



# Five Year Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020



Veterans Park Lagoon

Photo by: Jake Rostermundt

Milwaukee County  
Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture

## These are Your Milwaukee County Parks:

A Rich History, a Strong Heritage, and a Bright Future



***“It should be well thought of that a park exercises a very different and much greater influence upon the progress of a city in its general structure than any other ordinary public work.”***

***– Frederick Law Olmsted***



## Acknowledgements

**Our community of citizenry across Milwaukee County and our region and state who enjoy and value our parks**

**Our workforce of over 200 full-time and 1,000 part-time and seasonal employees**

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Greetings!

There is no doubt we have a great park system and we haven't even reached our full potential yet! The purpose of this 5-year Strategic Plan is to strengthen the Milwaukee County Park System to 2020 and beyond. Like the population, the County's park and recreation needs are growing and, with that, our commitment to our mission of sustaining the legacy of our world-class park system by managing and conserving natural, cultural and recreational resources for the benefit of the community. Now we are faced with the challenge to maintain a mature park system, meet public expectations for safe, clean, accessible parks, and reposition our parks in rallying with the community to resolve community issues.

Since my arrival to Milwaukee County in 2013, I've toured the system and spoke at length with residents, staff, friends groups, business partners, advocacy groups, and elected officials. I've held eight public listening sessions to hear directly from the community how they perceive the parks, and to listen to how the parks can participate in addressing community needs. Though there were a wide range of topics discussed at each meeting, I observed some common threads.

- There is a universal passion for parks
- We have extensive organizational knowledge
- There is a substantial backlog of capitalized maintenance needs
- We must invest in marketing, communication and promotion activities
- We must identify and invest in our core park visitor services and facilities
- Protection, conservation and preservation of natural and cultural resources must be a priority

In light of increasing demands and shrinking resources, it is more critical than ever that we strategically determine priorities together. Our strategic response will include a heightened focus on core services and financial sustainability, adjusted programmatic offerings and operational standards, investing in our staff, and leveraging alternative funding and partnerships.

Investing in a 10-year Community Park and Recreation Needs Assessment and finalizing our core service business plans will provide critical direction and data to ensure we align our offerings and capital development with what the community most values and needs.

As the Director for the Milwaukee County Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture, I am fortunate to lead an agency with an outstanding record. We face many opportunities ahead and as such we will work tirelessly with all stakeholders to lead a unified effort of identifying and achieving growth and sustainability. Our award winning staff and park system, with continued support from the County's electorate and leadership, guarantee that the same excellence will carry our parks into the future. My promise is to continue striving for consistency and quality in all that we do.



John W. Dargle, Jr.

## Purpose of the Five-Year Strategic Plan

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*Over 87% of Wisconsinites enjoy some form of outdoor recreation. This staggeringly high number reflects a state that is passionate about outdoor recreation and the traditions that go with it. Outdoor recreation happens over a variety of landscapes... providing high quality outdoor recreation experiences for a diverse population.*

- *Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), 2011-2016*

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Parks are a vital component in enhancing communities and keeping them healthy and strong. Our park system has long been a source of pride for the communities of Milwaukee County in southeastern Wisconsin. With 154 parks and parkways totaling 15,316 acres, our system of Milwaukee County parks are valued by the citizens who experience the parks and serve as volunteers, the quality workforce who conserve and protect them, and the partners who join our citizens and workforce in sustaining their value.

***The Strategic Plan guides the Milwaukee County Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture from fiscal year 2015 to fiscal year 2020. The overall purpose is to present stakeholder-centered strategic goals and annual action strategies which determine a strong course of investment***

Our park system began with the creation of The Milwaukee County Park Commission on August 20, 1907. Although parks had already been established within the limits of the City of Milwaukee by the City Park Commission, the visionary new County Park Commission had a much broader vision for the park system. Early Commissioners conceived of a park system that would form a "green belt" or series of scenic drives and parks encircling the county. Parks were located in outlying areas to allow for population expansion. Commissioners selected land not only for its natural beauty and interest, but also for its fitness for various forms of active and passive recreation. Besides the tax levy, park user fees support our programs. Additional financial assistance comes from federal and state grants, non-profit and civic partners, as well as corporate sponsors.

Through the strategic planning process, community members repeatedly voiced their support for the incredible value and benefits of the Milwaukee County parks and recreation system. The Trust for Public Land published a report titled, "The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs

More City Parks and Open Space,”<sup>1</sup> that makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental, and social benefits of parks and open space:

- Physical activity makes people healthier and increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and physiological health.
- Residential and commercial property values increase.
- Value is added to community through economic development and tourism.
- Trees improve air quality, act as natural air conditioners, and assist with storm water control and erosion.
- Crime and juvenile delinquency are reduced.
- Stable neighborhoods and strong communities are created.

In addition, the National Recreation and Park Association established “Three Pillars” to describe park and recreation and its impact within communities<sup>2</sup>. Our industry’s contribution to these pillars cannot be understated and we are confident this Strategic Plan effectively and sustainably addresses these issues over the next 5-years.



We believe a park system’s response to these socio-economic and environmental issues can have a profound effect within a community and we recognize and embrace our role and responsibilities here in Milwaukee County.

## Guiding Principles

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Best practices and industry standards compel the Milwaukee County Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture to have a current strategic plan, which is to be utilized in conjunction with business and operational plans, policies, processes, ordinances, and resolutions established by the department, Milwaukee County, and the state of Wisconsin.

Moreover, the Department is committed to conserving, preserving, and protecting a park system with a 108-year history and endeavors to meet and exceed park and recreation industry standards of professional quality and industry best practices. These industry agencies and policy bodies include, but are not limited to:

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<sup>1</sup> Gies, E. (2006). *The Health Benefits of Parks*, The Trust for Public Land, <http://www.tpl.org>

<sup>2</sup> National Recreation and Park Association. (2012, October 1). *Impacting Communities*. Retrieved August 4, 2014, from National Recreation and Park Association: <http://www.nrpa.org/About-NRPA/Impacting-Communities/>

- National Recreation & Park Association  
<http://www.nrpa.org/>
- Wisconsin Park & Recreation Association  
<http://www.wpraweb.org/>
- Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA)  
<http://www.nrpa.org/capra/>
- Parks, Energy, and Environment Committee  
Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors  
<http://county.milwaukee.gov/CountyBoard>

***Strategic planning is vital to high performing organizations and involves large scale input to identify and come to agreement on vision, mission, and values that support and guide the systems, structures, and strategies as a framework for organizational progress to achieve results.***

