

Fargo Park District Strategic Planning Meeting #3 2.21.24 Handout

Agenda Item #1

Current Mission Statement(s)

#1 The Fargo Park District improves the lifestyle of the community through a comprehensive system of parks and programs.

#2 We provide year-round, quality parks, facilities, and affordable recreational activities to create a strong, healthy community where all are welcome.

New Versions for Committee Feedback

Connecting people where Fargo grows, gathers, plays, and learns together.

Connecting community through places, spaces, and experiences.

Meeting #2 Committee Mission Statement Feedback

- Empowering communities through vibrant parks, innovative recreational programs, and environmental stewardship.
- Agree 100% to be short and concise. Every staff member should know and fully understand
- Cultivate a healthy and enjoyable recreational community for all.
- Cultivating the places and spaces where people feel they belong
- Cultivating the spaces and places where Fargo grows, gathers, plays and learns together.
- "Engage. welcome. thrive
- Engaging the community to cultivate an enduring and remarkable community where people want to be."
- Enhance quality of life through sustainable places and spaces
- Foster healthy recreation for all.
- I heard a couple of strong starts to a mission statement
- I like using the community's name, Fargo, in the mission statement. Building pride in the park district and community.
- It needs to be shorter and to the point
- Make it short
- The mission needs to be short and concise.

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- Needs to be simplified and engage a sense of feeling/connection for the community.
- Needs to instill pride in Fargo. Should not be copy and paste interchangeable with any community. Use the word Fargo in it
- Not exciting, does not really make me excited to utilize the parks available. Not catchy or marketable. Could be more concise.
- Recreate Together
- Short and to point. Something measurable
- Short, Sweet, and Marketable
- Something new and punchy - staff needs something different and it marks a new direction for Fargo Parks
- To provide opportunities which enrich lives
- We are here to serve you
- "We enrich lives while having fun.
- We enrich lives for fun.
- Should be this short and fit on a t-shirt. Like McDonalds We're lovin' it."
- We improve physical and mental wellbeing through connection and belonging (submitting for the whole table)
- We love to enrich lives
- We love to serve (good one for tennis too)
- "We strive to be the best part of your day"

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Agenda Item #2 – Value Statements

Review of the Current Value Statement - (Tabletop review and feedback)

Core Values/Belief statements are the non-negotiable characteristics which are the core culture of an organization. These characteristics are “what we do around here” and further define our actions and interactions with those we serve as an organization. Ultimately, the organization's core values, or beliefs serve as a guiding force providing a sense of direction for an organization.

Statements should begin with introductions such as: “we always,” “we believe,” or “we value.” You can also use a “kick-off” statement which summarizes your core beliefs followed by a list of words that identify your core values or beliefs.

Current Values #1	Current Values #2
<p>Intentional Leadership: We are relentless about getting great results while helping the people around us reach their full potential.</p> <p>Passion: We are committed to being the best at radically serving our community.</p> <p>Sincerity: We show genuine care and concern for our teammates and the people we serve.</p> <p>Solution Engineers: We don't let barriers stand in our way, we figure out ways to deliver excellence for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.</p>	<p>Intentional Leadership - We inspire the people around us to reach their full potential.</p> <p>Collaboration -We partner with stakeholders to provide a variety of parks, facilities, and recreational activities.</p> <p>Service -We are committed to serving the community with passion and sincerity.</p> <p>Stewardship -We work to protect and preserve all of our resources.</p> <p>Inclusion -We strive to make our parks, facilities and recreational activities welcoming to all.</p> <p>Solution Focused -We find ways to solve problems.</p>

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Examples of other communities' Parks and Recreation Value Statements

- *Dickinson Parks and Rec Values:* Leader, Excellence, Integrity, Service, Unity, Respect, Ethical
- *Bismarck Parks and Rec Values:* Accountability, Collaboration, Community, Diversity
- *Jamestown Parks and Rec:* Community, Excellence, Integrity, Accessible for all, Ongoing improvement, and FUN!
- *Oak Brook Illinois - Core Values:*
 - **Holistic Wellness:** Provide programs, services, and opportunities designed to improve all aspects of the overall wellness of the community.
 - **Environmental Stewardship:** Foster the responsible use and protection of the natural environment through education, conservation, and sustainable practices.
 - **Inclusion:** Promote a sense of belonging and provide access to the best in park and recreational opportunities for all.
 - **Teamwork:** Embrace the individuality and diverse viewpoints of our staff to foster recreational creativity and encourage a collaborative culture.
 - **Community Engagement:** Provide the very best customer experience with every interaction.
 - **Open Communication:** Engage in honest, and respectful communication, to connect and build relationships with our community.

