

DE SOTO

KANSAS



PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN DECEMBER 2018



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Acknowledgements

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

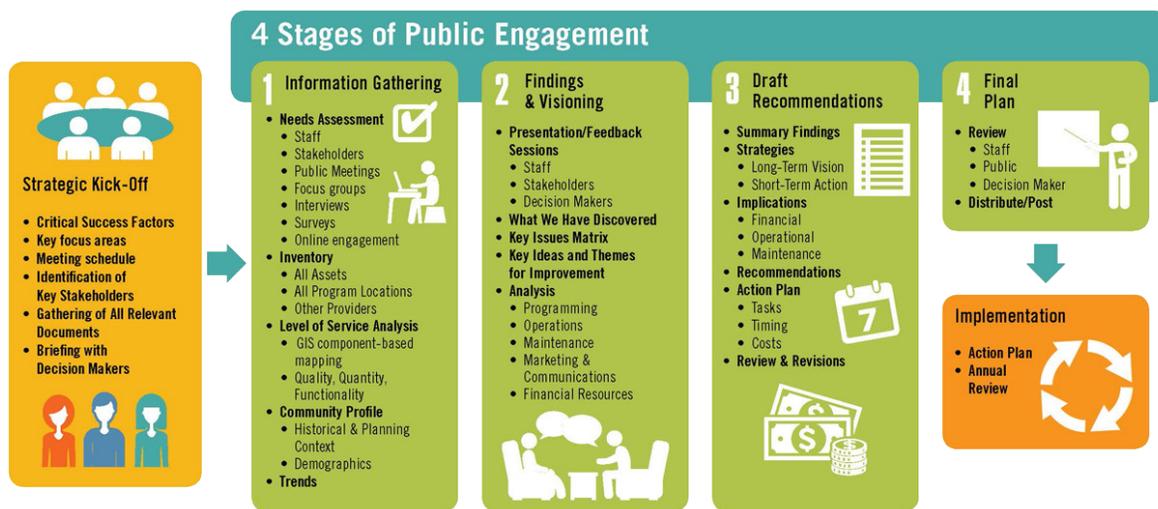
PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

Over a decade ago, in 2006, the first Parks and Recreation Master Plan in De Soto was developed to help guide staff in planning and providing quality parks and recreation services. In fall of 2018, just months after the City finalized its first ever Strategic Plan, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan was updated to reflect the changing

needs and desires of the area, in addition to accounting for the changing resources, programs, and facilities of De Soto. This plan will serve as an evolving resource to help guide the Parks and Recreation Department in reaching the desired vision of the community.

Planning Process Summary

Key Elements of a Community Parks and Recreation Strategic/Master Plan



Typically our Strategic/Master Plans include a 5-year focus on operations, 10-year focus on capital, and 20 year strategic vision. Other elements and tools are added as needed for a community-specific plan.

Key Issues Summary

Data Parks and Recreation Master Plan  Key Issue - Rating Scale a - priority b - opportunity to improve c - minor or future issue blank means the issue didn't come up or wasn't addressed	Qualitative Data				Quantitative Data		
	Consultant Team	Staff Input	Public Input	Leadership Interviews	Community Survey	Other City Documents	Facility Assessment/LOS
Organizational							
Improve ADA accessibility for all facilities & activities	a	a	a	a		a	a
Improve WiFi Connectivity	a	a	a			a	a
Greater access to information about what parks & recreation department does	a	a				a	a
Staff/Coach/Volunteer/Referee Training, Incentives & Organization	b		a			a	
Increase awareness of programs, services, amenities, & hours	b					a	a
Perceived lack of partnerships/communication with local agencies & businesses		b	a			a	
Great inequity in rental rates	a	a					
Improve communication around youth sports	c					a	
Need longer/later hours of operation (pool)						a	
Better use of technology (ex. Mobile app) & social media (Twitter)	a						
Programs & Service Delivery							
Teenagers, Young Adults, & Seniors identified as underserved populations	a	a		a		a	a
More offerings of unique community events (5ks, Movie in the Park, etc.)	a	a	b	a		a	
Wider diversity of unique program offerings such as cultural & artistic classes	a	a				a	a
Need better marketing of programs & events	a	a	a				
Timely & consistent communication about programs	a	a	a				
Need additional (&/or backup) fitness instructors	a	a					
Need evening fitness & program hours		c				a	
Need better youth sports organization & structure			b				
Swimming lessons often full			c				
Facilities & Amenities							
Need for connectivity of trails	a	a	a	a		a	a
Need additional sports fields (especially for soccer)	a	a	a			a	a
Aging infrastructure & amenities inhibits services (*included)	a	a	b	a		a	a
Restrooms - Need Improvements & Additional Facilities in Parks *	a	a	a	a		a	
Increase availability for indoor space for athletics	a	a	a			a	a
Need for more fitness rooms/dance or gymnastics studio	a	a	a			a	a
Practice fields in need of repair *	a	b				a	a
Additional lighting (athletic fields &/or courts) *	b	a	c			a	a
More Parking (esp. at Miller Park)	a	a	a			a	
Develop Riverfest Park	a	a		a		a	
Need to develop Wilderness Park, Widow Big Knife Park, Lexington & Commerce property	a	a				a	a
Playground equipment outdated		a	b			a	a
Improve entrance & wayfinding signage/monuments at entrance of parks	a	a	b	b			
Need adventure/unique elements at parks	b		a			a	
Finance							
Need additional funding sources	a	a	a			a	
Create value & equity in User Fees	a	a				a	
Need donations for park projects	a	a	a				

Inventory Assessment Summary

City Owned & Operated Parks

- Miller Park
- Widow Big Knife Park
- Riverfest Park
- Wilderness Park
- Commerce and Lexington (Future Park)

County Owned & Operated- used by De Soto Residents:

- Kill Creek Park
- 95th Street Trail Head & Kill Creek Streamway Dog Park
- Lexington Lake Park

County Owned & City Operated Parks:

- Sunflower Park Ball Fields

Park Matrix

Park Name	Address	Park Amenities																						
		Trail Length (Miles)	Acreeage	Diamond Ballfields	Rectangular Fields	Outdoor Basketball Courts	Sand Volleyball Courts	Tennis Courts	Horseshoe Pits	Stage / Amphitheater	Battling Cage	Water Fountains	Restrooms	Archery/Shooting Range	Fishing Docks	Swimming Beach	Boat Ramps/ Marinas	Text Camping Campsites	Rain Garden					
Miller Park	83rd and Ferry	10	0.35	2	3	0	1	1	2	2	1	1	3	4	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Widow Big Knife Park	7560 Edgerton Rd	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Riverfest Park	33440 W. 79th	50	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Wilderness Park	13205 Evening Star Rd	67	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Commerce & Lexington - Future	Commerce & Lexington	7	0.18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sunflower Park - Owned by Johnson County	37515 W. 103rd St	6	1.23	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kill Creek Park - Owned by Johnson County	11670 S Homestead Ln	884	13.5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	1	8	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Kill Creek Streamway Dog Park & 95th St. Trail Head - Owned by Johnson County	33460 W 95th St	16	0.88	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Lexington Lake Park - Owned by Johnson County	9000 Sunflower Rd	456	3.1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Cedar Creek Boat Ramp - Owned by Johnson County	Access Rd	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total		1534	19.2	5	5	0	1	1	2	2	2	8	13	7	15	2	2	4	1	1	1	1	1	1

* Acreeage & Trail length data taken from GIS or from De Soto/Johnson County Online Parks Descriptions

Residents in eastern De Soto have limited level of service to parks and facilities and have one or two regional facilities within 3-mile radius and are more than a walkable distance from any neighborhood or community park or facility.

Between downtown and the east side, there is a buffer of agricultural land. It would be beneficial to add a community park east of the agricultural buffer.

If a park is not added in eastern De Soto, trails should be added for non-vehicular access to other parks & amenities.



Recommendations and Action Plan



De Soto Parks & Recreation Recommendations & Action Plan



Goal 1:

Improve Facilities and Amenities

- Improve connectivity of trails
- Maintain/improve existing facilities
- Update aging infrastructure
- Improve ADA accessibility
- Implement Riverfest Master Plan
- Repurpose/refinish indoor fitness space
- Install/improve restrooms
- Install new entrance & wayfinding signage
- Fix drainage problems
- Install additional amenities at existing facilities
- Acquire new park land for sports fields
- Master Plan Widow Big Knife Park, Wilderness Park, Lexington & Commerce property



Goal 2:

Continue to Improve Organizational Efficiencies

- Prepare ADA Transitional Plan
- Improve WiFi connectivity in parks/facilities
- Clarify Mission, Vision, Values
- Redefine Park Board bylaws, roles, duties
- Clarify youth sports policies & procedures
- Utilize relevant marketing tools
- Improve/develop partnerships
- Develop equitable rental rates
- Improve communication with youth sports
- Extend pool hours
- Better use of technology & social media



Goal 3:

Continue to Improve Programs/Service Delivery

- Offer more programs for all ages
- Add more special events at Riverfest Park
- Hire one new full-time recreation programmer
- Increase social media presence
- Target user groups via email marketing
- Advertise for instructors & increase incentives/pay
- Offer more evening programs
- Improve transparency & communication with youth sports parents
- Offer additional swim programs



Goal 4:

Increase Financial Opportunities

- Recalculate Park Impact/In Lieu Of Fees
- Potential Bond Referendum for large capital projects
- Implement Cost Recovery & Pricing Philosophy/Policy
- Develop gift catalog for donors
- Resurrect use of Parks Foundation Fund

I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

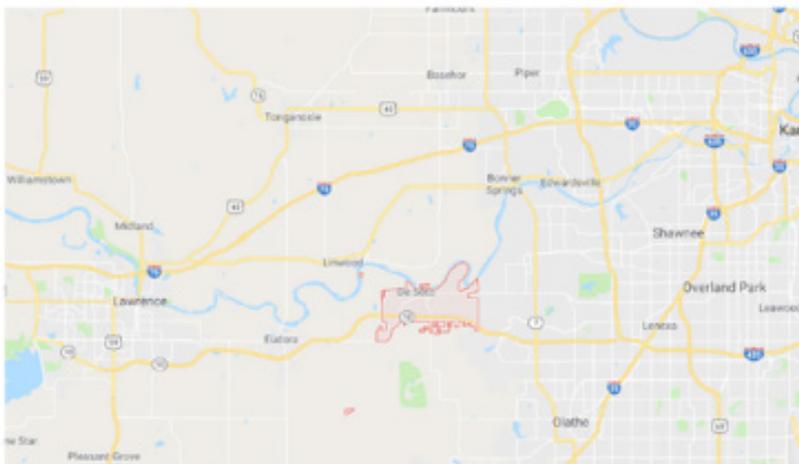
A. PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

Over a decade ago, in 2006, the first Parks and Recreation Master Plan in De Soto was developed to help guide staff in planning and providing quality parks and recreation services. In the fall of 2018, just months after the City finalized its first ever Strategic Plan, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan was updated to reflect the changing needs and desires of the area, in addition to accounting for the changing resources, programs, and facilities of De Soto. This plan will serve as an evolving resource to help guide the Parks and Recreation Department in reaching the desired vision of the community.

B. HISTORY OF PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The City of De Soto is a growing municipality located in Johnson County, just a short drive from Lawrence, Kansas, and Kansas City. A number of corporations, including international enterprises, call De Soto home, in addition to over 5,700 residents. Located just south of the Kansas River, the City of De Soto offers residents quality of life through its parks, recreation programs, and community facilities.

In 2001, the City of De Soto Parks and Recreation Department was formed. Prior to the department being developed, a Park Board performed physical labor, fundraising and made recommendations to the City Council.



Since that time, the De Soto Parks and Recreation Department has grown from two to six full-time staff members. Additions during this time frame include Riverfest Park, the Aquatic Center, and numerous programs.

The Johnson County Park and Recreation District owns four parks in De Soto City limits which are used and enjoyed by residents and visitors alike.

De Soto Parks Foundation

In 2013, former Mayor Maniez wanted to collect donations to purchase property for the expansion of Miller Park. He believed more people would donate if the recipient of the donation had 501 (c) (3) status – only donations to an entity recognized by IRS as being tax exempt can be listed as deduction on one’s taxes.

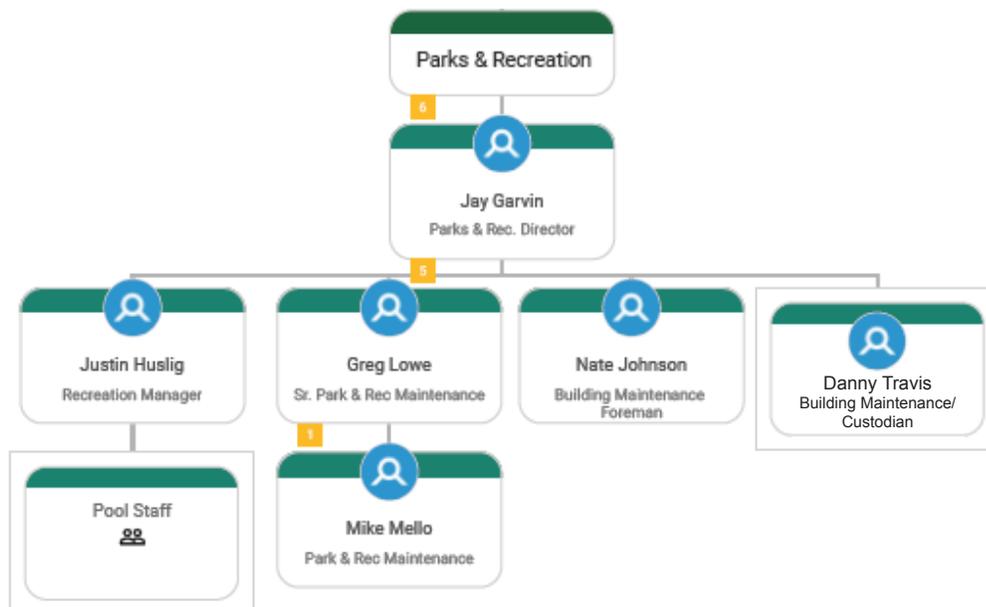
At the time, getting 501 (c)(3) status for the Parks Foundation through the IRS would have been a huge paperwork undertaking. To avoid this, the Department connected with the Kansas Rural Communities Foundation (KRCF), which has 501 (c)(3) status. Any donations to the De Soto Parks Foundation are funneled through the KRCF, which allows donations to qualify as being given to a 501 (c)(3) entity.

The Park Foundation is a Kansas Not-for-Profit entity (but does not have any status with the IRS), and the board members are the members of the City Council. Thus, to disperse funds, the City Council would need to take a vote, in the capacity of the board of the Foundation, to disperse funds.

C. DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

Kansas officially declared De Soto a “City of the Second Class” based on its population reaching 5,700 residents. De Soto operates under a common form of municipal government in Kansas, the Mayor-Council form, with Council members elected at large. The Parks and Recreation Department is divided into four main divisions, managed by a Parks and Recreation Director, with one staff for each of the departments: Recreation, Parks and Recreation Maintenance, Building Maintenance, and Community Center Operations. The Department’s organization is show in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: De Soto Parks and Recreation Organizational Chart



The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for four main primary areas:

- Maintenance and upkeep of the City’s four park properties (Miller Park, Riverfest Park, Widow Big Knife, and Wilderness)
- Maintenance and Operations of the Community Center, City Hall, Aquatic Center, and Dog Kennel
- Scheduling, oversight, and program implementation of all the recreation programs offered by the City
- Scheduling and management of rental space operations at the Community Center

There is also a Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, which was recently re-established to provide planning recommendations and advisement. The main responsibility of the Park Board, according to Section 12-301 of the City Code, is to “review and study the operation, maintenance, improvement and expansion of all park land and facilities in the city.” The Park Board assists the city staff in recommending long-range planning for future city parks and other recreation facilities. The Park Board operates with seven members, each appointed by the Mayor with the approval of the City Council.

D. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

The purpose of the Master Plan Update is to determine the direction for parks and recreation facility and programming improvements based on the evolving needs and priorities identified by the community. This plan will serve as a guide to help the City make decisions regarding current and future parks, recreation, and trails provision. This process included the engagement of the community while identifying opportunities for improvement in an easy to read format that is implementable.

1. **Develop a Master Plan Update with useful qualitative information that depicts the true needs of the community.** Gain broad public input from the public meetings, on-line survey, newly restructured Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and the Project Team, and utilize existing data from the City to ensure consistency with existing City planning efforts
2. **Develop the plan in a usable format that the City can build upon over time, and engage community stakeholders throughout the process.** Improved and increased collaboration among community stakeholders and agencies, utilization of a digital format for all mapping for future use, and a plan that can be built upon over time.
3. **Identify strengths, opportunities, and gaps for parks, recreation programs, and trails in De Soto.** Identify opportunities for prioritizing parks and recreational assets and focus on programs from the community input gathered and survey analysis.
4. **Assist with smooth transition of the new Park and Recreation Advisory Board.** Include newly appointed Park and Recreation Board members into the Master Plan Update process as well as review and make suggestions to the bylaws.
5. **Provide and present findings, recommendations, and implementation strategies that are usable and reader-friendly.** Synthesize all data and information gathered during the public input process and surveys, and clearly articulates the needs for parks, recreation, programming, open space, and trails in a simple yet precise format.

E. RELATED PLANNING EFFORTS

City Comprehensive Plan

[The Comprehensive Plan](#), adopted in 2004, and updated in 2011, acts as a roadmap and guide for how the community of De Soto wants to improve in the next 10 to 20 years. Primarily, the plan

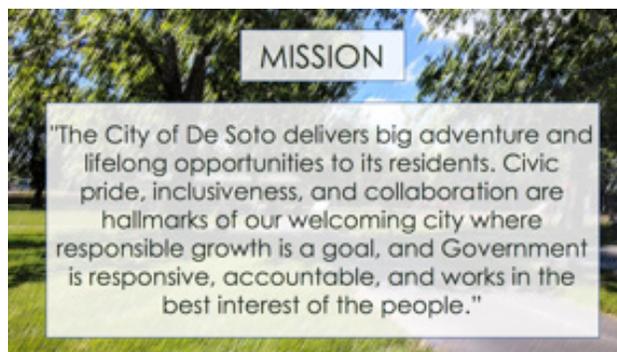
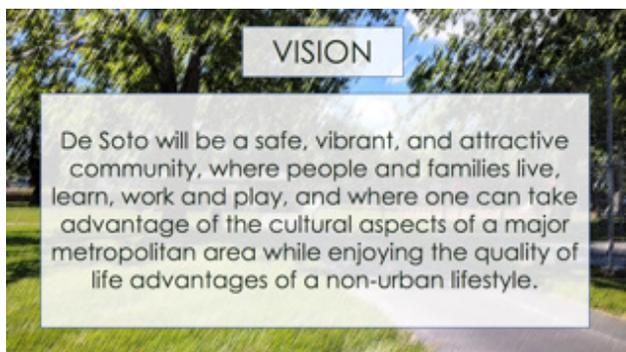
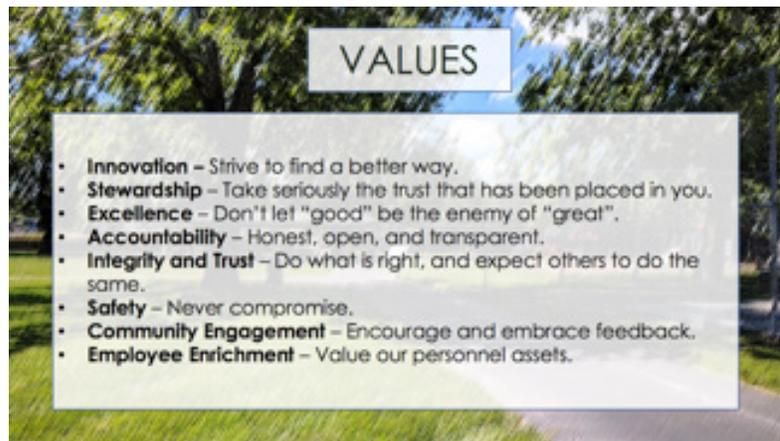
provides recommendations for future actions involving land development and land preservation. In 2004, Parks and Recreation Department staff was only made up of a Director and a full-time maintenance person. It was noted at that time that City resources would have to be leveraged by developing partnerships, outsourcing, grants, and other earned income opportunities. Below is a list of recommendations from the Comprehensive Plan specifically related to the Parks and Recreation Department.

Comprehensive Plan (2004) Key Issues Directly Related and Relevant To De Soto Parks and Recreation Department
The City should identify and acquire park land to the west for a future community park.
The City and School District should meet annually to confer about their dual role of providing facilities for use by citizens.
The City should plan for the development of individual park master plans for Miller Memorial Park and the undeveloped park sites. These plans will guide the City as it moves toward the upgrading of its current system and plans for future improvements by working in collaboration with its partners.
The City should initiate the process of documenting its costs for the facilities and services it currently provides in its Parks and Recreation Department. Those costs can be used as the City considers a cost recovery policy, annual budgets, and partnerships with others.
The City should schedule a formal recognition ceremony for its volunteers who have worked over several decades to ensure that services are provided.
Neighborhoods should be served with playgrounds. Given limited resources, park sites which are larger than playgrounds should be devoted to community level parks.
The City should develop a trail system that links neighborhoods to parks and points of interest, including the school campus.
The City should proceed with its plans to seek voter approval for a new outdoor swimming pool.
The City should refine its Impact Fee Ordinance, develop a Cost Recovery Policy and identify and implement a funding source for parks and recreation improvements.
The City Council and City Manager should continue to work with the Parks and Recreation Board to change its focus to long range planning issues and policy development.
Land adjacent to Miller Memorial Park on its northeast corner and east side along Kaw Street should be acquired for future expansion of the park. Land on the north side of the park should be acquired to provide passive park purposes as a viewshed to the river and bluff area

Strategic Plan

In October of 2016, the City Council and City Leadership developed the City’s first [Strategic Plan](#), which lists refined goals and objectives, in addition new mission and values statement. This plan was put in place to provide clarity for future decisions regarding city-wide policy. The Strategic Plan focused on areas such as economic development, incentives, planning efforts, and growth.

Many of the key themes identified in the Strategic Plan related to parks and recreation are referenced throughout the report, as detailed in the following table. It is important to remain consistent with previously defined goals and planning efforts and to further refine the community’s vision for the parks and recreation services. This chart can be a quick reference document for city staff to compare the plans and understand how they work together.



Strategic Plan Action Plan (2016) Items Directly Related and Relevant To De Soto Parks and Recreation Department	
Goal IF2: Provide integrated pedestrian and trails network throughout the city.	
Initiative IF2.1: Promote the construction of Complete Streets	
Objective IF 2.1B	Sign bike paths and identify bike lanes with striping on roads where it is appropriate
Objective IF 2.1C	Develop partners to advocate for bike trails and support bike programs
Initiative IF2.2: Connect existing and future parks with paved recreation paths.	
Objective IF2.2A:	Include a Initiate trail and sidewalk master plan within the Comprehensive Plan update in 2018
Objective IF2.2.B:	Connect trail links identified in master plan
Objective IF2.2C:	Focus on connection to new Lexington Lake Park. Enlist the help of the Johnson County Park & Recreation District
Objective IF2.2D:	Include a recreation path in the plans for the 91st Street Extension
Objective IF2.2E:	Seek funding and other opportunities to install a pedestrian trail or sidewalk along Ottawa Street from 83rd north to Riverfest Park.
Goal AM1: Expand recreational programming and upgrade amenities at parks facilities.	
Objective AM1.1.A:	Hire a consultant to update the 2006 Parks & Recreation plan
Objective AM1.1.B:	Garner community input in planning process
Objective AM1.1.C:	Plan should address the form and function of an expanded role for the Park Board
Initiative AM3.11.3: Build recreation paths and trails connecting existing and future parks facilities sidewalks are walkable and safe.	
Objective AM3.1.A:	Objective AM3.1.A: Develop comprehensive trail system master plan
Objective AM3.1.B:	Objective AM3.1.B: Research and pursue grants and funding opportunities for trails
Objective AM3.1.C:	Objective AM3.1.C: Obtain necessary easements and rights-of-way.
Objective AM3.1.D:	Work closely with the Johnson County Park & Recreation district to identify areas where we can cooperate
Initiative AM1.4: Work to identify and implement programming expansions to serve people of all ages and abilities.	
Objective AM1.4A:	Conduct outreach to get public input on desired programming expansion
Objective AM1.4B:	Budget additional staff in the Parks & Recreation department as necessary
Objective AM1.4C:	Identify local interest groups that would be willing and able to assist with operational and staffing needs of additional programming
Initiative AM1. 5: Increase the amount and diversity of physical amenities at City parks facilities.	
Objective AM1.5A:	Inventory existing parks amenities and prioritize upgrades or expansions
Objective AM1.5B:	Address ADA issues, wherever feasible
Objective AM1.5C:	Research and pursue grants and funding opportunities
Objective AM1.5D:	Consider ATV or Motor Cross park at Wilderness Park
Objective AM1.5E:	Pursue grant for historic marker of Quantrell's Crossing at Wilderness Park
Objective AM1.5F:	Construct RV park at Riverfest

Links to Planning Documents

- [City of De Soto Parks Master Plan](#) (2006)
- [City of De Soto Strategic Plan](#) (2018)
- [City of De Soto Comprehensive Plan](#) (2011)
- [Johnson County Parks and Recreation Legacy Plan](#)
- [City of De Soto Land Use Map](#)
- City Code

F. METHODOLOGY OF THIS PLANNING PROCESS

The process utilized in developing this Master Plan included the formation of an integrated Project Team that included staff and appointed officials. This project team provided detailed input to the GreenPlay team consistent with the planning process. This allowed for a collaborative approach in creating a master plan that incorporates staff and consultant expertise, as well as local knowledge, institutional history, and engagement that only community members can provide. The development of this plan included the following tasks:

- Document Collection and Review
- Community Engagement
- Facility Inventory
- Needs Assessment
- Financial Analysis
- Program Analysis
- Alternative Service Provider Analysis
- Recommendations: Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan

Community Engagement

The following methods were used:

- Focus Groups
- Stakeholder meetings
- Community-wide public meetings
- Open link survey

Facility Inventory

- Inventory of parks and facilities using existing mapping, staff interviews, and on-site visits to verify amenities and assess the condition of the facilities and surrounding areas.
- Interviews with staff to provide information about parks and recreation facilities and services, along with insight regarding the current practices and experiences in serving residents and visitors.
- Identification of alternative providers of recreation services to provide insight regarding the market opportunities in the area for potential new facilities and services.
- Analysis and measurement of the current delivery of service for parks and recreation facilities using a Level of Service Analysis.
- Targeting a level of service that is both feasible and aligned with the desires of citizens as expressed through the statistically-valid survey and other public outreach methods.