***CAPRA Standard 2.6***

- National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials <http://www.nacpro.org/>
- Golf Course Superintendents Association of America <http://www.gcsaa.org/>
- Wisconsin Turfgrass Association <http://www.wisconsinturfgrassassociation.org/>
- International Society of Arboriculture <http://www.isa-arbor.com/>
- Wisconsin Arborists Association <http://www.waa-isa.org/>
- Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals <http://www.recpro.org/>
- American Society of Landscape Architects <http://www.asla.org/>
- American Horticultural Society <http://www.ahs.org/>
- National Association for Interpretation <http://www.interpnet.com/>
- American Public Gardens Association <http://www.publicgardens.org/>

The Department's obligation to both Milwaukee County and the public for sound, responsible fiscal practices cannot go unrecognized. It's our goal to decrease our dependence on tax levy by making decisions with long-term sustainability in mind. It is essential to build public trust and support through thoughtful and deliberate budget requests within the limits of Milwaukee County resources while sustaining services and spaces vital to the community.

Most importantly, there are informal mandates of citizen and community stakeholder expectations that the Milwaukee County Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture strives daily to meet as this Strategic Plan is implemented alongside other departmental business and operational plans, which build the department's culture, values and belief systems through daily customer service and interactions.

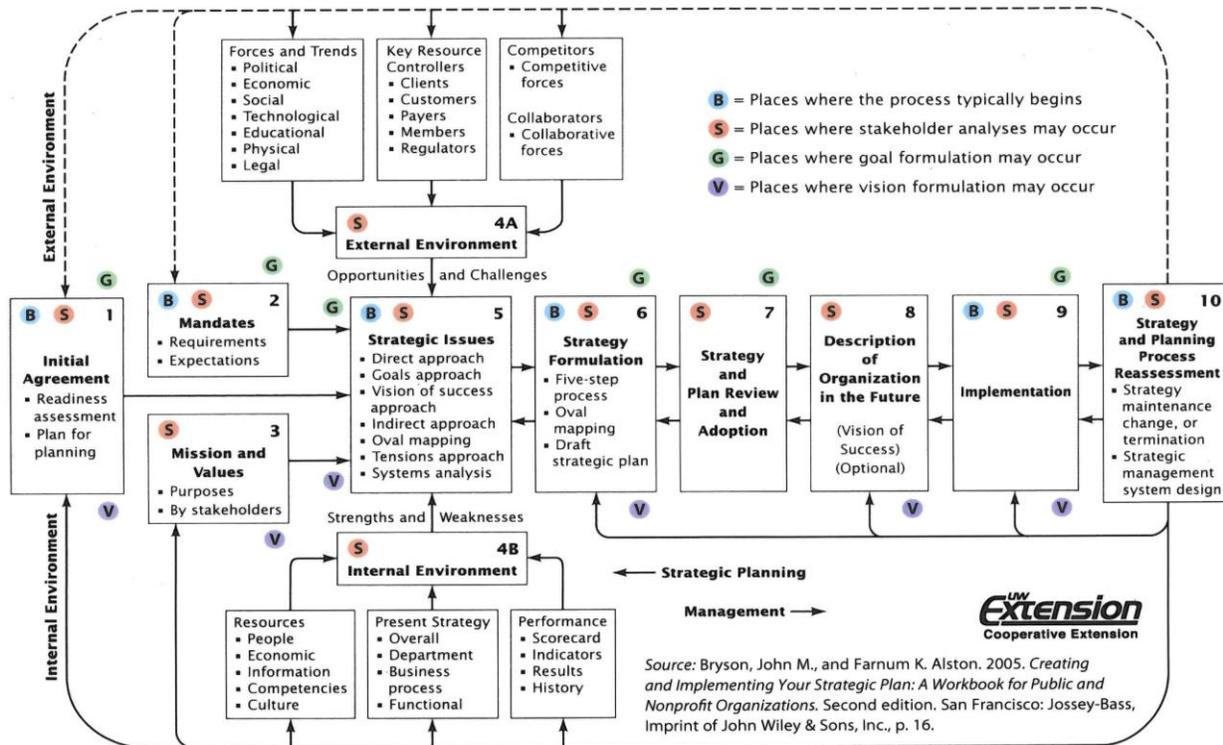
# Strategic Plan Process

The Strategic Plan was developed through a public and staff participatory process, from design beginning in September 2013 through the adoption process that began July 2014.

The strategic planning method used was based on the Bryson and Alston<sup>3</sup> (2005, 2011) model, researched by and used extensively by the University of Wisconsin-Extension. The full Bryson and Alston process, based on ten core steps, was employed to develop this strategic plan, represented by Figure 1.

Figure 1. Bryson & Alston Strategy Change Cycle

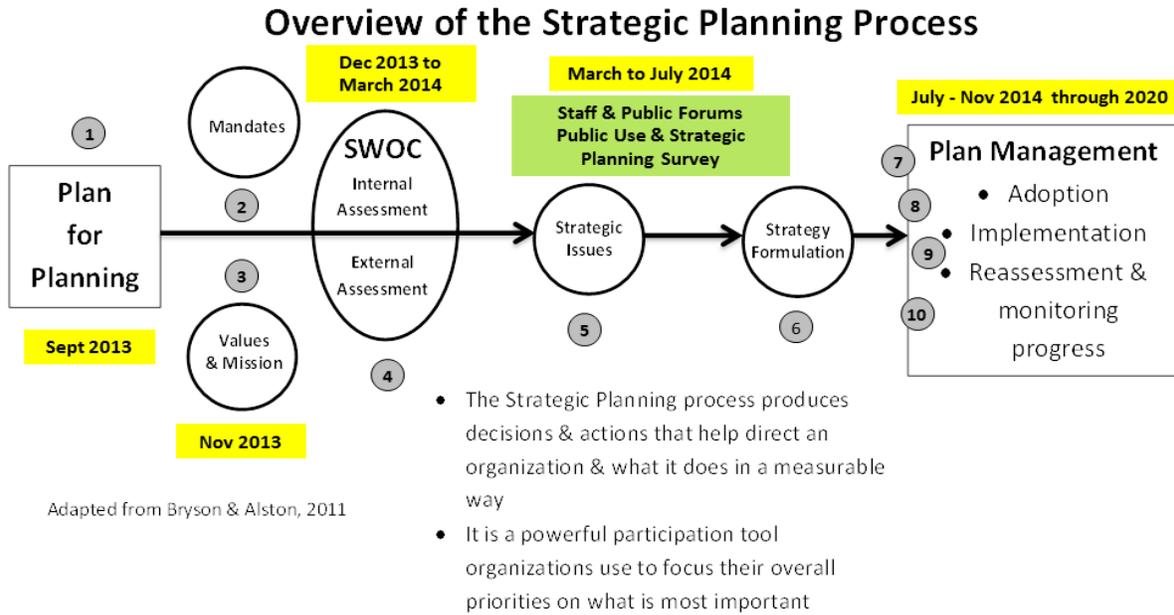
## Strategy change cycle



<sup>3</sup> Bryson, J.M. (2011). *Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations: A guide to strengthening and sustaining organizational achievement* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.

