion now.
- Think about bowling alley, there are none in Platte County (with exception of Park University).
- "Our facilities are OK now in the Platte City area" J.K.
- Safety, parking lot lighting, very important for any facility, including Platte Ridge Park.
- Need to balance improving our many great existing parks with building new.
- Lots of opportunities exist to make current sports parks better: lighting, utilities, restrooms, and new fields.
- Football fields, need more, many kids now traveling to Independence, south of the river, and up to Buchanan and Andrew counties to play.
- Lots of potential exists for local football teams to play together if we had a facility; tournaments could be played if we had a good complex to draw other teams to Platte County from around area and state.
- Current NSA football program has 142 kids, \$300 registration fee, and games in Independence.
- Current PCYFL football program has 200 kids, \$150 registration fee, and games at R-III and areas north of Platte County.

- The North Suburban League teams like the Jets, Vikings, and Chiefs would probably be interested in forming a Platte County based league with the others if a new complex was built.
- “We need to keep Platte County kids playing here.” C.S.
- “I’ve seen Betty Knight with a tear in her eye when she spoke of all the kids having to leave Platte County to play softball.....we still have that with football and soccer to a large degree.” A.S.
- Not enough soccer fields out there now.
- NSA currently has about 1,200 kids registering for soccer.
- Some good possibilities exist for combining soccer and football into one complex, but there will be a big challenge in the fall with overlapping seasons (lights will help make more use of fields, as will field turf).
- YMCA is building Challenger Park at 152 & Platte Purchase for disabled youth sports and to supplement their traditional programs.
- Y now uses Pleasant Valley Park for some of their Challenger programs.
- Lacrosse is a sport we are hearing more about, and they can use a football field too.

#### Priorities

- Indoor Sports opportunities....in collaboration with expansion of existing com. centers
- Outdoor Sports facilities
- More Cooperation with each other to maximize resources and services

#### Critical Issues for Future Collaboration and Partnerships

- Garry: this is important for future success of community centers, we need the connection to youth sports options to make the centers complete; start with simple putting out of NSA fliers and work from their
- Terry: tonight’s forum was very good start; need ongoing forum/format to continue dialog with each other
- John: just commit to working together, to serve the citizens, and complement each other
- Steve: we are on the right track; encouraged by meeting others and having chance to talk
- Chris: networking opportunities, we need to talk more; need “home league” opportunities by the creation of new facilities that bring us together; threats to this are varying rules from league to league and political “turf” issues
- Andy: put leaders in room together more than once every ten years; communicating with each other sets aside the fear of the unknown; key leaders here tonight probably serve 15,000+ families in Platte County, think of the power of us all working together
- Kim: get leaders of groups together more to work on common goals



# Dog Parks Group

**Date:** 11/17/08

**Moderator/County Reps:** Noel Challis

**Participants:** Stacy Smith, Dale Smith, Paul Binner, Cindy Seward, & Marie Mason

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## General Comments for parks and recreation

- Community Centers do not provide opportunities for everyone to join at an affordable price range
- There are limited opportunities for seniors in Platte County and this is further limited by the lack of community center availability to those on fixed incomes
- Publicity is important – people need to know what is available and how to use the facilities, usage would be increased through publicity
- Is there a way to partner with geo-caching groups for park betterment, they could help watch out over parks and give regular reports on their findings?

## Comments on Existing Facilities and proposed locations for Dog Parks in Platte County

- Shawnee Mission Park is a good example and well used
- Penn Valley Park is too small and is not well maintained
- Wyandotte County Park has an area that is nice
- Smithville Lake does not have a dog park, but plenty of informal area for dogs to run
- Weston's Bless Park would be an ideal location for a dog park; it is about 15 acres and includes a pond and also could access potable water, it would need fencing & other infrastructure
- How much influence does Platte County have with cities in the County, can we work with them to make more facilities available more quickly?
- Amity Woods Nature Preserve used to be an informal place to take dogs but it is no longer available
- Tiffany Springs Park would also be an ideal facility for dog use, however all of the parking lot gates are locked during the day and the park is unavailable
- Prairie Creek Greenway is a nice place to walk a dog

## Necessities for Dog Parks

- Fencing
- Large enough for a dog to run
- Access to potable water or notification that dog owner must bring water
- Trash cans and/or clean-up stations provided throughout the park, dog owners must be responsible for cleaning up after their own pets
- Clean-up stations can be plastic bag dispensers or a community pooper scooper that is stored next to each trash can

- Benches in the shade to allow dog owners a place to relax and watch their dogs
- A double gated entry to prevent dogs from escaping while another is entering
- Operate from dawn to dusk
- Restrooms or at least Portable Toilets
- Pets are family members and are important

#### Extras for Dog Parks

- It would be best to have a large, regional large dog park as well as smaller, neighborhood parks where local residents could take their dogs without a lot of effort
- Provide separate fenced areas for large and small dogs
- Require membership cards for access, these can be fee based or free. This type of system tends to encourage use of dog parks by responsible dog owners. It also can be used to require registration of dogs in the City or County and ensure that dogs are properly vaccinated.
- Provide a washing station where dog owners can clean their dogs before putting them in their cars. The washing station would need to be provided on a paved, non-muddy surface.
- If there is a lake or a pond for dogs to access to this would be a great feature. However, it would not be worth the expense to install one.
- Dog Play Equipment, one brand is Puppies Playground used by Camp Bow Wow

#### Ideas for management and funding of dog parks

- Advertising can be sold and mounted to fences
- Accept donations and partner with non-profit groups such as the Parkville Animal Shelter
- Use existing groups such as the Parkville Animal Shelter to communicate about the availability of dog park facilities, usage requirements, etc.
- Have clean-up stations be sponsored by pet-related services; contract with a yard cleaning service for weekly or twice-monthly clean-ups – if they provide this service they can receive free advertising
- Provide separate fenced areas where use by dogs can be rotated, this would allow the grass to grow back in areas that are not being used

# Seniors Group



**Date:** 11/19/08

**Moderator/County Reps:** Noel Challis

**Participants:** Martha Zirschky, Sue Dance, Judy Shafe, Kathy Macken, Mary Overstreet, & Paul Buschmann

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## General Comments

- Experience at the Springs at Tiffany Hills has been unfavorable. The children there are unruly and more staff / parent responsibility is needed to control children who are out of the water. There is a negative view of the proposed Kansas City plan to bus children to this facility because they will come with limited supervision.
- Line Creek Community Center is a nice facility for ice skating and is well utilized.
- It is important for parks and recreation facilities to be well maintained and safe.