Figure 2: Community Engagement Strategies Utilized



Assessment and Analysis

- Financial
- Program

Needs Assessment

- Consideration of the profile of the community and demographics, including population growth, and projections of demographic changes.
- Further analysis of the statistically-valid community interest and opinion survey as well as open link survey.

Operational and Marketing Analysis

- SWOT Analysis
- Staffing assessment

Recommendations: Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan

- Identification and categorization of recommendations into themes with goals, objectives, and an action plan for implementation.
- Development of an action plan for capital improvements including operational impacts, and timeframe to support the implementation of the plan.



II. THE DE SOTO COMMUNITY: PROFILE AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

By analyzing population data, trends emerge that can inform decision making and resource allocation strategies for the provision of parks, recreation, and open space management. Key community characteristics were analyzed to identify current demographic statistics and trends that can impact the planning and provision of services.



Figure 3: Demographic Map and Overview of Study Area



Source: Esri Business Analyst; Image: Google Maps, June 2018

This demographic profile was compiled in June 2018 from a combination of sources including the ESRI Business Analyst, American Community Survey, and U.S. Census. The following topics will be covered in detail in this report:



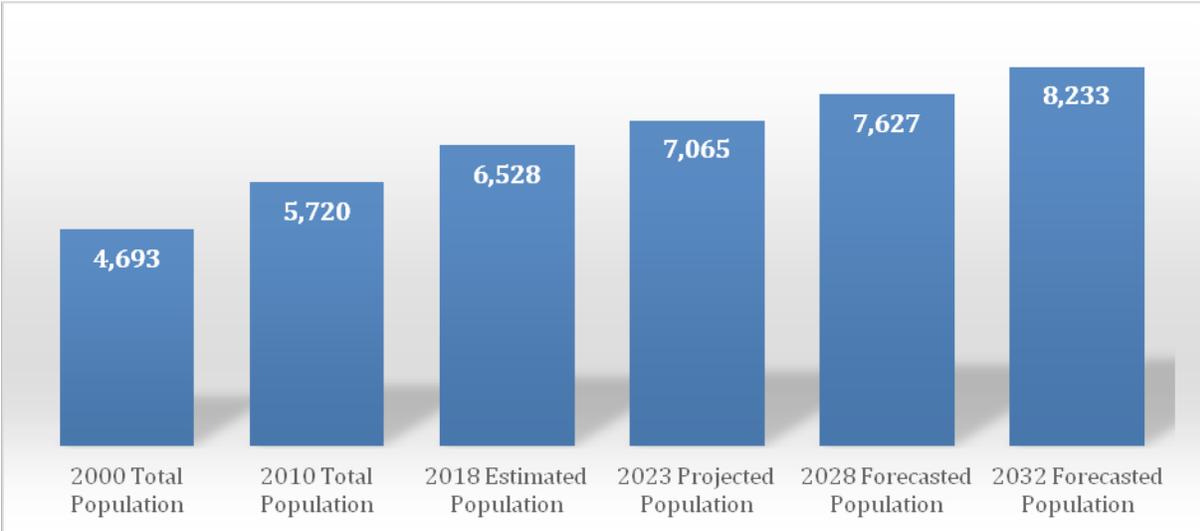
Population Projections

Figure 4 contains actual population figures based on the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census, in addition to estimates of 2018 and 2022 population by ESRI Business Analyst. Using the average annual growth rates between 2018 and 2023, projections were calculated for 5 and 10 year increments until 2032.



The City of De Soto is expected to grow at over 1.59% average annual growth from 2018 to 2023; projections estimate that the population will reach over 8,000 people in 2032. De Soto has a higher population growth than Johnson County, the State of Kansas, and the United States.

Figure 4: City Population Growth Trend



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Esri Business Analyst Population Projections
 *2018 – 2028 growth rate of 1.59% used to forecast 2028 – 2032 population





The median age is expected to increase from 35.4 years of age in 2010 to 39.1 years in 2023. This can also be seen when looking at the shift of age groups in **Figure 5**. The age group of 15 to 24 year olds is expected to decline three percent by 2023. Similarly, the age group of 55 to 64 year olds is also expected to decrease by the same amount. The age group expected to see the most growth is the 65 to 74-year-olds.

Median Age

2010
35.4

2018
38.8

2023
39.1

Population Age & Gender Distribution

The City of De Soto has less than one percent more males than females. The existing and projected population of different age groups, or cohorts, is illustrated in the following series of figures. As demonstrated in **Figure 5**, the city has very different age distributions. Knowing this can help inform in planning recreational activities for specific age groups.

Figure 5: Estimated Population by Age Cohort between 2018 and 2023



Source: Esri Business Analyst

Race/Ethnicity

Prior to reviewing demographic data pertaining to a population’s racial and ethnic character, it is important to note how the U.S. Census classifies and counts individuals who identify as Hispanic. The Census notes that Hispanic origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person’s parents or ancestors before arrival in the United States. In the U.S. Census, people who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be any race and are included in all of the race categories.

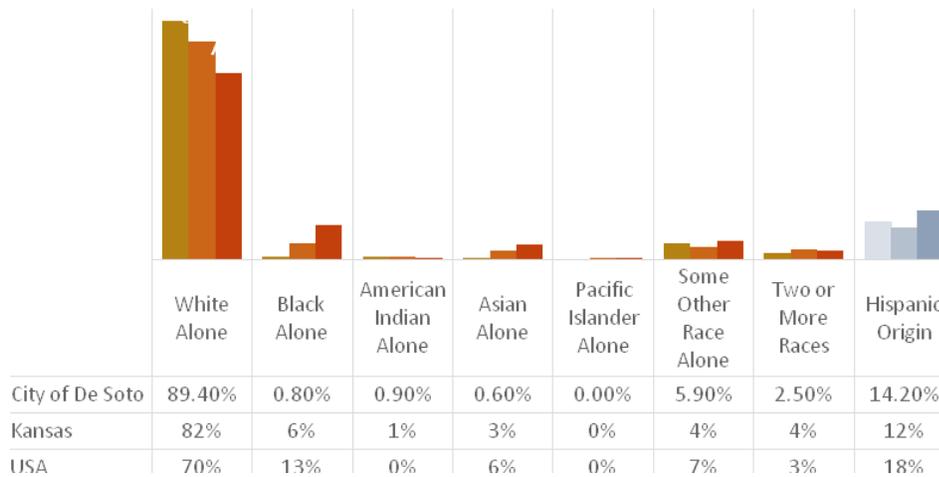


Overall, the state of Kansas is more diverse than the City of De Soto; however, the Hispanic population in De Soto is about two percent higher than the state. Over 89 percent of the population in De Soto is white. When analyzing those who identify as Hispanic, that number is expected to increase from 14.19% in 2018 to 15.95% in 2023.

All race categories add up to 100 percent of the population; the indication of Hispanic origin is a different view of the population and is not considered a race. **Figure 6** reflects the approximate racial/ethnic population distribution for the City, State of Kansas, and the United States, based on the 2018 estimates from the U.S. Census. Understanding the populations in the area can inform marketing and communication strategies, in addition to programming strategies.



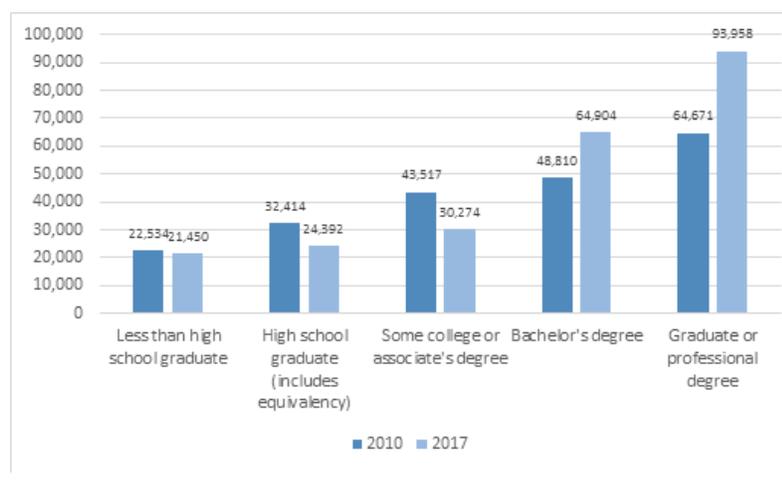
Figure 6: City, State, and National Comparison of Racial and Ethnic Character



Educational Attainment

According to a Census study, education levels had more effect on earnings over a 40-year span in the workforce than any other demographic factor, such as gender, race, and ethnic origin.¹ This can be seen in **Figure 7**, where the educational attainment for De Soto was measured against median earnings. Those with a Graduate or Professional degree earned nearly four times the amount of a high school graduate.

Figure 7: Median Earnings in 2010 and 2017 By Educational Attainment

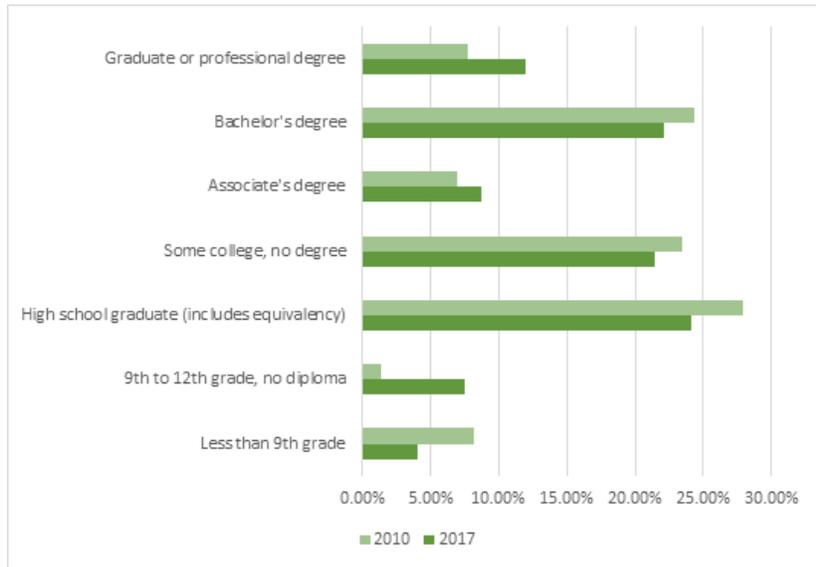


¹ Tiffany Julian and Robert Kominski, "Education and Synthetic Work-Life Earnings Estimates" American Community Survey Reports, US Census Bureau, <http://www.Census.gov/prosd/2011pubs/acs-14.pdf>, September 2011.



A breakdown of the educational attainment by City residents over the age of 25 was measured, as illustrated in **Figure 8**. Over a quarter of residents had completed some college, but had not received a degree. About a fifth of the population received a Bachelor's Degree.

Figure 8: Educational Attainment of Adults, 2010 to 2017 (ages 25+)

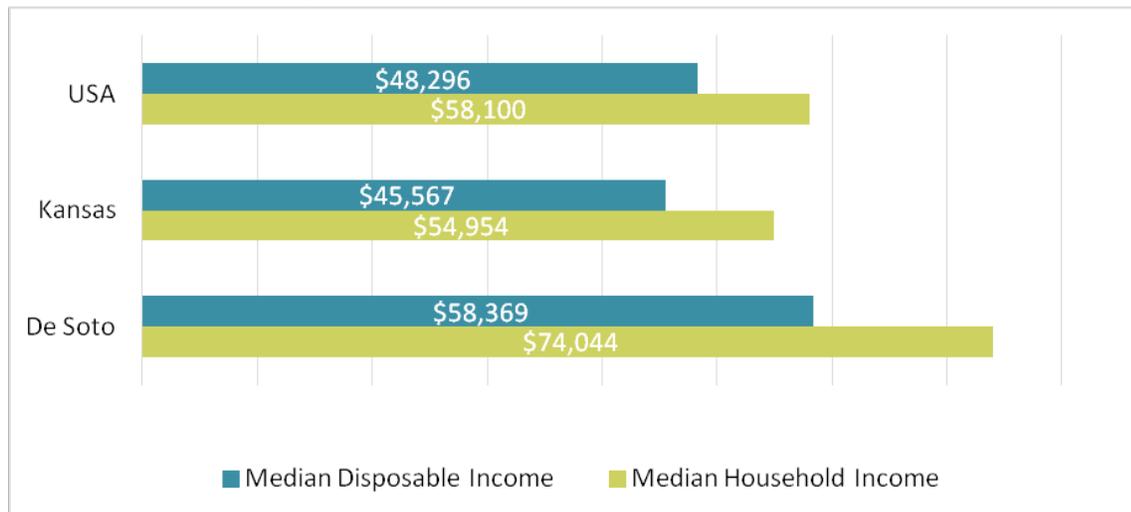


Source: Esri Business Analyst

Employment

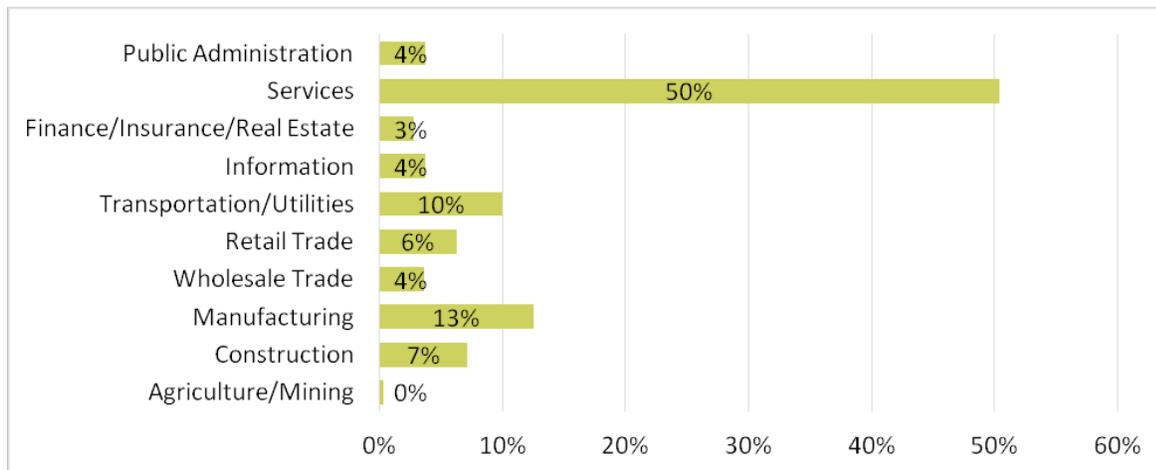
The most current data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the American Community Survey, illustrated in **Figure 9**, indicates that the median and disposable household income in the City is higher than that of the Kansas and the United States. In 2010, the median income for the City of De Soto was \$61,915 according to the American Community Survey. That number has increased to \$74,044 as of 2018.

Figure 9: Median and Disposable Household Income



Source: Esri Business Analyst

Figure 10: 2018 Employment by Industry in De Soto



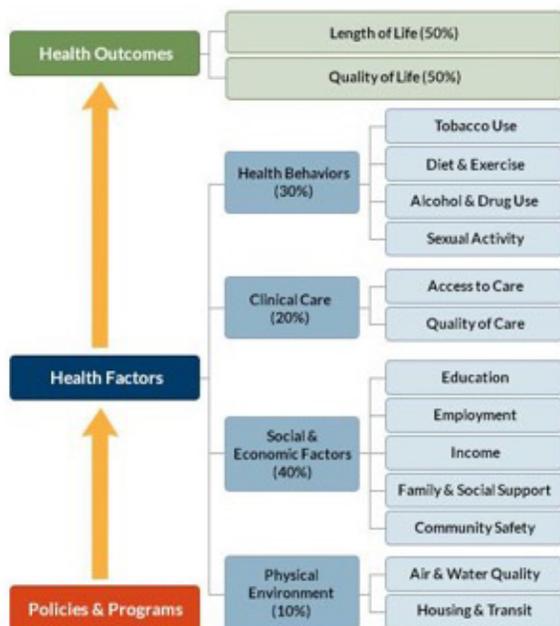
Source: Esri Business Analyst

Health Ranking

Understanding the status of the community’s health can help inform policies related to recreation and fitness. For instance, learning that the 9.4 percent of the City of De Soto lives with a disability may help justify the need for adaptive programming in recreation, or additional accessibility in facilities and playgrounds. The American Community Survey attempts to capture six elements of a disability: hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, and independent living.

9.4% of residents within the City of De Soto live with a disability.

Johnson County ranked 1st out of 103 Counties for Health Outcomes and Health Factors.



County Health Ranking

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s *County Health Rankings and Roadmaps* provide annual insight on the general health of national, state, and county populations.² The 2018 *Rankings* model shown here highlights the topic areas reviewed by the Foundation. The health ranking for gauged the public health of the population based on “how long people live and how healthy people feel while alive,” coupled with ranking factors including healthy behaviors, clinical care, social and economic, and physical environment factors.

² University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute & Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, City Health Rankings 2018, <http://www.Cityhealthrankings.org>

B. PARK AND RECREATION INFLUENCING TRENDS

According to the Outdoor Industry Economy Report, in Kansas alone, annual consumer spending in outdoor recreation is \$7.3 billion, supporting 71,000 direct jobs. This led to \$481 Million in state and local tax revenue. Nearly 61 percent of Kansas residents participate in outdoor recreation annually. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation (71,000) sustains more jobs in Kansas than the beef industry (48,000).

Figure 11: State of Kansas Outdoor Recreation Economy



Source: Outdoor Industry, 2016 Outdoor Recreation Economy Report

Table 1: Generational Age Categories

Generational Changes

Generational Group	Age Category
Generation Alpha	~ Born 2017 - ?
Generation Z	~ Born 1999 - 2016
Millennials	Born 1981 - 1998
Generation X	Born 1965 - 1980
Baby Boomers	Born 1946 - 1964
Silent Generation	Born 1945 and earlier

Source: ESRI Business Analyst

Activity Participation varies based on age, but it also varies based on generational preferences. In regard to generational activity, according to the 2018 “Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report,” Millennials had the highest percentage of those who were “active to a healthy level,” but a quarter also remained sedentary. Nearly 28 percent of Generation X were inactive, with Baby Boomers at 33 percent inactive. Baby Boomers prefer low impact fitness activities such as swimming, cycling aquatic exercise, and walking for fitness.

The figure below demonstrates the breakdown of generations in the city. Generation Alpha and the Millennial Generation are age groups that are both expected to increase in size, while all other generations are anticipated to decline. The Baby Boomers, which made up 23 percent of the population, will decrease by three percentage points in just five years.

Recreational Preferences

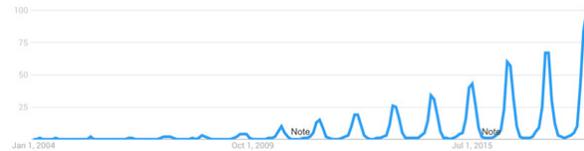
According to the 2018 “Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation (SFIA) Report,” outdoor recreation is an activity group that is continuing to capture the interest and attention of new audiences; besides those older than 55, all other age groups listed camping as the number one activity among non-participants.

Nationally, overnight backpacking has seen an average annual growth of seven percent for the last five years. RV Camping is also growing in popularity, with an average annual growth of nine percent in the last three years. Stand-up paddle boarding has seen, on average, 20 percent annual growth in the last five years. According to the 2018 SFIA, Millennials are more likely than other generations to engage in water sports.

Spray grounds/Splash pads

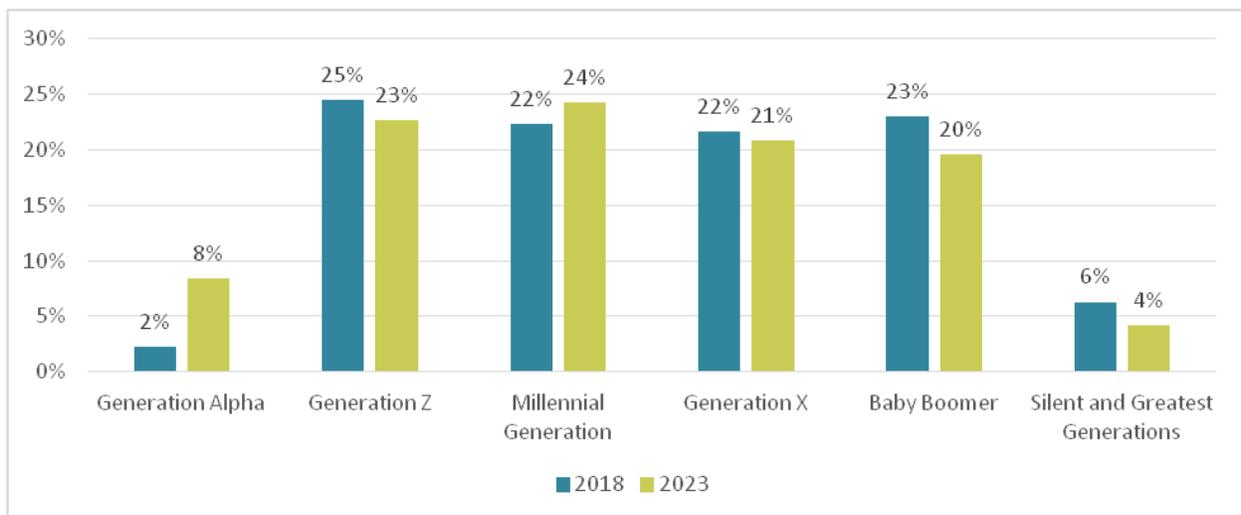
Splash pads, or spray grounds, have seen enormous growth in popularity over the past decade. Simply looking at search terms over time (from 2004 to present), Google Trends show that more people are searching for this amenity. The following graph is specific to Pennsylvania.

Figure 13: “Splash Pad” (Google trends)



Source: Google Trends, “Splash Pad,” United States January 2004 – June 2018

Figure 12: City of De Soto Generational Comparisons from 2018 - 2023



Source: ESRI Business Analyst, U.S. Census

The popularity of splash pads is geographical, and is more common in the West. According to a Feature Article from June 2016 “A Look at Trends in Aquatic Facilities,” splash play areas were least common in the Northeast; only 31.9 percent of responding agencies had this amenity, compared to 55.8 percent of those in the West.³ Urban areas are more likely to have splash play areas than rural areas. This shift is most likely due to the benefits of splash play areas. Compared to a traditional aquatic facility, splash pads typically incur lower maintenance costs, less programming, and lower staffing costs. Over a third of survey respondents said that they plan to add splash pads to their list of features.



Therapeutic Recreation

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) established that persons with disabilities have the right to the same access to parks and recreation facilities and programming as those without disabilities. In 2004, The National Council on Disability (NCD) issued a comprehensive report, *Livable Communities for Adults with Disabilities*.⁴ This report identified six elements for improving the quality of life for all citizens, including children, youth, and adults with disabilities.

The six elements are:

1. Provide affordable, appropriate, accessible housing
2. Ensure accessible, affordable, reliable, safe transportation
3. Adjust the physical environment for inclusiveness and accessibility
4. Provide work, volunteer, and education opportunities
5. Ensure access to key health and support services
6. Encourage participation in civic, cultural, social, and recreational activities

Active Transportation – Bicycling and Walking

In many surveys and studies on participation in recreation activities, walking, running, jogging, and cycling are nearly universally rated as the most popular activities among youth and adults. Bicycling and walking are attractive as they require little equipment, or financial investment, to get started, and are open to participation to nearly all segments of the population. For these reasons, participation in these activities is often promoted as a means of spurring physical activity, and increasing public health.



³ “Aquatics: A Look at Trends in Aquatic Facilities,” *Recreation Management*, June 2016 <http://recmanagement.com/feature/201606fe03/1>

⁴ National Council on Disability, *Livable Communities for Adults with Disabilities*, December 2004, <http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2004/12022004>.

The design of a community's infrastructure is directly linked to physical activity – where environments are built with bicyclists and pedestrians in mind, more people bike and walk. Higher levels of bicycling and walking also coincide with increased bicycle and pedestrian safety and higher levels of physical activity. Increasing bicycling and walking in a community can have a major impact on improving public health and life expectancy.

Economic benefits of bicycling and walking include:

- Bicycling and walking projects create 8 to 12 jobs per \$1 million spent, compared to just 7 jobs created per \$1 million spent on highway projects.
- Cost benefit analyses show that up to \$11.80 in benefits can be gained for every \$1 invested in bicycling and walking.