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Words or statements often associated with core value or belief statements:

Our core values drive our actions. We are committed to: (select 3 – 5 words that would identify the core values)

Accountability	Fairness	Personal Integrity
Caring Environment	Genuine Relationships	Pride
Caring Staff	Giving Back	Professional Growth
Challenging	Goal Orientated	Professionalism
Character	Good to Great	Pursuit of Excellence
Citizenship	Growth	Relationships
Collaboration	Growth-Oriented	Resilience
Commitment to Excellence	High Expectations	Respect
Community	Honesty	Responsibility
Community Pride	Honor and Integrity	Safe Learning Environment
Compassion	Inclusion	Strive for Perfection
Connection	Individual Creativity	Striving for Excellence
Continuous Improvements	Innovation	Student Growth
Curious Learners	Integrity	Student-Centered
Customer Service	Kindness	Success
Data Driven	Leadership	Support
Dedication	Learning for All	Supportive Environment
Determination	Life-Long Learning	Transparency
Empowerment	Modesty and Humility	Teamwork
Engagement	Nurturing Environment	Trustworthiness
Excellence	Opportunities	

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Agenda Item #3 – Vision Statements

Review of the Current Vision Statement - (Tabletop review and feedback)

A vision statement is a public declaration that organizations use to describe their high-level goals for the future. Vision statements articulate the What – Our Purpose, the Why – the Reason; and How we Plan to get there – Our Outcomes.

Current Vision #1	Current Vision #2
<i>The Fargo Park District strives to be a top-performing park district in the United States.</i>	<i>We enrich lives in our community by providing a wide range of parks, facilities, and recreational activities.</i>

Examples Parks and Recreation Vision Statements

Example 1:

"To be the premier provider of recreational and leisure opportunities, enhancing the quality of life for all residents by offering a wide range of accessible, attractive, and well-maintained parks and facilities."

Example 2:

"To create a vibrant and sustainable park system that inspires active lifestyles, fosters community engagement, and preserves the natural beauty of our region for generations to come."

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Example 3:

"To be recognized as a leader in promoting wellness, environmental stewardship, and cultural enrichment through diverse park experiences that connect people to nature, history, and each other."

Example 4:

"To be the catalyst for enhancing community vitality, promoting health and wellness, and fostering environmental conservation through exceptional parks, trails, and recreational programs."

Example 5:

"To be the leading provider of outdoor recreation and cultural experiences, offering innovative programs and preserving natural resources to ensure a sustainable and thriving community."

Example 6:

"To be a trusted steward of our parks and open spaces, creating opportunities for all residents to enjoy outdoor activities, connect with nature, and build a strong sense of community."

Example 7:

"To be a driving force in promoting healthy and active lifestyles, providing safe and inclusive spaces that nurture personal growth, social connections, and environmental awareness."

Example 8:

"To be a model for sustainable park management, utilizing best practices in conservation, education, and community engagement to inspire environmental stewardship and preserve our natural heritage."

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Using the previous examples a vision statement could be as follows:

"Our vision is to create a vibrant and sustainable park system that inspires active lifestyles, fosters community connections, and celebrates the unique natural and cultural heritage of our region. We strive to provide exceptional parks, trails, and recreational programs that enhance the well-being of our residents and promote a sense of pride and unity within our community."

Create your Vision Statement

OUR CAUSE Our Purpose, the Why	
OUR ACTIONS The Reason	
OUR IMPACT How we plan to get there – Our Outcome	
VISION STATEMENT DRAFT	

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Agenda Item #4– Strategic Planning Survey and Focus Group Themes Review Committee Feedback.