## Comments on Community Centers

- Community Centers may not provide opportunities for everyone to join at an affordable price range, even the discounted rates may still be too high for seniors
- Community education is needed to show people the availability of the Community Centers and their services, when people see "YMCA" they automatically think they cannot afford it and do not investigate it.
- The Community Centers are nice facilities.
- The Silver Sneakers program provided by the Community Centers is awesome.
- The pools at the community centers have limited swimming areas and are focused more on children's activities.
- Platte Senior Services is working on developing a water therapy/aquatics program with the YMCA to begin in 2009; these will be 6 week programs and each individual will be able to participate in two programs per year.
- Is there a way to provide transportation to the Community Centers? Current programs available through the Platte Senior Services Fund can provide transportation if the person receiving the transportation is going to a therapy session, otherwise access to transportation is limited.
- Is there an opportunity to provide a community center and/or similar programs for the north region of the County?

## Comments on Existing Senior Services in the County and other good examples

- Platte Senior Services has an executive director, administrative assistant, a social worker, and transportation staff (transportation is limited to necessities).
- Platte Senior Services helps fund the Response Link program that allows a senior in need to use a call button for help that will then alert family members or 911.

- Platte Senior Services provides “meals on wheels” and meals at the senior center. The senior center also has activity rooms for crafts, games, internet access, and television. The craft room is currently underutilized.
- English Landing Park provides nice music programs, etc. The grass in front of the stage is difficult for seniors of limited mobility to navigate.
- The Gladstone Community Center provides wonderful programs and tours. Platte County residents often use this facility and its services.
- Zona Rosa has walks and talks that are nice. It is essential that this type of activity not be planned at the dinner hour.
- Johnson County has a fixed transportation route with known terminals that allows access for seniors to parks and recreation facilities.
- Vail, Colorado has a sprayground that is converted into an outdoor ice rink in the winter. This type of feature is a fun place for seniors to take grandchildren to visit.
- Reflective gardens, such as the Oriental Garden in Ashland are nice.
- The Kendallwood Estates provides recreation amenities to residents by contracting with hotels (swimming pools) and golf courses.

Comments on Senior Needs and Desires
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- When people think of seniors they often stereotype them as not physically active, we need to be careful to include all types of senior citizens and their wide range of abilities.
- Seniors tend to participate more frequently in morning and evening activities.
- There is a great need for transportation services for senior citizens. Senior Center transportation is currently provided through OATS (out of Harrisonville). This is limited to two vans. Is it possible to partner with them and increase transportation capacity and routes?
- Places to walk are important because this allows them to maintain a level of good health.
- Places to get exercise and fresh air.
- Senior citizens may not leave their neighborhoods to walk because access is limited to other facilities by the need to drive, distance, etc.
- Opportunities for an amphitheatre, entertainment, concerts, gatherings, music in the park would be highly utilized by seniors
- Socialization is a necessity for senior citizens
- Provide day trips to parks and recreation facilities and other locations
- Consider partnering with continuing education programs at local schools.
- Consider partnering with private sector for programs like Zona Rosa, etc.
- Consider hiring a recreation director to help plan programs for seniors and others.
- Senior citizens are interested in dog parks.
- Shaded trails away from noise and traffic.
- Wherever there are places to bring children (playgrounds, etc.) there should be benches or places for seniors to watch and supervise.
- Community gardens would provide a place for people with similar interests to gather and participate in therapeutic activities. The garden would need to have a fence, water, and a shaded area for relaxation.
- Natural resource protection and greenspace are important.

# Environment and Sustainability Group



**Date:** 11/19/08

**Moderator/County Reps:** Noel Challis

**Participants:** Celine Armstrong, Susan Brown, & Carla Dods

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Comments on Community Centers

- Community Centers are expensive although they are the most utilized in the metropolitan area.
- A lower-end community center that provides basic needs would be fine. A sustainable choice could be to lease the unutilized space in an empty store or mall to provide exercise equipment and other features.
- The Prairie Village Community Center is “too fancy.”

## Define Sustainability as it relates to Parks and Recreation facilities

- Take advantage of known sustainable practices and implement them.
- Be a good example of sustainability by implementing upcoming technology that saves energy, etc.
- It is important to stay within budget and make choices that are budget-conscious.
- Park University has a goal of becoming carbon neutral – this could be a goal for Parks and Recreation.
- Include native prairie plantings. Decreased maintenance (employee time, chemicals, & mower pollution) of native plants makes sense environmentally and monetarily.
- Possibly put parkland into a carbon banking program.
- Use solar and take parks off the energy grid. Solar lights currently use only compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) but LED technology for solar is coming.
- Choose park furnishings and products that are both environmentally friendly and durable. Limit use of PVC.
- Ensure that parks and recreation facilities are on a walkable route, consider using LEED for Schools biking/walking section as an example.
- As much as possible combine nodes for group amenities and infrastructure (limit footprint).
- Focus on stormwater quality and quantity. Have a goal of net zero run-off.
- Provide educational opportunities along with best practices.
- It's important for people to experience nature.
- Preserve large blocks of land.
- Have an asset management plan that includes life expectancy of furnishings and facilities.
- Conduct water quality monitoring (funding available through 319 grants).
- Many sustainable choices are policy related. For example, an energy conservation policy may be that ballfield lights are turned off after 10pm.
- Use swales instead of pipes – have a no curb policy where possible or at a minimum provide curb cuts for stormwater release. For parking lots use bumpers instead of curbs.



