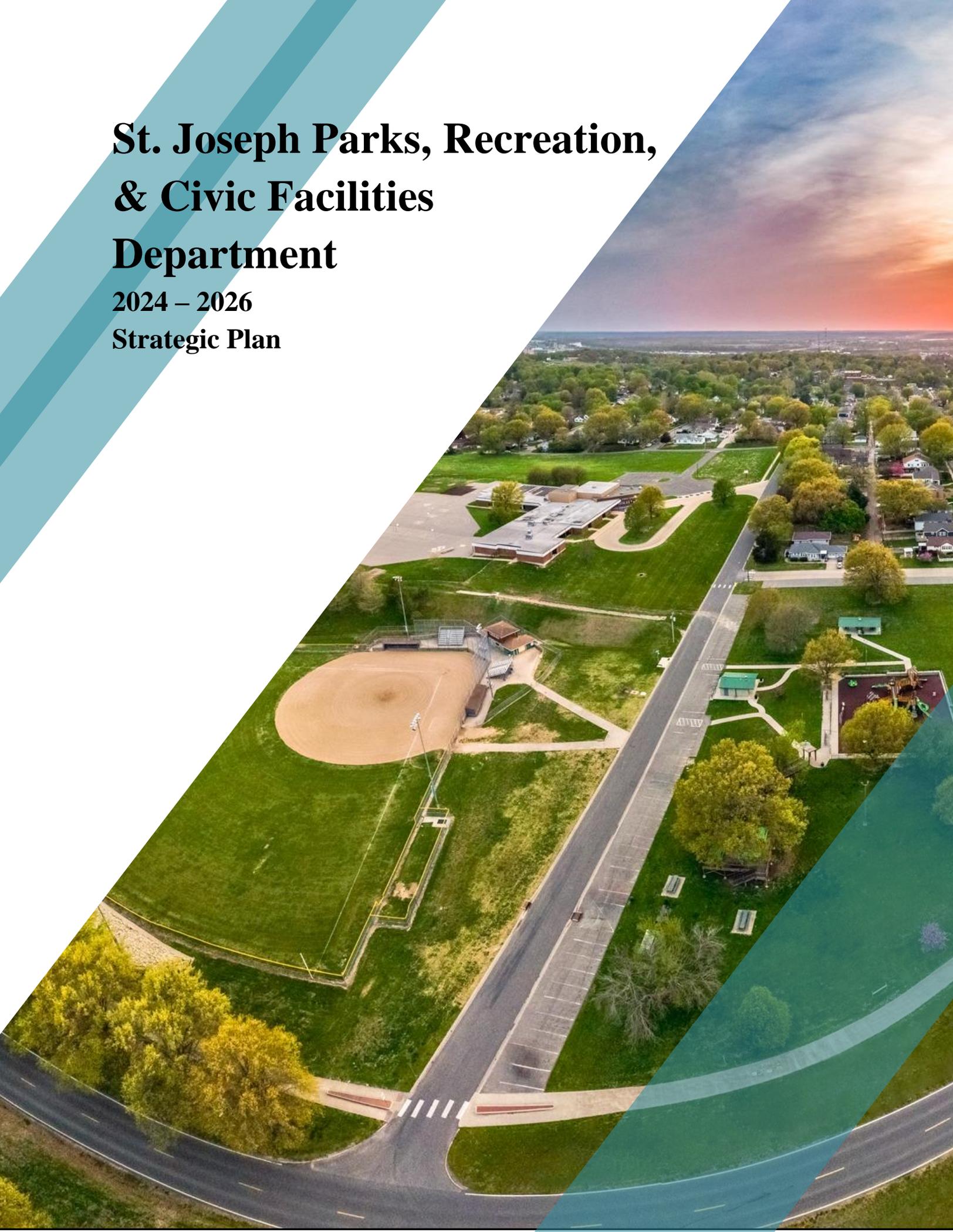


# **St. Joseph Parks, Recreation, & Civic Facilities**

## **Department**

**2024 – 2026**

**Strategic Plan**



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## **Message from the Director**

This strategic plan was initially created through the process referenced below. In the spring of 2023, the St. Joseph Parks, Recreation, & Civic Facilities Department in conjunction with members of the Park Board updated the plan to carry the department and the community forward through 2026. The main goals and strategies, even though improved, are still valid and require further attention. Both departmental staff and Park Board members support the extension of the plan. This was also supported during the 2021 Half-Cent Park Sales Tax campaign when voters overwhelmingly approved the tax that primarily targeted “fixing what was broken” throughout the parks department.