Focusing on the most Important things...Discussion

Survey Main Themes Take-a-ways

- Changeover in the last 6 years. Finding a direction and sticking with it
- Create a refined system of evaluating programs, facilities & activities currently managed by the park district.
- Develop a system of communication that empowers staff to make critical decisions and keeps the community informed.
- Difficult to weigh each opinion because of the difference in size of the group that is polled. Need a system to help in the decision-making process. Communication of information is key. Get data-Placer AI
- Diversity in programming. Need focus.
- Every response is about things to “add” or “need more” - challenge will be to sort, prioritize and sunset (and no one mentioned stopping programs in survey)
- Governance issues are at the forefront
- The governance piece will help with culture and address some of the weaknesses mentioned in both the internal and external section.
- Governance, clear accountability, decision making skills. Maybe less people involved in all decisions
- How to balance the building of new facilities in new areas of town while maintaining existing facilities in developed parts of town.
- Interesting that the internal has staff as a strength but the external did not. How much gravity should the internal survey have over commented on themselves?
- Lots of strengths, expand on them and work on changing weaknesses to opportunities to get better.
- Missing social inclusion plan.
- More focus on new facilities than updating existing ones
- "Needing to address governance seems to be the priority because it sets the tone and expectations for everything else.
- A focus on providing indoor facilities also seemed to be a strong need"
- The Park District should take over and enhance the work of the FM Trail builders. A huge asset to the community that could be even more with public government involvement.
- The perspectives of the community and staff seem to match in some areas. Seems like a easy spot to start.
- Prevalence and knowledge of Board/Staff dynamic
- Public perception view and importance of stability and strong plan to move forward are important.
- Safety should be an underlying theme. Not if this would be possible if people don't feel safe.

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- Suggest moving incorporating indigenous population in planning from future trends to can improve or opportunities.
- The community sees the politics and lack of stability between board and staff

At A Glance Document Feedback

- A wide variety of opportunities events, programs, parks, trails, seniors, river access, sports center...
- Are resources being allocated to the correct buckets for facilities and programs based on usage?
- Broad offerings reflect broad community needs/wants and the diversity of neighborhoods in Fargo
- Determining the measures for success across a wide variety of programming and amenities.
- Develop a process that not only measures viability but determines a communication tool when programming will change or end to soften the blow to the community users.
- Good to have a process to decide what to continue and what to stop doing to better use resources
- How are all the opportunities communicated to the community? There are so many I am not aware of.
- How best to align all this work with others to determine what the Park District Leads, Partners, Supports, or doesn't engage. Need to establish processes with data to help determine
- How do these facilities match up geographically? Is that dispersed with purpose or what are the identifying variables?
- How do these facilities match up geographically? Is that dispersed with purpose or what are the identifying variables?
- "How do we measure what is successful?"
- When is it time to move forward with different ideas, even if it upsets the minority."
- I'd like to see the amount of effort or time that is spent to provide events. Then show with an ROI. Might very quickly provide staff additional time in their day for future projects
- It's easy to focus on just the area you're working in and forget how much we do.
- It's okay to eliminate things that run their course.
- Make the hard choices to sunset items - what do we want to be good at.
- More focus on non-sport youth. Dance, arts, more festivals
- Need to decide how to sustain everything
- Need to develop an overall strategy to understand if a project or program is worth continuing or perusing.
- No idea park district did so much
- ROI is lacking
- Should meals on wheels be the park district s responsibility?

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- Surprising that senior services are run through the park district. Also, the lack of cultural and artistic programming
- The breath of activities, including based on climate / seasons, and water-based recreation of river, ponds.
- The FPD needs to vet out each event/program and make decisions on what to keep/expand or phase out. Tracking each event/program would be beneficial.
- There are many facilities that serve many different purposes for the community.
- "Trying to be everything to everyone.
- Hard to measure"
- Under programs there are no tennis or pickleball programs and Courts Plus does both, including tennis in the parks.
- We need to put together a governance system that gives staff the ability to add change or eliminate programs or events and be supported.
- What do we think people (the community, and stakeholders) want from the Park District? What have people lost interest in? Are we up to date on the social climate of what people want and will use?
- Lots of similar statements can easily pair these down so there's less. I like the idea of having a system in place to stop a program.
- Need culture and governance pieces to drive plan.
- Need to make sure governance is clear so that it allows leaders to build a culture of success. As we all know culture eats strategy for lunch.
- Programs for diverse cultures to see themselves in our communities and programs. Systems in place to get staff buy in, direct public feedback to be a catalyst for a decision
- Sense of direction and buy in from staff. What? Why? When? How? Where?
- The resources needed to retain and attract top staff.
- These outcomes will take a huge lift from staff and a very talented staff. How can we recruit and retain high performing staff members.
- We discussed a couple weaknesses, Board over involvement "North Fargo neglect, mostly Board. Do we need a different structure, wards by area, longer terms, less change in Board.
- We improve physical and mental wellbeing through connection and belonging (sending for the whole table)
- What is the problem with governance? The recurring comments are about that. As well as cultural spaces/arts and what that looks like.
- Will all these pieces be a part of the plan - seems like too many.