National bicycling trends:

- There has been a gradual trend of increasing bicycling and walking to work since 2005.
- Infrastructure to support biking communities is becoming more commonly funded in communities.
- Bike share systems, making bicycles available to the public for low-cost, short-term use, have been sweeping the nation since 2010. Twenty of the most populous U.S. cities have a functional bike share system.

Festivals and Special Events

Public parks and recreation agencies play a major role in planning, managing, and hosting festivals and other community programs that often serve to draw new users into their facilities. Attendants to events hosted in parks, or recreation centers, who enjoy their experience may want to return for another event or program, or simply to enjoy the park or recreation facility. Participants in these special programs can become interested in visiting other parks, recreation facilities or participating in programs.



In 2014, festivals grew in popularity as economic drivers and urban brand builders. Chad Kaydo describes the phenomenon in the January 2014 issue of *Governing* magazine. “Municipal officials and entrepreneurs see the power of cultural festivals, innovation-focused business conferences and the like as a way to spur short-term tourism while shaping an image of the host City as a cool, dynamic location where companies and citizens in modern, creative industries can thrive.”



The success rate for festivals should not be evaluated solely on the basis of profit (sales), prestige (media profile), and size (numbers of events or overall attendance). Research by the European Festival Research Project (EFRP) indicates there is evidence of local and county government supporting and even instigating and managing particular festivals themselves to achieve local or regional economic objectives, often defined very narrowly (sales, jobs, and tourism). There are also a growing number of smaller, more local, community-based festivals and events in communities, most often supported

by local councils that have been spawned partly as a reaction to larger festivals that have become prime economic-drivers. These community-based festivals often will re-claim cultural ground based on their social, educational, and participative value. For more information on the values of festivals and events, see the CRC Sustainable Tourism research guide on this topic.

C. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Public input was gathered during the week of June 28, 2018. Methods used to engage with the community included focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and public meetings. Additional information was collected via phone interviews and emails sent by citizens wanting to participate. The goal of these sessions was to gather information that would guide the development of survey tools. Participants included: City staff, local business owners, lifeguards, regional leaders, stakeholders; and members of the public.

Q1: What are the Strengths of the Parks and Recreation Department?

Facilities

One major strength of the De Soto Parks and Recreation Department by focus group participants is the accessibility and affordability to the community center, fitness classes, and local parks. Services and amenities offered by the City are perceived as assets to the entire community, especially the Community Center and the Aquatic Facility. The outdoor pool is highly valued because of its “top-notch” aquatic lessons and instructors. The successes of the Aquatic Center made residents believe that the pool should be a “destination” where are additional features such as a Lazy River or Splashpad can entertain kids and adults.



De Soto Aquatic Center June 2018

Staff

Citizens of De Soto, Kansas consistently mentioned that a strength of the Parks and Recreation Department is the approachability of all of the department staff. Residents felt that the department was very open to suggestions and new ideas. Residents expressed that the staff was able to accomplish a lot with little staff and resources.

Programs

Overall, programs were also noted as a strength of De Soto Parks and Recreation. Participants enjoy the fitness classes and the instructors. The mix of active and passive recreation is something that residents appreciate. New programs such as Pickleball were able to succeed due to the willingness of the Department to listen and take action. This sport is gaining traction locally, and residents enjoy playing the game, especially when there is involvement with all age groups. In addition, there are recreational sport leagues that are very welcoming to beginners. Their level of competitiveness was noted as a strength. They also do a good job at partnering with surrounding municipalities to offer more resources and sports teams.

Parks

Residents were pleased by the quality of the parks in regard to cleanliness and maintenance. Riverfest Park was seen as an underutilized strength because of its potential for community events.

Parks in De Soto, Kansas are diverse and offer a variety of programs and amenities for residents.

Q2: What are the weaknesses of the Parks and Recreation Department?

Connectivity & Biking

Connectivity was a recurring topic with regard to trails and parks in De Soto. Trails offer an opportunity for transportation to areas such as Miller Park, Riverfest Park, Schools, Downtown Area, and JCPRD Facilities. Johnson County also has potential for trail improvement projects which could be a mutually beneficial partnership. Specifically, there was interest in connecting trails from De Soto to Johnson County, and from Lexington Lake to other trails. Certain sidewalks end abruptly, and limit walkability in the area.



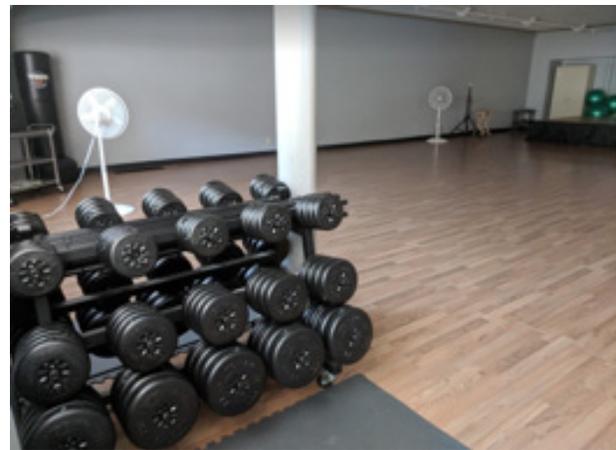
Sunflower Park, June 2018

With connectivity, participants expressed that there would need to be more education about cars and bikes travelling safely together. Participants in the focus group have seen the number of cyclists in the area increase. With the lack of bike lanes available, safety is a concern. Educating the public on how to drive with bikes, and likewise, educating bikers on safe routes (avoiding 83rd and Kill Creek) is imperative. Participants expressed that De Soto could become a destination for cyclists, and is slowly becoming one. Trail standards and policies

should be a consideration. A number of related issues were brought up, such as how people will want to use the trails in the future. Will they be used for commuting? Electric bikes? Unicycles? Width of trails? Multiuse?

Programs

Regarding fitness classes and programs, additional space is desired for classes. The current city administrative building has space but needs work. Could a relationship with the school district help alleviate this problem? Should renovations be done to current administrative building? These were the questions focus groups asked.



Community Fitness Room, June 2018

Soccer is a popular sport in De Soto, and many residents felt that it needs to be prioritized moving forward by having dedicated fields for soccer. Some participants expressed frustration because the location of their practice/games had been moved to new locations. In addition, game rules seem to change with the season and the referee who is officiating. Focus groups mentioned that the training to be a coach or official was unorganized and lacked essential information. Finally, with soccer being a coed sport, parents expressed that the competition level was uneven – especially as kids turn into teens and gender differences become more prevalent. The older the kids get, the fewer play in town, making it less fun as a league. Soccer is currently co-ed, which girls don't like, so they leave town for girls leagues.

Playing against other cities doesn't always work since they have different views of what "recreation" is, and different rules in regard to age groups. Some do it by grade level, some by birthdays. The lack of consistency and communication are two areas that needed improvement.

Fields

Soccer fields are needed – users noted that they need a home for practice and games since games often get moved. Miller Park often floods and causes additional issues. A soccer facility at Lexington Lake Park may answer that need, but funding still needs to be established before that is secured. Residents voiced that additional fields for other sports beyond soccer were also needed, such as baseball and softball. Having permanent irrigation would be desired, as Miller Park often gets flooded which can cause game cancellations.

Parks

Further dedication to the Riverfest Park development is desired. Key components in the Master Plan should be carried out to provide a number of amenities. Basic needs such as restrooms, paved roads, and shelters are a priority to residents. Although large events may require portable restrooms at scale, more people would like to use Riverfest park on a daily basis – so permanent restrooms are wanted. Residents also noted that they would like to see greater (and safer) connectivity to the Riverfest Park. Residents addressed that Miller Park needs improvement in regard to updated lighting, additional parks, additional restrooms, another park shelter, and updated playground equipment (for all ages).



Riverfest Park, June 2018

Events

In addition, more community wide events were desired by residents. Ideas included block parties, movie nights, free concerts, or other annual events. These gatherings could help De Soto build stronger relationships with its residents and tourists alike. Events like De Soto Days could be moved to Riverfest Park because of its capacity and purpose to hold festivals.

Marketing

One major weakness of De Soto is the lack of communication and awareness of programs. The services, parks, amenities, and programs are not reaching all of those in the community who want to learn about them. Residents want to know more about the offerings and opportunities through De Soto Parks and Recreation and need to know where to find this information.



Parks and Recreation Webpage, June 2018

Awareness and communication are essential components to help educate the public on offerings. Some residents were not aware of other parks besides Miller Park. Greater awareness and communication about the other parks such as Widow Big Knife, Lexington Property, and others would be helpful. Having clear and consistent signage at all parks will help unify and brand the parks department. This is especially true at event parks such as Riverfest.

Using modern advertising channels such as social media and the website can help to inform residents. A key question remained after these focus group conversations: “how do we get program information to the public so that they can better utilize our services?” In addition, online registration and payments need to be seamless. This will be improved with the website redesign that is already planned for the city. Considering a longer registration window would be helpful as registrants noticed that they often miss a deadline. Additionally, De Soto Happenings (the quarterly catalog) features some of the Parks and Recreation offerings but does not list all of them. This would be a great opportunity since the magazine reaches all households in De Soto.

Partnerships

There are currently missed opportunities to partner with small businesses and school districts. To offer more programs – which is desired at Riverfest Park – De Soto Parks and Rec should partner with other agencies that can help.

Administrative

Residents recognized that staff is limited in De Soto for managing and operating programs. Ideas for new staff include a marketing/advertising person for programs, website, and social media, a sponsorship/funding person, and a special events programmer.

Q3: What programs would you like to see?

- Aquatic Programs (Water Aerobics, Open Swim, Lap Swim)*
- Archery*
- Art Program*
- Bocce Ball*
- Coed Softball*
- Cycling Classes*
- Dance Classes*
- Educational Classes (Cooking, Conservation, Recycling, Bike Safety)*
- Gymnastics Program for Youth*
- Indoor and Outdoor Pickleball*

- Offer Outdoor Fitness Classes in the Parks*
- Open Gym Classes*
- Roller Hockey*
- Running Clubs/Track Clubs for Kids*
- Special Events (Food Trucks, Festivals, Music)*
- Street Soccer*
- Walking Group/Aerobics*

Q4: What improvements should be made to existing facilities?

RIVERFEST PARK

- Trail Connectivity to Park
- Main Entry Signage
- Disc Golf
- Shelters for Parties
- Destination Playground
- Need Restrooms and Lighting
- Camping Opportunities (RV and Tent)
- More Events with Food Trucks

COMMUNITY CENTER

- More Multi-purpose/Fitness Rooms
- Floor Stability
- Space for Youth Classes
- Increase Community Center Hours

OTHER PARKS AND AMENITIES

- Miller Park needs age-appropriate playground equipment for the 5 and under age group
- Improve drainage issues for soccer at Miller Park
- Year-round Indoor Pool
- Skate Park apparatus or fitness equipment along paths, trails



Q5: What additional facilities would you like to see?

The following facilities were mentioned when asked focus groups about what they would like to see offered by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Shaded Bocce Ball Court	More Restrooms at Parks	More Multi-Use Trails for Longboarding
Connectivity to Parks	Space for Fitness Classes	Gymnastics Facility
Indoor Pool	RV Park and Tent Camping	Racquetball Courts
Disc Golf Course		

Q6: What Partners/ stakeholders could assist with implementation?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Johnson County Community College Lawrence Parks and Recreation School District Disc Golf Course Company De Soto Arts Council Fund De Soto Days Festival Fund De Soto Kansas Parks Foundation Fund Urban Trail Co. (Kansas City) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Johnson County Park and Recreation De Soto Kansas Parks Foundation Fund De Soto Chamber of Commerce
Potential Partners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jazzercise Tae Kwon Do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AB Creative (Play and Playground Equipment) Merk Harps Grocery Huhtamaki Engineered Air Kansas City Power and Light Company

Q7: What are the key issues & values of De Soto?

Clean

Safe

Excellent Schools

"Build Your Life With Us"

Great place to raise kids

Strong Community

Want Growth but Not Change

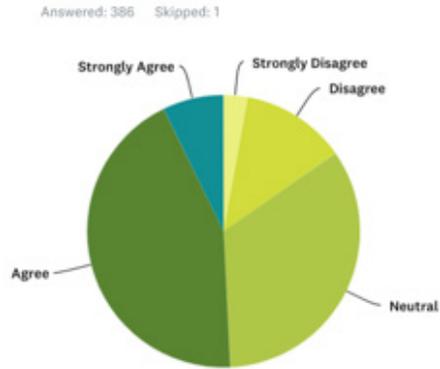
Growing Hispanic Population

Family Oriented

Funding

Q8: What should be the top priorities in 5-10 years?

- Establish marketing channels to successfully communicate with residents
- Implement the Master Plan and follow through with future plans for Riverfest Park
- Meet expectations of youth sports program with consistent rules and well-trained coaches
- Maintain and improve current programs, facilities, and resources before investing in new
- Build recreational paths and trails to existing and future parks facilities.
- Expand programming opportunities to serve people of all ages and abilities.
- Diversify the physical amenities at City parks facilities
- Host events that bring the community together

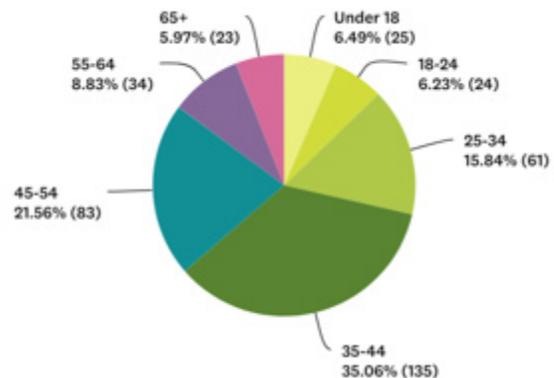


Survey Response

Over thirty-five percent of survey respondents were between the ages of 35 and 44 years old. Those under the ages of 25 and those over the age of 55 has less than ten percent participation in their age cohorts. When asked if the participants lived in City limits, 70 percent responded that they did, 28 percent lived outside of the City limits, and only five people were not aware if they lived in the City limits.

Overall Satisfaction

When asked if the Parks and Recreation Department meets the needs of the community, 43 percent of respondents agreed. It is important to note that one third of participants were neutral on the subject, and that 12 percent disagreed with the statement.



D. COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY

SURVEY

- 387 Survey Responses
- 1.3 Views of Facebook Video Ad
- Emailed to Recreation Database of 2,226 Users

As part of the information gathering process, a community survey was developed to better understand the community's perception of the parks and recreation services. The survey was posted on the City's homepage, on the City's Facebook Page, and was also emailed to 2,226 people subscribed to the City e-newsletter. Overall 387 responses were collected and analyzed using Survey Monkey.

Communication & Marketing

When asked if participants were aware of the location and amenities of City parks, more than 55 percent either agreed or strongly agreed. However, several comments indicated that participants only thought they knew of all the parks until all of them were listed in the survey. Widow Bike Knife and Wilderness Park were both parks that many participants were not aware of.

Increased awareness of programs was the number one response when asked what would increase participation in offerings by the Parks and Recreation Department. Just 50 percent of respondents agree that they know where to find information about the programs and parks offered by the department. Survey respondents indicated that the notices for events and programs are often communicated via word of mouth, and that information is relayed too short of notice. The survey then asked respondents to indicate how they would most like to receive information.

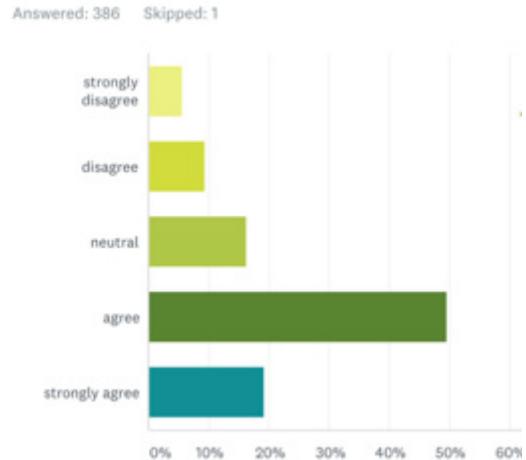


Table 2: Communication Preferences

How would you like to receive information from De Soto Parks and Recreation?	
Answer Choices	Responses
City Website	75.68%
Social Media (Facebook/Instagram/NextDoor)	70.27%
Discovering De Soto Quarterly Magazine	38.92%
Local media (TV/Radio/Newspaper)	10.81%
Radio/TV	5.95%
At the community center/other city buildings	28.92%
Email Newsletter	55.68%
Rack cards/poster	11.35%
Word of Mouth	18.65%

Some of the other ideas that were listed in the comments of this question include:

- Flyers
- Large Banners
- Talk Radio
- Through the schools
- Electronic/LED sign
- City Bulletin Board
- Direct Mail
- Twitter

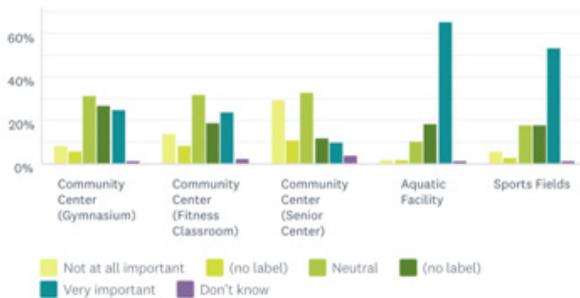
Facilities

The survey then asked how important the parks and recreation facilities were to the respondents. The aquatic facility and the sports fields were rated as “very important.”

When asked what would increase participation in parks and recreations services (related to facilities), the top responses were:

- Additional facilities and amenities (42%)
- Upgraded existing facilities and amenities (42%)
- Improved condition/maintenance of parks or facilities (26%)
- Increased/different hours of operation (21%)
- Additional Lighting (athletic fields/courts) (19%)
- Improved WiFi Connectivity (18%)
- More Parking (15%)
- Increased safety and security (15%)

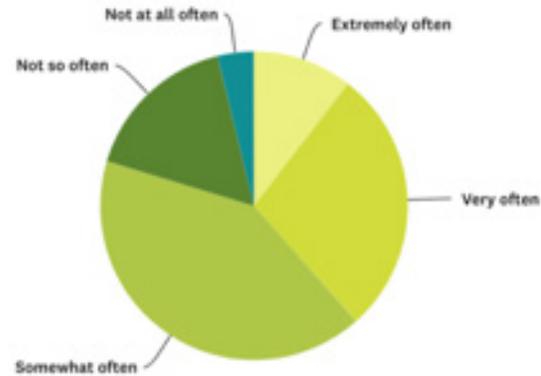
How important are the following facilities to your household?



The next question asked how often residents visited the parks in De Soto. Knowing that visitation differs by season, one’s schedule, and other factors, this question gaged the overall perception from residents as to how often they think they use the parks. The majority of respondents said that visited “somewhat often,” while 10 percent noted they visited “extremely often.”

How often do you visit the public parks in De Soto?

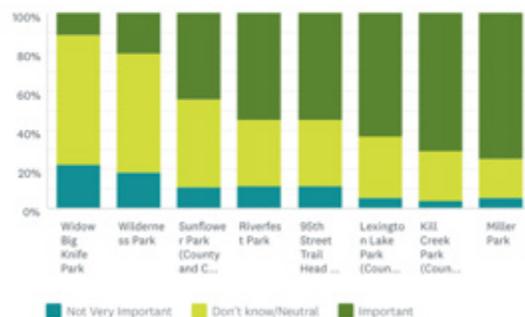
Answered: 315 Skipped: 72



The survey then asked how important the parks were to the participants’ households. Miller Park was the most important, at a weighted average of 4.22/5. Two county-owned parks, Kill Creek Park (4.16) and Lexington Lake Park (4.08) were also ranked highly in this question. The two parks with the lowest weighed average were Widow Big Knife and Wilderness Park. Participants noted that they were unaware of these parks and their locations. Finally, the survey asked what the level of interest might be in regards to non-traditional park amenities and/or play structures. The survey listed a number of unique options as referenced below, including some of the items (such as ATV trails) that were identified in the Strategic Plan. The responses primarily favored zip lines and rock climbing structures, followed by Tree Canopy Trails

How important are the following parks to your household?

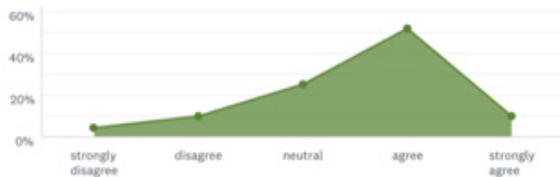
Answered: 316 Skipped: 71



and Ropes Course. BMX Bike Parks and Bike Pump Tracks were rated the lowest on this question, with ATV Trails just ahead of these two options with 38 percent of respondents “not at all interested” in this feature. Many comments revealed that priority should rather be on the existing facilities, such as updating the playground equipment at Miller Park, and completing projects at Riverfest Park, before focusing on new park amenities. Many participants also were unaware as to what these non-traditional amenities were which may have impacted the results.

I am aware of the recreation programs offered by De Soto City Parks and Recreation Department.

Answered: 209 Skipped: 118



Programs

With regard to programs, participants were first asked if they were aware of the recreation programs offered by the department. Of those, 52

percent noted that they agreed. They were then asked how important the current programs were to the community. The top five programs are listed below. The lowest scoring program was Blastball by those who participated in the survey.

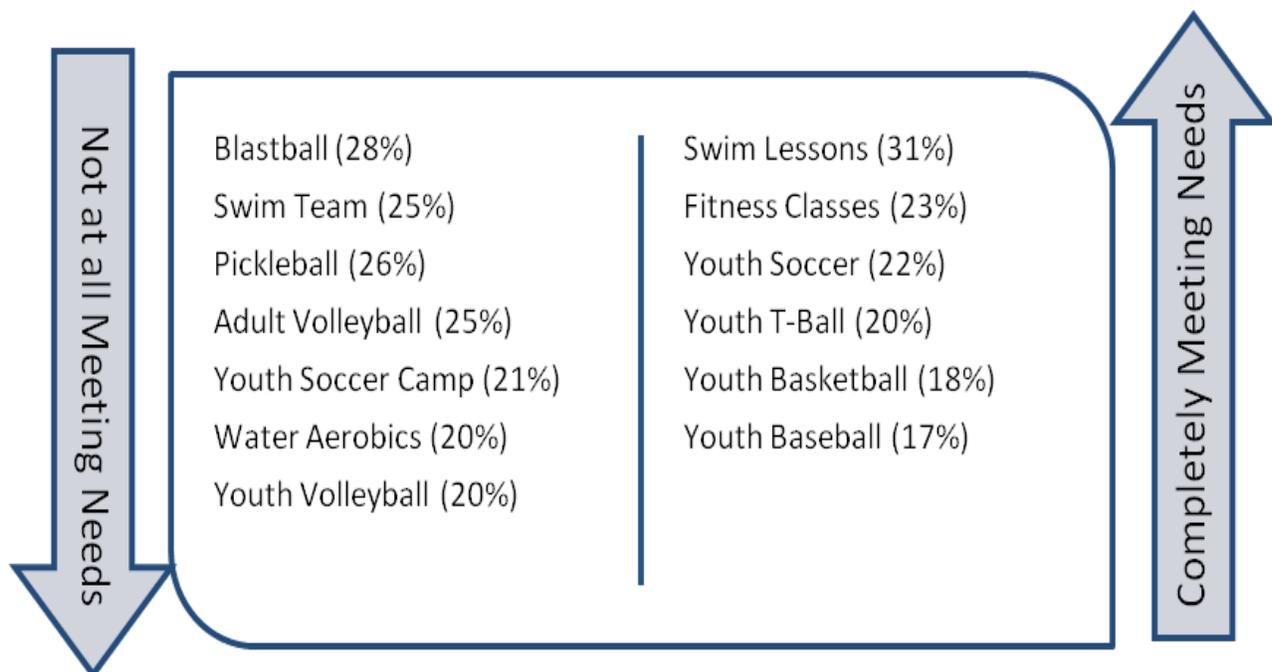
How important are the following programs?

Answered: 270 Skipped: 117

Top 5 Programs

- Swim Lessons (4.26 weighted average)
- Special Events
- Youth Basketball
- Youth Soccer
- Youth Tball (3.90 weighted average)

To identify which programs needed the most attention, participants were asked to identify how well the current programs were meeting the needs of the community. Below is an illustration to demonstrate how well the following programs are meeting the needs of the community.



Participants were asked who was sufficiently served in regard to programs, and young children were the number one response. According to the survey, teenagers and adults lacked sufficient programs for their age group.

Finally, participants were asked what types of activities they would participate in if they were offered by De Soto Parks and Recreation. A variety of ideas were presented, many of which were echoed in the focus groups. Unique cultural/artistic activities, mom-and-tot programs, adult sports, and additional fitness classes were some of the highlights. Other comments noted that working adults could not attend classes unless they were early morning or after 6 p.m. A number of seniors noted that they wanted fitness programming for their age group.

E. ORGANIZATIONAL AND MARKETING ANALYSIS

It is important to understand the organizational components that help to define the department. This often starts with becoming clear with the mission, vision, values, and purpose of the department. In this case, De Soto does not have these statements for the Parks and Recreation Department but rather relies on the City for overall guidance. Without knowing the defined purpose of parks and recreation, which varies greatly for departments around the country, it is difficult to make decisions.

The mission, vision, and values of the department can and should be related to the City's overall statements, but in the end should reflect the ultimate purpose and role that parks and recreation serves. Some of the related items to note are:

- As a department, there is no Vision and Mission Statement.