- It is important that sustainable practices are designed, implemented and maintained in a quality manner that allows the public to have a positive perception.
- Always require construction pollution prevention plans.
- Use permeable pavers in overflow parking areas.
- Incorporate practices that will reduce the heat island effect.
- Utilize services like the Community Conservation Corps and other volunteers for maintenance and installation.
- Purchase low emission maintenance equipment. Consider eliminating blowers from regular maintenance activities.
- Solar applications can be used for swimming pool heaters.
- Create and follow a detailed management plan that incorporates best practices.
- Recycle. Make sure people know that recycling is an option at parks facilities and events.
- Document mowing schedule, especially when a mow is cancelled due to lack of need – this shows responsible maintenance.
- Provide shade structures for parking areas that have solar panels.
- When choosing swimming pool management – choose companies who use green standards.
- Incorporate green roofs and make sure people can see them and relate to them.
- Educate staff regarding sustainable practices.
- Don't try to do too much at once, incorporate sustainability in a way that is manageable.

Examples of Best Management Practices to follow
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- Low Impact Development (LID) Center has criteria to follow.
- Buildings should be LEED Certified at a minimum.
- National Parks and Recreation provides technical assistance as a resource.
- Use the Sustainable Sites Initiative.
- Consider using guidance from several sources and making a custom set of goals that is manageable.
- Lenexa's Rain to Recreation program
- It is positive that the County has a stream setback policy, but it could use some improvements.
- Incorporate Green Collar Jobs into your management plan.
- Dave Crawford has a series in the Business Journal on sustainability.
- Consider having the County sign on to the Climate Change Initiative.
- Continue to follow the MARC Ozone initiative and limit mowing on days when levels are high.
- MoDOT and KDOT are incorporating transportation and environmental planning.
- Green Area Ratio program.
- MARC is in the process of developing a conservation and transportation plan.



## West Platte R-II Students Group

**Date:** 11/25/08

**Moderator/County Reps:** Noel Challis

**Participants:** Lexi Collier, Lauren R, Rhett M, Casey F, Whitney Taylor, Nathan Coulson, Michael, Jessica, Alex Roe, & Chloe

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

### Current Status of Parks & Recreation Facilities in the County

- Love the Springs at Tiffany Hills, although it is often crowded.
- Enjoy the trails for walking and jogging.
- Weston Bend State Park is nice, but the facilities seem limited. Also the restrooms are not very clean.
- There is only one outdoor basketball facility at the City Park in Weston. There is a need for more places to play basketball.
- Glad that the tennis courts in Weston were just resurfaced.
- Shiloh Springs is a nice golf course. The driving range is too small.
- Snow Creek is fun, but always crowded. It needs to be larger.
- Platte Ridge Park is a great park. Students have enjoyed watching their nieces and nephews play football and soccer there. The playground is fun for kids and the fishing pond is nice.
- Students often use the Weston Bluffs Trail.
- The Platte City Community Center is nice, but it is too small and always crowded. The swimming pool is also too small. Students commented that they like the North Kansas City Community Center better.
- The weight room at the school is a good community amenity but it is only open for limited hours and adult supervision is required for students to access it.

### Important Issues and Opportunities for the Future

- Students like what is available and want more of it.
- Natural Resource protection is important.
- Would like places to play sand volleyball.
- There is a need for extreme sports parks, especially for skateboards.
- It would be nice to have community parks that are close with more amenities.
- Dog Parks would be an excellent addition. Both a large one and smaller areas to take dogs.
- It would be nice to have a swimming pool in Weston. Spraygrounds are nice but they are a better amenity for small children.
- There is a need for transportation to parks and recreation facilities for younger students or the ability to walk or bike to these facilities.
- Would like to have access to indoor recreation opportunities. Possibly more hours to play volleyball at the school, etc.

- Sports parks need places to play casual sports, pick-up football, etc.
- Students would like to form a Stream Team to clean-up creek along Benner Park and other waterways in Weston.
- It would be nice to have a facility like the Parkville Athletic Complex that includes opportunities for all types of indoor sports and other activities for teens. Also, more employment opportunities are needed for teens in Weston and this would be an ideal place to work.
- There is a need for both competitive and recreation sports leagues (all types) for teenagers similar to programs. The Weston Sports Association has good programs but they end after the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Involvement in these activities helps teenagers to be less bored and reduces bad behavior.
- Teen recreation nights and gathering sports are needed in Weston.
- Other activities that would be nice to have: bowling alley with an arcade, ice skating, movies, paintball course, laser tag, an indoor rock climbing wall, batting cages, a driving range, gravity ball, and Velcro walls (something similar to Edge Gymnastics in Riverside).



# Water Trails & Blueways

**Date:** 12/2/08

**Moderator/County Representative:** Jim Kunce

**Participants:** Jake Allmans, Heather Bass, Don Breckon, Neil Davidson

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status

- The Missouri River (portion in the State of Missouri) has been designated as the “Lewis and Clark River Trail” through a Governor’s proclamation.
- There is limited public boat ramp access along the Platte County portion of the Missouri River. Parkville’s English Landing Park is a primary ramp location on the Missouri side. Leavenworth and Atchison have boat ramps on the Kansas side that is popular launch points.
- All boat ramps installed along the Missouri River require U.S. Coast Guard approval.
- The Platte River has several access points along its bank.
- The Missouri Department of Conservation is submitting a budget request for their '09 fiscal year for construction of a ramp at a new location (Union Mill Access) and installation of a new ramp at Humphrey’s Access along the Platte River.
- Platte County has purchased future park property in Parkville that is located just west of English Landing Park along the Missouri River.

