

# Chapter 4: Vision

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Greatness does not just happen; it is the result of a concerted effort implementing a shared vision for the future. In the parks and recreation system, the shared vision is formed through the combination of the System Plan Guiding Principles and the City of Rochester Parks & Recreation Department’s adopted Mission and Strategic Direction Plan. Together, this vision and mission statement provides a guide for the development of the parks and recreation system over the next 20 years.

## Mission Statement

The City of Rochester Parks & Recreation Department operates with an established, clear purpose, which is identified and communicated by this mission statement:

***“Providing traditional, innovative and affordable quality services (activities, programs and facilities) for Rochester’s residents and visitors.”***

# Strategic Direction Plan

## Vision

In 2015 the City of Rochester Parks & Recreation Department underwent a strategic visioning process to identify a plan for the operation of the department over the next three years. This plan includes the following vision:

We will be an organization that has (is):

- » **The Destination of Choice.** We will be top of mind for state, regional and national recreational and competitive events. We are a significant force in the economic development of Rochester through the services and venues we offer.
- » **A Culture of Pride.** We are an organization that does not compromise on excellence. Our employees take pride in all that they do, are engaged and look forward to coming to work every day. We are seen as an employer of choice in the city.
- » **Fully Leveraged Technology.** We fully embrace and leverage technology to work smarter and more efficiently while enhancing the experience of our customers.
- » **Outstanding Reputation in the Community.** We meet the needs of ALL of a diverse community. We top all of the healthy living lists and are looked at as an example of excellence in Parks and Recreation nationally. We are the best practice.
- » **Sustainable Stability.** We are seen as an essential department in this community. We are fully staffed and funded to support the vision and mission of our department.

To support this vision, the Strategic Direction Plan establishes a series of strategic objectives, or areas of focus, around which specific outcomes to implement the vision were identified. A set of actions and projects were then identified and used for the development of annual staffing, training, and budgeting needs. The Strategic Direction Plan will be revisited and updated as needed when the Parks and Recreation System Plan is adopted.

# System Plan Guiding Principles

In concert with the existing mission and vision of the department, this system plan contains the following set of Guiding Principles: Support Excellence, Cultivate Health, Create Connections, Encourage Exploration, Be Flexible & Responsible, and Grow Gracefully. These principles are intended to direct the development of the parks and recreation system. Key characteristics of the Guiding Principles include:

- » Oriented to the future
- » Identify what the community desires for itself based on shared understandings
- » Serve as a tool for evaluation of proposals, projects, ideas, and future directions
- » Provide an anchor during conflict, a way of finding common ground and shared values
- » Become a basis for coordination and cooperation

The Guiding Principles were developed based on community input, the existing conditions analysis, and the needs assessment. The Guiding Principles are organized into a set of six themes. Each theme has a brief description followed by a series of bullets to provide further description.

## Support Excellence

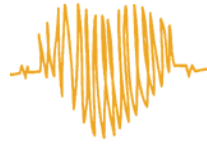


As a regional center of commerce, a global destination for health services, and a top-ranking place to call home, Rochester accommodates an ever-changing group of people with an immense range of recreational needs and expectations. Only a top-notch parks and recreation system can truly support these many facets of Rochester and reflect the nature of the

happenings within the city. To support excellence the Parks and Recreation department will:

- » Maintain system quality, condition, and safety
- » Address facility needs by exploring state-of-the-art improvements
- » Strengthen partnerships with neighborhoods, associations, agencies, schools, and the arts community
- » Be the region's premier destination for tournaments and events
- » Develop a system that is integral to the region's economic success

## Cultivate Health



Parks have long been a symbol and source of rejuvenation and health, but our understanding of their benefits has come a long way from Frederick Law Olmsted’s concept of parks as “Lungs of the City”. Today, few can argue the need for parks and recreation to cultivate a culture of well-being and active living within a community. Rochester especially, because of its role as host and home to the Mayo Clinic and its visitors, must embrace and meet this need with vigor. In recognition of this, the Parks and Recreation Department will:

- » Provide a diversity of quality facilities to support life-long activity
- » Support healthy living by providing a pedestrian/bicycling network
- » Offer programming and education to support healthy choices
- » Protect environmental health through sustainability initiatives

## Create Connections



Despite our increasing virtual connectedness and mobility, or perhaps because of it, physical connections to people and place have become paramount. People are looking to drive less, get more out of their limited resources, such as free time and money, and live in places that support these goals. That means a community that is well-connected physically and socially. To create connections, the Parks and Recreation Department will work to:

- » Develop a connected park, natural area, and trail system
- » Expand opportunities for gathering (shelters, events programming, etc.)
- » Improve accessibility by reducing physical and financial barriers
- » Strengthen the links to neighborhoods and diverse communities
- » Promote community pride

## Encourage Exploration



Sometimes we all need a little nudge to expand our horizons. Whether we are a novice pickleball player looking to incorporate physical and social activity into our daily lives, a child from Mogadishu not accustomed to hiking in the woods, or a visitor from Wisconsin who has just stepped out of a hospital room and is looking for an afternoon walk, trying something new can have its own set of challenges. But as we all know, the rewards can be lasting and life-changing. A strong parks and recreation system recognizes this, and takes steps to minimize the barriers that can prevent people from reaping the benefits of the system. To encourage exploration, the Parks and Recreation Department will:

- » Make the system simple to navigate
- » Inspire beginners of all ages to discover new recreational activities, arts and culture
- » Expand opportunities to access nature
- » Attract visitors through unique facilities and easy access

## Be Flexible & Responsive



While many communities are subject to the ebbs and flows of population shifts, changing trends, and demographics, changes in Rochester can be magnified because of the nature of its main economy and labor force. As a result, the Parks and Recreation Department must be particularly adept at gauging and responding to the community's evolving character and needs. To be flexible and responsive, the Parks and Recreation Department will work to:

- » Support users of all ages and abilities
- » Adapt to busy lifestyles and recreational trends
- » Collaborate with users on park/facility development
- » Capitalize on technology to improve user experience and operations

## Grow Gracefully



Rochester is growing, and while this growth comes with great potential and opportunity, it also comes with responsibility. In collaboration with planners, designers, developers, citizens, and other City departments, Parks and Recreation has an obligation to seek the right mix of development, preservation, spending, and saving. Proper planning and fore-thought will yield great results for parks and recreation, and will save time, money, and other perhaps irrevocable resources down the road. To grow gracefully, the Parks and Recreation Department will:

- » Ensure adequate distribution of parks, facilities, and open spaces
- » Pursue financial stability, now and in the future
- » Staff appropriately to maintain a high quality system
- » Engage volunteers to expand capabilities