- As a department, there are not Agency and Department goals and objectives and/or Department Workplan on paper.
- There is not a formal marketing plan.
- They do not produce annual reports.
- The department has not performed any formal surveys or analysis in the last 5 years.

The department maintains an agreement with Johnson County Parks and Recreation to lease Sunflower Ball Fields. De Soto Parks and Recreation maintains the facility and makes major improvements, with approval from the County. The De Soto Parks and Recreation Department has a working relationship with the school district (USD 232) to use their gyms at no cost for the youth basketball program. In return, USD 232 uses the Sunflower Ball Fields in the spring and the Aquatic Center for P.E. classes at no cost. The department currently holds a contract with a landscape company which mows all parks and recreation property except for Wilderness Park.

From further analysis, there is a clear need for the following items:

- **Clarify the Department's Purpose:** Communication of purpose and offerings of Parks and Recreation Department should be crystal clear. Define mission, vision, and values.
- **Partner for Success:** Perceived lack of partnerships/communication with local agencies and businesses is a downfall. Look to outside service providers for ways to better serve the community. Create partnership agreements in writing that serve the Parks and Recreation Department and the other party. "Competitors" in the area can serve as allies in order to expand offerings, particularly for programs and special events that cannot be managed with the current staffing conditions.
- **Expand Access:** ADA accessibility for all facilities and activities is critical. According to the U.S. Census, 9.4 percent of De Soto residents live with some sort of disability. Ensure that there is an ADA Transition

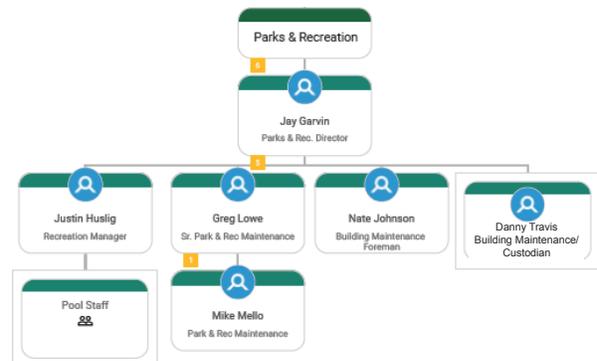
Plan per Federal Law, and that programs can be adapted to serve those to want to participate.

- Train and Organize Youth Sports:** Look to successful youth sports programs to assess the current structure and what is/is not working. Limited parks and recreation staff need to find ways to clarify rules and expectations for coaches and referees. Conduct a formal and repeatable training system with incentives for volunteer coaches. Ask for feedback from coaches regularly. Find ways to communicate last minute changes. Clarify and communicate the purpose of De Soto Youth Sports program – whether it is competitive or designed so all players can play – the expectation should be consistent and clear.
- Seek Greater Awareness:** Programs, services, amenities, and hours all need more awareness. It is critical that the Parks and Recreation Department find a few effective methods that reach a majority of residents. Residents should know exactly where to look to find the information they need. Survey results showed that the City website is the most preferred way to find parks and recreation information. The new update to the website in Fall of 2018 should also help with that marketing piece. Creative marketing strategies can also go a long way in extending awareness: posting in De Soto specific Facebook groups (with permission) may prove effective. Perhaps creating a Twitter feed could help push out last minute updates.
- Ensure Rental Equity:** Rental rates vary greatly depending on the organization. Many agencies establish policies that allow 501 (c)(3) non-profits (with documentation) have a discounted rate on rentals. Having policies written down will help alleviate issues in the future.

- Over-Communicate:** Improved communication around youth sports and program registration. Utilize as many avenues as possible with the goal of over-communicating the message.
- Consider Extended Hours:** Staff permitting, it may be worth experimenting with extended hours (and possibly a longer season) in the pool.
- Ensure Connectivity:** Wi-Fi connectivity in city facilities and Riverfest Park is important to the community. By keeping with current initiatives to expand Wi-Fi in those areas, De Soto residents should be able to enjoy greater internet access in those public areas. This will also help for vendors who need Wi-Fi during festivals/ events for online access to their Point of Sale systems.

Staffing Analysis and Considerations

The current staffing structure allows the department to maintain a level of service for the current facilities to an acceptable standard. However the future capacity for maintenance will be limited if the parks are expanded. Most of the information gathering revealed that there should be an emphasis on maintaining and upgrading the current equipment in the parks. The current park maintenance contract should be continued to have the landscape company continue the mowing and basic maintenance.



Staffing for programs and events may become a challenge as demand for community events and additional programming continues. Currently, the Recreation Manager is in charge of hiring and training 40+ lifeguards every summer, in addition to year-round responsibilities of programming the Community Center Fitness Room. The capacity of this position will be limited primarily with regard to planning special events and coordinating with partners for programs. A recommendation is to hire an additional full-time Programmer for to help expand recreation program offerings (and/or work with partners who can offer services), oversee special events organization (to bring tourism into the area), and to oversee the marketing, communications, and outreach of the Parks and Recreation Department.

F. RECREATION PROGRAMMING ANALYSIS

Measuring the success of programs is most commonly analyzed by looking at participation. Understanding the current participation numbers often is an indication of the long term viability of the program. Low participation may not necessarily mean that the program should be eliminated; factors such as awareness, marketing, registration process, operations, and management of the program will all influence the success of the program. Understanding the strengths of the most popular programs will help gain clarity as to how less-attended programs can improve. It is also worth considering the opportunity to partner with clubs/nonprofits/small businesses that offer similar services. Before analyzing the current participation of recreation programs, it is important to talk about the potential of partnerships now.

Partnerships

The Department offers programming opportunities through partnerships and contracted services. This is a very typical method of service delivery

in park and recreation departments throughout the country. Staff usually manage the contractual programming and seek new opportunities to increase program areas. This is a very efficient method of providing services; eventually, by continuing to partner, the Department will increase the volume of programs the public would like to see offered. The current contractual program areas are listed in detail below.

Table 3: Alternative Providers

Alternative Provider			
Organization	Activity	Location	
Great Life Golf and Fitness	Golf and Weight/Cardio Room	De Soto, KS	No
Oak Country Golf Course	Golf Course	De Soto, KS	No
Jazzercise	Jazzercise	De Soto, KS	Yes
White Tiger Tae Kwon Do	Tae Kwon Do	De Soto, KS	No
Wildcat Youth Football & Cheerleading	Football & Cheer	De Soto, KS	No
De Soto Youth Wrestling	Wrestling	De Soto, KS	No
De Soto Arts Council	Meetings and Art Shows	De Soto, KS	No
Johnson County Parks and Recreation	Parks, Day Care, Programs, Youth and Adult Sports	Shawnee Mission, KS	Yes
Johnson County 3&2	Baseball	Lenexa, KS	Yes

Great Life Golf and Fitness currently manages the Golf Course and the Weight/Cardio Room. They are located within De Soto proper, and use the old stage in the community center as their weight room/gym. De Soto Parks and Recreation does not offer this service, and have entered into an agreement with GreatLife to provide this to the community.

If the De Soto Parks and Recreation Department tries to be all things to all people it can result in mediocre or low-quality service. Instead, they should focus on delivering higher-quality service in a more focused (and perhaps limited)

way. It will be important for De Soto to ask the following questions to determine which programs are appropriate to handle for themselves versus creating a partnership with another agency.

- Q: Is the agency the best or most appropriate organization to provide the service?**
- Q: Is market competition good for the citizenry?**
- Q: Is the agency spreading its resources too thin without the capacity to sustain core services and the system in general?**
- Q: Are there opportunities to work with another organization to provide services in a more efficient and responsible manner?**

The term “partnership” should be defined as those that have a key strategic aligned mission and are mutually beneficial collaborations to fulfill an important or essential service. Partnerships should be negotiated in writing, reviewed annually and be valued based on true cost of service provision.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johnson County Community College • Lawrence Parks and Recreation • School District • Disc Golf Course Company • De Soto Arts Council Fund • De Soto Days Festival Fund • De Soto Kansas Parks Foundation Fund • Urban Trail Co. (Kansas City) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johnson County Park and Recreation • De Soto Kansas Parks Foundation Fund • De Soto Chamber of Commerce
Potential Partners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jazzercise • Tae Kwon Do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AB Creative (Play and Playground Equipment) • Merk • Harps Grocery • Huhtamaki • Engineered Air • Kansas City Power and Light Company

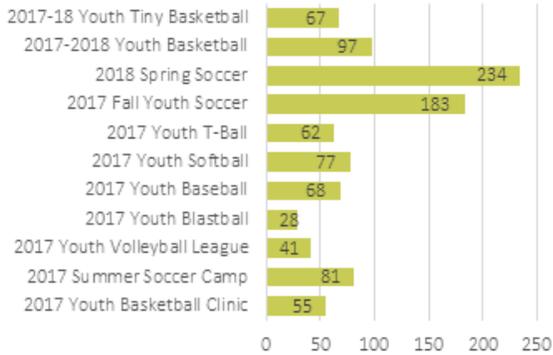
Participation in Current Offerings

Youth Sports

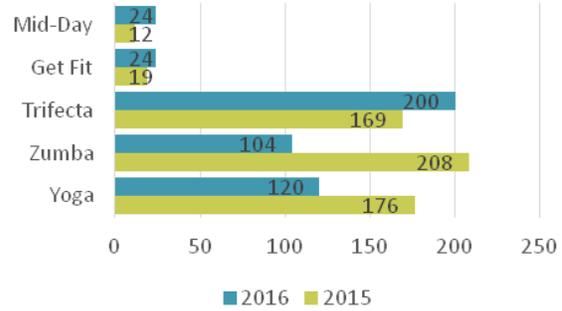
The most popular program according to 2016 participation data is Spring Soccer, and then Fall Soccer. Soccer serves the ages of 4 through 14, while Baseball serves a slightly older age group. Blastball, Youth T-Ball, and Youth Tiny Basketball serve a small portion of children, and therefore, do not have high rates of overall participation.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	ADULT	SENIOR
Youth Sports																					
2017 Youth Blastball	4 to 5																				
2017 Youth T-Ball	5 to 6																				
2017-18 Youth Tiny Basketball	1st-2nd																				
2017 Youth Basketball Clinic	K-6th																				
2017 Summer Soccer Camp	K-8th																				
2017 Youth Volleyball League	3rd-6th																				
2017 Youth Baseball	6 to 15																				
2017 Youth Softball	6 to 15																				
2017 Fall Youth Soccer	4 to 14																				
2018 Spring Soccer	4 to 14																				
2017-2018 Youth Basketball	3rd - 6th																				

Youth Sport Participation



Indoor Fitness Class Participation by Activity



Programmed Classes

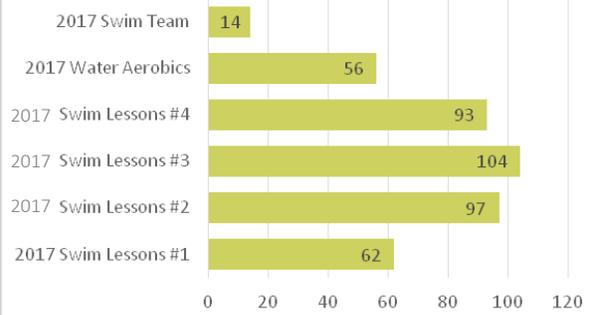
With regard to fitness classes, a range of cardio and aerobic sessions are combined into “Fitness Sessions” based on season. Overall, the most popular class was Zumba, followed by the Trifecta, and then Yoga.

Fitness Classes (\$12 - \$15/Month) Include:

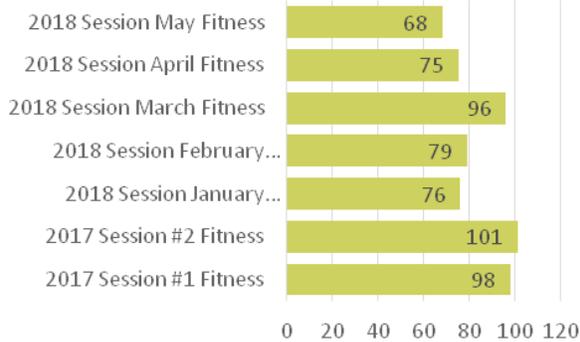
Strength Camp	Kick Start 45	Stretch and Strength	Tabata GX	Mix it Up
Pi-Yo	Blast and Burn	Barre Fusion	20/20/20	

Aquatics

Aquatic Participation



Indoor Fitness Class Participation by Season



Programs and Activities

The City of De Soto currently offers 4 different special events throughout the year:

- Splash N Play
- 4th of July
- Doggie Plunge
- Appreciation Day

With further analysis, and after cross analyzing the survey results to the focus group meetings, the following items have appeared as themes to consider for future programming:

- **Find Ways to Serve Underserved Populations:** While youth have many options to participate in sports, it was identified that teenagers, young adults, and seniors are limited in recreational programming. De Soto may not need to create and oversee programs for each population, but rather define a target market that the City will serve. Then, look to outside businesses/organizations/nonprofits that could help that could (or are already) creating programs for the other groups.
- **Community Gatherings:** Residents of De Soto want additional events that bring together the community. Community events such as 5ks, Movies in the Park, etc. would provide social gathering places, boost relationships, and remind De Soto residents why they love their city.
- **Diversity of Programs:** Beyond sports, there is a desire to expand offering of programs offerings to be centered on the arts, culture, history, or dance. Specialized programs may be offered through the City, or perhaps groups or individuals near De Soto could have the skills and resources to offer it through a beneficial partnership.
- **Bring Additional Special Events:** There is a need for better marketing of programs and events. Special events, such as Winesong, bring in hundreds of visitors into the area. More awareness around these kinds of events could bring in tourism dollars and promote small businesses and hotels in the area.
- **Improve Communication and Marketing:** Timely and consistent communication about programs. Again, over communicate. Utilize as many avenues as possible with the goal of over-communicating the message. Use online methods of marketing, including the traditional flyers, direct mail, the City's website, Facebook, and email blasts. Consider the

implementation of Instagram and Twitter.

- **Ensure Program Success:** Need additional (and/or backup) fitness instructors. Find a list of back-up or substitute instructors via online databases/personal connections/references from other nearby cities.
- **Expand Program Hours:** Need evening fitness and program hours for working parents.
- **Youth Sports Organization:** Look to successful youth sports programs to assess the current structure and what is/is not working. Limited parks and recreation staff need to find ways to clarify rules and expectations for coaches and referees. Conduct a formal and repeatable training system with incentives for volunteer coaches. Ask for feedback from coaches regularly. Find ways to communicate last minute changes. Clarify and communicate the purpose of De Soto Youth Sports program – whether it is competitive or designed so all players can play – the expectation should be consistent and clear.
- **Capitalize on Successful Programs:** Knowing the successful programs such as swim lessons are often full, it may make sense to invest additional resources to make sure that there is adequate staffing for them.



G. FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Current Financial Circumstances

Parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services are essential to maintaining De Soto's diverse and desirable community. However, not all facilities, programs, and services are equal. In general, the more a facility, program, or service provides a community benefit to its citizens as a whole, the more that element should be paid for by all citizens as part of the City's general fund. The more a facility, program, or service provides individual benefits, the more that element should be paid for by user fees. This funding and cost recovery philosophy acknowledges the tremendous public benefits of parks and recreation to the community. Parks and recreation services also promote and support a community's economic development, crime prevention, and community health.

The De Soto Parks and Recreation Department is primarily funded through the City's General Fund in approximately the levels listed below. These figures are recommendations rather than actual approved budget numbers.

General Fund Parks:	\$359,142
General Fund Pool:	\$310,200
General Fund Community Center:	\$169,852

General Fund Parks and Recreation Total Revenue: \$192,200

The Capital Improvement Fund (CIP) has a long and ever-changing list of capital improvement projects for the City to consider each year. During the past several budget cycles, decisions on specific individual projects were not made until late fall or early in the budget year. The City is not obligated to follow the CIP project list exactly. The CIP list is based on estimated project costs. The Parks and Recreation Department requested the CIP figures listed below, although in a recent year, the

Department received \$51,139 of the requested \$64,100.

CIP Fund Parks:	\$0
CIP Fund Pool:	\$7,500
CIP Fund Community Center:	\$0

There is a Special Parks Fund that is comprised of fees from the state liquor tax and park fees transferred to the CIP Fund. The amount budgeted annually in this fund is approximately \$25,000 and has been very consistent for several years.

A Sponsorship Fund was created in 2007 to capture private donations made to the City for the purpose of recreation programming. The fund guarantees donors that their funds will be used for specific recreation program enhancements. The fund prevents any unused donations at the end of the year from being lost to the City's overall unspent cash balance. The recent revenue projection was \$3,700 with an expenditure expectation of \$3,100.

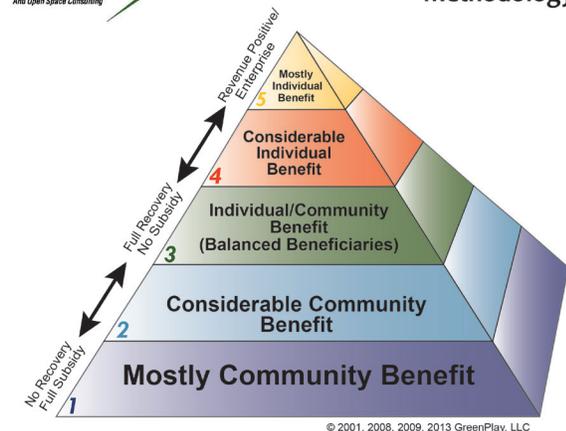
Focus group and survey respondents expressed concern over the access and affordability of programs and services. The Parks and Recreation Department staff needs to continue to work diligently to implement and monitor equitable user fees to improve revenues while maintaining the level of affordability that residents of De Soto find acceptable. All user fees should be based on a decided percentage of covering the same direct costs of each program. Currently, the Department uses the School District's model for free or reduced lunches to determine eligibility for scholarships. Everybody gets to participate.

Financial Sustainability for Program Delivery

It is important for the City to develop a resource allocation and pricing philosophy that reflects the values of the community and the responsibility it has to the community. This philosophy will be especially important if the City moves forward in the development of new programs and additional and/or renovated facilities, and as it strives for sustainability and determines how much it is willing to subsidize operations with tax dollars.

One means of accomplishing this goal is applying a process using an industry tool called the “Pyramid Methodology.” This methodology develops and implements a refined cost recovery philosophy and pricing policy based on current “best practices” as determined by the mission of the agency and the program’s benefit to the community and/or individual. A cost recovery philosophy and policy would support the current De Soto financial policy to “review and update fees and charges at least annually to ensure they keep pace with actual program costs, cost-of-living changes, and methods or levels of service delivery.”

Critical to this philosophical undertaking is the **GREENPLAY LLC** **The Pyramid Methodology**



support and understanding of elected officials, and ultimately, residents. Whether or not significant changes are called for, the agency wants to be certain that it is philosophically-aligned with its residents. The development of the core services and cost recovery philosophy and policy is built on a very logical foundation, using the understanding of who is benefitting from recreation services to determine how the costs for that service should be offset.

Recreation programs and services are sorted along a continuum of what delivers the greatest individual benefit to what delivers the greatest community benefit. The amount of subsidy for each level (not necessarily each individual program) is then determined to create an overall cost recovery philosophy.

Developing effective ongoing systems that help measure success in reaching cost recovery goals and anticipate potential pitfalls are dependent on the following:

- Understanding of current revenue streams and their sustainability.
- Tracking all expenses and revenues for programs, facilities, and services to understand their contributions to overall department cost recovery.
- Analyzing who is benefiting from programs, facilities, and services and to what degree they should be subsidized.
- Acknowledging the full cost of each program (those direct and indirect costs associated with program delivery) and where the program fits on the continuum of who benefits from the program or service to determine appropriate cost recovery targets.
- Defining direct costs as those that typically exist purely because of the program and the change with the program.
- Defining indirect costs as those that would typically exist anyway (like full-time staff, utilities, administration, debt service, etc.).
- Program fees should not be based on ability to pay, but an objective program should be in place that allows for easy access for lower income participants through availability of scholarships and/or discounts.

Potential Funding Support

Lack of funding was one key theme from focus group participants and survey respondents. The Department should continue to pursue funding strategies from the Master Plan action steps including:

- Explore alternative funding sources for the Parks and Recreation Department that strategically align with targeted services such as a potential bond referendum, resurrecting the Parks Foundation and develop a gift catalog for donors.

- Update the Park Impact Fees/In Lieu of Fees that were established in 2005 to give the Parks and Recreation Department enough resources to buy, build, and/or maintain new park land in the growth areas or those existing areas with no current level of service.
- The City should make it a priority to leverage partnerships wherever possible to help fund the facilities, programs, and services that it provides to the community.
- Implementation of a cost recovery and equitable pricing philosophy and policy where revenue go back into the Parks and Recreation Department where they are created sustainability.
- Explore the opportunities for (and use of) sponsorships, in accordance with an approved Sponsorship Policy. A sample Sponsorship Policy has been submitted as a staff resource document.

Based on the capital and O&M budget estimates identified in this master plan as well as the unfunded capital improvement projects, it is imperative that the City maximize the funding and revenue opportunities listed below while balancing the affordability issue within the community.

Potential Funding Sources

The De Soto Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for providing recreational facilities and activities to the residents of the City of De Soto, Kansas. De Soto Parks and Recreation Department is complemented by a few Johnson City parks and some private service providers aimed to encourage recreational and leisure time activities.

Generally, there are a variety of mechanisms that local governments can employ to provide services and to make public improvements. Parks and Recreation operating and capital development funding typically comes from conventional sources such as sales, use, and property tax referendum voted upon by the community, along with developer exactions.

Operating funds are typically capped by legislation; may fluctuate based on the economy, public spending, or assessed valuation; and may not always keep up with inflationary factors. In the case of capital development, “borrowed funds” sunset with the completion of loan repayment and are not available to carry-over or re-invest without voter approval.

Identifying as many potential funding sources or options for De Soto Parks and Recreation Department will enhance the future success of operations.

Utilizing a list of over 100 potential funding sources compiled over 35 years of consulting with agencies across the United States, along with brief explanations, GreenPlay assisted the Board of Directors and staff in the exercise of categorizing this list of traditional and alternative potential funding as follows:

- Funding sources **currently being utilized**
- Funding sources the board **definitely would consider**
- Funding opportunities that could be **considered in the future**

The results of this exercise are as follows:

These funding sources are currently being used or could easily be used by the De Soto Parks and Recreation Department to create the existing budgets for capital and operational expenditures.

General or Operating Fund

Parks and recreation services are typically funded by an agency’s General or Operating Fund, which can be comprised of property tax, sales tax, and other compulsory charges levied by a government for the purpose of financing services performed for the common benefit of a community. These funds may also come from resources such as inter-governmental agreements, reimbursements, and interest and may include such revenue sources as franchise taxes, licenses and permits, fees, transfers in, reserves, interest income, and miscellaneous other incomes.

Property Tax

Property tax revenue often funds park and recreation special districts and may be used as a dedicated source for capital development. When used for operation funding, it often makes the argument for charging resident and non-resident fee differentials.

Sales Tax

This revenue source often funds public park and recreation agencies either partially or fully. Sales tax revenue is very popular in high traffic tourism agencies and with cities, counties, and state parks. Special Districts cannot exact sales taxes, which often calls into question the issue of charging resident and non-resident fee differentials.

Development Impact Fees

Development impact fees are one-time charges imposed on development projects at the time of permit issue to recover capital costs for public facilities needed to serve new developments and the additional residents, employees, and visitors they bring to the community. State laws, with a few minor exceptions, prohibit the use of impact fees for ongoing maintenance or operations costs. Not all states allow the collection of impact fees.

Park Land Dedication Ordinance

Park land dedication requirements typically state that all residential subdivisions of land (and often commercial), with some exemptions, are to provide for parks by either dedicating land, paying an in-lieu fee (the amounts may be adjusted annually), or a combination of the two.

Daily Admission and Annual Pass Sales or Vehicle Permits

Daily and annual pass fees can apply to regional parks and aquatics centers. The consultant team recommends consideration of bulk discount buying of daily admission fees marketed as “monthly, seasonal, 3-month, 6-month, and/or annual passes.”

Registration Fees

This revenue source is for participating in programs, classes, activities, and events which

typically require pre-registration to ensure a place. These services may or may not have limited space. These participant fees attempt to recover most if not all of the direct expenses and are often revenue positive due to market demand.

Ticket Sales/Admissions

This revenue source is for accessing facilities for self-directed or spectator activities such as splash parks, ballparks, and entertainment activities. Fees may also be assessed for tours, entrance or gate admission, and other activities, which may or may not be self-directed. These user fees help offset operational costs or apply to new projects.

General Obligation Bonds

Bonded indebtedness issued with the approval of the electorate for capital improvements and general public improvements.

Inter-local Agreements

Contractual relationships could be established between two or more local units of government and/or between a local unit of government and a non-profit organization for the joint usage/development of sports fields, regional parks, or other facilities.

Partnerships

Partnerships are joint development funding sources or operational funding sources between two separate agencies, such as two government entities, a non-profit and a government agency, or a private business and a government agency. Two partners jointly develop revenue producing park and recreation facilities and share risk, operational costs, responsibilities, and asset management based on the strengths and weaknesses of each partner.

Creating synergy based on expanded program offerings and collaborative efforts can be beneficial to all providers as interest grows and people gravitate to the type of facility and programs that best suit their recreational needs and schedules. Potential strategic alliance partnerships where missions run parallel and mutually beneficial relationships can be fostered and may include the following.