Figure 2 provides both an overview and a timeline of the Milwaukee County Parks Department process over ten months.

Figure 2: 2013 – 2014 Milwaukee County Parks Department Strategic Planning Process



## Stakeholder Participation

Below, Figure 3 illustrates the stakeholder participation process undertaken in the creation of this five-year strategic plan.

Figure 3. Stakeholder Participation Process of Engagement



A strategic planning team of ten staff representing each division and multiple levels within the organization met monthly as the “first and final filter” approval team for each step in the strategy planning cycle through full plan adoption.

The Parks Department Senior Executive and Management Teams were also engaged throughout the process, and the entire staff had their first introduction to the plan in late January 2014 at the Department’s first All-Hands Staff Meeting. These ongoing updates allowed full department engagement for buy-in of the process and plan.

After completing steps 1-5, at the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges (SWOC) phase of the environmental analysis, five staff and five public forums were held from February to March 2014 in order to engage a full range of public stakeholders. Invitations to the public forums began with the Parks Advisory Commission and Friends Groups. Further, two public input surveys were conducted from February to April: the general parks interest and use survey, and a special strategic planning survey. Both public input surveys are ongoing surveys, with the responses noted in this strategic plan being from March 17 to April 30, 2014. Communications inviting the public to complete both public input surveys included fliers advertising the public forums, announcements at each public forum, and both surveys are housed on the County Parks website <http://county.milwaukee.gov/Parks>.

The strategic plan process was presented to the Milwaukee County Executive, the Board of Supervisors’ Parks, Energy and Environment Committee, and regular updates were presented to the Parks Advisory Commission. The Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors is scheduled to consider the final strategic plan for concurrence in December 2014.

## Our Mission, Our Vision and Our Values

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Like any great organization, analyses, reviews, assessments, and audits are conducted at multiple levels to assess our status. As part of our 5-year planning cycle, we will review our mission, vision and values to ensure they continue to accurately reflect our beliefs.

The **mission** of the Milwaukee County Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture, which represents what we do best as an organization and what we believe will continue to define us five years from now, is:

***To sustain the legacy of our world-class park system by managing and conserving natural, cultural and recreational resources for the benefit of the community.***

Our **vision** statement expresses what our department looks like when our strategies and actions outlined in this strategic plan are implemented to achieve our full potential. Our vision, our desired future state is:

***To inspire passion for parks as a part of people's lives, encouraging participation, learning and stewardship.***



Our **values**, which demonstrate our beliefs as individuals, as a department, and through the culture we create in partnership with our workforce, our citizens and our partners, are:

1. **Our Committed Stewardship**: *We value our leadership in the stewardship of Milwaukee County’s rich natural and cultural resources.*
2. **Our Strong Community**: *We value and embrace the diversity of our community and the social interaction that occurs within our green spaces; we value our volunteers, friends, advocates, and partners who work tirelessly and collaboratively to strengthen our park system.*
3. **Our Quality**: *We value our high standards for service delivery that distinguish us in the park and recreation industry.*
4. **Our Parks**: *We value the product that is our park system as a unique, safe, clean, and accessible space that provides opportunities and experiences to the public.*
5. **Our Dedicated Workforce**: *We value and support our quality workforce by fostering a positive work environment through learning and growth.*

## Strategic Issues and Areas of Investment

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Milwaukee County Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture’s 2015-2020 Strategic Plan provides direction for the entire department and presents stakeholder-centered strategic goals and objectives which determine a strong course of investment in the park system. Thirteen strategic issues, formed as questions, emerged from our environmental analysis and serve as a guide for our investment over the next five years. The four categories of strategic investment – **People, Parks, Processes, and Partners** – best describe a strategic alignment of actions that address the strategic issues to achieve identified outcomes.

**People** are the 200 full-time and 1,000 part time and seasonal employees who make up our dedicated and passionate workforce.

**Parks** are our 15,316 acres of 156 parks and parkways across 19 municipalities in Milwaukee County that offer a diverse inventory of amenities, programs and natural capital.

**Processes** are our fiscal and management practices to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of our park system.

**Partners** are our community of committed volunteers, advocates, business partners, donors, non-profit and government agencies that we collaborate with to provide service to the public.

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## **Milwaukee County Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture 2015-2020 Strategic Issues**

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### **Investing in our:**

#### **People**

How will we invest in, support, and develop our high quality and dedicated workforce?

How will we improve internal structures of communication within the organization and foster a positive work environment?

What is the most appropriate organizational structure for the parks?

#### **Parks**

How will we conserve, preserve and protect our natural resources and lands toward a healthy condition?

How will we optimize use of our parks and facilities?

How will we maintain and update our aging facilities to best serve the community?

#### **Processes**

How will we organize policies and improve business practices?

How will we best measure and evaluate our performance to accomplish our mission?

How will we communicate our public value and enrich citizen quality of life?

How will we diversify and stabilize our funding sources?