## Future Needs & Key Issues

- It is critical to provide public information about river trail opportunities in Platte County. This will increase public awareness of the available resources and help to direct more water trail users into the County.
- The “process” of increasing public awareness should have started about three years ago. So it is important not to wait any longer and to enhance public awareness now.
- The time to advertise and promote canoeing and kayaking in this region is in the months of January and February.
- Integrate commonly used internet resources such as “Google Earth” and link to state, county, municipal and private business websites.
- The Missouri Department of Conservation’s Discovery Center may be a logical location in this region to help disseminate public information about available water trail opportunities.
- The Platte County Community Centers should also be considered to help increase community awareness and should be approached about offering instructional programs for kayaking and canoeing, particularly in the winter off season.
- The County should continue to incorporate the “Lewis & Clark Water Trail” branding in the planning and marketing of the recreational use of the Missouri River.
- Kayaking and canoeing is the most prevalent form of boating in the County.
- The “short term” planning process should focus on dissemination of public information about water trail opportunities. This is the quickest and most cost effective method to increase public awareness and to encourage utilization of water trail resources. Lots can be done now with little money.

- The “long term” planning process should evaluate and explore the needs for riverfront access acquisition, restrooms, parking, boat ramps and other site infrastructure requirements.
- “Water trails” and “land trails” should be planned together. They should be treated as one entity and they should be shown together on the same maps. Both types of trails can be marketed and promoted together.
- The newly acquired future park property west of English Landing Park is an ideal location for a new Parkville boat ramp. It’s location along the river, related to the river current, makes it suitable and safe for boat access.
- E.H. Young Park located in Riverside would make another good location for a future boat ramp.
- Obtaining camping permission from private landowners will help to increase the opportunity for extended water trail trips.
- Safety and emergency response on river trails was not a significant concern among this group. Limited discussion about establishing 9-1-1 GPS tracking coordinates along water trails was considered. Cell phone access on the rivers can be “spotty”.

Priorities
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- Trails
- Community Parks
- Natural Resources



## Trails Group (multi-use)

**Date:** 12/2/08

**Moderator/County Representative:** Jim Kunce

**Participants:** Laura Anderson, Chris Hershey, Julie Reynolds, Scott Schleisman, Virginia Wallace

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

### Current Status

- The County has made progress that is noticeable by the public in the development of trails.
- The trails that have been constructed are multi-use in purpose.
- Trail development in the County has correlated with the Northland Trails Vision Plan and Metro Green Trail Plan.
- More trails are desired by the public.

### Future Needs & Key Issues

- Biking, hiking and walking trails are great opportunities for families to spend time together.
- Trail connections are very important because they help to create opportunities.
- Public awareness of the available trail opportunities in the County needs to be increased.
- If the available money for trails is finite, it is better to build the trails than to promote and advertise the trails.
- Two important considerations for the development of future bicycle amenities in the County should include an off-road bike system and a roadway bike system.
- The off-road bike system will provide recreation opportunities for off-road bike riders and it will help to reduce the travel time for people in the County that normally have to drive a far distance to enjoy this type of amenity.
- The roadway bike system should be constructed separate from, but parallel to vehicular roads. This will provide safer bike routes for bicyclist that travel long distances.
- Concern that when the Missouri Riverfront Trail connects to the English Landing Trail, the bicycle usage will noticeably increase in English Landing. This will be a result of bicyclist utilizing the long length of the combined trail system and at the same time avoiding 9 Highway. This could create trail user conflicts in English Landing.
- "Cycle Parks" are being built across the country and should be considered in the design of future bicycle amenities in Platte County.
- Trail walkers identified trailhead amenities such as restrooms, parking and better marked road signage to locate trail entrances as important improvements that are needed.
- The walkers and bicyclist generally agreed that mile markings along the trail route are not necessary. This is because many avid walkers and bicyclist utilize advanced electronic recording devices to determine distances. Agreed that marking distance might be more important for a novice trail patron.
- On-site maps (such as those in an information kiosk) should be provided at each trailhead with "You Are Here" arrows. Directional signs along the route that state the distance to a destination point or major intersection are helpful reference guides.
- K Highway from 9 Highway north to Prairie Creek Greenway should not be considered a high priority trail route because there is not much traffic on the road anyways and it is generally safe as an existing bike route.

- It would be good to continue expanding the Missouri Riverfront and English Landing trails to the west and north to ultimately link with the Weston Bluffs Trail.

Priorities
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- Trails
- Natural Resources
- Community Parks



# Equestrians Group (horse trails)

**Date:** 12/2/08

**Moderator/County Representative:** Jim Kunce

**Participants:** Cindy Brown, Kendell Casey, Leslie French, Jetta McGinnis, Jane Smith

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status

- According to the combined Missouri Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2001 Missouri Equine Survey, "Missouri equine inventories may be the third largest in the nation".
- Platte County, even though a "metro-county", still has significant open, rural areas. Horses are owned on many of these rural properties.
- Equestrian trails are identified in the Platte County portion of the Northland Trails Vision Plan.
- To-date no public equestrian trails have been constructed in the County.
- The local equestrian community does not consider itself to be "collectively well organized in the County".
- The Platte County 4H sponsors a Horsemanship Program that serves approximately 25 youths annually.
- The 4H Horsemanship Program currently utilizes the privately operated Platte County Fairgrounds located in the City of Tracy. They are not charged a fee.