Currently partnering with:

- Chamber of Commerce
- School Districts
- Neighboring counties/communities
- Private alternative providers
- Senior Citizen Groups (AARP, Silver Sneakers)

Can easily partner with:

- Churches

Could partner with:

- Hospital
- Civic Groups (Kiwanis, Optimists, VFW, Elks, Rotary, etc.)
- Convention and Visitor's Bureau
- Homeowner or Neighborhood Associations
- Youth Sports Associations
- Adult Sports Associations

A Sample Partnership Policy has been provided as a staff resource document.

Privatization – Outsourcing the Management

Typically used for food and beverage management, golf course operations, ball field, or sports complex operations by negotiated or bid contract.

Grants

Grants often supplement or match funds that have already been received. For example, grants can be used for program purposes, information technology infrastructure, planning, design, seed money, and construction. Due to their infrequent nature, grants are often used to fund a specific venture and should not be viewed as a continuous source of funding.

Facilities and Equipment Grants

These grants help buy long-lasting physical assets, such as a building. The applicant organization must make the case that the new acquisition will help better serve its clients. Fund providers considering these requests will not only be interested in the applicant's current activities and financial health, but they will also inquire as to the financial and program plans for the next several years. Fund providers do not want allocate resources to an organization or program only to see it shut down in a few years because of poor management.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

This fund was reauthorized by Congress in December 2015 for three years. Generally during this short period, the level of funding allocated to states (through the State and Local Assistance Program) for outdoor recreation land acquisition and facility development is anticipated to rise. Every state runs their state and local assistance program in a slightly unique manner, so we encourage any municipal or City parks personnel interested in LWCF to contact their LWCF State Liaison Officer (typically someone at a state's department of fish and game, environmental protection, or conservation and recreation) for more information.

Agricultural Leases

In some agency parks, low land property along rivers, or excess land may be leased to farmers for crops.

Surplus Sale of Equipment by Auction

Agencies often have annual surplus auctions to get rid of old and used equipment, generating additional income on a yearly basis.

Enterprise Funds

These funds establish business units that are self-sustaining through fees and charges. Debt service and all indirect costs should be allocated or attributed to enterprise funds. Any excess revenue generated is maintained by the fund for future needs and cannot be used by another fund or department. Examples include premier sports tournament complexes.

Cost Savings Measures

In addition to aligning cost recovery with goals, charging appropriate fees, and using traditional and alternative funding mechanisms, several cost saving measures can improve the overall cost recovery picture for an agency.

Change Maintenance Standards/Practices

Add one extra day onto the mowing interval; thus reducing the amount of mowing in a season. Evaluate and determine actual maintenance needs and schedules for upkeep of different facilities and landscape features/types. Based on needs,

evaluate resource needs (equipment, staff, etc.) and production rates of staff/equipment for the system’s regularly occurring maintenance work and prioritize maintenance program needs, schedules and relevant resource allocations.

Consider turf management strategies by turf use/wear – high intensity use and maintenance needs (such as sports fields) versus low intensity use areas such as lawns along the edge of a woodlot or roadway – there are usually areas of turf that are regularly maintained because “they have always been mowed”; by changing the maintenance strategy to not mowing or not regularly mowing such areas, less time/resources need to be dedicated to mowing overall. Naturalizing areas of lawn where you don’t need lawn is a “going green” type of practice that also reduces maintenance needs/costs.

Buildings/Facilities

- Evaluate needs and consider in-house versus contracted maintenance workers for different needed services/trades.
- Standardize equipment, fixtures, and relevant materials.
- Are some facilities in such disrepair that continuing to throw limited funding on “band-aids” no longer practical?
- In designing new facilities, are simple sustainability factors being vetted (such as orienting the building to maximize solar gain to reduce lighting and heating costs)?
- Add energy efficient fixtures, low flow water fixtures, eliminate throw away products like paper towels and replace with energy efficient hand dryers.
- Strategically locate trash and recyclable containers to reduce cost of having staff empty these and spend time picking up trash/recyclables that are not properly placed by patrons.
- Reduce cleaning frequency of office spaces and centralize trash and recyclables into one location in employee work areas to save on costs of related to housekeeping.

- Consider having staff complete multiple tasks at the same time – emptying recyclables and trash at the same time as doing rounds or inspections.
- Educate users to better utilize existing facilities and resources to cut down costs – clean up after themselves.

Equipment and Supplies

- Purchase better equipment that last longer and requires less maintenance – saving money on the front end does not always result in cost savings overall.
- Standardize equipment (such as vehicles, grounds equipment and tools, etc.) as a way to increase efficiency in training staff to use it, and as a means to simplify and reduce costs associated with parts inventory and maintenance/repair programs (ex. Mechanic places one order for 10 air filters for 1 type of lawnmower and gets bulk price from one vendor, versus ordering 10 different filters for 10 different mowers, from multiple vendors and keeping track of it all).
- Consider leasing vehicles or other heavily used equipment – it can be more cost effective for an organization to lease vehicles or equipment and rotate their fleet regularly versus allocating resources to maintain and repair aging fleets of old, well used vehicles/equipment that have higher likelihood of breakdowns and associated loss of production time.
- Use volunteers to assist with housekeeping and maintenance.
- Solicit in-kind donation of time and services in exchange for maintenance assistance

Contract Re-negotiate or Re-bid

At every opportunity, review contracts to ensure you are not paying more than you have to, or are receiving the maximum amount of revenue possible.

Cost Avoidance

An agency must maintain a position of not being everything for everyone. It must be driven by the market and stay with its core businesses. By shifting roles away from being a direct provider of facilities, programs, or services, an agency may experience additional savings. This process is referred to as *cost avoidance*. The estimated savings could be realized through partnering, outsourcing, or deferring to another provider in the provision of a service and/or facility. One example is purchasing in bulk.

Green Practices

Use light, water, and motion sensors
 Update to energy efficient ballasts, motors, appliances

Many agencies miss the easiest green practices in their everyday operating procedures and policies. These include administrative procedures, best operating standards, and sustainable stewardship performance measures. Many of the industry best practices outlined below (**Table 4**) may be currently and successfully employed by De Soto Parks and Recreation.

These funding sources are potential funding opportunities the De Soto Parks and Recreation Department *definitely would consider* for additional funding of capital and operational expenditures.

Grants

Grants often supplement or match funds that have already been received. For example, grants can be used for program purposes, information technology infrastructure, planning, design, seed money, and construction. Due to their infrequent nature, grants are often used to fund a specific venture and should not be viewed as a continuous source of funding.

General Purpose or Operating Grants

When a grant maker gives an operating grant, it can be used to support the general expenses of operating. An operating grant means the fund provider supports the overall mission and trusts that the money will be put to good use. Operating grants are generally much harder to procure than program or support grants.

Table 4: Green Practices Focus Area and Action Step

Focus Area	Action Step
Administrative	Recycle Office Trash (consolidate trash and recyclables to one common location – reduce cost to empty containers in each office) Clean offices weekly instead of daily Conserve Resources Flex Scheduling
Sustainable Stewardship	Preventative Maintenance Lead by Example Public Education - agencies should lead by example teaching the public a little bit about what green practices actually are and how they might be able to incorporate some of the same features (maybe raingardens or LED lighting) in their own home to help conserve our shared natural resources. Incorporate Stewardship Principles in all Park and Recreation Services Seek Available Grant Funding and Initiative Awards

Management or Technical Assistance Grants

Unlike most project grants, a technical assistance grant does not directly support the mission-related activities of an agency. Instead, they support management or administration and the associated fundraising, marketing, and financial management needs.

Program-Related Investments (PRIs)

In addition to grants, the Internal Revenue Service allows foundations to make loans—called Program-Related Investments (PRIs)—to nonprofits. PRIs must be for projects that would be eligible for grant support. They are usually made at low or zero interest. PRIs must be paid back to the grant maker. PRIs are often made to organizations involved in building projects.

Matching Grants

Many grant makers will provide funding only on the condition that an amount equal to the size of the grant can be raised from other sources. This type of grant is another means by which foundations can determine the viability of an organization or program.

Planning Grants

When planning a major new program, an agency may need to spend a good deal of time and money conducting research. A planning grant supports this initial project development work, which may include investigating the needs of constituents, consulting with experts in the field, or conducting research and planning activities.

Private Grant and Philanthropic Agencies

Many resources are available which provide information on private grant and philanthropic agency opportunities. A thorough investigation and research on available grants is necessary to ensure mutually compatible interests and to confirm the current status of available funding. Examples of publicly accessible resources are summarized below.

Information on current and archived Federal Register Grant Announcements can be accessed from The Grantsmanship Center (TGCI) on the Internet at: <http://www.tgci.com>.

Another resource is the Foundation Center's RFP Bulletin Grants Page on Health at: <http://foundationcenter.org>. Research www.ecivis.com for a contract provider of a web-based Grants Locator system for government and foundation grants specifically designed for local government.

Program or Support Grants

A program or support grant is given to support a specific or connected set of activities that typically have a beginning and an end, specific objectives, and predetermined costs. Listed below are some of the most common types of program or support grants:

Seed Money or Start-up Grants

These grants help a new organization or program in its first few years. The idea is to give the new effort a strong push forward, so it can devote its energy early on to setting up programs without worrying constantly about raising money. Such grants are often for more than one year, and frequently decrease in amount each year.

Naming Rights

Many agencies throughout the country have successfully sold the naming rights for newly constructed facilities or when renovating existing buildings. Additionally, newly developed and renovated parks have been successfully funded through the sale of naming rights. Generally, the cost for naming rights offsets the development costs associated with the improvement. People incorrectly assume that selling the naming rights for facilities is reserved for professional stadiums and other high profile team sport venues. This trend has expanded in recent years to include public recreation centers and facilities as viable naming rights sales opportunities.

Naming rights can be a one-time payment or amortized with a fixed payment schedule over a defined period of time. During this time, the sponsor retains the "rights" to have the park, facility, or amenity named for them. Also during this time, all publications, advertisements, events, and activities could have the sponsoring group's name as the venue.

Naming rights negotiations need to be developed by legal professionals to ensure that the contractual obligation is equitable to all agents and provides remedies to change or cancel the arrangements at any time during the agreement period.

Philanthropic

Philanthropy can be defined as the concept of voluntary giving by an individual or group to promote the common good and to improve the quality of life. Philanthropy generally takes the form of donor programs, capital campaigns, and volunteers/in-kind services.

The time commitment to initiate a philanthropic campaign can be significant. If an agency decides to implement a capital fundraising campaign and current resources that could be dedicated to such a venture are limited, it may be recommended that the agency outsource some or most of this task to a non-profit or private agency experienced in managing community-based capital fundraising campaigns. Capital campaigns should be limited to large-scale capital projects that are desired by the community but for which dedicated funding is not readily available.

Foundation/Gifts

These dollars are received from tax-exempt, non-profit organization. The funds are private donations in promotion of specific causes, activities, or issues. They offer a variety of means to fund capital projects, including capital campaigns, gifts catalogs, fundraisers, endowments, etc.

Gift Catalogs

Gift catalogs provide organizations the opportunity to let the community know what their needs are on a yearly basis. The community purchases items from the gift catalog and donates them to an agency.

Volunteer Programs/In-Kind Services

This revenue source is an indirect source in that persons donate time to assist an agency in providing a product or service on an hourly basis. This reduces cost in providing the service, plus it builds advocacy for the system. To manage a volunteer program, an agency typically dedicates a staff member to oversee the program for the entire agency.

Adopt-a-Park/Adopt-a-Trail

Programs such as adopt-a-park may be created with and supported by the residents, businesses, and/or organizations located in the park’s vicinity. These programs allow volunteers to actively assist in improving and maintaining parks, related facilities, and the community in which they live.

Neighborhood Park Watch

As a way to reduce costs associated with vandalism and other crimes against property, an agency may consider a neighborhood park watch program. This program develops community ownership of an agency’s facilities.

Recycling Centers

Some agencies and counties operate recycling centers for wood, mulch, and glass as revenue generators for their systems.

Table 5: Green Practices Focus Area and Action Step

Focus Area	Action Step
Administrative	Virtual Meetings
	Eliminate Environmentally Negative Chemicals and Materials
	Purchase better equipment and supplies that require less maintenance and are more durable

Green Practices

- Conduct energy audits
- Use solar and wind energy
- Implement green operating practices

Many agencies miss the easiest green practices in their everyday operating procedures and policies. These include administrative procedures, best operating standards, and sustainable stewardship performance measures. Many of the industry best practices outlined in **Table 5** may be considered to successfully employ by the City of De Soto.

These funding sources are potential funding opportunities the De Soto Parks and Recreation Department *could consider in the future* for additional funding of capital and operational expenditures. These funding sources may not be available currently in De Soto or an agreement may be necessary for implementation. These funding sources may meet with some resistance and be more difficult to implement.

Sin Tax

This revenue source often partially funds public park and recreation agencies and is derived from casinos, tobacco tax and/or marijuana tax (where legalized). Sin tax revenue is somewhat popular in many states (where it is legal) with high traffic tourism agencies and with cities, counties, and state parks. Special Districts many times cannot exact sin taxes, which often calls into question the issue of charging resident and non-resident fee differentials.

Local Improvement Districts

Different from cities that are direct beneficiaries of these funds, Special Districts (or local improvement districts) are the beneficiaries of pass-through funding from cities or counties, which have responsibility for their interests. Special Districts cannot exact or collect the land dedication or the fee-in-lieu on their own.

Full Faith and Credit Bonds

Bonds that are payable from the general resources of the agency. They are not tied to a specific revenue source, but the payment of principle and interest uses available operating funds.

Fundraising

Many park and recreation agencies have special fundraisers on an annual basis to help cover specific programs and capital projects. This can include selling bricks, benches, pavers, tiles, and commemorative tree plantings, etc.

Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding is the practice of funding a project or venture by raising many small amounts of money from a large number of people, typically via the Internet. Park and Recreation agencies are beginning to incorporate crowdfunding efforts alongside traditional fundraising strategies. NRPA has implemented a Fund Your Park crowdfunding platform. It's free to members, donations are tax deductible and you have all the support you need from NRPA staff. *Source: Kara Kish, MPA, CPRE, CPSI, article in Parks and Recreation Magazine, December 2015. www.NRPA.org*

Gifts in Perpetuity

Irrevocable Remainder Trusts

These trusts are set up with individuals who typically have more than a million dollars in wealth. They will leave a portion of their wealth to an agency in a trust fund that allows the fund to grow over a period of time and then is available to use a portion of the interest to support specific park and recreation facilities or programs that are designated by the trustee.

Life Estates

This revenue source is available when someone wants to leave their property to an agency in exchange for their continued residence on the property until their death. An agency can usually use a portion of the property for park and recreational purposes, and then use all of it after the person's death. This revenue source is very popular for individuals who have a lot of wealth and their estate will be highly taxed at their death. Their benefactors will have to sell their property because of probate costs. Life Estates allow individuals to receive a good yearly tax deduction on their property while leaving property for the community. Agencies benefit because they do not have to pay for the land.

Maintenance Endowments

Maintenance Endowments are set up for organizations and individuals to invest in ongoing maintenance improvements, and infrastructure needs of specific/targeted facilities. Endowments retain money from user fees, individual gifts, impact fees, development rights, partnerships, conservation easements, and for wetland mitigations.

Raffling

Some agencies offer annual community raffles, such as purchasing an antique car that can be raffled off in contests.

Capital Improvement Fees

These fees are on top of the set user rate for accessing facilities such as sport and tournament venues and are used to support capital improvements that benefit the user of the facility.

Development Surcharge/Fee

Some agencies have added a surcharge on every transaction, admission, or registration to generate an improvement or development fund.

Dog Park Fees

These fees are attached to kennel clubs who pay for the rights to have dog park facilities for their own exclusive use. Fees are on the dogs themselves and/or on the people who take care of other people's dogs.

Flexible Fee Strategies

This pricing strategy would allow an agency to maximize revenues during peak times and premium sites/areas with higher fees and to fill in excess capacity during low use times with lower fees to maximize play.

Lighting Fees

Some agencies charge additional fees for lighting as it applies to leagues, special use sites, and special facilities that allow play after daylight hours. This fee may include utility demand charges.

Parking Fee

This fee applies to parking at selected destination facilities such as sports complexes, stadiums,

and other attractions to help offset capital and operational cost. Fees may be charged for after-hours overnight usage of parking facilities or for storage at parking facilities with excess space.

Processing/Convenience Fees

This is a surcharge or premium placed on electronic transfers of funds, automatic payments, or other conveniences.

Recreation Service Fee

The Recreation Service Fee is a dedicated user fee that can be established by a local ordinance or other government procedure for the purpose of constructing and maintaining recreation facilities. The fee can apply to all organized activities that require a reservation of some type, or other purposes as defined by an agency. Examples of such generally accepted activities that are assigned a service fee include adult basketball, volleyball, and softball leagues; youth baseball, soccer, and softball leagues; and special interest classes. The fee, above and beyond the user fee, allows participants to contribute toward the construction and/or maintenance of the facilities being used.

Recreation Surcharge Fees on Sports and Entertainment Tickets, Classes, MasterCard, Visa

This fee is a surcharge on top of the regular sports revenue fee or convenience fee for use of MasterCard and Visa. The fee usually is no more than \$5.00 and is usually \$3.00 on all exchanges. The money earned would be used to help pay off the costs of improvements or for operational purposes.

Residency Cards

Non-residents may purchase "residency" on an annual basis for the privilege of receiving the resident discounts on fees, charges, tours, shows, reservations, and other benefits typically afforded to residents only. The resident cards can range in price, but are often at least equivalent to what a resident pays in taxes annually to support operations, maintenance, and debt service.

Real Estate Transfer – Tax/Assessment/Fee

As agencies expand, the need for infrastructure improvements continues to grow. Since parks and recreation facilities add value to neighborhoods and communities, some agencies have turned to real estate transfer tax/assessment/fee to help pay for acquisition and needed renovations. Usually transfer tax/assessment/fee amount is a percentage on the total sale of the property and is assessed each time the property transfers to a new owner. Some states have laws prohibiting or restricting the institution, increase, or application of this tax/assessment/fee.

Room Overrides on Hotels for Sports Tournaments and Special Events

Agencies have begun to keep a percentage of hotel rooms reservation fees that are booked when the agency hosts a major sports tournament or special event. The overrides are usually \$5.00 to \$10.00 depending on the type of room. Monies collected would help offset operational costs for hosting the events.

Security and Clean-Up Fees

An agency may charge groups and individuals security and clean-up fees for special events other type of events held at facilities.

Self-Insurance Surcharge

Some agencies have added a surcharge on every transaction, admission, or registration to generate a self-insured liability fund.

Signage Fees

This revenue source charges people and businesses with signage fees at key locations with high visibility for short-term events. Signage fees may range in price from \$25-\$100 per sign based on the size of the sign and location.

Trail Fee

These fees are used for access to closed bike trails to support operational costs. Fees for bike trails are typically \$35 to \$50 a year. This arrangement works for bike trails if the conditions of dedicated use, fencing for control, and continuous patrolling/monitoring are in place. Multi-purpose trails that are totally open for public use without these

conditions in place make it difficult to charge fees and are nearly impossible to monitor.

Utility Roundup Programs

Some park and recreation agencies have worked with local utilities on a round up program whereby a consumer can pay the difference between their bill and the next highest even dollar amount as a donation to the agency. Ideally, these monies would be used to support utility improvements such as sports lighting, irrigation cost, and HVAC costs.

Concession Management

Concession management is the retail sale or rental of soft goods, hard goods, or consumable items. Through contracting, the agency either receives a percentage of the gross sales or the net revenue dollars from the revenue above direct expenses. Net proceeds are generally more difficult to monitor.

Merchandising Sales or Services

This revenue source comes from the public or private sector on resale items from gift shops, pro-shops, restaurants, concessions, and coffee shops for either all of the sales or a defined percentage of the gross sales. Typically, agencies engage in this type of service as a convenience to their patrons and as a means of enhancing overall operational cost recovery.

Private Concessionaires

Contracts with private sector concessionaires provide resources to operate desirable recreational activities. These services are typically financed, constructed, and operated by a private business or a non-profit organization with additional compensation paid to an agency.

Booth Lease Space

Some agencies sell booth space to sidewalk vendors in parks or at special events for a flat rate or based on volume of product sold. The booth space can also be used for sporting events and tournaments.

Catering Permits and Services

This is a license to allow caterers to work in the system on a permit basis with a set fee or percentage of food sales returning to the agency. Also, many agencies have their own catering service or an authorized provider list and receive a percentage of dollars from the sale of food.

Land Swaps

An agency may trade property to improve access or protection of resources. This could include a property gain by the agency for non-payment of taxes or a situation where a developer needs a larger or smaller space to improve its profitability. The agency would typically gain more property for more recreation opportunities in exchange for the land swap.

Leasebacks on Recreational Facilities

Many agencies do not have adequate capital dollars to build desired revenue-producing facilities. One option is to hire a private investor to build the facility according to the specifications requested with the investment company financing the project. An agency would then lease the property back from the investor over 20+ years. This can be reversed whereby an agency builds the facility and leases to a private management company who then operates the property for a percentage of gross dollars to pay off the construction loans through a subordinate lease.

Licensing Rights

This revenue source allows an agency to license its name on all resale items that private or public vendors use when they sell clothing or other items with its agency's name on it. The normal licensing fee is 6 to 10 percent of the cost of the resale item.

Manufacturing Product Testing and Display or Research

An agency may work with specific manufacturers to test their products in a park, recreation facility, or in a program or service. The agency may test the product under normal conditions and report the results back to the manufacturer. Examples include lighting, playground equipment, tires on vehicles, mowers, irrigation systems, seed & fertilizers, etc. The agency may receive the product for free

but must pay for the costs of installation and for tracking results. Research Fees may be charged to allow research to occur on park lands or related to equipment used at Parks. Companies may pay to have their equipment installed and tested to prove durability and user satisfaction. Product Placement fees may also be an option – having a company not only donate their equipment but also pay a fee to have their equipment used at a public facility.

Private Developers

Developers may lease land through a subordinate lease that pays out a set dollar amount plus a percentage of gross dollars for recreation enhancements. These could include sports complexes and recreation centers.

Sale of Development Rights

Some agencies sell their development rights below park ground or along trails to utility companies. The agency would receive a yearly fee on a linear foot basis. This type of activity would be dependent on grant restrictions on property purchased with grant funding.

Sale of Mineral Rights

Many agencies sell mineral rights under parks, including water, oil, natural gas, and other by products, for revenue purposes.

Special Use Permits

Special permits allow individuals to use specific park property for financial gain. The agency receives either a set amount of money or a percentage of the gross service provided.

Subordinate Easements – Recreation/Natural Area Easements

This revenue source is available when an agency allows utility companies, businesses, or individuals to develop some type of an improvement above ground or below ground on its property. Subordinate easements are typically arranged over a set period of time, with a set dollar amount that is allocated to the agency on an annual basis.

Land Trusts

Many agencies have developed land trusts to help secure and fund the cost of acquiring land that needs to be preserved and protected for greenway purposes. This may also be a good source for the acquisition of future lands.

Positive Cash Flow

Depending on how aggressively an agency incorporates marketing and management strategies, there may be a positive fund balance at the end of each year. While current facilities, projections, and fee policies do not anticipate a positive cash flow, the climate can change. The ending positive balance could be used, for example, to establish a maintenance endowment for agency recreation facilities, to set aside funds

for capital replacement and/or repair, or to generate a fund balance for contingency or new programming opportunities.

Green Practices

Use electric and hybrid vehicles
Use greywater

Many agencies miss the easiest green practices in their everyday operating procedures and policies. These include administrative procedures, best operating standards, and sustainable stewardship performance measures. Many of the industry best practices outlined below (**Table 6**) may eventually be successfully employed by your agency.

Table 6: Green Practices Focus Area and Action Step

Focus Area	Action Step
Operating Standards	Reduce Driving LEED® Design Principles
Sustainable Stewardship	Re-analyze and Revised Practices and Standards Monitor and Report Results

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III. THE PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM IN DE SOTO: INVENTORY AND LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

A. INVENTORY

Park System Summary

City Owned & Operated Parks:	County Owned & City Operated Parks:	County Owned & Operated (used by De Soto Residents):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Miller Park Widow Big Knife Park Riverfest Park Wilderness Park Commerce and Lexington (Future Park) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sunflower Park Ball Fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kill Creek Park 95th Street Trail Head & Kill Creek Streamway Dog Park Lexington Lake Park

Scale used to evaluate the physical condition of each amenity:

- Poor: needs repaired or replaced
- Good: serves the intended purpose
- Excellent: like-new condition

Refer to **Appendix B** for larger version of the Park matrix as well as Park Resource and Trails maps.