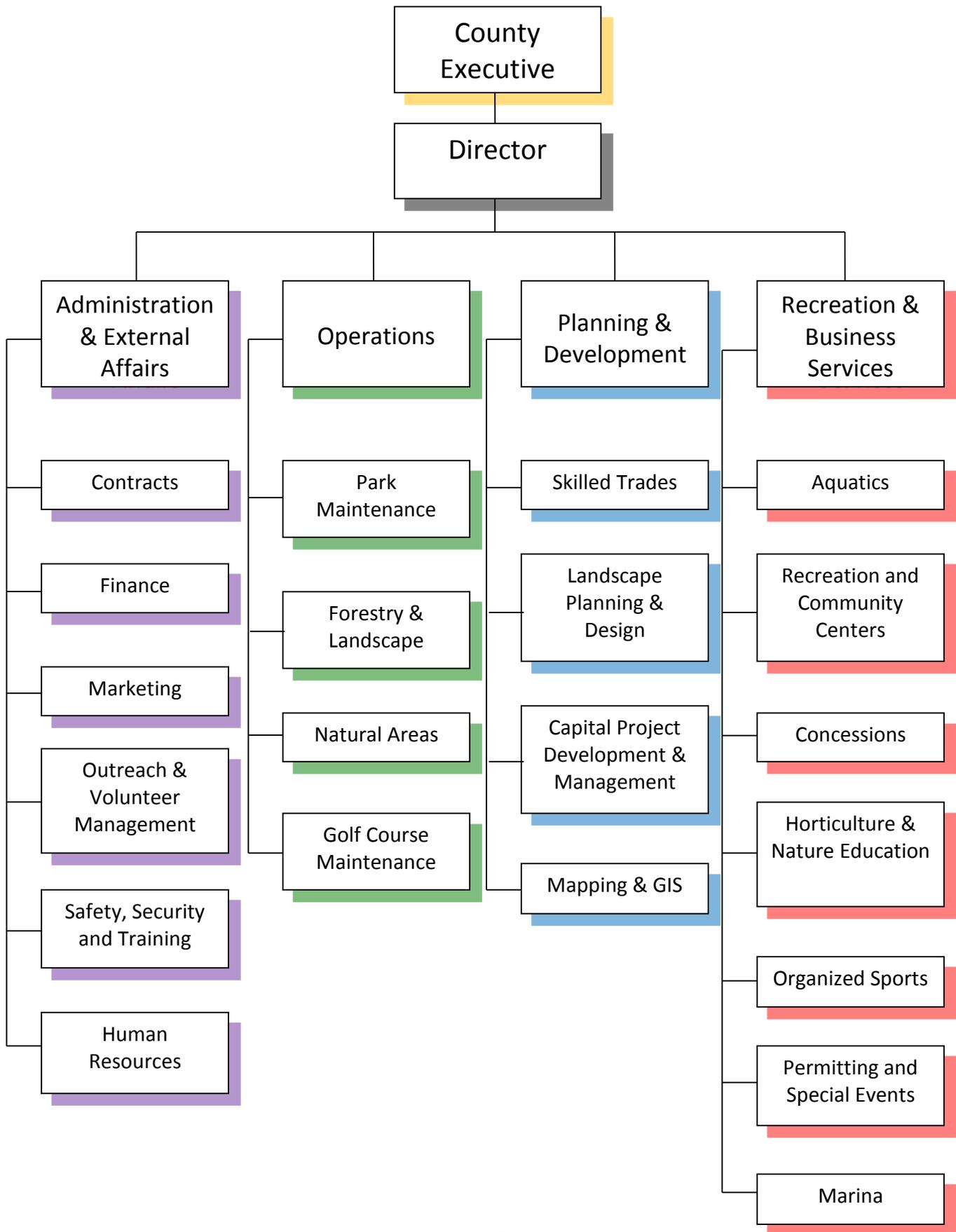
How will we improve cost recovery?

#### **Partners**

How will we engage, leverage and develop community partners and corporate partners/sponsors to optimize and broaden our programs and services?

Which community priorities and issues of quality of life will we actively invest in and how will we meet the needs of a diverse community?

# Milwaukee County Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture Organizational Chart



# Environmental Analysis

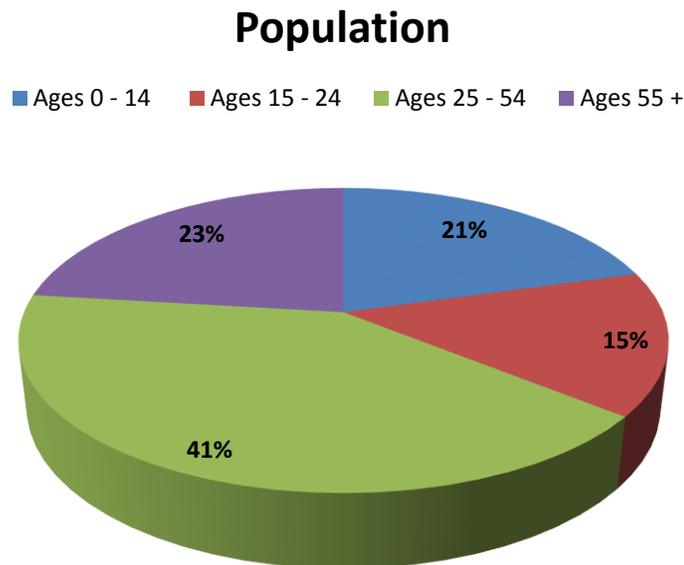
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The environmental analysis is comprised of an internal conditions assessment and an external conditions assessment. Beginning with an assessment of the external and internal stakeholders, the analysis continued with inviting those stakeholders and the public at-large to engage in a strengths, weaknesses (areas to improve), opportunities/hopes, and challenges (SWOC) analysis.

## Milwaukee County Demographic Profile<sup>4</sup>

Demographic data is a vital tool for park and recreation agencies, assisting in characterizing populations that must be considered when engaging in planning and programming initiatives. In addition, demographics will be an essential component of the Needs Assessment development process and will help establish a solid point of reference for future projections. We connect demographic data analysis to our strategic goals and actions, situating the role of the parks department and its system as a sought-out, valued public resource that meets the current and emerging quality of life goals of a changing citizenry.

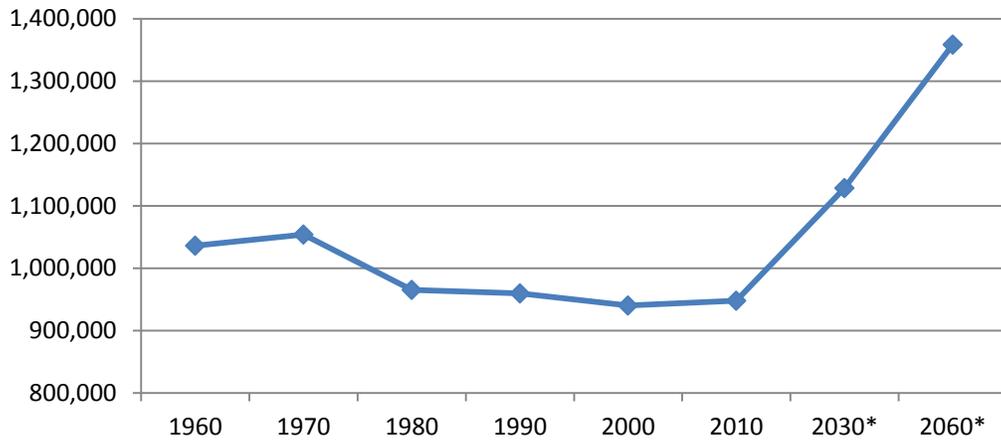
**Total Population**      **946,584**



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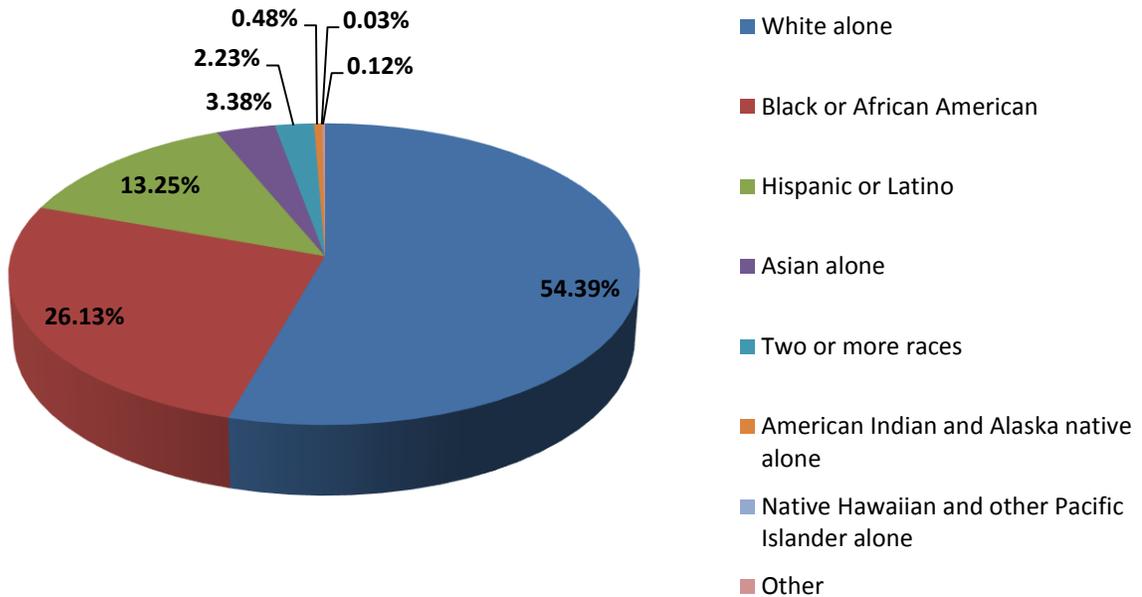
<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. 31 July 2014  
<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/55/550791k.html>.

## Population Trend and Projection Milwaukee County



\*Proximity. [U.S. State, Metro, County Population Trends: 2010 2030 2060 Interactive Table](http://proximityone.com/demographics2060.htm). 30 July 2014  
<http://proximityone.com/demographics2060.htm>

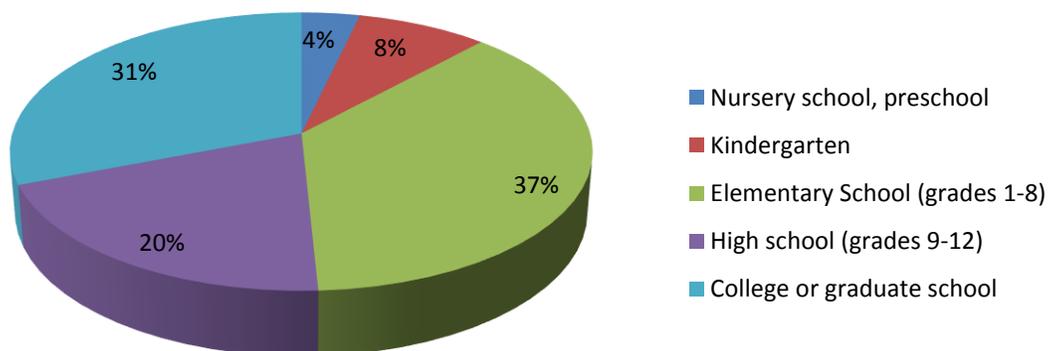
## Race



Total Households	379,711
Households with one or more people under 18 years old	119,026
Households with one or more people 65 years and over	81,011
Employment status (16 years and over)	736,809
Percent unemployed	10.6%
Median household income	\$43,599
Percent of all families with income below poverty level	16.5%
Housing Occupancy – total housing units	379,711
Percent vacant housing units	9.1%
No vehicles available in occupied housing	14%

With 31% of total Milwaukee County households having at least one resident under 18 years old, there is a great opportunity for the parks system to inspire health and wellness for generations to come. In addition, there are opportunities to connect neighborhood and community assets, resources, and partnerships to those with limited incomes and without access to cars through education, services, and programs that promote walkability and the value of distance to green space.

## School Enrollment



According to the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) Technical Report No. 11, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition, *The Population of Southeastern Wisconsin*, population of the Region (defined as Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, Waukesha, and Kenosha Counties) under their intermediate-growth scenario regional population would increase 17%, households would increase by 22%, and employment would increase 18%. SEWRPC has considered both regional economic and population trends to assist in their visioning initiative which will contribute to our understanding of the regional composition as we progress through this Strategic Plan.

As SEWRPC develops Vision 2050, a comprehensive evaluation and development of the Region's future land use and transportation plan, the Milwaukee County Parks will be active participants and will consider the data, ideas, themes, and recommendations that emerge from the process for use in our own comprehensive planning initiatives.



## Current Condition Assessment

Centered by a SWOC analysis of four assessment areas (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities/hopes & challenges), the SWOC provides an overall view of factors affecting the Parks Department and/or the broader Milwaukee County/Southeastern Wisconsin community. They also aid in determining a desired future for the department and its role in the County. Another method to determine the public's current usage and interest in the parks, the Department published an Interest and Use Survey in March 2014. Three months of data is summarized below. The Parks Department will continue to run the survey and pull data semi-annually to identify trends, emerging themes, ideas, and suggestions.

### Top Results of 2014 Parks Interest and Use Survey

Top 10 activities the public participates in or venues visited while visiting the Parks:

1. Walking/jogging
2. Hiking/nature trails
3. Relaxation
4. Picnics
5. Aquatic Centers and swimming pools
6. Beaches
7. Concerts
8. Biking
9. Oak Leaf Trail
10. Mitchell Park Domes

Top 5 opportunities the public would like to see available:

1. Additional beer gardens
2. Organized hikes/tours
3. Miniature golf
4. Camping
5. Additional dog exercise areas

Quotes have been taken from community input via the Parks Interest and Use Survey.

*“I drive by the parks...enjoying their beauty.  
I'm proud of our park system.”*

*“Increased opportunities and resources to preserve (the) few remaining  
quality natural areas...”*

## Internal Strengths

Internal strengths are resources or capabilities that help an organization accomplish its mission. Our strengths are attributes and assets we have control over and that we can capitalize on to support our opportunities.

1. Our “emerald necklace,” 15,316 acres of quality land, diverse facilities with public access, and the connectivity of our trail system to accommodate users of all types (passive and active).
2. Our legacy, vision, and our ability to educate our users about our 108-year history.
3. Dedicated, passionate, knowledgeable workforce that adapts with creativity, innovation, resiliency, and resourcefulness to respond to customer needs, above and beyond to ensure satisfaction. Visible and available to the public, preventing problems; provide great experience for patrons.

*“I believe the park system cares about our parks and the people in the community.”*

*“The workforce may be dedicated but there are not enough to sustain and maintain the needs of the Park System. The Parks have missed several opportunities to modernize and offer opportunities to the citizens.”*

## Internal Weaknesses

Internal weaknesses are deficiencies in resources and capabilities that hinder an organization in accomplishing its mission; however, shoring up these weaknesses and transitioning them into strengths over the next 5-years is our goal.

1. Inconsistent, outdated policies, practices, plans and procedures (both internally and externally); lack of core guiding documents and plans.
2. Telling our story so that the community and beyond know what we do and what we can offer.
3. Maintaining current facilities and infrastructure; assessing and improving utilization of our facilities.
4. Lack of consistent, successive workforce training and development.
5. Lack of effective communication that contributes to divisional silos.
6. Lack of current technology to improve workforce communication and efficiencies, customer service, and education.
7. Inconsistent evaluation practices to determine both customer and employee satisfaction.

*“I find Milwaukee parks wonderful but lacking in adapting to changing demographics.”*

*“Make it easy for businesses to support you.”*

## Future & Desired Condition Assessment

Examined together, an organization's challenges and opportunities indicate a future and desired condition. Through our strengths we can actively invest in opportunities and manage or minimize challenges, often beyond our control.

### Challenges & Concerns

External challenges are outside factors that can negatively affect our organization or community.

1. A political environment affecting fiscal priorities and operations.
2. Maintaining and expanding volunteer base, business partnerships, and internship, co-op and service learning experiences.
3. The need to meet and exceed industry performance standards.
4. Establishing and communicating guidelines and standards for Friends groups and user groups.

*“I feel we need improved communication between residents and the County parks.”*

*“The parks provide exercise and recreation for such a large diverse population. The green space needs to be of high value, as a tax payer, I feel we are lucky to have these parks.”*

### External Opportunities & Hopes

External opportunities are outside factors or hoped-for situations that can affect our organization or community.

1. Consistent yet innovative funding regardless of source, balancing needs while encouraging state-of-the-art investments.
2. Telling our story of how the diversity of our park system history and how users utilize our parks in order to help us justify getting support from political stakeholders.
3. Evaluation of how well we do our core services, programs and our practices.
4. Need to address specific internal and external perceptions.

*“Please do not lose focus on the community and public partnerships. Together we can all achieve more.”*

*“Many programming opportunities are being missed which would make the parks and park facilities more frequently used.”*

## Strategic Actions and Outcomes

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Once each strategic goal was determined and categorized, division leadership and management teams met to discuss what specific strategic actions needed to take place to address each issue. Next, both teams then determined which divisions will lead addressing those actions. Last, the leadership and management teams determined approximately how long addressing each issue will take over the next five years.

As this Strategic Plan is dynamic by design, on-going assessment and re-evaluation will occur throughout the 5-year timeframe. Through measurement we should learn:

- If our strategies are working and whether our approach is producing the results we expected. If so, are there ways to further capitalize? If not, should we abandon the strategy?
- If the measurement process is appropriate. If it isn't, what is?

Annually, as our work plans are established we will define what determines a successful outcome. For example:

An annual work plan for our Aquatics section is to develop new programmatic offerings at our indoor swimming pools.

Success will be measured by:

- A 20% increase in overall attendance
- A 15% increase in revenue
- A 90% customer satisfaction rating

Failure to achieve one or more of these performance measures will not necessarily reflect an inability to be successful rather provide an opportunity for modification. Any outcome will result in a re-evaluation of not only the strategy we used to develop the programming but whether or not our measures were realistic and achievable. In addition, contributing factors such as the facility condition, maintenance issues, staff performance, weather, and marketing efforts must be considered.

Annual reporting of the past year's outcomes paired with a presentation of the work plans for the year to come will provide stakeholders our successes and deficiencies and adjustments made as a result. Consistent application of this process will yield residual benefits<sup>5</sup> including:

- Our ability to be responsive to important issues
- Resolution of peripheral issues
- Refined strategies
- Improved communication, knowledge and collaboration
- Increased ability to tell our story
- An environment that supports and responds to innovation and creativity

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<sup>5</sup> Bryson, J. M. (2004). *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement* (3rd Edition ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

# People

## Goal 1: Create a culture of creativity, collaboration and empowerment among our diverse workforce

### Objective: Invest in, support and develop our highly skilled, quality and dedicated workforce

Action item examples

- 🌿 Invest in workforce development and training
- 🌿 Create employee awards and recognition programs
- 🌿 Establish leadership development/succession program
- 🌿 Implement performance management and development plans

### Objective: Improve internal structures of communication within the organization and foster a positive work environment

Action item examples

- 🌿 Optimize technology
- 🌿 Convene staff forums and conduct surveys
- 🌿 Enhance teambuilding, mentoring and cross divisional work teams

### Objective: Create the most appropriate organizational structure for the Parks

Action item examples

- 🌿 Align workforce planning efforts to business and operational needs
- 🌿 Analyze staffing models and explore opportunities for efficiencies

### Outcomes:

- 🌿 25% of full-time staff holding professional certifications or licenses
- 🌿 Hold ten staff forums and develop specific action plan from staff surveys
- 🌿 Achieve 90% workforce satisfaction rating