The St. Joseph Parks, Recreation, & Civic Facilities Department provides the citizens of this city with opportunities and options for a variety of recreation, fitness, and leisure activities. To provide for these, a tremendous variety of partnerships with community groups, both in numbers and impact on the public, have been established. These partnerships include arts groups, youth sports, adult sports, health organizations, medical institutions, museums, educational institutions, service groups, and religious organizations.

A formal strategic plan for the St. Joseph Parks, Recreation, & Civic Facilities Department was a new concept in 2017. Although the department has always participated in a planning process, a formal written plan resulting from formal public input through public meetings and surveys had not existed in recent years. The value of the community input aspect of the process is extremely beneficial allowing community members to know they have a voice in the future of the parks system in this community. Input from the community gives staff and elected officials essential information on what is important to its citizens and community partners, and allows information and input to be fluid, changing with community and infrastructure needs, innovations, and modern technology.

The original planning in 2017 involved the distribution of surveys, both electronic and paper, and the hosting of several public sessions to ensure a broad range of viewpoints were taken advantage of.

Throughout the next three years, continued public input will be evaluated as it is provided and community partners who participated in the process will also continue to be communicated with to hold the parks department accountable for following through with the interests of the community.

I want to thank all who were involved in this important process. The future of the parks system in St. Joseph is critical to the health and happiness of our citizens and those who choose to visit our city.

Respectfully,

Chuck Kempf, Director of Parks, Recreation & Civic Facilities

## **Department Profile**

The St. Joseph Parks, Recreation & Civic Facilities Department is comprised of ten (10) divisions to provide venues for entertainment, recreation, physical fitness, education, socialization, wellness opportunities, and maintenance for the city park areas and the enjoyment of the residents and visitors of St. Joseph, Missouri. The St. Joseph parks system is comprised of 53 parks and facilities and an improved urban trail system. There are currently 42 outdoor areas that require regular maintenance activity. A variety of amenities and infrastructure exist at these locations, including shelters, picnic tables, park benches, athletic fields, open green space, bandstands, stages, tennis and pickleball courts, basketball courts, scenic overlooks, trails (both paved and primitive), ponds, skateboard parks, playgrounds, outdoor exercise equipment, fountains, and statues. Several of these outdoor park locations have restroom facilities. The paved Urban Hike and Bike Trail System connects St. Joseph from Northside Complex to Hyde Park, from Heritage Park to the Downtown Riverfront Park, Ashland Avenue to St. Joseph Avenue, 36<sup>th</sup> Street to 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, and Riverside Road to the REC Center.

The City of St. Joseph is the county seat of Buchanan County Missouri. St. Joseph is also the largest city in the Northwest Missouri area. Travel to and from St. Joseph can be made via Interstates 229 and 29; Highways 36, 169, 59, 371, and 71; Rosecrans Memorial Airport; and the Missouri River. The multiple means of transportation and the variety of recreational opportunities available in St. Joseph bring in a large number of visitors, annually.

The St. Joseph Parks, Recreation & Civic Facilities Department is proud of the diverse services that we offer. The parks department is comprised of and maintains 42 municipal parks, administrative and maintenance divisions, the Remington Nature Center, Joyce Raye Patterson Senior Center, Civic Arena, Missouri Theater, REC Center, Bode Sports Complex, Fairview Municipal Golf Course, the Bill McKinney Softball Complex at Heritage Park, the Aquatic Park, Krug Pool, Liberty Oak Splash Park, Bartlett Parkway Disc Golf Course, and River Bluff Trails Park.

## **Facilities**

### *Parks Administration*

Parks Administration, located at 1920 Grand Avenue, St. Joseph, Missouri, is the central headquarters for the Parks, Recreation & Civic Facilities Department. Primary duties of the administration division include customer service activities, budget monitoring, shelter management, special event coordination, human resource activities, staff training, public education, publicity and communication, event and activity planning, and monitoring. Providing support to all other park divisions is critical and substantial.