		Park Amenities																		
Park Name	Address	Trail Length (Miles)	Acreage	Diamond Ballfields	Rectangular Ballfields	Sand Volleyball Courts	Outdoor Basketball Courts	Tennis Courts	Horseshoe Pits	Stage/Amphitheater	Bathing Cage	Water Fountains	Restrooms	Archery/Shooting Range	Boat Ramps/ Marina	Fishing Docks	Swimming Beach	Tent Camping Campsites	Rain Garden	
Miller Park	83rd and Ferry	10	0.35	2	3	0	1	1	2	2	1	1	3	4	1	5	0	0	0	0
Widow Big Knife Park	7560 Edgerton Rd	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Riverfest Park	33440 W. 79th	50	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0
Wilderness Park	13205 Evening Star Rd	67	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Commerce & Lexington - Future	Commerce & Lexington	7	0.18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sunflower Park - Owned by Johnson County	37515 W. 103rd St	6	1.23	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kill Creek Park - Owned by Johnson County	11670 S Homestead Ln	884	13.5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	1	8	0	1	1	1	0
Kill Creek Streamway Dog Park & 95th St. Trail Head - Owned by Johnson County	33460 W 95th St	16	0.88	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Lexington Lake Park - Owned by Johnson County	9000 Sunflower Rd	456	3.1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	0	1	1	0	0
Cedar Creek Boat Ramp- Owned by Johnson County	Access Rd	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total		1534	19.2	5	5	0	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	8	13	7	15	2	2	4

* Acreage & Trail length data taken from GIS or from DeSoto/Johnson County Online Parks Descriptions

Miller Park

10 Acres
83rd and Ferry

Assessment of Amenities and Physical Condition

Miller Park			
Quantity	Amenity	Condition	Notes
1	Sand Volleyball Court	Good	Sand court- tension boundary lines would be a good addition
1	Memorial Monument sign and Waterfall	Excellent	
1	Restroom Building and Concession Stand	Good	ADA Accessible, 1 Men & 1 Women stall- additional stalls would be beneficial during ball games
1	Outdoor Basketball Court	Good	
1	Fenced in Tennis Courts	Good	
2	Playground Areas	North: Good condition South: Poor condition	South Play Area is not ADA Accessible
3	Baseball Diamonds	A, B, and C Diamonds: Good	
2	Horseshoe Pits	Good	Well-shaded area, out of the way way of others
1	Concrete Amphitheater Space	Good	
1	Picnic Shelter	Good	
1	Shaded Picnic Area	Excellent	New, ADA Accessible with ADA Seating at table
1	Pergola	Good	Nice landscaping but no seating
5	Charcoal Grills	Good	Plenty of Grills
4	ADA Accessible Water Fountains	Poor	
1	Batting Cage	Good	
2	Parking Lots	Good	82 offsite parking spaces
	Large Lawn Area	Good/Poor	Condition dependent on weather: floods during rain events
	Ball Field Lighting	Good	"A" Field updated to Musco "B" Field needs updated to Musco "C" Field No Lighting
	Security Lighting	Excellent	Plenty of light fixtures throughout park
	Benches and Trash Cans	Good	Plenty of seating and trash cans throughout park
	Sidewalks and Pathways	Good	ADA Accessible throughout park
	Trees	Good	Large/mature shade trees

Future Considerations & Recommendations

- The sand volleyball court could benefit from boundary lines/ropes.
- Additional sand volleyball courts would be highly used based on usage of current court.
- Add additional stalls in the restroom facility- during peak game times 1 stall for each gender is insufficient.
- Fixing the drainage problems within the lawn area of the park would be very beneficial. This space could be highly utilized if it did not flood often.

Wilderness Park

13205 Evening Star Rd

67 Acres

Assessment of Amenities and Physical Condition

Wilderness Park			
Quantity	Amenity	Condition	Notes
1	Shooting Range & Shelter	Poor	Functional but dilapidated
1	Gravel Parking Area	Good	Seems to be untouched

- Permitted activities:
 - Fishing
 - Camping
 - Horseback Riding
 - Shooting range with written permit

Future Considerations & Recommendations

- Needs an entry sign, or something to identify that you have arrived at a De Soto owned park.

Better access or pathways through the park ground would be beneficial. As of now everything is gated off, with access only along one edge. The addition of ATV and dirt bike trails on the park property would be an added amenity for the community.

Widow Big Knife Park

7560 Edgerton Rd

38 Acres

Assessment of Amenities and Physical Condition

Undeveloped park land with river frontage: **Good condition**, contains both forested area and pasture land

- Currently rented to an archery club

Future Considerations & Recommendations

- Needs an entry sign, or something to identify that you have arrived at a De Soto owned park.
- Could be an excellent location for an adventure park with zip lines/ ropes courses/ etc.

Commerce & Lexington Future Park Site

7 Acres

Assessment of Amenities and Physical Condition

Commerce and Lexington Future Park Site			
Quantity	Amenity	Condition	Notes
1	Paved Trail	Good	
	Wooded Area	Good	Seems to be untouched

Future Considerations & Recommendations

- Needs an entry sign, or something to identify that you have arrived at a De Soto owned park.
- Adding exercise equipment or skateboard rails/jumps along the trail could increase usage.

Sunflower Ball Fields

37515 W. 103rd St.

6 Acres

Assessment of Amenities and Physical Condition

Sunflower Ball Fields			
Quantity	Amenity	Condition	Notes
2	Baseball Diamonds	Good	North Diamond: Pitching mound, scoreboard No ADA path or seating to field South Diamond: Pitching mound No ADA seating or scoreboard
2	Water Fountains	Excellent	New and ADA accessible
	Parking Lot	Poor	Needs new curb stops and restriped. No ADA accessible path from parking to seating at ball fields. Plenty of parking spaces
	Lighting	Good	Security Lighting Poor (Only 1 and not working) Ball field Lights outdated but working
1	Access Point to Paved Trail	Good	
1	Restroom Facility	Excellent	Like New, Very Clean 2 Toilets for Each Gender
1	Concession Stand	Poor	Very rundown, needs replaced
	Trash Cans	Good	Plenty of them
	Bleachers	Poor	Rusty, no handrails, no ADA Spots
	Batting Cage	Good	

Future Considerations & Recommendations

- Needs an entry sign, or something to identify that you have arrived at a De Soto leased park.

Riverfest Park

33440 W. 79th
50 Acres

Assessment of Amenities and Physical Condition

Riverfest Park			
Quantity	Amenity	Condition	Notes
1	Open lawn used for sports field	Good	Also used as parking for events
2	Portable restrooms year round	Good	Poor Lighting
1	Solar lighting panel	Good	
	Boat ramp	Good	
	Playground	Good	Not ADA accessible since there is no pathway to it
2	Picnic Area	Good	Not ADA accessible since the concrete pads are elevated
	Information Signage	Excellent	
	Water Fountain	Good	Functions as needed, more fountains could benefit the park
	Above ground electrical equipment	Good	but not visually pleasing
1	Gravel Trail	Good	
1	Paved Sidewalk loop	Good	
1	Performance Stage	Good	
1	Lawn for Performance Seating	Good	Partly Shaded
1	Abandoned park entrance building	Poor	Boarded up and not in use
1	Rain Garden	Good	With good informational signage
	Parking	Poor Condition	Only 4 defined parking spaces (all of which are ADA)
7	Security Light Fixtures	Good Condition	Not enough throughout the park- currently only have lights on festival frontage area, and west concrete loop.

Future Considerations & Recommendations

- Needs an entry sign, or something to identify that you have arrived at a De Soto owned park.
- Needs better access from town to the park. It is currently dangerous to walk or ride along the 2-lane road that curves and crosses rail tracks.

Lexington Lake Park

9000 Sunflower Rd
456 Acres

Assessment of Amenities and Physical Condition

Lexington Lake Park			
Quantity	Amenity	Condition	Notes
1	Entry Sign	Excellent	
1	Fishing Lake	Excellent	
1.6 Miles	Paved Trail	Excellent	
1.5 Miles	Soft Trail	Good	
2	Parking Lots	Excellent	Provides Proper ADA Accessibility
1	Boat Ramp	Excellent	
1	Fishing Dock	Excellent	Provides Proper ADA Accessibility
1	Water Fountain with Dog Bowl	Excellent	
1	ADA Accessible Water Fountain	Excellent	
1	Playground	Excellent	New equipment with ADA compliant rubber surfacing
1	Shade Canopy with Bench	Excellent	Provides shaded seating for playground
1	Picnic Shelter	Excellent	ADA accessible pathway and seating
2	Charcoal Grills	Excellent	Like New

Future Considerations & Recommendations

This park contains land that would be useable as soccer practice fields that could benefit the De Soto Parks and Recreational league.



Kill Creek Park

11670 S Homestead Ln
884 Acres

Assessment of Amenities and Physical Condition

Kill Creek Park			
Quantity	Amenity	Condition	Notes
1	Entry Sign	Excellent	Wayfinding signage and entry monument are noticeable
1	Swimming Beach	Good	Has Lifeguard Stands
1	Fishing Dock	Good	ADA Accessible
	Trail Access Points	Good	Well-Marked/Visible
1	Boat Ramp & Marina	Good	Rental Equipment: Canoes, Peddle Boats, Fishing Boats
1	Playground	Excellent	ADA Accessible
4	Picnic Shelters	Excellent	ADA Accessible with ADA Seating
4	Drinking Fountains	Good	ADA Accessible
8	Charcoal Grills	Good	
5	Parking Lots	Excellent	Provides ADA Accessibility
1	Restroom Facility	Good	Clean and Well-Functioning but dark
1.5 Miles	Paved Trails	Excellent	
12 Miles	Soft Multi-Use Trails	Good	
1	Off-Leash Dog Park	Good	
	95 th Street Trail Head	Good	Plenty of parking, portable restroom facility available

Future Considerations & Recommendations

More consistent hours of operation for rentals & swim beach, as well as better communication of these hours would greatly benefit the usage of this park.



Aquatics Center

32905 West 84th St.

Assessment of Amenities and Physical Condition

Aquatics Center	
Quantity	Amenity
6	Lap Lanes
1	Vortex Pool
1	Large Slide
2	Kiddie Slide
2	Water Play Equipment
1	Climbing Wall
2	Beach Entry Pools
6	Shade Structures/Umbrellas
1	Locker Room Facility
1	Party Room
1	Concession Stand
1	Storage Building
Aquatics Center Events	
	Swim Free Days
	Doggy Swim Day
	Evening Swim Nights
	4 th of July Party

Future Considerations & Recommendations

A “Dive-In” event could be a popular event, which consists of projecting a movie on a large screen, allowing people to float in the pool while watching.



Community Center

32905 West 84th St.

Assessment of Amenities and Physical Condition

Community Center		
Amenity	Condition	Notes
Senior Center	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Catering Kitchen - Tables and Chairs - Room Divider Walls - Room Rented Out - No alcohol allowed - Not ideal flooring for fitness classes - Used for Tae-Kwon-Do
Fitness Room	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mirrors and Free Weights - Kids Play Room with Foam Floor and Toys
Arts Room	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rented by the Arts Council (Non-profit group) - Sink and Counter
Basement/Storage Room	Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asbestos filled storage room
Upstairs	Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asbestos filled rooms - Ceilings are falling in - Tiles and walls crumbling - Water damage from roof
Shop	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parks Shop Facility – Limited Space - Street Department’s Sign shop/storage- Limited Space - Water Department Offices: Asbestos tile and chalk-boards
Gymnasium:	Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full court floor & basketball hoops - Water damage causing warping on court - Floor is nearing the end of its life and will need replaced within a few years
Locker Rooms:	Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Used for sports equipment storage - Not suitable for use as functional locker/shower rooms

Future Considerations & Recommendations

Renovate more space in the Community Center for use as fitness rooms, dance or gymnastics studios.

B. LEVEL OF SERVICE ASSESSMENT

Level of Service Gaps

The east border of De Soto City Limits has no level of service to parks and facilities. This means that these residents are outside of the 3-mile radius from any neighborhood, community or regional park. Between downtown De Soto and the east side residential area, there is a buffer of agricultural land. It would be beneficial to all residents of east De Soto if a park was added east of the agricultural buffer, to better serve them. If land acquisition prevents a park being added in this area, focus should be directed towards adding trails so that these residents have better non-vehicular access to other parks & amenities near downtown De Soto. Refer to **Appendix C** for Level of Service map demonstrating the level of service of parks.

C. FACILITY ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Signage and/or entry monuments are not present at many of the parks.

The parks missing entry sign include: Wilderness Park, Widow Big Knife Park, Commerce & Lexington (future park), Sunflower Park – Ball Field entrance, and Riverfest Park

There is a need for soccer fields. None of the parks in the study area contain formal soccer fields. Many of the areas that are set up for soccer seasonally are prone to frequent flooding, have no lighting, and have no seating.

Drainage problems exist in Miller Park. The flooding of the lawn space in Miller Park seems to be a key item that residents would like fixed.

There is no safe access from town to Riverfest Park. A sidewalk or path could greatly benefit the day-to-day use of Riverfest park by creating a safe way for residents to access it. Currently, users must walk along the 2-lane road that curves and crosses rail tracks twice.

Communication of Facility & Park hours, amenities provided there etc. Many residents indicate that they can't keep track of what is offered, since hours don't seem consistent or well publicized.

Need for more fitness rooms/dance or gymnastic studios. The current community center has a lot of unused space but would need major renovations to make these spaces suitable for additional classes.

Need for connectivity of trails. There are many trails in the area, however none of them directly connect to each other. Residents would love to see trail connectivity further east, to tie into existing Johnson County/Lenexa trails.

Implementation of Riverfest Master Plan. Residents are hesitant to support other parks being added/renovated until they see the master plan for Riverfest Park implemented.

IV. KEY ISSUES

A. KEY ISSUES TRIANGULATION MATRIX

Key issues and themes for focus were identified using a number of tools, including review of existing plans and documents, focus groups, stakeholder meetings, a community survey, Leadership interviews, inventory and level of service analysis, and staff/project team input. The information gathered from these sources was evaluated, and the recommendations and action plans were developed and are listed in the following section.

The findings are summarized on the **Key Issues Matrix**, which captures all of the key issues that surfaced during the Master Plan process and prioritizes them on one matrix. The key issues were placed into four categories on the matrix:

- a) Priority
- b) Opportunity to Improve
- Left Blank means the issue did not come up or wasn't addressed in that venue

The qualitative data planning tools used to determine the priority of key issues include:

1. Consultant team's expertise
2. Staff input
3. Public forum input
4. Leadership Interviews

The quantitative data planning tools used to determine the priority of the key issues include:

1. Community Survey
2. Existing planning documents
3. Facility Assessment / LOS

The Key Issues Matrix summarizes the areas that need immediate attention and determine the direction of the implementation of recommendations in the Master Plan. The planning process vetted out key issues in four key areas as summarized in the following matrix.



Data Parks and Recreation Master Plan  Key Issue - Rating Scale a - priority b - opportunity to improve c - minor or future issue blank means the issue didn't come up or wasn't addressed	Qualitative Data				Quantitative Data		
	Consultant Team	Staff Input	Public Input	Leadership Interviews	Community Survey	Other City Documents	Facility Assessment/LOS
Organizational							
Improve ADA accessibility for all facilities & activities	a	a	a	a		a	a
Improve WiFi Connectivity	a	a	a			a	
Greater access to information about what parks & recreation department does	a	a				a	a
Staff/Coach/Volunteer/Referee Training, Incentives & Organization	b		a			a	
Increase awareness of programs, services, amenities, & hours	b					a	a
Perceived lack of partnerships/communication with local agencies & businesses		b	a				a
Great inequity in rental rates	a	a					
Improve communication around youth sports	c					a	
Need longer/late hours of operation (pool)						a	
Better use of technology (ex. Mobile app) & social media (Twitter)	a						
Programs & Service Delivery							
Teenagers, Young Adults, & Seniors identified as underserved populations	a	a		a		a	a
More offerings of unique community events (5ks, Movie in the Park, etc.)	a	a	b	a		a	a
Wider diversity of unique program offerings such as cultural & artistic classes	a	a				a	a
Need better marketing of programs & events	a	a	a				
Timely & consistent communication about programs	a	a	a				
Need additional (&/or backup) fitness instructors	a	a					
Need evening fitness & program hours		c				a	
Need better youth sports organization & structure			b				
Swimming lessons often full			c				
Facilities & Amenities							
Need for connectivity of trails	a	a	a	a		a	a
Need additional sports fields (especially for soccer)	a	a	a			a	a
Aging infrastructure & amenities inhibits services (*included)	a	a	b	a		a	a
Restrooms - Need Improvements & Additional Facilities in Parks *	a	a	a	a		a	
Increase availability for indoor space for athletics	a	a	a			a	a
Need for more fitness rooms/dance or gymnastics studio	a	a	a			a	a
Practice fields in need of repair *	a	b				a	a
Additional lighting (athletic fields &/or courts) *	b	a	c			a	a
More Parking (esp. at Miller Park)	a	a	a			a	
Develop Riverfest Park	a	a		a			a
Need to develop Wilderness Park, Widow Big Knife Park, Lexington & Commerce property	a	a				a	a
Playground equipment outdated		a	b			a	a
Improve entrance & wayfinding signage/monuments at entrance of parks	a	a	b	b			
Need adventure/unique elements at parks	b		a			a	
Finance							
Need additional funding sources	a	a	a			a	
Create value & equity in User Fees	a	a				a	
Need donations for park projects	a	a	a				

V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION PLANS

A. RECOMMENDATIONS

After analyzing the issues that resulted from this process, including the Key Issues Matrix, qualitative and quantitative data, inventory of existing assets, Level of Service analyses, citizen survey, staff and leadership input, stakeholder and public input, a variety of recommended goals and objectives were developed to provide guidance for the improvement of parks, recreation facilities and trails in De Soto. These recommendations focus on enhancing public recreation in the city through improvements to existing park facilities and recreation amenities, increased organizational efficiency, improved programming and service delivery, and expanded financial opportunities.

GOAL 1: IMPROVE & UPDATE EXISTING PARKS AND FACILITIES

Objective 1.1: Maintain and upgrade Existing Facilities Standards

1.1.a. Update Aging Infrastructure

With the limited number of De Soto Parks, many parks are highly used which leads to the deterioration of infrastructure and equipment. It is recommended that the items listed in the Low Scoring Amenity Matrix (Staff Document) for Miller Park, Wilderness Park, Sunflower Park and the Community Center be updated. These updates will help with functionality and ADA accessibility in existing parks.

1.1.b. Improve ADA accessibility

An analysis of current accessibility through parks and facilities should be completed to determine where improvements are needed. The list of improvements in the ADA Transition Plan should be broken up into categories for short-term, mid-

term, and long-term phases that the City of De Soto can plan and appropriately allocate budget for improvements each year.

1.1.c. Implement Riverfest Master Plan

To increase usage of Riverfest Park, it is recommended that the appropriate budget be allocated to implement the remainder of the planned design for Riverfest Park. De Soto residents have requested places to camp, paved drives, permanent restrooms, additional parking, additional sand volleyball courts, and additional trails which Riverfest Park could provide if fully implemented.

1.1.d. Repurpose & Refinish Indoor Fitness Spaces

Residents of De Soto recognize that there is unused space within the City Hall building, that could be beneficial for additional programs. It is recommended that rooms are refinished, and repurposed for additional fitness studios, dance lessons or other programs. Repurposing rooms in the basement (near the existing fitness studio) should be priority, before refinishing the rooms in the upper levels of the building.

1.1.e. Install & Improve Restroom Facilities in Parks

Restrooms facilities in existing parks are important to De Soto residents. A priority for the City of De Soto should be to install permanent restrooms in Riverfest Park, that are well-lit for safety and nighttime use during events. Additional improvements to restroom facilities would be to add more stalls within Miller Park, as there is currently only one stall for each gender. As unused and future parks are developed, permanent restrooms should be a consideration.

1.1.f. Install New Entrance and Wayfinding Signage at all City Owned Parks

The De Soto City Parks do not currently have consistent signage and wayfinding in place. It is recommended that an entry monument and wayfinding sign be designed, that can be customized and implemented at the entrance of each City Owned Park. The entry and wayfinding sign at Lexington Lake (Johnson County Owned) could be used as an example.

1.1.g. Fix Drainage Problems

Miller Park is highly used and cherished by De Soto Residents, although it has ongoing drainage issues that affect sports practices and events held in the park. Fixing these drainage issues is a necessary improvement, to ensure the continued use of the lawn space within Miller Park.

1.1.h. Install Additional Amenities in Existing Parks & Facilities

Prior to developing new parks, De Soto Residents would appreciate additional the following additional amenities be added to existing facilities.

- Within Miller Park, there is a need for additional parking, an additional shelter, updated play equipment and irrigation on existing sports fields.
- Parking lots additions are recommended in the NE Corner, doubling the size of the current lot near the tennis courts, as well as installing a new parking lot in the SW corner of Miller Park near the old pool building.
- Residents of De Soto indicate using the shelter in Miller Park frequently and therefore would like an additional shelter to be added for events.
- It is recommended that the oldest play equipment in the northern playground of Miller Park be replaced with more modern play structures.
- Improve outdoor recreation access for fishing
- In addition to the improvements of amenities at Miller Park, there is a desire for an additional water feature/attraction at the Aquatic Center.

Objective 1.2: Improve Connectivity of Trails

Trail Guidelines/Standards include the order of preference of trail types:

1. Multipurpose Recreational Trails
2. Hard surface 8-10 feet wide
3. Soft surface 6-8 feet wide
4. Sidewalks 4-6 feet wide
5. On street bike lanes only considered if options #1 or #2 cannot exist

Refer to the Trails Map in the **Appendix C** for recommended trail connections. Recommendations for future trails are broken into: planned construction, short-term, medium-term, and long-term.

1.2.a. Finish Construction of Western Trail

A trail from the De Soto school facilities, west to Lexington Lake is planned for construction beginning in 2019.

1.2.b./1.2.c. Short-term connections include:

Installation of a city-owned trail from downtown De Soto to Riverfest Park, to safely cross railroad tracks, and be separated from vehicular traffic along the narrow road. A connection between the dead-end trail south of the 95th Street Trail Head and Kill Creek Park should be a short-term goal for Johnson County.

1.2.d./1.2.e. Medium-term connections include:

Installation of a sidewalk along Kill Creek Road from 83rd St. to K-10, as well as an 8' asphalt trail from the intersection of 83rd St. and Kill Creek Road, to Corliss Rd. These connections will provide safe access to downtown from residential neighborhoods in the east area of De Soto.

1.2.f. Long-term connections include: Installation of a soft-surface recreational trail along the river, from Riverfest Park, through Widow Big Knife Park, and connecting into the current trails at Lexington Lake.

Objective 1.3: Build Additional Sports Fields

1.3.a. Add 4 Rectangular Sports Fields

Within the existing De Soto City Parks there is not currently a dedicated location for rectangular practices and games. It is highly recommended that the City begins looking for additional park land to build sports fields on. The priority should be in adding rectangular fields with irrigation, fencing, lighting, concession/restroom, parking, path, etc.

1.3.b. Add 5 Diamond Sports Fields

After the rectangular needs are addressed, the City should re-evaluate the need for additional diamond fields with 300' fencing for other sports. The priority should be in adding rectangular fields with irrigation, fencing, lighting, concession/restroom, parking, path, etc.

Objective 1.4. : Develop Master Plans for Existing Unused Parks & Future Parks

1.4.a. Widow Big Knife Park

Widow Big Knife Park currently leases land to the Prairie Traditional Archers Club, but is not used for City of De Soto parks or recreation activities. It is recommended that a Master Plan is completed for this park to explore programming options and site layouts that use the property to its full extent. Since this park is partially forested, it provides opportunity for adventure park amenities such as zip lines, ropes courses, obstacle courses, bike trails, etc.

1.4.b. Wilderness Park

Wilderness Park is currently underutilized, since it is further out of De Soto city limits than most residents prefer to travel for every-day park amenities. The current programming includes a shooting range that can be used by the public, and gravel parking areas. Camping and horseback riding are also permitted uses in this park, although there are no physical amenities that cater to those uses. It is recommended that the City of De Soto decide if this park is worth keeping in their park system or returning the land to the federal government. If the park remains in the De Soto park system, it is recommended that this

property become the location of many outdoor sport activities such as the following: Clay-pigeon shooting range, archery range, ATV trails/course, horseback riding trails, and camping. A Master Plan should be completed before implementation of new programming takes place.

1.4.c. Lexington & Commerce Parcel

The City of De Soto already owns the parcel at the intersection of Lexington & Commerce, to be used as a future park. A Master Plan should be completed to explore programming options and site layouts to best utilize the space. It could be beneficial to use an online survey during this process, to solicit feedback from residents on amenities that they would like to see located in that park.

GOAL 2: CONTINUE TO IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

Objective 2.1: Upgrade Organizational Standards

2.1.a. Prepare ADA Transition Plan for all Parks and Facilities

To meet federal ADA regulations, preparing an ADA Transition Plan is recommended. An analysis of current accessibility through parks and facilities should be completed to determine where improvements are needed. The list of improvements should be broken up into categories for short-term, mid-term, and long-term phases that the City of De Soto can plan and appropriately allocate budget for each year.

2.1.b. Improve WiFi connectivity in parks/ facilities

Consider cost/benefit of Wi-Fi connectivity in parks and facilities as an added value to patrons. Parents can stay during their kids activities and check their emails and get work done rather than drop them off.

2.1.c. Clarify Mission, Vision, Values

Clarify mission statement, values, and vision of the City and display publicly at all facilities to tell the story of department's dedication to quality. This can also include online exposure with social media.

2.1.d. Redefine Park Advisory Board bylaws, roles, duties

The main responsibility of the Park Board, according to Section 12-301 of the City Code, is to “review and study the operation, maintenance, improvement and expansion of all park land and facilities in the city.” Previous planning documents and informational interviews reveal the importance of keeping the Park Board focused on long-range planning rather than day to day operations. The Park Board can assist city staff by providing recommendations for planning efforts of future city parks and facilities.

According to the Section 12-301 of the City Code, the Park Board:

- Consists of seven members, appointed by the mayor with the approval of the city council. No Terms are specified.
- A member of the governing body should be selected to serve as a non-voting ex-officio member of the park board for a term of one year.
- Duties include review and study the operation, maintenance, improvements and expansion of all park land and recreation facilities in the city
- The park board shall develop and recommend to the governing body a long-range plan for the future development of city parks and other recreation facilities and participate in all discussions on modification of the park and recreation element of the city’s comprehensive plan.