PEOPLE	How will we invest in, support and develop our highly skilled, quality and dedicated workforce?						
	Project Title	Lead Division	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	Review and update employee awards and recognition programs	Admin					
	Dedicate a percent of budget to business related training and workforce development	Admin					
	Develop and implement an employee exchange program	Admin					
	Provide IT training	Admin					
	Establish a leadership development/succession program	Admin					
	Establish an Innovations Team	Recreation					
	Implement performance management and development plans	Admin					
	Promote diversity	Admin					
PEOPLE	How will we improve internal structures of communication within the organization and foster a positive work environment?						
	Project Title	Lead Division	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	Optimize OWA/Outlook	Admin					
	Hold quarterly staff forums	Admin					
	Enhance employee communication	Admin					
	Enhance teambuilding, mentoring, and cross divisional work teams	Admin					
	Conduct employee opinion surveys	Admin					
	Develop specific action plans from employee surveys	Admin					
PEOPLE	What is the most appropriate organizational structure for the parks?						
	Project Title	Lead Division	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	Evaluate Compensation Study results	Admin					
	Align workforce planning efforts to business and operational needs	Admin					
	Analyze current staffing models and explore opportunities for efficiencies	Admin					

# Parks

## Goal 2: Broaden and strengthen park stewardship

### Objective: Conserve, preserve and protect our natural resources and parklands in a healthy condition

Action item examples

- 🌿 Continue development of site-specific ecological management and restoration plans
- 🌿 Develop energy management plan while replacing or renovating obsolete or inefficient energy infrastructure
- 🌿 Invest in natural capital maintenance & projects
- 🌿 Organize waterway operation and management program
- 🌿 Minimize impact by invasive plant and animal species

### Objective: Optimize use of our parks

Action item examples

- 🌿 Complete 10-year Community Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment
- 🌿 Broaden service and programming opportunities

### Objective: Maintain and update our aging facilities and equipment to best serve the public

Action item examples

- 🌿 Develop ADA-Compliance transition plan
- 🌿 Complete park master plans
- 🌿 Refine capital development criteria and evaluation process

### Outcomes:

- 🌿 Complete 25 park master plans
- 🌿 Complete 15 ecological management and restoration plans
- 🌿 Reduce energy consumption by 15%
- 🌿 Plant 5,000 trees
- 🌿 Complete system-wide GIS inventory



PARKS	How will we conserve, preserve and protect our natural resources and parklands in a healthy condition?						
	Project Title	Lead Division	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	Continue site specific natural resources management plans	Operations					
	Develop energy management plan (green initiatives)	Operations/					
	Fund natural capital projects (sustainable green environment)	Operations					
	Expand encroachment education	Operations					
	Organize waterway operation and management program (rivers, beaches, lagoons)	Operations					
	Write river corridor management plans	Operations					
	Organize natural resources stewardship model	Operations					
	Develop and implement a natural areas ranking system	Operations					
PARKS	How will we optimize use of our parks and facilities?						
	Project Title	Lead Division	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	Develop site/section-specific business plans	Recreation					
	Dedicate a percent of budget to marketing/communication	Admin					
	Evaluate and explore intergovernmental agreements (Federal, State, Local)	Admin					
	Update Park and Open Space Plan (SEWRPC)	Planning					
	Update Trails Network Plan and implement trail development strategy projects to create new trail connections and improve existing trails	Operations					
	Grow sports tournaments (event and program management)	Recreation					
	Expand programming in aquatics facilities	Recreation					
	Expand programming in stewardship education	Operations/ Recreation					
	Study the feasibility of public arts in Parks	Recreation					
PARKS	How will we maintain and update our aging facilities and equipment to best serve the community?						
	Project Title	Lead Division	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	Refine capital development criteria and evaluation process	Planning					
	Complete park master plans	Planning					
	Continue parkway renewal and redevelopment plan	Planning					
	Develop an ADA-compliance transition plan	Planning					
Develop comprehensive capital equipment replacement plan	Operations						

# Processes

## Goal 3: Maintain excellence in public and fiscal management

### Objective: Diversify and stabilize our funding sources

Action item examples

- 🌳 Adopt a common financial philosophy
- 🌳 Establish enterprise funds/revenue stabilization reserve
- 🌳 Create a Parks Foundation
- 🌳 Grow concessions opportunities
- 🌳 Leverage Parks Amenities Matching Fund

### Objective: Improve cost recovery

Action item examples

- 🌳 Invest in revenue-generating facilities to grow programs and services to improve over-all cost recovery
- 🌳 Complete core service analysis and develop business plans
- 🌳 Develop facility renovation, replacement and repurposing plan

### Objective: Develop consistent, logical and relevant policies and procedures

Action item examples

- 🌳 Complete accreditation process
- 🌳 Update policy and procedure manual
- 🌳 Update ordinances/statutes

### Objective: Develop effective performance measures and evaluation processes

Action item examples

- 🌳 Hold public listening forums and conduct surveys
- 🌳 Develop budget performance measures
- 🌳 Identify and implement industry best management practices & standards
- 🌳 Expand customer satisfaction survey program

### Objective: Communicate our public value

Action item examples

- 🌳 Invest in marketing and communication
- 🌳 Complete agency branding study
- 🌳 Conduct economic impact study
- 🌳 Create dynamic, updated website

## Outcomes:

- 🏆 Be awarded accreditation by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies
- 🏆 Win the Gold Medal for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management
- 🏆 Host ten public listening forums and report results and actions
- 🏆 Achieve 90% customer satisfaction rating
- 🏆 Achieve cost recovery of 50%
- 🏆 Complete six (6) business plans
- 🏆 Expand e-commerce to increase revenue by 15%



PROCESSES	How will we diversify and stabilize our funding sources?						
	Project Title	Lead Division	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	Adopt a common financial philosophy in the delivery of services with a goal of sustainability with limited County	Admin					
	Create a Parks Foundation	Admin					
	Fund Parks Amenities Matching Fund	Admin					
	Develop sponsorships, naming rights, and advertising program	Operations					
	Formalize grant management program	Admin					
	Establish "Enterprise" funds/establish a revenue stabilization reserve	Recreation					
	Grow concessions opportunities	Recreation					
PROCESSES	How will we improve cost recovery?						
	Project Title	Lead Division	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	Reinvest in revenue-generating facilities to grow programs and services and improve overall cost recovery	Recreation					
	Complete core services analysis	Recreation					
Develop facility renovation, replacement and repurposing plan	Planning						
PROCESSES	How will we organize policies and improve business practices?						
	Project Title	Lead Division	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	Complete policy and procedure manual	Admin					
	Secure CAPRA Accreditation	Admin					
	Update ordinances/statutes	Admin					
	Improve cost accounting (secure a means to track the true cost of business)	Admin					
	Enhance use of technology to create efficiencies (e-commerce initiatives)	Recreation					
	Evaluate reservation software and pursue support and maintenance agreement	Recreation					
	Write revenue and pricing policy/plan	Recreation					
	Develop agency information technology infrastructure plan	Admin					
Partner with IMSD/DAS to formalize a facility maintenance management and work order system	Planning						