The parks department is a member of the National Recreation & Parks Association, Missouri Parks and Recreation Association, United States Tennis Association, and the Amateur Softball Association of America.

### *Maintenance Division*

The maintenance division is responsible for all park buildings and land maintenance. This group of 26 full-time employees maintains department vehicles; performs grass, weed, snow, and trash removal at all city parks properties and the urban trail system; prepares ball fields; performs maintenance of facilities, including painting, roofing, plumbing, electrical, carpentry, and other general maintenance duties such as graffiti removal. Staff is involved with reducing expenses on renovation and new construction projects by performing demolition, debris hauling, excavation, final site grading, roofing, and assembling and installing equipment, furniture, and other amenities. The ball field maintenance crew mows, trims, prepares fields for games, monitors and repairs irrigation systems, removes trash and debris, and performs other maintenance duties such as painting and fence repairs. The maintenance staff is also responsible for the setup and breakdown each year of “Holiday Park” at Krug Park and the “South Pole” at Hyde Park. Thousands of visitors enjoy these two holiday-themed parks each year.

### *Remington Nature Center*

The Remington Nature Center is a history and nature-based museum located in a 13,000-square-foot facility constructed in 2008. This outstanding facility provides an opportunity for interpretation and education of conservation and nature that is relative to Northwest Missouri and the Missouri River areas, appealing to all interest levels and ages. Interactive components provide visitors with hands-on experiences incorporating the use of their senses. Included in the many displays in the nature center are animal habitats, river and land travel, transportation and trade, and live animal displays. One of the more substantial displays is the 7,000-gallon aquarium stocked with native fish. Also found in the nature center is a large variety of taxidermy, an outdoor and indoor classroom area, meeting rooms with full audio/visual components, viewing areas for taking in the natural beauty of the area, a public eating area, a public patio, native plantings, and a gift shop. A popular birthday party destination, the nature center offers birthday party packages. The nature center also offers conference room rentals and monthly activities for all ages. The Remington Nature Center is a favorite location for many school field trips with educational programming and scavenger hunts.

### *Joyce Raye Patterson 50+ Activity Center*

The Joyce Raye Patterson 50+ Activity Center is a hidden gem in St. Joseph. This 21,288 square-foot facility is available to all persons, residents, and visitors alike, 50 years of age and older. The center is an activity hub for approximately 48 organizations and groups to meet. These groups meet daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly, at the center. Entrance to the center is free; however, some of the groups and organizations that meet at the center charge a membership fee. Amenities at the JRP include a dance floor where regular dances are scheduled, a cafeteria and dining room area open to all ages for lunch, billiards, 8-ball, snooker, table tennis, table shuffleboard, cornhole, and several gathering areas. Retirement groups, bridge, Bingo, Mahjong, 10-point pitch, Mexican train dominoes, spades, group exercise classes, the JRP Kitchen Band, and many other groups meet regularly at the center. The JRP also offers blood pressure screenings, and topics of interest to users of the facility. For those wishing to stay in shape, the center houses a 2,288-square-foot

room that includes 43 pieces of strength and cardio equipment and a separate circuit training room that includes 12 pieces of curves resistance training equipment.

### *Civic Arena*

A variety of exciting and fun events are held at the Civic Arena which encourages tourism in St. Joseph. Opened in October of 1980, this multi-use facility provides a location for small to large events. Since opening, the arena has been used for rodeos, bull riding championships, car shows, the circus, truck shows, the Harlem Globetrotters, Kansas City Kings Basketball, arena football, high school basketball playoffs, NCAA Division II Championship Events, Olympic weightlifting trials, the Royal Lipizzaner Stallions, Elk sales, tire shows, craft festivals, sports shows, home shows, sales, farm shows, dog shows, food shows, antique shows, tractor pulls, mud wrestling, Crypticon, proms, wedding receptions, graduation receptions, training events, meetings, conferences, conventions, banquets, and professional shows such as Winnie the Pooh, Sesame Street Live, the Ice Capades, and Spirit of Dance. The home of a large number of concerts and comedy shows, the arena is a choice location for acts such as Rascal Flatts, George Strait, Larry the Cable Guy, George Carlin, Hoobastank, the Statler Brothers, Kiss, Martina McBride, Tracy Lawrence, Joan Jett, Lorrie Morgan, Tom Jones, Reba McEntire, Ratt, Damn Yankees, REO Speedwagon, Travis Tritt, Robert Plant, Black Sabbath, Billy Ray Cyrus, Casting Crowns, and many other top-notch acts. The arena is also proud to have been the venue of a WWF/WCW wrestling event, five nationally televised boxing matches, a show for Barbara Mandrell, and videos for Sawyer Brown and the Oak Ridge Boys. The versatile design of the building includes meeting rooms with modular walls for groups of 25-300, general assembly seating for up to 4,200, or 19,000 square feet of unobstructed exhibit space. Also available at the arena are superb lighting and acoustics, a scoreboard, and concessions.