As indicated in the Strategic Plan, Objective AM 1.1C, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan should address the form and function of an expanded role for the Park Board. As a new Park Board has been appointed, the Park Board Code Chapter XII, Article 3 needs to be edited to define the new Park Board members roles, duties, and by-laws.

ARTICLE 3. PARK BOARD

- 12-301. Park advisory board created.
- 12-302. Members; terms; appointments.
- 12-303. Ex officio member.
- 12-304. Organization; officers.
- 12-305. By-laws; meetings; quorum.
- 12-306. Duties.

Park Boards around the country vary in their structure, terms, by-laws, and duties. By looking at best practices of Advisory Boards across the country, the following information should help to clarify the function, roles, and responsibilities. The language below is adapted from the NRPA Advisory Board Member Resource Guide, first developed from the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association. Examples of By-Laws from two exceptionally run Advisory Boards have been provided to Department staff as a separate resource document.

Redefine Park Advisory Board bylaws, roles, duties	
NRPA Advisory Board Guide Recommendation	
Structure	The advisory board is typically associated with a park(s) and/or recreation department administered by a division of government: state, county, parish or municipality
Oversight	In most cases, the governmental entity is administered by an elected body, which has management and policymaking responsibility for a broad range of governmental services including park(s) and/or recreation. This elected body has the final authority for making all decisions but often looks to an advisory board for recommendations and input regarding decisions that affect the park(s) and recreation department.
Size	The optimum size for an advisory board is generally five to nine members but larger advisory boards do exist. Boards composed of at-large members, representatives of the entire community, regardless of where they live, their particular interests or memberships, normally fall within this range.
Appointments	In the case of at-large advisory boards, members are appointed by the elected body either as a whole, or by the elected chairperson, mayor, governor, etc. In some cases, existing advisory board members will provide the first screening of new members, making recommendations to the elected official(s), who may or may not appoint the recommendations.
Terms	Appointments are generally for a specific term. In the case of an advisory board representing specific groups or geographic areas, the representative can be a political appointment, chosen by the organization they represent or they may serve because of becoming the president or chair of their respective group. In this case, it is possible to have some representatives change annually while others serve for various lengths of time, depending on the election criteria of the individual organizations.
Role of Advisory Board	<p>The advisory board may provide community input to the department director and staff regarding facility operations and programming.</p> <p>In all cases, the role of this type of park(s) and/or recreation board is just what the name implies: advisory. The group serves as a resource to the decision makers, be that staff, director or elected officials. The advisory board can convey how the citizens as a whole, or the segment/organization/program they represent, feel about policies, programs, proposals, or decisions.</p>

As the new Advisory Board is on boarded into their new roles, it is essential that they know their roles and responsibilities. It is recommended that each member reads the full version of the NRPA Advisory Board Resource Guide. It is essential that each new advisory board members be oriented to their roles, duties, and responsibilities as well as those policies, decisions, and approvals for which they are not responsible.

Additional information related to the following questions can be answered in detail in that guide:

- What is the advisory board’s role?
- What should be covered in a board meeting?
- How should the Citizen Board Operate (Sample Agenda)?
- What role should citizen board members play with the media?
- What are the main tasks of the advisory board?
- What can a citizen board member do to remain effective during their tenure?
- What are the important qualities and motivations for being a citizen board member?
- How should board members be oriented and trained for their role?

An excerpt from the Advisory Board Resource Guide lists the following expectations below:

2.1.e. Clarify youth sports policies & procedures

Clarify policies and procedures with youth sports programs and make all information and participation criteria accessible. Be consistent with officials and any coaches trainings.

2.1.e.1. Improve communication with youth sports

Use email newsletter to specifically target youth sports parents and share updates, rain outs, sports information via email blasts.

2.1.f. Utilize relevant marketing tools

The Department currently does a good job of promoting its programs and activities through its website, flyers and social media. When asked how they prefer to receive their information from the Department, survey respondents noted that the website, social media, email and De Soto Happenings were the best means.

Citizen board members are expected to:

- Attend meetings regularly - commitment is paramount.
- Do your homework and contribute to the discussions - review the information provided, be prepared with questions and relevant discussion points. Clarification of agenda items or need for additional information should be discussed with the director/chief executive prior to the meeting.
- Vote based on what you believe is best for the community, recognizing that you may need to occasionally compromise. A board member must be willing to abide by and support the decisions, policies and programs agreed upon by the board.
- Be aware of the importance and value of parks and recreation in your community– gain knowledge, ask questions, and work closely and in cooperation with the director/chief executive.
- Resist political, personal and special interest pressures – have courage, maintain integrity, set high personal standards for yourself and fellow board members, and avoid potential or perceived conflicts of interest.
- Be familiar with and adhere to Robert’s Rules of Order or whatever source your agency has identified for meeting protocol.
- Serve as your agency’s ambassador – promote and support agency events, programs, services, etc.
- Encourage citizen participation – recruit your fellow residents to participate in agency events, programs and services, and encourage them to volunteer in the park system.

Using modern advertising channels such as social media (Facebook, Instagram, NextDoor), email blasts and the website redesign that is already planned can help to inform residents. Considering a longer registration window would be helpful as registrants noticed that they often miss a deadline. Additionally, Discovering De Soto (the quarterly catalog) features some of the Parks and Recreation offerings but does not include all of them. Listing all the program opportunities and registration periods would be a great opportunity since the magazine reaches all households in De Soto.

2.1.g. Develop a Marketing Plan

To continue to be successful, the Department should develop a marketing plan that will guide communication and promotion of its activities and facilities. Such a marketing effort will create greater awareness of city recreation offerings, and should include branding for the Department, use of social media, and development of the Department website and partnership opportunities. If developed, the Marketing Plan should be updated every five years or as needed and include marketing strategies that incorporate the efforts of partner departments, other local Parks and Recreation Departments, and projects.

As part of the Marketing Plan, the Department should evaluate wayfinding signage to facilities on roadway, pathways, and within parks. The Department should develop signage standards for parks, trails, and providing measured distances and loops. Improved wayfinding signage will contribute to a greater sense of connectivity to parks, facilities, and pathways. This is a recommendation under the facilities and amenities section as well.

Using modern advertising channels such as social media and the website can help to inform residents. A key question remained after these focus group conversations: “how do we get program information to the public so that they can better utilize our services?” In addition, online registration and payments need to be seamless; this will be improved with the website redesign that is already planned for the city. Considering a longer registration window would be helpful as registrants noticed that they often miss a deadline.

Additionally, Discovering De Soto (the quarterly catalog) features some of the Parks and Rec offerings but does not tell all of them. This would be a great opportunity since the magazine reaches all households in De Soto.

Utilize relevant tools (website, social media, (Facebook, Instagram, NextDoor) email blasts to advertise.

2.1.h. Improve/develop partnerships

Many programs and services are provided by youth organizations or other service providers. The Department should continue to evaluate programs and services, and continue to improve the development of partnerships including cities, schools, county, businesses, & youth organizations to provide recreational opportunities and services for city residents. Current Joint Use Agreements should be reviewed annually for relevance and equity for all parties.

As popularity in program offerings and activities increases, continue to look for opportunities to expand programs while working with the other service providers and formalize these agreements in writing. Continue to expand with partners that form a collaboration relevant to department goals providing both open space and amenities for the community but also facility space for additional programming opportunities.

2.1.i. Develop equitable rental rates

Develop equitable rental rates for all organizations renting public space from the City based on hourly or SF rates. Discounted rates can be applied for 501 (c)(3) non-profit organizations equally.

2.1.j. Extend pool hours

Extend pool hours during the summer to include more evenings and potentially after Labor Day when weather permits.

2.1.k. Better use of technology & social media

Find 1-3 social media platforms that are utilized in De Soto to communicate updates with the community.

GOAL 3: CONTINUE TO IMPROVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Objective 3.1: Enhance Programs and Services Standards

3.1.a. Offer more programs for all ages

The Department should continue to look for opportunities to expand recreational programs and activities based on community demand and current trends. The community would like to see nature/environmental and fitness and wellness programs expanded, as well as additional programs for special needs, teens, and seniors.

The Department should continue to monitor recreational trends and community needs to stay current with programming and demand. As new programs and services are developed and implemented, continue to create a balance between passive and active recreation.

3.1.b. Add more special events at Riverfest Park

Increased community events were a priority for focus group participants and survey respondents. The Department should continue to look for opportunities to expand community special events. Working with local partners, the Department can help facilitate the growth of community events at Riverfest Park with a regional draw. In order to ensure that the events reflect the diversity of the community, the Department should continue to engage the community in event development.

3.1.c. Hire one new full-time recreation programmer

To be able to add the additional recreational programs and special events the public would like, one additional recreation programmer needs to be hired as the department is currently understaffed and programming at capacity year round.

3.1.d. Increase social media presence

The department needs to maintain active presence on the social media channels that the community of De Soto embraces for information gathering.

3.1.e. Target user groups via email marketing

Establish direct communication with target user groups and all active contacts via email marketing while allowing recipients to unsubscribe. Target groups can be formed based on past program registration of activities.

3.1.f. Advertise for instructors & increase incentives/pay

Continuous advertising in all possible media avenues in surrounding communities need to occur to successfully recruit instructors for the recreational program areas desired. Current pay levels as well as incentive pay percentages need to be increased to make these positions attractive enough for people to drive to De Soto. These costs should be included in the user fees and passed on to the consumers.

3.1.g. Increase evening programs

The public input supported the need for more evening adult program opportunities for the working and commuting portion of the De Soto community.

3.1.h. Improve transparency and communication with youth sports parents

Improve communication and transparency with youth sports organizations and parents. Use of social media prior to and throughout the season would help solve the perception many patrons have with the lack of communication and transparency in these program areas.

3.1.i. Offer additional swim programs

Public comments included the need for additional swim programs including during evening hours. Most aquatic programs fill up fast and are at capacity where not all swim program needs are taken care of currently.

GOAL 4: INCREASE FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Objective 4.1: Identify Improved Funding Mechanisms

4.1.a. Recalculate Park Impact/In Lieu Of Fees

We do want to differentiate between Land Dedication, Fees in Lieu of Land Dedication and Impact Fees, which all make up development fee, and are often blended together to come up with the “mix” desired by the agency. So speaking of the Impact Fees, some focus on park development, some add trails, some add recreation. This speaks to Impact Fees in general.

State laws vary but all require a rational nexus between the need for additional capital facilities and the growth in population generated by the subdivision. It is a growth should pay its own way concept, and is intended to *maintain* the current level of service.

- According to the level of service of the park entity, the impact fee must be in line with the cost to deliver the service both in terms of proximity and in the nature of the provision.
- Impact fees cannot be used to remedy replacement or repairs of existing facilities.
- Many are builder fees rather than developer fees.
- All apply to residential, but some also apply to commercial or non-residential development.
- Most require that impact fees be based on a capital improvement plan
- Most account for at least a portion of “neighborhood level” service (neighborhood park system and trails with in parks), many do not cover this complete cost.
- Some account for “community level” service (pro-rata share of community park system, recreation facilities, trails).
- Many have a fee **per dwelling unit** for the neighborhood park system and a fee per dwelling unit for the community park system. Currently these range from \$800 to \$4,800 per household unit depending

on property values in each different community. Typically the range is from \$1,200 - \$2,000 per housing unit.

- Some, with development of significant size allow the developer to provide the park, to city standards, in lieu of paying the impact fees.
- Some differentiate between single family and multi-family dwelling units and use per dwelling unit population number from their local planning agency as the multiplier to determine a more equitable cost per person. Other lean toward thinking that multi-family dwelling units have less yard space and so the need is greater....may depend on other local development ordinances/
- Most have, or should, have an annual inflation factor.
- State enabling legislation typically has explicit language regarding construction credits.
- Each municipality determines the formula and procedure by which the impact fee is levied, by ordinance.

Some communities use square footage for commercial and/or industrial units as the multiplier but unaware of any that have used # of bedrooms as the multiplier.

4.1.b. Potential Bond Referendum for large capital projects

Floating a bond referendum to be approved by vote of the town is the single most popular method of funding the large costly capital projects in Master Plans. If the timing is right within the community, successful bond referendums can be passed as long as a well-publicized plan that includes exact facilities, location, total project capital cost estimates, annual O&M cost projections, cost benefit, economic impact for De Soto, and conceptual plan is presented to educate the voting public.

4.1.c. Implement Cost Recovery & Pricing Philosophy/Policy

The Department should pursue a formal resource allocation and cost recovery philosophy, model, and policy that is grounded in the values, vision, and mission of the De Soto Parks and Recreation Department. The GreenPlay team conducted a workshop for staff on the Pyramid Methodology and provided resource materials for the Department. The Department should consider developing a pricing methodology that reflects the community's values, while generating revenues to help sustain De Soto facilities, parks, programs, and services. As part of the policy, the current scholarship program should be expanded and publicized to allow for inclusion and equity for all participants and families.

4.1.d. Develop gift catalog for donors

A gift catalog should be created that contains all opportunities within Parks and Recreation for donations and sponsorships at all levels of giving from the small events, memorial trees/benches, event sponsors, etc. up to and including naming rights of facilities. Those businesses and individuals capable of donating can shop the catalog for their giving comfort zone annual amount that is tax deductible. The concept of the gift catalog is for the potential donors to know that the department will only be asking for their financial assistance one time each year and will not be back several times to seek additional donations for several programs and/or events.

4.1.e. Resurrect use of Parks Foundation Fund

The resurrection of the Park Foundation Fund should be considered as a 501c3 non-profit where people can donate specifically for park and recreation activities and/or facilities while being tax deductible. This entity can be a proactive fundraising body along with the Parks Advisory Board while using the gift catalog to demonstrate the need to supplement the operating public funds available through the City General Fund each year.

B. ACTION PLAN, COST ESTIMATES AND PRIORITIZATION

The following Goals, Objectives, and Action Items for the recommendations are drawn from the public input, inventory, level of service analysis, findings feedback, and all the information gathered during the master planning process with a primary focus on maintaining, sustaining, and improving City of De Soto parks, recreation, open space, and trails. All cost estimates are in 2018 figures where applicable. Most costs are dependent on the extent of the enhancements and improvements determined or known at this time. The Operational Budget Impact is a dollar range calculated as the annual number of hours estimated multiplied by an average hourly rate of \$20 per hour to cover all levels of staff including benefits.

Timeframe designations recommended to complete tasks are noted as:

- Short-term (up to 3 years)
- Mid-term (4-6 years)
- Long-term (7-10 years)
- Ongoing (occurs on a continuous basis)

GOAL 1: IMPROVE & UPDATE EXISTING PARKS AND FACILITIES

<i>Objective 1.1: Maintain and upgrade Existing Facilities Standards</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
1.1.a Update Aging Infrastructure Upgrade the items listed in the Low Scoring Amenity Matrix (Staff Document)	See Low Scoring Amenity Matrix (Staff Document)	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Ongoing
1.1.b Improve ADA accessibility	See Low Scoring Amenity Matrix (Staff Document)	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Ongoing
1.1.c Implement Riverfest Master Plan	See 1.1c.1-c.4		
1.1.c.1 Add and Install Parking Lots	Paving: \$52.00 per square yard (6" asphalt on 6" crushed rock)	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Short-Term
1.1.c.2 Add and Install Security Lighting	Lighting: \$5,000 (per 18-24' LED Pole, installed)	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Short-Term
1.1.c.3 Construct Permanent Restroom Facility	\$142,000 for new restroom structure with 2 stalls per side.	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Short-Term
1.1.c.4 Implement phases 2-4 of the Riverfest Master Plan to reach full build out.	\$3,364,243 (2007 cost estimate + approx. 3% per year inflation)	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Long-Term
1.1.d. Repurpose & Refinish Indoor Fitness Spaces in City Hall building	\$150 per sf renovation area (NOT including asbestos removal)	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Mid-Term
1.1.e. Install & Improve Restroom Facilities in Riverfest Park and Miller Park	\$100 per sf of renovation area & \$110,000 for new restroom structure with 2 stalls per side.	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Short-Term

1.1.f. Install New Entrance and Wayfinding Signage at all City Owned Parks	\$20,000 per park (Entry monument & wayfinding signs)	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Ongoing
1.1.g. Fix Drainage Problems in Miller Park	\$100,000	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Short-Term
1.1.h. Install Additional Amenities in Existing Parks & Facilities	See 1.1 h.1- h.6	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Ongoing
1.1.h.1. Add irrigation on existing sports fields at Miller Park	\$12,000 per field	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Mid-Term
1.1.h.2. Add parking lots in Miller Park at NE corner tennis courts & the SW corner near the old pool building	\$52.00 per square yard (6" asphalt on 6" crushed rock)	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Long-Term
1.1.h.3. Add shelter in Miller Park for events	\$100,000 (Large Pavilion)	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Mid-Term
1.1.h.4. Replace northern playground structure at Miller Park	\$60,000 (1 large structure, 2 smaller pieces)	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Mid-Term
1.1.h.5. Improve outdoor recreation access for fishing at Riverfest Park	\$15,000	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Short-Term
1.1.h.6. Add water feature/attraction at the Aquatic Center or Park	\$225,000 (per feature)	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Mid-Term
Objective 1.2: Improve Connectivity of Trails			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
1.2.a. Trail from the De Soto school facilities, west to Lexington Lake (included with 91st Street extension project)	Included with 91st St. Project	Minimal additional O&M	Short-Term
1.2.b. Trail from downtown De Soto to Riverfest Park	\$38.00 per linear foot (8 ft. wide asphalt trail)	Minimal additional O&M	Short-Term
1.2.c. Trail connection between the dead-end trail south of the 95 th Street Trail Head & Kill Creek Park	\$38.00 per linear foot (8 ft. wide asphalt trail)	Minimal additional O&M	Short-Term

1.2.d. Sidewalk along Kill Creek Road from 83 rd St. to K-10	\$58.00 per linear foot (5 ft. wide concrete sidewalk)	Minimal additional O&M	Mid-Term
1.2.e. Trail from the intersection of 83 rd St. and Kill Creek Road, to Corliss Road	\$38.00 per linear foot (8 ft. wide asphalt trail)	Minimal additional O&M	Mid-Term
1.2.f. Soft-surface recreational trail along the river, from Riverfest Park, through Widow Big Knife Park, and connecting into the current trails at Lexington Lake	\$20.00 per Linear Foot (8 ft. wide mulch trail)	Minimal additional O&M	Long-Term

Objective 1.3: Build Additional Sports Fields

Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
1.3.a Add (4) Rectangular Sports Fields (earthwork, pad, grass surface, irrigation)	\$265,000 per field (Not including land acquisition)	TBD	Short-Term
1.3.a.1 Sports Field Lighting	\$32,000 per field (4 poles, custom fixtures)	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	TBD
1.3.b. Add 5 Diamond Sports Fields with 300' fences	\$420,000 per field (Not including land acquisition)	TBD	Long-Term
1.3.b.1 Sports Field Lighting	\$53,000 per field (6 poles, 44 fixtures)	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	TBD
1.3.c. Add Concession Stand	\$100,000	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	TBD
1.3.d. Add Restroom Facilities	\$142,000 for new restroom structure with 2 stalls per side.	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	TBD
1.3.e. Add Parking Lot for Sports Complex	\$52.00 per square yard (6" asphalt on 6" crushed rock)	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	TBD

1.3.f. Add Aluminum Bleachers	\$6,000 per set (15' long, 5 rows, with handrails)	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	TBD
Objective 1.4: Master Plan Existing Unused Parks & Future Parks			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
1.4.a. Develop Widow Big Knife Park Master Plan	\$30,000	TBD	Short-Term
1.4.b. Develop Wilderness Park Master Plan	\$30,000	TBD	Mid-Term
1.4.c. Develop Master Plan for Lexington and Commerce Parcel	\$20,000	TBD	Short-Term

GOAL 2: CONTINUE TO IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

Objective 2.1: Upgrade Organizational Standards			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
2.1.a Prepare ADA Transition Plan for all Parks and Facilities	None	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Short-Term
2.1.b. Improve WiFi connectivity in parks/facilities	TBD	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Short-Term
2.1.c. Clarify Mission, Vision, Values	None	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Short-Term
2.1.d. Redefine Park Advisory Board bylaws, roles, duties	None	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Short-Term
2.1.e. Clarify youth sports policies & procedures	None	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Short-Term
2.1.e.1. Improve communication with youth sports	None	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Ongoing

2.1.f. Utilize relevant marketing tools	None	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Ongoing
2.1.g. Develop a Marketing Plan	None	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Mid-Term
2.1.h. Improve/develop partnerships	None	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Ongoing
2.1.i. Develop equitable rental and lease rates	None	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Short-Term
2.1.j. Extend pool hours	None	Minimal additional O&M	Short-Term
2.1.k. Better use of technology & social media	None	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Ongoing

GOAL 3: CONTINUE TO IMPROVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICE DELIVERY

<i>Objective 3.1: Enhance Programs and Services Standards</i>			
Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
3.1.a. Offer more programs for all ages	None	Minimal additional O&M	Ongoing
3.1.b. Add more special events at Riverfest Park	TBD	TBD	Ongoing
3.1.c. Hire one new full-time recreation programmer	None	\$50,000	Short-Term
3.1.d. Increase social media presence	None	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Ongoing
3.1.e. Target user groups via email marketing	None	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Ongoing

Objective 3.1: Enhance Programs and Services Standards

3.1.f. Advertise for instructors & increase incentives/pay	None	Additional pay for instructors	Ongoing
3.1.g. Increase evening programs	None	Additional Staff Hours	Short-Term
3.1.h. Improve transparency & communication with youth sports parents	None	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Short-Term
3.1.i. Offer additional swim programs	None	Additional pay for instructors	Short-Term

GOAL 4: INCREASE FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Objective 4.1: Identify Improved Funding Mechanisms

Actions	Capital Cost Estimate	Operational Budget Impact	Timeframe to Complete
4.1.a. Recalculate Park Impact/In Lieu Of Fees	None	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Short-Term
4.1.b. Potential Bond Referendum for large capital project	None	Cost to list Bond Referendum on ballot	Mid-Term
4.1.c. Implement Cost Recovery & Pricing Philosophy/Policy	None	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Short-Term
4.1.d. Develop gift catalog for donors	None	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Mid-Term
4.1.e. Resurrect use of Parks Foundation Fund	None	No additional O&M but existing Staff Time	Mid-Term

APPENDIX A: PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY



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Public Input Summary

Public input was gathered during the week of May 28, 2018. Methods used to engage with the community included focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and public meetings. Additional information was collected via phone interviews and emails sent by citizens wanting to participate. The goal of these sessions was to gather information that would guide the development of survey tools. Participants included: City staff, local business owners, lifeguards, regional leaders, stakeholders, and members of the public.

Q1: WHAT ARE THE STRENGTHS OF THE PARKS AND REC DEPARTMENT?

Facilities

A major strength of the De Soto Parks and Recreation Department identified by focus group participants is the accessibility and affordability to the community center, fitness classes, and local parks. Services and amenities offered by the City are perceived as assets to the entire community, especially the Community Center and the Aquatic Facility. The outdoor pool is highly valued because of its “top-notch” aquatic lessons and instructors. The successes of the Aquatic Center made residents believe that the pool should be a “destination” where additional features such as a Lazy River or Splashpad can entertain kids and adults.



De Soto Aquatic Center June 2018

Staff

Citizens of De Soto, Kansas consistently mentioned that a strength of the Parks and Recreation Department is the approachability of all of the department staff. Residents felt that the department was very open to suggestions and new ideas. Residents expressed that the staff was able to accomplish a lot with little staff and resources.

Programs

Overall, programs were also noted as a strength of De Soto Parks and Recreation. Participants enjoy the fitness classes and the instructors. The mix of active and passive recreation is something that residents appreciate. New programs such as Pickleball were able to succeed due to the willingness of the department to listen and take action. This sport is gaining traction locally and residents enjoy playing the game, especially when there is involvement with all age groups. In addition, there are recreational sport leagues that are very welcoming to beginners. Their level of competitiveness was noted as a strength. They also do a good job at partnering with surrounding municipalities to offer more resources and sports teams.

Parks

Residents were pleased by the quality of the parks in regard to cleanliness and maintenance. Riverfest Park was seen as an underutilized strength because of its potential for community events. Parks in De Soto, Kansas are diverse and offer a variety of programs and amenities for residents.

Q2: WHAT ARE THE WEAKNESSES OF THE PARKS AND REC DEPARTMENT?

Connectivity & Biking

Connectivity was a recurring topic in regard to trails and parks in De Soto. Trails offer an opportunity for transportation to areas such as Miller Park, Riverfest Park, Schools, Downtown Area, and Johnson County Parks and Recreation Department (JCPRD) Facilities. JCPRD also has potential for trail improvement projects which could be a mutually beneficial partnership. Specifically, there was interest in connecting trails from De Soto to Johnson County, and from Lexington Lake to other trails. Certain sidewalks end abruptly, and limit walkability in the area.