PROCESSES	How will we best measure and evaluate our performance to accomplish our mission?						
	Project Title	Lead Division	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	Organize and perform contract audits	Admin					
	Engage in public listening forums	Admin					
	Offer and evaluate public surveys	Admin					
	Evaluate performance measures	Admin					
	Identify & implement industry best management practices and standards	Admin					
	Expand customer satisfaction survey program to provide feedback in all key business areas	Admin					
	Research demographic and recreation trend reports to inform future programming	Recreation					
PROCESSES	How will we communicate our public value and enrich citizen quality of life?						
	Project Title	Lead Division	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	Expand marketing and communication efforts and resources	Admin					
	Conduct an agency branding study to develop a new agency brand image, brand standards	Admin					
	Develop mobile interface initiative for customers	Admin					
	Maintain, update and promote a dynamic website (enhance on-line park and facility information)	Admin					
Conduct an economic impact study	Admin						

# Partners

## Goal 4: Strengthen partnerships to become more responsive to community needs

### Objective: Engage, leverage and develop community and corporate partners to optimize and broaden programs and services

Action item examples

- 🍷 Develop a centralized volunteer and internship management program
- 🍷 Expand intergovernmental partnerships
- 🍷 Collaborate with community-based organizations and stakeholders to enhance service delivery and help address quality of life issues

### Objective: Establish investment priorities for diverse community needs and quality of life initiatives

Action item examples

- 🍷 Complete 10-year Community Park and Recreation Needs Assessment
- 🍷 Expand public outreach and participation in park system planning processes
- 🍷 Conduct annual community survey

### Outcomes:

- 🍷 Increase volunteer hours by 25%
- 🍷 Connect with 80 actively-engaged friends groups
- 🍷 Conduct five community surveys and develop action plans to address results



*Traveling Beer Garden partnership with Sprecher Brewing Company*



*Clean water, clean beaches partnership with MillerCoors and UWM – School of Freshwater Sciences*

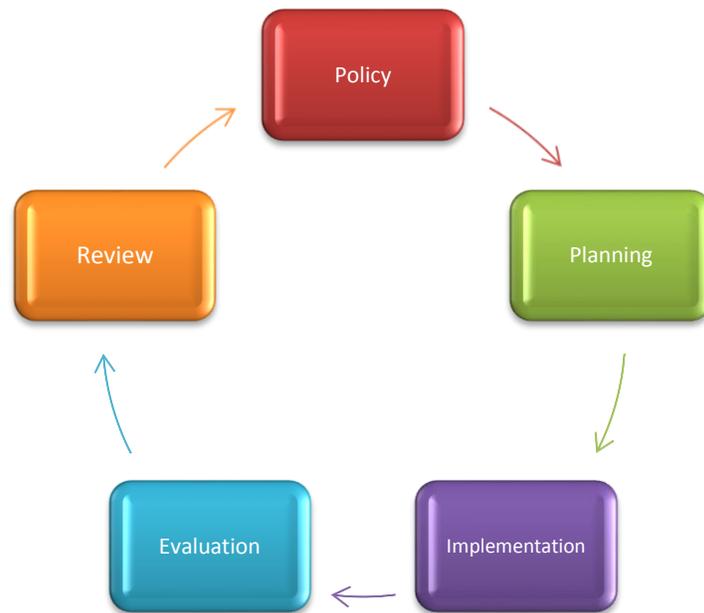
<b>How will we engage, leverage and develop community partners and corporate partners/sponsors to optimize and broaden our programs and services for a lifetime?</b>							
<b>PARTNERS</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Lead Division</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
	Inform and engage Friends and advocacy groups (Formalize Friends Program)	Admin					
	Develop a centralized volunteer and internship program	Admin					
	Engage community athletic organizations	Recreation					
	Partner with user groups for facility development to enhance service delivery with new and upgraded facilities	Recreation					
	Evaluate leasing opportunities of park land, facilities, and amenities	Recreation					
	Establish partnerships for stewardship	Operations					
	Partner with MMSD and municipalities on storm water projects to restore streams and environmental features in parks	Planning					
	Enhance adopt-a-field, park, facilities, and dog exercise area partnerships	Operations/ Recreation					
	Work with community-based and non-profit organizations and stakeholders to address quality of life issues	Admin					
<b>Which community priorities and issues of quality of life will we actively invest in and how do we meet the needs of a diverse community?</b>							
<b>PARTNERS</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Lead Division</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
	Start Needs Assessment to identify facilities and program needs, including community needs survey to address recreation programming, open space, natural resources and park needs	Planning					
	Expand effectiveness of public outreach and participation in park system planning processes	Planning					
	Conduct annual community survey	Admin					

# Plan Implementation and Integration

After this strategic plan is adopted, implementation will be led by process champions and sponsors from internal and external stakeholder groups, under the leadership of the Director and his executive leadership. This plan is an integral piece of our overall planning effort that includes the 10-year Community Park and Recreation Needs Assessment, 3-5 year business plans, annual work plans, and individual performance plans. These plans are cohesive and provide us a flexible and dynamic framework to build upon for continued success. Through an Annual Report we will present our accomplishments and report the upcoming year’s work plan once the budget is adopted.



Step 10 of the Bryson and Alston model is strategy and planning process reassessment whereby the plan is evaluated and adjusted to ensure the strategies continue to provide value to the organization and the community. A common model used in strategic (or performance) management systems contains actions that support continuous improvement efforts and will be utilized by the department throughout the lifecycle of this Strategic Plan. Utilizing this model ensures a thoughtful approach and will help to minimize or eliminate piecemeal planning and/or decisions.



Overall success of this plan will take teamwork, commitment, communication, and a good attitude from staff and stakeholders. The Parks team is energized and along with our Friends, partners and colleagues we will advance the Milwaukee County Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture while honoring the legacy, this gift, which has been entrusted to us.