### *Missouri Theater*

The Missouri Theater opened in 1927 by Paramount Studios as a 1,200-seat movie palace. This spectacular venue, designed by the Boller Brothers, originally showed silent films. In September 2001, Ellison-Auxier Architects, Inc, began renovating the theater. Fresh paint and carpet were applied, plaster was repaired, upholstery on the theater seats was cleaned, lighting and sound systems were upgraded and dressing rooms were remodeled. In 2016, a looping system was installed in the theater to provide an even more enjoyable theater experience to patrons with t-coils in their hearing aids. Regular shows are performed in the theater by groups such as Robidoux Resident Theatre, the Performing Arts Association, the River Song Chorus, the Saint Joseph Symphony, the St. Joseph Community Choir, Creative Arts Productions, several local dance studios, and others. This spectacular, ornate venue is quite a sight to see. St. Joseph is proud of its crown jewel.

### *The Rec Center*

The REC Center features a full-service fitness center with a variety of cardio and weight training equipment, an indoor walking track, open gyms, private bathrooms with showers, and meeting rooms. This facility is home to fitness classes, youth and adult volleyball leagues, pickleball

leagues, and a variety of other tournaments and leagues. The REC Center is also a popular location for birthday parties.

### *Bode Sports Complex*

Bode Ice Arena is a 30,000-square-foot facility that opened in 1975. The arena contains a concessions area, locker rooms, a warming room, a full ice skate rental for figure skating or hockey, a seating area for 500, and an ice surface that is 185x85 feet. The ice arena offers public sessions, broomball, lessons, ice hockey, curling, and figure skating. Bode is home to the St. Joseph Figure Skating Club, the St. Joseph Youth Hockey Association, and the St. Joseph Curling Club, and it is a popular venue for field trips, school classes, home school classes, and private parties. Bode Ice Arena is a member of the Learn to Skate USA program through the United States Figure Skating Association and offers a variety of lessons for hockey, figure skating, and recreational skating. The arena is often used during the John L. Cassidy Heartland Winter Games and is proud to boast that it is the home to 2011 National Champion Ryan Bradley.

In 1999, additional facilities were added around the arena, creating the Bode Sports Complex. The complex was opened in June of 1999 as a result of a generous benefactor, George Bode Jr., who left his entire estate to the city of St. Joseph to help fund anything pertaining to recreation. This complex houses outdoor lighted basketball courts with seating and scoreboards, a lighted versatile outdoor area for adaptive sports and pickleball, an outdoor skate park, and an indoor ice arena.

### *Fairview Municipal Golf Course*

Fairview Municipal Golf Course, established in 1925, is one of the oldest public golf courses in Northwest Missouri. Rolling fairways, hazards, and large mature trees make up this over 200-acre, 18-hole golf course. Measuring over 6,300 yards, this course provides a challenge for all levels of players. Fairview also offers a practice putting green, a driving range, a short game and bunker practice area, a pro shop, a concession stand, and a banquet room. Fairview offers PGA-instructed golf lessons and a Junior Program and several area high schools call Fairview Golf Course their home course. A few famous people have played at Fairview over the years including Norm Stewart, Charlie Daniels, and Conrad Dobler.