## Future Needs & Key Issues

- There are primarily two types of recognized recreation equine activities. This includes indoor/outdoor arena and equestrian trail venues.
- Often times equestrian trail users are not avid arena users. But group participants believe equestrian arena users are often times also equestrian trail users.
- This group believes that equestrian trails are the largest need for their group in the County, but also believe that a good indoor/outdoor arena might be well used.
- Platte County residents that are equestrian trail riders have to "trailer" their horses to locations outside of Platte County in order to enjoy public equestrian trails.
- Popular equestrian trails available for public use are located at Smithville Lake, Wyandotte Lake, and Perry Lake.
- The Platte County 4H Horsemanship Program has no Platte County equestrian trails to ride on, so they travel to Clay County's equestrian trail at Smithville Lake for the Annual St. Jude's Trail Ride.
- Special event "endurance rides" that is 25 to 50 miles long can be very popular and draw large numbers of participants and spectator crowds.
- A common feature of public equestrian trails in this region is that they are often located around bodies of water (lakes in particular).
- Equestrian trail riders believe that the Missouri Department of Conservation's Platte Falls Wildlife Area represents an ideal location for a public equestrian trail in Platte County. The property is large and the routes could follow the Platte River, an attractive water feature.



However, this property, as is the case with all the Missouri Department of Conservation properties in the County, is not available for equestrian activity.

- The Northland Trails Vision Plan identifies a proposed equestrian trail route that would utilize the Platte River riparian corridor.
- The group would like to work with the County to explore and discuss the feasibility of using the conservation properties with the Missouri Department of Conservation.
- Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department's Tiffany Springs Park has also been identified as a desirable equestrian park location by members of the group. This park location has an organized group that is promoting non-motorized recreational use of the park.
- The group has also identified Tiffany Springs Park as a possible location for an equestrian arena.
- The arena facilities located at the Platte County Fairgrounds are not in optimal condition for equestrian uses and may be hazardous and unsafe.
- An example of a multi-use equestrian trail is one located in Denver, Colorado. This facility includes a dirt trail that runs parallel to a paved pedestrian/bicycle trail. Other trail concepts discussed included "on and off day trails". These trails were open on alternating days (or perhaps three days out of each week) for equestrian use then followed by pedestrian/bicycle use.
- Desirable amenities for an equestrian trail facility include items such as paved parking lots, large trailer size parking spaces, easy to enter and exit parking lots (minimal backing up of trailers), convenient "hitching posts" at trailheads and located along the route, and restroom facilities.

Priorities
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- Trails
- Natural Resources
- Community Parks
- Youth Sports

# Performing and Fine Arts

**Date:** 12/2/08

**Moderator/County Representative:** Jim Kunce

**Participants:** Karen Hardcastle, John Jacobsen, Karole Jacobsen, Cathy Murdock, Susan Newburger, Michael Newburger

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status

- Platte County has an active performing and fine arts community.
- Park University is a significant stake holder in the performing and fine arts.
- Space for storage, production and performance has not been adequate in Platte County.

## Future Needs & Key Issues

- The Bell Road Barn Players are looking for a permanent “home”. This would be a theatre that would have approximately a 300-seat capacity.
- The Kansas City Cabaret Concert will perform at the Embassy Suites for their annual conference.
- The Platte County Community Centers do not have adequate space for the groups to meet.
- The Riverside Community Center is difficult to reserve time because the YMCA is given first priority to schedule programs.
- Park Hill South has a theatre with an estimated 800 seating capacity. It is difficult to schedule and not readily accessible (easy to find) for general public performances.
- Local churches occasionally work with the theatre groups to provide space for performances, but this is often restricted by the content of the production.
- West Platte R-II School District is considering the need for a theatre amenity for future capital projects.
- The Steam Boat Arabia Museum is exploring the possibility of relocating from the River Market to Parkville. The City would like to consider the feasibility of an expanded stage in the museum that could also support performing and fine arts activities.
- The Platte County Fairgrounds has some limited space available for use.
- Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department has an outdoor amphitheatre located in Hodge Park that does not appear to get significant use. But it is located in Clay County.
- An indoor/outdoor multi-use theatre would be an ideal facility. A good design example is the Peninsula Players Theatre located in Fish Creek, Wisconsin.
- Outdoor theatre are nice, but often times are not senior or ADA friendly.
- Adequate storage is an important requirement for theatre groups.
- Theatre and performing arts makes an area more of a destination. The performance and related events can draw business into a community.
- The benefits of theatre can promote diversity. And theatre can bring prestige to a community.
- A partnership or consortium of local performing and fine arts groups would be good.

Priorities
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- Multipurpose Indoor/Outdoor Facility (not on the review cards)
- Natural Resource Protection
- Community Parks
- Trails
- Community Centers
- Youth Sports/Programs
- Swimming Pools and Spraygrounds



# Public Safety at Parks

**Date:** 12/2/08      **Moderator/County Representative:** Jim Kunce

**Participants:** Mike Shelton, Michael Costanzo, Todd Bryant, Pat Clark, Frank Hunter

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status

- Platte County is growing in population and is anticipated to continue that trend into the foreseeable future.
- Park and recreation amenities and facilities have significantly expanded during the Platte County Parks sells tax initiative.
- Law enforcement response demand continues to increase throughout the County.
- Public safety agencies general consist of law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services (EMS) and emergency response management.

## Future Needs & Key Issues

- Public safety and security on trails is one of the growing concerns among public safety officials in the County.
- Trails present a unique challenge for law enforcement because of the linear and the occasionally secluded nature of their locations.
- One of the major concerns for public safety officials is the ability to identify the geographical location from which an emergency phone call may originate.
- The Mid-America Regional Counsel's 9-1-1 Committee has recently began considering the most effective methods of addressing the concern of locating phone calls along trail routes. The committee is going to begin a test pilot program in Johnson County, Kansas, to utilize GPS phone location tracking technology and GIS mapping systems. This will require establish GPS coordinates along regional and local trail routes.
- The 9-1-1 Committee in eager to expand the trail GPS call tracking system program throughout the MARC service region.
- Trails also cross between different municipal and County jurisdictions, which creates difficulties in determining which public safety departments should respond to emergency calls.
- The Communication system between the various law enforcements and different jurisdictions is critical.
- Park and trail public safety should be "seamless" between jurisdictions. Park and trail patrons generally do not know or care when they have crossed between jurisdictions, but they still should have quality public safety services available to them regardless of their location.
- Public safety agencies need better mapping of parks, trails and recreational facilities. This includes more than just the address and location of the amenity. It should also include maps that show the layout of the facility and key reference points within the location, such as park roads, parking lots, shelter houses, buildings, ponds, sports complexes, entrances, trailheads, and any other significant and identifiable landmarks.