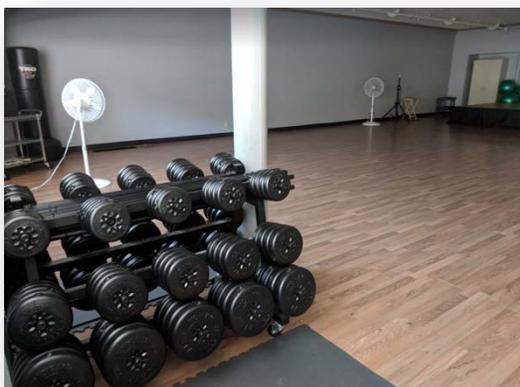
With connectivity, participants expressed that there would need to be more education about cars and bikes travelling safely together. Participants in the focus group have seen the number of cyclists in the area increase. With the lack of bike lanes available, safety is a concern. Educating the public on how to drive with bikes, and likewise, educating bikers on safe routes (avoiding 83rd and Kill Creek) is imperative. Participants expressed that De Soto could become a destination for cyclists, and is slowly becoming one. Trail standards and policies should be a consideration. A number of related issues were brought up, such as how people will want to use the trails in the future. Will they be used for commuting? Electric bikes? Unicycles? Width of trails? Multiuse?



Sunflower Park, June 2018

Programs

In regards to fitness classes and programs, additional space is desired for classes. The current city administrative building has space but needs work. Could a relationship with the school district help alleviate this problem? Should renovations be done to current admin building? These were the questions focus groups asked.



Community Fitness Room, June 2018

Soccer is a popular sport in De Soto, and many residents felt that it needs to be prioritized moving forward by having dedicated fields for soccer.

Some participants expressed frustration because the location of their practice/games had been moved to new locations. In addition, game rules seem to change with the season and the referee who is officiating. Focus groups mentioned that the training to be a coach or official was unorganized and lacked essential information. Finally, with soccer being a coed sport, parents expressed that the competition level was uneven – especially as

kids turn into teens and gender differences become more prevalent. The older the kids get, the fewer play in town, making it less fun as a league. Soccer is currently co-ed, which girls don't like, so they leave town for girls leagues.

Playing against other cities doesn't always work since they have different views of what "recreation" is, and different rules in regard to age groups. Some do it by grade level, some by birthdays. The lack of consistency and communication are two areas that needed improvement.

Fields

Soccer fields are needed – users noted that they need a home for practice and games since games often get moved. Miller Park often floods and causes additional issues. A soccer facility at Lexington Lake Park may answer that need, but funding still needs to be established before that is secured. Residents voiced that additional fields for other sports beyond soccer were also needed, such as baseball and softball. Having permanent irrigation would be desired, as Miller Park often gets flooded which can cause game cancellations.

Parks

Further dedication to the Riverfest Park development is desired. Key components in the Master Plan should be carried out to provide a number of amenities. Basic needs such as restrooms, paved roads, and shelters are a priority to residents. Although large events may require portable restrooms at scale, more people would like to use Riverfest park on a daily basis – so permanent restrooms are wanted. Residents also noted that they would like to see greater (and safer) connectivity to the Riverfest Park. Residents addressed that Miller Park needs improvement in regard to updated lighting, additional parks, additional restrooms, another park shelter, and updated playground equipment (for all ages).



Riverfest Park, June 2018

Events

In addition, more community wide events were desired by residents. Ideas included block parties, movie nights, free concerts, or other annual events. These gatherings could help De Soto build stronger relationships with its residents and tourists alike. Events like De Soto Days could be moved to Riverfest Park because of its capacity and purpose to hold festivals.

Marketing

One major weakness of De Soto is the lack of communication and awareness of programs. The services, parks, amenities, and programs are not reaching all of those in the community who want to learn about them. Residents want to know more about the offerings and opportunities through De Soto Parks and Recreation and need to know where to find this information.

Awareness and communication are essential components to help educate the public on offerings. Some residents were not aware of other parks besides Miller Park. Greater awareness and communication about the other parks such as Widow Big Knife, Lexington Property, and others would be helpful.

Having clear and consistent signage at all parks will help unify and brand the parks department. This is especially true at event parks such as Riverfest.



Parks and Recreation Webpage, June 2018

Using modern advertising channels such as social media and the website can help to inform residents. A key question remained after these focus group conversations: “how do we get program information to the public so that they can better utilize our services?” In addition, online registration and payments need to be seamless; this will be improved with the website redesign that is already planned for the city.

Considering a longer registration window would be helpful as registrants noticed that they often miss a deadline. Additionally, Discovering De Soto (The quarterly catalog) features some of the Parks and Rec offerings but does not list them all. This would be a great opportunity since the magazine reaches all households in De Soto.

Partnerships

There are currently missed opportunities to partner with small businesses and school districts. To offer more programs – which is desired at Riverfest Park – De Soto Parks and Recreation should partner with other agencies that can help.

Administrative

Residents recognized that staff is limited in De Soto for managing and operating programs. Ideas for new staff include a marketing/advertising person for programs, website, and social media, a sponsorship/funding person, and a special events programmer.

Q3: WHAT PROGRAMS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?

- Aquatic Programs (Water Aerobics, Open Swim, Lap Swim)
- Archery
- Art program—people could paint murals to give the town character
- Bocci Ball
- Coed Softball
- Cycling classes
- Dance Classes
- Educational Classes (Cooking, Conservation, Recycling, Bike Safety)
- Family Friendly Events (Movies in the Park/Pool)
- Gymnastic Program for Youth
- Indoor and Outdoor Pickleball
- Offer outdoor fitness classes in the parks
- Open Gym Classes
- Roller Hockey
- Running clubs/track clubs for kids
- Special Events: Food Trucks, Festivals, Music
- Street soccer
- Walking Group/Aerobics

Q4: WHAT IMPROVEMENTS SHOULD BE MADE TO EXISTING FACILITIES?

Riverfest Park

- Trail Connectivity to Park
- Main Entry Signage
- Disc Golf
- Shelters for Parties
- Destination Playground
- Need Restrooms and Lighting
- Camping Opportunities (RV and tent)
- More events with foodtrucks

Community Center

- More multi-purpose/Fitness Rooms
- Floor stability
- Space for youth classes
- Increase Community Center Hours

Other Parks & Amenities

- Miller Park needs age appropriate playground equipment for the 5 and under age group.
- Improve drainage issues for soccer at Miller Park
- Year Round, Indoor Pool
- Miller Park needs age appropriate playground equipment for the 5 and under age group.
- Skate park apparatus or fitness equipment along paths/trails

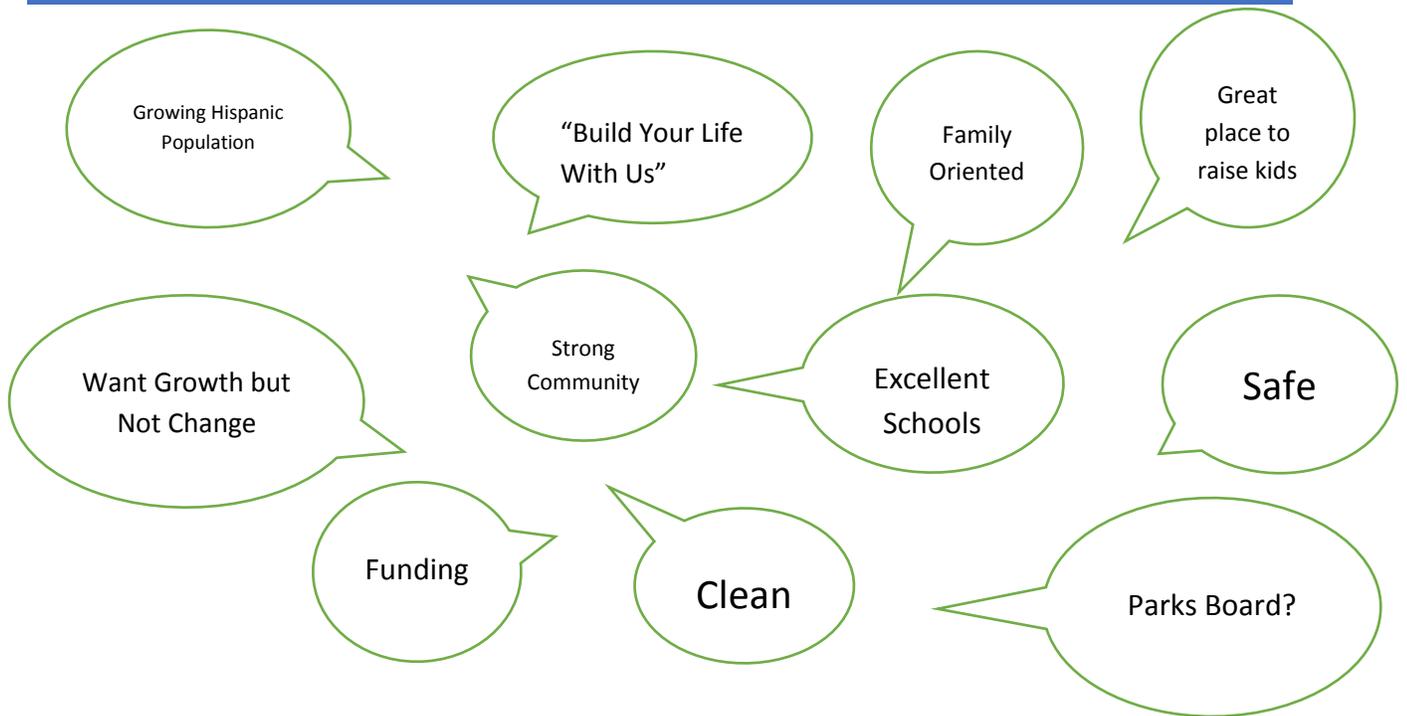
Q5: WHAT ADDITIONAL FACILITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|------------------------|----------------------------|
| -Shaded Bocce Ball Court | -Indoor Pool | -More multi-use trails for longboarding | -Racquetball Courts | -Space for Fitness Classes |
| -Gymnastics Facility | -More Restrooms at Parks | -RV Park & Tent Camping | -Connectivity to Parks | -Disc golf course |

Q6: WHAT PARTNERS/STAKEHOLDERS COULD ASSIST WITH IMPLEMENTATION?



Q7: WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES & VALUES OF DE SOTO?



Q8: WHAT SHOULD BE THE TOP PRIORITIES IN 5-10 YEARS?

- Establish marketing channels to successfully communicate with residents
- Implement the Master Plan and follow through with future plans for Riverfest Park
- Meet expectations of youth sports program with consistent rules and well-trained coaches
- Maintain and improve current programs, facilities, and resources before investing in new
- Build recreational paths and trails to existing and future parks facilities.
- Expand programming opportunities to serve people of all ages and abilities.
- Diversify the physical amenities at City parks facilities.
- Host events that bring the community together

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APPENDIX B: PARK MATRIX



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Park Amenities

Park Name	Address	Acreage	Trail Length (Miles)	Diamond Playgrounds	Rectangular Ballfields	Sand Volleyball Courts	Outdoor Basketball Courts	Tennis Courts	Horseshoe Pits	Stage/Ampitheater	Picnic Shelters/Pavilions/Pagoda	Batting Cage	Water Fountains	Restrooms	Archery/Shooting Range	Grills	Fishing Range	Boat Ramps/ Marina	Swimming Beach	Tent Camping Campsites	Dog Park	Rain Garden	
Miller Park	83rd and Ferry	10	0.35	2	3	0	1	1	2	2	1	1	3	4	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Widow Big Knife Park	7560 Edgerton Rd	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Riverfest Park	33440 W. 79th	50	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Wilderness Park	13205 Evening Star Rd	67	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
Commerce & Lexington - Future	Commerce & Lexington	7	0.18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sunflower Park - Owned by Johnson County	37515 W. 103rd St	6	1.23	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kill Creek Park - Owned by Johnson County	11670 S Homestead Ln	884	13.5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	1	8	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
Kill Creek Streamway Dog Park & 95th St. Trail Head - Owned by Johnson County	33460 W 95th St	16	0.88	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Lexington Lake Park - Owned by Johnson County	9000 Sunflower Rd	456	3.1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Cedar Creek Boat Ramp- Owned by Johnson County	Access Rd	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total		1534	19.2	5	5	0	1	1	2	2	2	2	8	13	7	15	2	2	4	1	1	1	1

* Acreage & Trail length data taken from GIS or from De Soto/Johnson County Online Parks Descriptions

APPENDIX C: MAPS



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PARKS & RECREATION RESOURCE MAP

Park and Facility Locations

- 1: Miller Park
- 2: Widow Big Knife Park
- 3: Riverfest Park
- 4: Wilderness Park
- 5: Commerce & Lexington Land (Future)
- 6: Sunflower Park (Owned by Johnson County)
- 7: Kill Creek Park (Owned by Johnson County)
- 8: Kill Creek Streamway Dog Park & 95th St. Trail Head (Owned by Johnson County)
- 9: Lexington Lake Park (Owned by Johnson County)
- 10: De Soto Community Center & Aquatic Center
- 11: Oak Country Golf Course (Privately Owned)
- 12: Great Life Golf Course (Privately Owned)
- 13: Cedar Creek Boat Ramp (Owned by Johnson County)

Schools

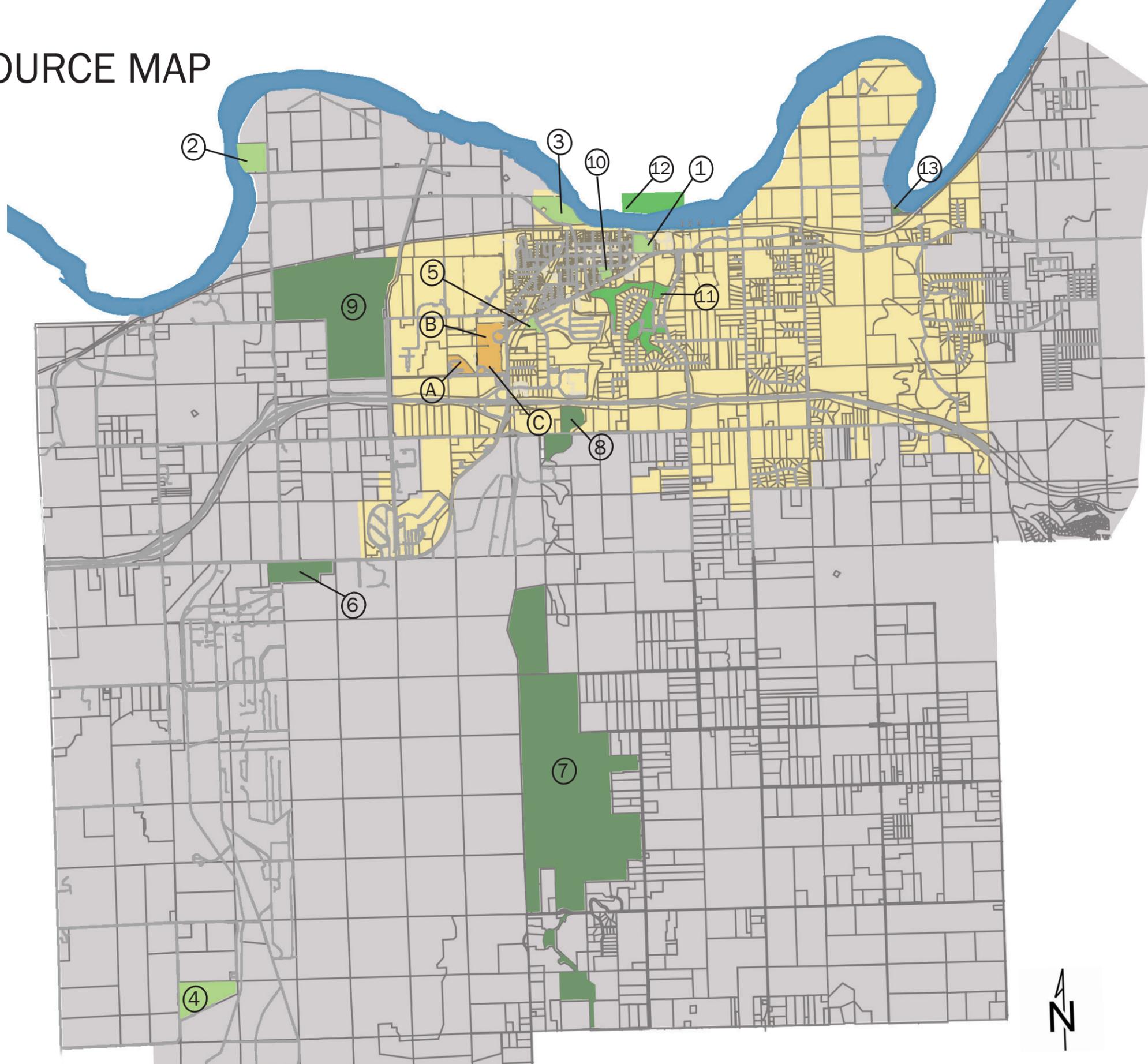
- A: Starside Elementary School
- B: Lexington Trails Middle School
- C: De Soto High School

Alternative Providers *Located in City Facilities*

- *Great Life Golf and Fitness
- *Jazzercise
- *White Tiger Tae Kwon Do
- *Wildcat Youth Football & Cheerleading
- *De Soto Youth Wrestling
- *De Soto Arts Council

Legend

- DE SOTO CITY PARKS
- JOHNSON COUNTY PARKS
- GOLF COURSES
- SCHOOL FACILITY
- DE SOTO CITY LIMIT
- URBAN GROWTH AREA



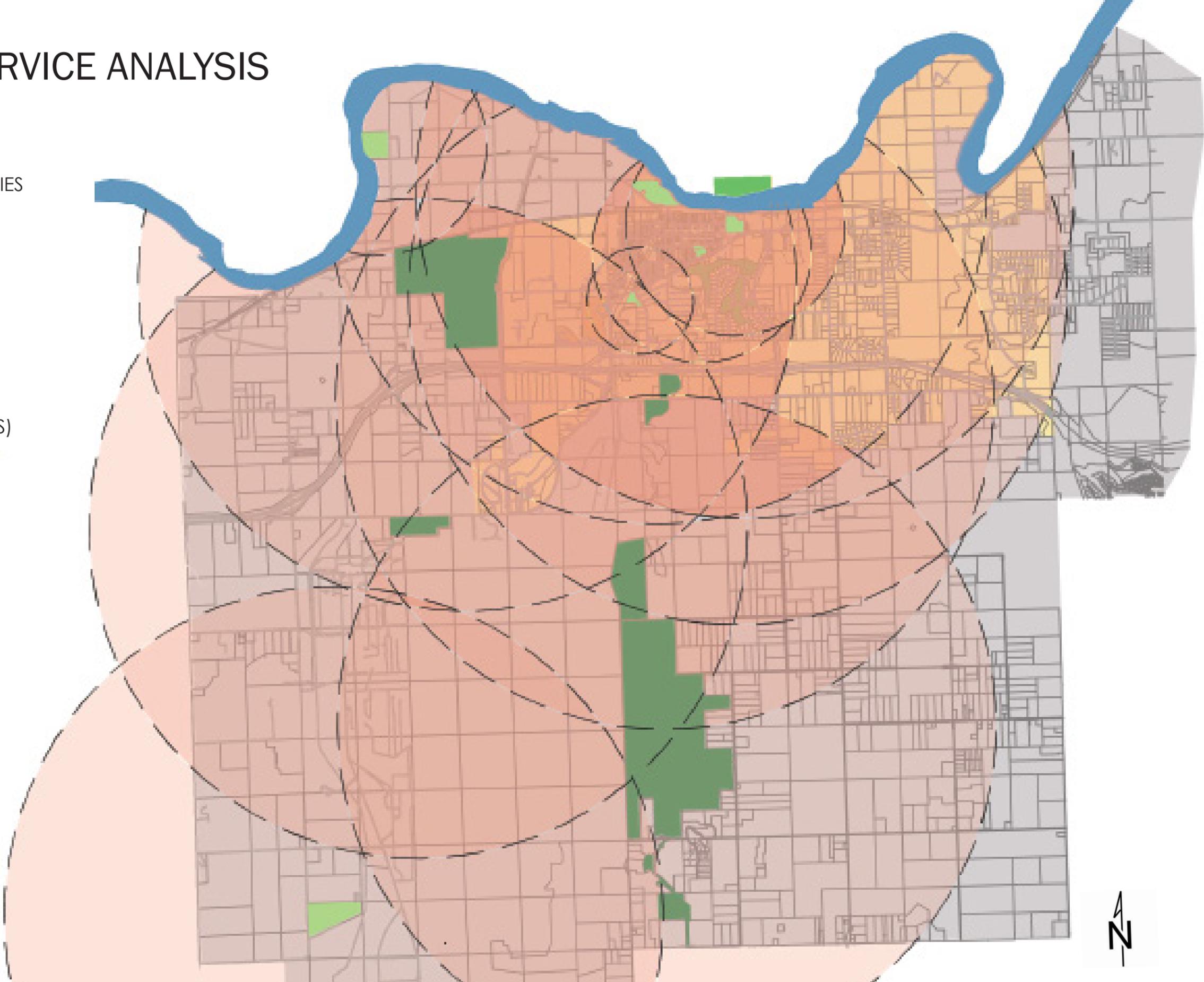
2018: DE SOTO PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

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PARK LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS

Legend

- DE SOTO CITY PARKS & FACILITIES
- JOHNSON COUNTY PARKS
- SCHOOL FACILITY
- DE SOTO CITY LIMIT
- URBAN GROWTH AREA
- LEVEL OF SERVICE RADIUS (LOS)
 - 1/2 mile LOS radius for neighborhood parks
 - 1 mile LOS radius community parks & facilities
 - 3 mile LOS radius for regional parks & facilities

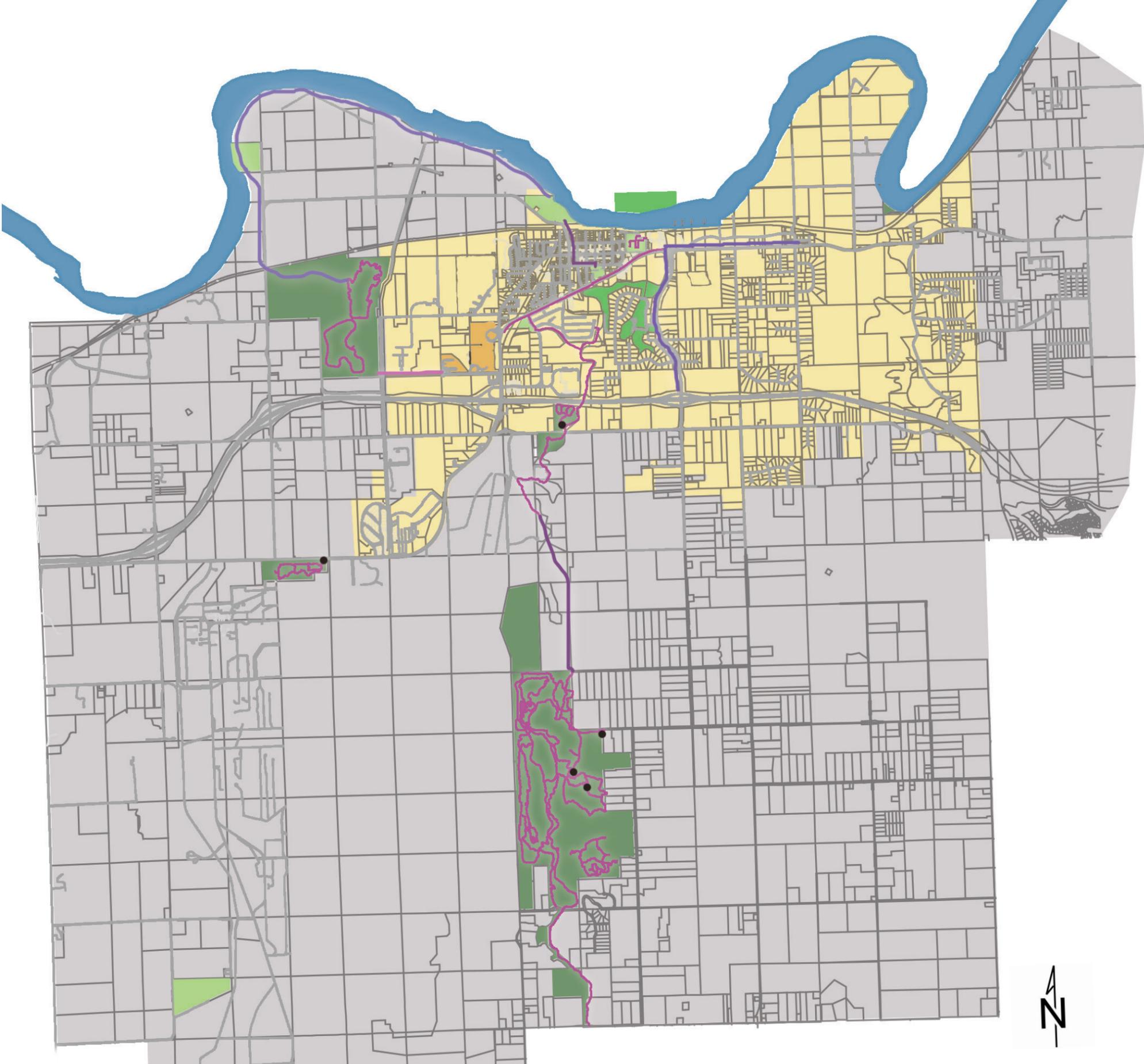


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TRAILS MAP

Legend

- DE SOTO CITY PARKS
- JOHNSON COUNTY PARKS
- SCHOOL FACILITY
- DE SOTO CITY LIMIT
- URBAN GROWTH AREA
- TRAIL HEAD
- EXISTING TRAIL
- 2019 PLANNED CONSTRUCTION
- SHORT TERM: PROPOSED TRAIL CONNECTIONS
- MEDIUM TERM: PROPOSED TRAIL CONNECTIONS
- LONG TERM: PROPOSED TRAIL CONNECTIONS



2018: DE SOTO PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN