CITY OF FAIRFIELD PARKS AND RECREATION STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2024

PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT
CITY OF FAIRFIELD
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FAIRFIELD
THE FIELD IS OPEN

ADOPTED | JANUARY 2020

South Trace Golf Course

MESSAGE FROM

TIPHANIE HOWARD, CPRP
DIRECTOR OF PARKS & RECREATION

The City of Fairfield maintains 41 parks and recreation facilities totaling 845 acres, including; an 18-hole championship golf course, a 9-hole executive golf course, a Community Arts Center, an aquatic center, an 1817 farm mansion, a 45 acre lake, 75 acres of nature preserve, 14 miles of bike/hike paths and two historical cemeteries. During the year, the Parks and Recreation staff conducted hundreds of special programs and events, enhancing the quality of life experiences for thousands of residents. Operating this extensive system requires extraordinary care, planning, and teamwork.

On behalf of the Fairfield Parks and Recreation Department, I am pleased to present our 5-Year Strategic Plan. In this plan, we have highlighted critical work that needs to be accomplished over the next several years to ensure that the City has an accessible, equitable, and a first-class park system that serves the entire Fairfield community and the thousands of individuals who visit and enjoy our parks and facilities each year, regardless of their income, ethnicity, gender, ability or age.

Our Strategic Plan reflects our chief priorities, confronts new and existing challenges, and sets us on a course to pursue exciting new opportunities. What you will find is this plan is organized under a set of high-level priority focus areas. Within each area, we have developed specific objectives aimed at ensuring that we serve the Fairfield community and visitors at the highest level through our parks, facilities and programs within the City.

The following high-priority focus areas will help us meet our mission over the next five years:

- Provide a variety of community open spaces, parks and recreation opportunities for programming, including active and passive recreation for all ages and abilities.
- Protect existing natural areas, environmentally sensitive lands and watersheds.
- Develop and sustain quality assets and invest into revitalization of current assets.
- Improve organizational effectiveness.

The Fairfield Parks and Recreation Department is one of the largest and most dynamic municipal park systems in the region, and our staff is extremely proud of the work we do to serve the community. You deserve a park system worthy of this great city, and we are dedicated to exceeding your expectations. This five-year strategic plan is a critical step forward in the Department's future, and together, we are making our parks and public spaces a place that our community will be proud to call their own now and for generations to come.

Tiphanie Howard

Tiphanie Howard, CPRP
Director of Parks and Recreation

MISSION, VISION & CORE VALUES

A clear mission and vision is paramount for public-serving organizations that are purpose driven, such as the City of Fairfield's Parks and Recreation Department. Our organizational principles drive our strategic direction and reinforce our dedication to the Fairfield community and our visitors.

Mission

The mission of Fairfield Parks and Recreation Department is to enrich the quality of life for the citizens of the community, sustain the City's natural resources and environment, and provide broad based leisure activities, cultural opportunities, facilities and services for all ages.

Vision

Build a better future for all through parks and recreation. Create a system of parks and facilities, along with excellent programs and services to enhance the high quality of life that attracts and retains residents, businesses, and visitors to our community.

Core Values

Our core values are based on the National Recreation and Parks Association's "Three Pillars - Social Equity, Health & Wellness and Conservation".

- Stewardship: responsibly conserving our resources.
- Integrity: acting ethically in our daily interactions.
- Dignity: providing the same standard of care to all individuals.
- Service: committing to quality in our products and facilities.

Fairfield Aquatic Center

SWOT ANALYSIS

Through the practice of performing a SWOT Analysis, we were able to identify our current position prior to developing this strategic plan. Our staff took an internal and external look at what has been working well, what we could be doing better, what issues might stand in our way from accomplishing these goals, and, finally, recognizing opportunities that will help us achieve these goals.

SWOT Analysis Results

Strengths: New staffing and organizational opportunities to provide a different approach; dedicated and service-oriented team members; a varied and expansive inventory of programs and facilities; and a talented and experienced staff.

Challenges (Weaknesses): Ability to recruit quality part-time/seasonal staff; positively promote the value that parks and recreation services adds to the community; and the inability to tap into the competitive nature of the funding process.

Opportunities: Building a stronger volunteer program; improving social media and marking/branding efforts; collaborating with internal departments and/or external agencies; and developing a stronger environmental education component to our offerings.

Threats: Availability of external partnerships; part-time pay competition from outside organizations; and the demand for Capital and maintenance funding resources to elevate our position as a first-class parks and recreation agency.

PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS & GOALS

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GOAL 1

PROVIDE A VARIETY OF COMMUNITY OPEN SPACES, PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAMMING, INCLUDING ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATION FOR ALL AGES AND ABILITIES.

GOAL 2

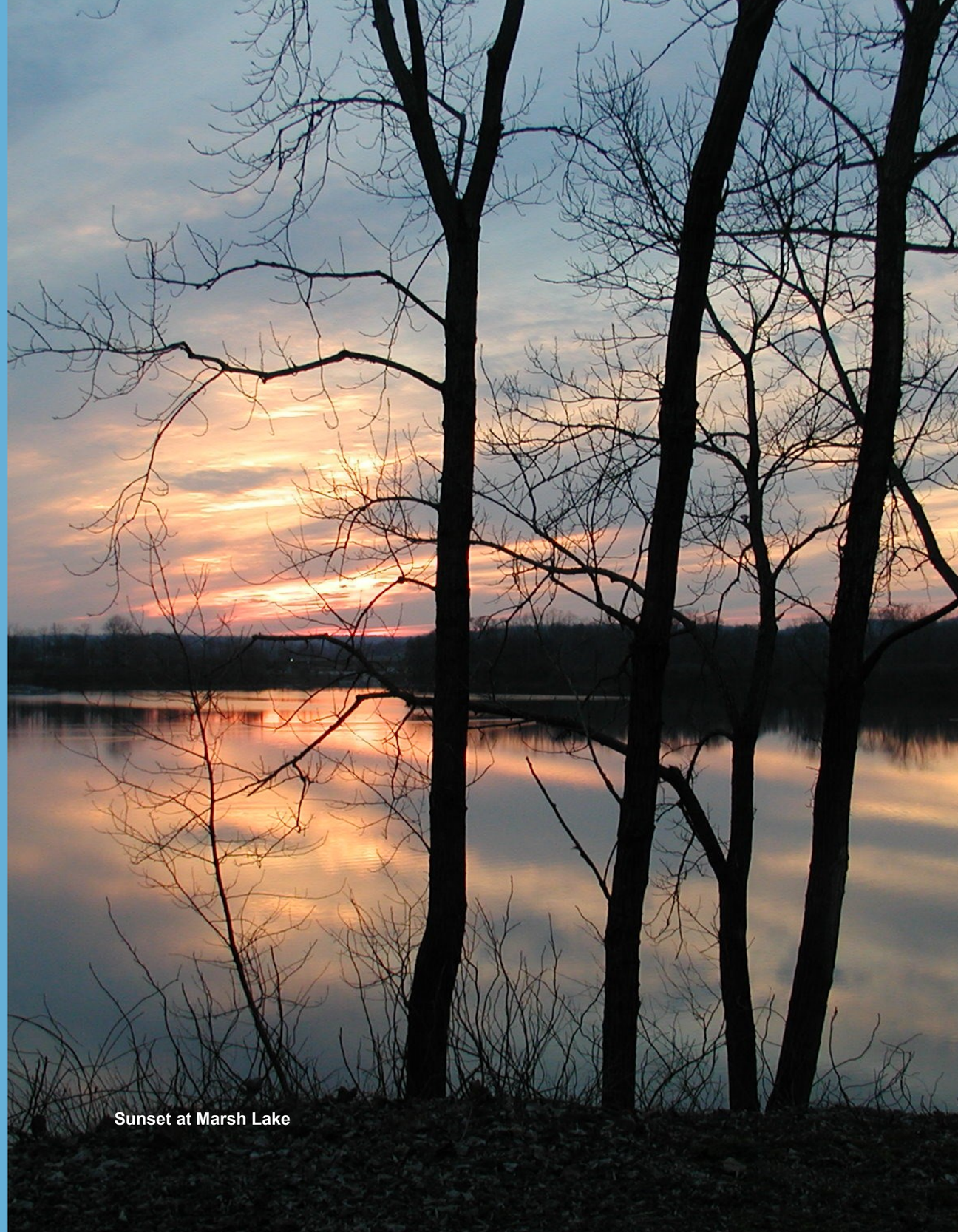
PROTECT EXISTING NATURAL AREAS, WATERSHEDS, AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS.

GOAL 3

DEVELOP AND SUSTAIN QUALITY ASSETS AND INVEST INTO REVITALIZATION OF CURRENT ASSETS.

GOAL 4

IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS.



Sunset at Marsh Lake

Cyclocross at Harbin Park

GOAL 1

PROVIDE A VARIETY OF COMMUNITY OPEN SPACES, PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAMMING, INCLUDING ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATION FOR ALL AGES AND ABILITIES.

Action Steps:

Identify opportunities to continue the development of the city's park and recreation system, including maintenance, expansion and enhancements as needed.

Ensure convenient access to parks, open spaces and recreation opportunities through multiple modes of access (motor vehicle, bicycle path/trail, and sidewalk) and connectivity between parks and neighborhoods.

Coordinate public and private resources to understand and meet the programming, open space and recreational needs of the city, and to avoid duplication of services.

Encourage new development to plan for and incorporate public gathering spaces and pocket parks in connection with the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Study the feasibility of developing Marsh Park as a water-based recreational venue, including access along the Great Miami River.

Identify locations within the park system for new and expanded trails for bicycling, hiking and walking and partner with key agencies to assist in funding opportunities.

GOAL 2

PROTECT EXISTING NATURAL AREAS, WATERSHEDS, AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS.

Action Steps:

Identify and inventory lands suitable for conservation and protection.

Establish mechanisms to restrict or prevent development on those lands through the purchase of land for conservation easements.

Tree Planting at Huffman Park

Community Arts Center

GOAL 3

DEVELOP AND SUSTAIN QUALITY ASSETS AND INVEST INTO REVITALIZATION OF CURRENT ASSETS.

Action Steps:

Prioritize resources to ensure the long-term viability of the parks and recreation system for the future while addressing maintenance priorities.

Identify opportunities to enhance current facilities and parks to make them first-class establishments.

Develop training criteria for maintenance staff that will influence engagement, ownership and stewardship of parks and recreation amenities.

Identify partners and key stakeholders who have the capacity to dedicate resources to the parks and recreation department through collaborative efforts.

Study the feasibility of developing new and enhancing current inventory with upgraded amenities and benchmark neighboring organizations for streamlining regional offerings.

Improving the consistency and uniformity in regard to attention to detail with the upgrades, improvements and maintenance of current and future amenities within the system.

GOAL 4

IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS.

Action Steps:

Identify and remove internal roadblocks that interfere with providing outstanding customer service and develop a competitive differentiation strategy for superior service delivery.

Establish high-impact leadership practices that reflect a first-class organization through identifying the “Six Systems of Organizational Effectiveness” practices at every level of service.

Develop a marketing and communication plan that effectively and efficiently reflects each division in a unified, yet diverse, component of the department’s identity.

Measure the impact of the department’s programs, events and facilities on the community and identify an appropriate level of quality for the products and services provided by focusing on a balance of quality with cost effectiveness.

FurField Dog Park & Trailhead

Huffman Park

MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

The Strategic Plan has been designed to follow four high-priority focus areas over the next five years. Each priority area is followed by action items that will direct us through our decision making process as we develop budgets, partnerships and Capital Improvement Plans. Each action item contains measurable objectives that we intend to implement over this time period. These items will help staff position the organization toward achieving the best long-term results and undertake opportunities that will move the department toward the achievement of our Mission and Vision.

Measuring Process

Our progress will be measured, evaluated and reported on an annual basis through the City of Fairfield's Annual Report. Through measuring our performance in this fashion, our decision making process will provide us the ability to provide a more improved parks and recreation service that better reflects our community's needs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this Strategic Plan will serve as a blueprint for the transformation of the department in order to reach the next level for our community. We will align our resources to meet the goals identified in this plan as we become better prepared to meet the opportunities and challenges of tomorrow.