- Uniform signage, including location identification markers along trail routes would be helpful tools for public safety response. This uniform signage (such as text, color and size) should be adopted by MARC member agencies.
- Design of parks and trails to help accommodate public safety and emergency response is a high priority.
  - This includes adequate width of trails for an emergency vehicle.
  - Frequent and wide turn-around areas for emergency vehicles.
  - Design landscaping and maintain grounds to reduce danger zones.
  - Public safety department want to avoid using regular patrol cars on trails because they are not as maneuverable, and gravel surfaces reduce equipment life expectancy.
  - Motorized equipment such as Gators and ATV's are increasingly important tools for trail patrolling and emergency response.
- The County's parks and recreation ordinances should be reviewed to ensure that they provide adequate content to support law enforcement authority.
- Law enforcement staffing needs are not currently adequate. The County Sheriff's Department experiences "blackout" periods in which they do not have adequate staff to immediately respond to all of the emergency calls at a given time.
- The focus group recommends that there be a Platte County parks and recreation public safety committee that consists of state, County and local municipal public safety agencies. They suggest that the committee will only need to meet one to two times a year and that Platte County Parks & Recreation Department could be the sponsoring agency.

Priorities
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- Public Safety on Trails
- Seamless Public Safety between Jurisdictions
- Platte County Parks Public Safety Committee
- Public Safety Staff and Equipment Resource for Park and Trail Patrols



# Historical & Cultural Education and Preservation

**Date:** 12/3/08      **Moderator/County Representative:** Jim Kunce

**Participants:** Clay Bauske, Jim Brooks, Dorothy Day, Sharen Hunt, Ann Raab

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status

- Platte County has important historical and cultural resources that should be preserved for future generations.
- These resources provide valuable educational opportunities for the Citizens and visitors of the County.
- Platte County Parks has already played a role in preserving historical and cultural resources through the acquisition of properties such as Green Hills of Platte Wildlife Preserve, Prairie Creek Greenway and Platte Ridge Park.
- The County's Parks and Recreation Outreach grant has awarded funds to programs such as the Platte County Annual Ethnic Festival and Weston's Preserve America Grant Project.
- The Weston Bluffs Trail features historical interpretive signage of the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery journey.
- The County contributed funds to the Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department for acquisition of private property along Line Creek for the preservation of the archeological and cultural record of valuable Native American (Hopewell Indian) artifacts.
- Platte County has actively participated in land management practices to restore and protect historical natural resources, such a native prairie restoration, that once formed the natural landscape of the land.

## Future Needs & Key Issues

- The County parks and trail system is an ideal infrastructure to support a Platte county-wide historical and cultural experience. The parks and trails could be used as "historical information nodes". These locations would include common signage and create a continuity of information that can provide informative historical and cultural education.
- The "historical information nodes" concept is an excellent opportunity to bring together the various historical and cultural preservation groups in the County and build a cooperative partnership among them.
- Historical, cultural, ethnic and natural resources can be place under the "one umbrella" of Platte County Heritage.
- Historical resources are gleaned from the written (recorded) history.
- Cultural history is based upon material and archeological artifacts, not from recorded history.
- Ethnic resources consists of both past and present attributes, contributions and traditions of all the various people that make up the past and present population of the County.
- Natural resources such a river bottoms, riparian corridors, wetlands, forests and prairies are all important elements of the County's natural history.
- There continues to be significant need for historical and cultural education and preservation in Platte County.

- Educating the public about the County's history and culture is important if future generations are expected to continue supporting and financing historical and cultural preservation.
- Platte County's rich African-American history has not been fully explored and there are many opportunities to increase the public's awareness and appreciation.
- Many other ethnic groups have had important roles in the County's history, including early Native American Indians.
- The City of Parkville is discussing the feasibility of relocating the Steam Boat Arabia Museum to the City with the owners of the museum.
- The County could actively engage in promoting historical or "archeo-tourism" to help draw more visitors.
- The stone arch bridge located on West Platte Road may possibly be one of the oldest existing structures in the City of Riverside. It is not protected and could be threaten by future road improvements.
- There is an important need to record the "oral" records in the County before that information is permanently lost. The County can move into the future without destroying the past.

Priorities
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- Protect Historical and Cultural Resources
- Celebrate Ethnic Diversity
- Partner with Educational Institutions and Historical Societies.
- Utilize the County Park System to Create Historical and Cultural Awareness



# Park Hill South High School Students

**Date:** 12/5/08      **Moderator/County Representative:** Noel Challis

**Participants:** Mike Kegin, Mitch Wainwright, Drew Lake, Amber Bozarth, Sam, Amanda, & Elle

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status of Parks & Recreation Facilities in the County

- Springs at Tiffany Hills - nice, especially good that it has a 50M competitive pool, most of the activities provided at the Springs are focused on kids, it is expensive to go frequently, it provides good employment opportunities for youth
- Weston Bend State Park is nice
- Youth use the Southern Platte Pass Trail for access to restaurants, neighborhoods, & schools
- The Community Centers are nice, a lot of youth enjoy spending time there, the equipment is really nice (especially the ones with the TVs), classes are fun, great for off season sports training, dodge ball games at the Y are fun
- Suggested Community Center improvements: Expand the community center or build an additional one because it is often crowded, a larger indoor pool with lap lanes is needed, add an indoor volleyball court, add a snack bar with healthy choices – since youth spend a lot of time here it would provide a healthy, fun place to relax with friends, the basketballs are often flat, need a place to stretch
- Shiloh Springs is a nice golf course. The grass could use a little work. It's good to have a public (not just private) course in the County
- Enjoy English Landing Park, provides good open space for informal sports
- The current district aquatics center is gross, there is something wrong with the filter system or something, students are grateful for an indoor place to swim but suggest not using this as an example
- The Skate Park in Riverside is well used
- Lee's Summit has a nice dog park with areas divided for small and large dogs
- Line Creek is a nice facility, a lot of them used it when younger, but not used as much now
- Currently enjoy playing beach volleyball at Riss Lake – however it is not well maintained, they have to weed it to play on it, and it could use lights
- The school provides lacrosse and water polo, these are nice options to have