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Notes

Internal (Staff) Stakeholder Survey Main Themes

Strengths	Weaknesses/Challenges	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff longevity • Providing excellent opportunities • Employees • Programs and services • Facilities • PTO and flexibility of time off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Compensation (new people making what existing people are making) • Leadership changes • Lack of decision making • Lack of planning, prioritizing, visioning, and defined processes • Staff shortages • Board priorities, too much involvement in day-to-day processes and personal agendas • Follow-through • Emphasis on new facilities, not existing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plan, define mission, procedures and standards • Community partnerships and sponsorships that benefit both parties • More community engagement • Salary survey • Opportunities for public assistance • Utilizing outside partnerships • Professional development • Equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board too involved in day-to-day operations and personal agendas • Stability • Funding • Equipment • Public opinion • Workforce shortages and employee turnover • Vandalism • Public opinion

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External (Community) Stakeholder Survey Main Themes

Strengths	Weaknesses/Challenges	Should Change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities • Beautiful parks • Bike trails • Communication with public regarding activities and projects • Facilities • Flowers, landscaping, and plantings • Golf courses • Growing pickleball community • Green Space • Neighborhood parks • Parks are clean and well-kept. • Pools • Programming • Running, walking and bike trails • Services • Strong tennis program • Well-funded • Youth events and facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult programming • Bathroom and parking facilities at small parks • Board members with too much self-interest • Customer service at activities • Diversity • Lack of indoor facilities • Lack of lighting • Lack of security – safety in parks, on trails and drug sales • More pickleball courts • Need indoor facilities for tennis and pickleball • North-end being ignored • Not enough dog parks • Plant more trees • Senior activities • Stable leadership • Staff pay • Staffing • Upkeep on facilities • Winter trails/walking path maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balanced focus on greenspace, arts, culture, activities vs sports • Better nature trails • Board members should pay the same fees • Improving lighting • Indoor courts and facilities • Larger indoor pool • More accessibility for all • More communication with public (this survey is a start) • More free splash parks and pools • More Winter sports – including family skating vs hockey rinks • Personnel to enforce park rules • Reopen River Road in Lindenwood • Should be more like West Fargo Parks Program • Website – updated with current info.

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Best Possible Future	Critical Decisions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A District that meets the needs of all in the community.• A District with more activities and services.• Access to parks within walking distances of all neighborhoods• Accessible, affordable, clean facilities• Continue to make upgrades and maintaining beautiful parks• Create safe and engaging nature-focused environments• Indoor activities year-round• Maintained trails during all seasons• More courts, especially in the Winter• Re-invest in existing parks and buildings• Updated park spaces in all areas, not just South Fargo	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adding more parks• Adding more tennis courts• Adding more indoor courts• Adding more pools• Don't forget the Urban Core• Leadership• Accessibility and affordability of programs and facilities• Keep up the maintenance, so park spaces and trails can be utilized year-round• Keeping fees reasonable, so all can afford it• Plant more trees• Park security

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Community Partnership Focus Group Themes

Does Well	Can Improve	Opportunities	Important for Long-term Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family events Outdoor spaces are well-kept Partnerships Facilities throughout community Youth activities Neighborhood parks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board and Leadership politics and stability Downtown greenspaces and parks Are programs being delivered where they are needed Improve inclusivity: special needs, everyday residents, non-sports people Long-term planning/vision Trail network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More tree planting More connected trails Green space design More public engagement Master Planning Planning perennials Moorhead-Fargo connection Winter trails and activities Marketing with drone footage What are other cities doing (Sioux Falls, Winnipeg) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address conflict between leadership and board Commitment to follow plan Communication – internal and external Future planning for facilities Master Planning Track and communicate progress with the community
Future Trends	Most Critical Decisions 1 to 2 years	Most Critical Decisions 3 to 5 years	Foundation Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boomers' retiring Change in aquatic trends (splash parks vs pools) Tech planning: geocaching, drones, virtual parks Pickleball expansion Incorporate indigenous population in planning (living on native land) Millennials with kids Private/Public partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aging staff Depot decision Facilities planning Implement Strategic Plan Governance: board, executives, staff working together and communicating Metro Rec Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balancing opportunities as the city grows Infill and growth Equity of parks in all directions (north end) Next investment of facilities Stable leadership and governance Succession planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Champion private gifts Legacy projects Capital projects Scholarships Grants Endowments Funding upgrading of existing facilities