## Important Issues and Opportunities for the Future

- Indoor pool is a priority over additional outdoor aquatics
- Consider adding a diving pool at the YMCA or another indoor facility
- Trails throughout the area would be nice
- Would like more places to play beach volleyball
- Expand the sports offerings at Tiffany Springs Park, this seems like a good, central place for many people to gather for all types of sports, add football and Frisbee golf areas



- The Driving Range that used to be in Riverside was popular, would like to have another one closer than Shiloh Springs
- Dog Parks would be an excellent addition.
- It would be nice to have a swimming pool in Weston. Spraygrounds are nice but they are a better amenity for small children.
- Add a Frisbee Golf Course
- It would be nice to have a place like Sports City with indoor soccer, etc. in the Northland
- Dog Bag dispensers are necessary – people need to clean-up after their pets
- Natural Resource protection is very important
- The current facilities are well used and more of the same would also be used
- Would like more indoor volleyball opportunities
- There is a need for intramural sports
- Horse trails would be used if built
- The students would love to have their own aquatics facility and football field rather than needing to use the district facilities, they are disappointed that an offer for funding from the Argosy Casino was turned down by the school



# Platte County R-III HS Students (tennis focus)

**Date:** 12/5/08      **Moderator/County Representative:** Noel Challis

**Participants:** Casey, Renee, Anna Rudy, Abbey Billings, Zach Keith

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status of Parks & Recreation Facilities in the County

- YMCA is nice and well used, the equipment is really nice, the facility is good size for Platte City
- The Springs is a nice facility
- Weston Bend State Park is also nice
- Prairie Creek Greenway is a really nice area
- Have played softball at Platte Purchase and Platte Ridge and have enjoyed experiences there – involved through both youth and adult recreation leagues
- The sales tax and implementation are working well overall, this seems to be a very forward-thinking & forward-acting community
- There are no good tennis courts in the Platte City Area. They currently have to go to Park Hill or Oak Park to play. This year the tennis team received permission to practice at Seven Bridges. However, this facility may not always be available to them.

## Important Issues and Opportunities for the Future

- Based on available facilities and what is missing, dog parks are not as needed as tennis courts
- Tennis is important because it reaches across all age ranges and is good for families
- In addition to tennis courts, it would be nice to have recreation leagues
- There is a need for a competitive swimming facility in the northern part of the County

## Tennis Courts – What is Needed & Current Efforts

- Four courts are required for a regulation tennis tournament, but it would be awesome to eventually have 6-8
- If possible the courts should be built in partnership with the school on school property
- Lights would be an excellent amenity because the courts are then more usable for the community
- Fences that balls do not roll under
- Windscreens are nice on fences
- A tennis facility could be built in phases. They submitted a drawing of a proposed tennis facility for the PCR-III campus
- A rough estimate for the cost of one tennis court is \$50,000
- They have looked into grant opportunities and most are limited to low income areas
- The school district has said that they are looking for a partner to construct a tennis facility. The two existing courts on campus are full of cracks and will probably be

removed. The school does have some land available behind the new central office facility. The school may or may not be able to provide funding for a tennis facility.

- Parents are looking into starting a fundraising campaign for the courts



# Park Hill High School Students

**Date:** 12/9/08      **Moderator/County Representative:** Noel Challis

**Participants:** 3 students and faculty advisor, Del Anderson

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status of Parks & Recreation Facilities in the County

- The Springs at Tiffany Hills is nice.
- Barry Platte Park is nice and well-used
- Pools are nice, but can be money pits if not managed properly

## Important Issues and Opportunities for the Future

- It would be nice to have dog parks within walking distance of home.
- Are there equestrian trails available at Tiffany Springs? If not, this would be a good place for equestrian trails.
- It would be nice to have more equestrian trails – focus areas: airport, Waukomis, & Line Creek
- The proposed Line Creek walking / biking trail is a high priority.
- Natural resource protection is a top priority. If this is not one of the goals of the Parks and Recreation department, who will do this?



# North Platte R-I High School Students

**Date:** 12/9/08      **Moderator/County Representative:** Noel Challis

**Participants:** Kelsey A., Laura H., MaryAnn, Zach, Jarry, & Principal Roger Geiger

The **general discussion** at the meeting is detailed below.

## Current Status of Parks & Recreation Facilities in the County

- Smithville Lake has nice, long, paved trails for biking
- Weston Bend is great for biking and camping
- The small trail at the Camden Point Park has been a nice addition.
- It seems that the smaller community parks could have even more amenities. Hopefully these additions will be possible with future funding.
- The YMCA in Platte City is really nice. It could perhaps be larger and have more equipment, but it is not overcrowded now.
- The Springs is really nice and worth the drive.
- Shiloh Springs is a nice golf course.
- The softball field at Dean Park is really nice. The one drawback is that it has a fixed pitching mound. Since the mound is not removable the field does not fit the criteria to host districts.
- The baseball fields at Platte Ridge Park are really nice.
- Snow Creek is a fun facility.
- The closest only bowling alleys available are in St. Joseph and Gladstone. There is one in Plattsburg but it is way too small.
- It is nice to leave small towns and get away for big amenities like the Plaza or Crown Center, but bowling and other similar activities should be provided closer.

## Important Issues and Opportunities for the Future

- It would be nice to have batting cages similar to those at Maplewoods. They could be operated by paying for a season pass or a certain number of visits up front. Batting cages should have a grass or faux turf surface.
- Batting cage area at Maplewoods also provides training sessions and lessons for developing baseball skills, this would be a nice amenity.
- Need an entertainment center that includes a bowling alley, go-carts, billiards, and arcade and a rock wall.
- A bowling alley and a rock wall closer to home are priorities.
- A rock wall should be a floor to ceiling fixed feature.
- A place to ride 4-wheelers would be nice.
- There is a need for rental space for nice events such as a prom, etc.
- An indoor water park would be really nice.
- Canoe and paddleboat rental at a lake.



# Community Parks/Recreation

**Date:** 12/19/08

**Moderator/County Representative:** Brian Nowotny, Dick Horton, Jim Kunce

**Participants:** Neil Davidson, Michael Short, Kathy Armitage, Jean Sublett, Stacey Benninghoff (Health Department), Kathy Dusenberry, Jade Liska, Jim Flink

## Overview

The "general recreation" group discussed demographics relative to the impact of an aging population with the baby boomers and the differences that will impact the provision of recreation programs and facilities. The boomers, for example, will be segmented into three tiers with different preferences, according to research completed by Northwest Missouri State University. It was noted that the seniors who are now reaching retirement age have dollars available to spend on things of their choice, thus a demand for what we offer in parks and recreation.

The group acknowledged there seems to be interest in dog parks with advocates hoping to partner with others to provide programs and facilities for pets and their owners.

The need for competitive swimming facilities (50 meter by 25 yard facility) was a large topic of discussion. Appears to be more demand than existing facilities can accommodate, thus the support for the pursuit of partnerships with school districts and swim teams to determine if a financial package can be developed to construct a facility. A location near the airport was mentioned to accommodate large events that would attract visitors from other regions of the country. Group suggested contacting KCMO Parks to discuss possible partnerships for expanding the Springs facility. Other amenities in a large indoor facility might include warm water and basketball courts/volleyball courts.

Interest was also expressed in trails that would accommodate adventure hiking, walking, and biking.

Recognizing the need to inform the public about facilities and programs available to them, it was mentioned that one mechanism might be the **Textcaster System** used by the Sheriff. This system alerts citizens by sending messages to their phones. As mentioned by Jim Flink, we want information now, sent directly to us on our hand held device, and "just in time". On the decline is communication through the evening news and newspapers; e.g. the Kansas City Star recently laid off 33% of its work force. Further, Jim Flink is of the opinion that people will subscribe to "bundled" information of their choice in the future to keep informed about matters of importance to them.

Support was also expressed for facilities like Power Play in Lee's Summit that are geared toward families. Power Play offers bumper cars, games, rock climbing walls, and other fun things where families can go for fun, birthday parties, etc. Regarding area growth, Jade mentioned that the Northland is receiving 90% of all building permits in KCMO and more in Platte County than in Clay County along the I-29, Highway 69, and Highway 45 Corridor.

# General Topics and Key Observations

The general issues discussed at the meeting are detailed below.

## Current Status of Parks & Recreation Facilities in the County

- Kathy and the Y are doing a “wonderful job” of providing programs for seniors
- Boomers have lots of money to spend on recreation
- “We are seeing needs coming out now that we also heard 10 years ago; these are ‘second generation’ issues that may now have come of age since a good base of parks is now in place.” - Michael Short
- Health care providers would like to have more information about what was going on in the parks and what is available at the community centers (through emails, newsletters, etc....)
- “we are struggling to find ways to communicate with citizens in this fast moving society today”; need to find new methods of communication
- County needs to continue funding parks and recreation services as KCMO is not able to keep pace, by their own admission, with amenities and quality of life services that are needed in Platte County (we saw this 10 years ago and that is what lead to original master plan, along with EDC focus on trails)

## Important Issues and Opportunities for the Future

- Follow Platte County demographic trends i.e. young, old, to find trends
- Lifetime fitness needs to be a priority, like swimming, walking, adventure hiking, and biking
- Need to realize that boomers are not “brand loyal” and will choose best value in their purchasing
- Need more attention to aging population; Sue Myllkangas of NWMSU is working on marketing to boomer populations
- Obesity is a problem in our community, need to get kids more active
- Need more un-programmed space in parks for groups to develop their own programs/play, i.e. ethnic group games with large numbers of people on weekends
- Need to explore partnerships for pets, like FOPAS and dog parks
- Dog parks are an emerging trend, not a short term fad
- Need for competitive swimming facilities is a bigger need in Platte than most other areas; each neighborhood it seems like has their own team (and for some a small pool to train in)
- Need multi-court sports center for our youth, basketball and indoor soccer
- Should study Gladstone/NKCSD partnership and improve upon it; consider multi-school district partnership with R-III, Park Hill, and others; visit with Richard King of Gladstone and Clark Stokes who were involved
- Need to consider a major kids recreation place, like a birthday party place with multiple activities to keep lots of kids interested (could be built at site with large lap lane pool)
- Keep more facilities local, in short driving distance or walking distance from neighborhoods as proximity/convenience is very important to usage
- Utilize more partnerships to provide/dispense health related information; PC Health Department very interested in these partnerships to share information at community centers, parks, etc...

- Need to constantly develop new ways to communicate with citizens, very important; consider the wave of texting, and tools such as “text caster” to get information to people how they want it, when they want it (immediately)
- Consider newspaper newsletters, tabloid style papers that are bundled with information on schools, public safety, recreation, entertainment, etc....
- Need to follow growth, Northland (especially Platte) is receiving 90% of the building permit requests now in KCMO

Priorities
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- 1A Community Centers, swimming pools, indoor sports centers
- 1B Trails, Natural Resource Protection, Community Parks