### *Bill McKinney Softball Complex at Heritage Park/Heritage Park*

Located inside the 35 acres of Heritage Park is the Bill McKinney Softball Complex, a state-of-the-art softball facility with many great amenities. Housed within this complex are five softball fields, a concession area, and a covered playground. The entire facility is fenced. Heritage Park is located east of the Missouri River and north of the Remington Nature Center. Since opening in 2003, it has been the host venue for national, state and high school tournaments, multiple Air National Guard tournaments, several concerts including Matt Snook, fireworks viewing, corporate challenge events, and city kickball and softball leagues. The remaining area of Heritage Park consists of green space, a parking area, and the north section of the Riverfront Trail.

## *Aquatic Facilities*

The City of St. Joseph has three pools and one splash park for public use. Two pools are outdoor facilities and opened only during the summer session. The third pool is operated in cooperation with Missouri Western State University on the university's campus. This indoor pool is open year-round and available to the community for public sessions. The outdoor pools are located in Northside Complex and at the Aquatic Park. The Krug Pool, located inside Northside Complex is a basic public swimming pool with a diving well. The Aquatic Park features a 300-foot lazy river with a vortex area, a zero-depth beach entry pool area with a water playground, lounge chairs, a sun deck, large shade structures, and a concession area. Liberty Oak Splash Park is the newest addition to aquatic facilities, opening in 2021. The \$2 million facility is open from May 1 through the end of September each year.

## **Park Spaces**

Within the city limits, the parks department maintains 42 parks, ball field areas, and green spaces. Six of the largest parks and complexes in St. Joseph include, from north to south, Krug Park, Northside Complex, Noyes Sports Complex, Bartlett Park, Phil Welch Stadium, and Hyde Park.

### *Krug Park*

Krug Park is a 162-acre park located on the north side of the City adjacent to St. Joseph Avenue and Krug Park Place. Krug Park, pronounced (Kroog) Park, became a city park with the first of many land donations by the Krug family beginning in 1889. The original park included an observation tower, a fountain, a pavilion, a bandstand, and greenhouses. Many additions and modifications were made through the years which provided for several new amenities.

In the 1980s, a decision was made to decorate the park for Christmas, creating a holiday park. This tradition continues today.

In 1990, a master plan was developed to salvage this park which was beginning to show signs of disrepair. A circular wooden gazebo and four wooden pergola structures were added, along with a rose garden area to the north side of the lagoon, people from the community donated lilac bushes which were planted along a curve leading up into the park, and structures were repaired and replaced.

Krug Park has seen many changes throughout history, and today it includes a lagoon, duck feeders, a rose garden and gazebo, an amphitheater, a rock garden, a playground, Krug Castle, a pergola, and a children's circus area. Krug Park is popular for the catch and release fishing opportunities, concerts and educational events at the amphitheater, picnics, hikes, and is most known for Krug Castle.

### *Northside Complex*

The Northside Complex is located adjacent to Krug Park and St. Joseph Avenue on the north end of St. Joseph. This complex provides a variety of recreational amenities including Krug Pool, three tennis courts, an outdoor racquetball court, a horseshoe court, basketball courts, a practice softball field, a playground, and two bantam football fields. Northside Complex is a popular weekend and evening destination location in North St. Joseph and has hosted events such as Parties on the Parkway, softball tournaments, trunk-or-treats, and a variety of other recreational events.

### *Noyes Sports Complex*

Noyes Sports Complex is located near Central High School and is accessed from Noyes Boulevard, north of the Aquatic Park entrance. This 23-acre complex has 12 lighted tennis courts that are used for high school, college, and general play, a multipurpose building for the youth fields, an outdoor track, a lighted ballfield, a softball field, and 16 lighted horseshoe courts.

### *Bartlett Park*

Bartlett Park, bounded by Renick, Duncan, 32<sup>nd</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup> Streets, is located in the middle of St. Joseph and consists of 24 acres of green space, a softball field, a youth baseball field, restrooms, a playground, a tree house, shelters, disc golf courses, and a play path. The trails along Southwest Parkway and Noyes Boulevard meet up at the center of the park with the improved hike and bike trail connecting this park north to Northside Complex and south to Hyde Park. An inclusive playground with a poured-in-place surface, connectivity to the tree house, and the creation of the disc golf courses emphasize the importance of this mid-town park.

### *Phil Welch Stadium*

Phil Welch Stadium was built in 1939 as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project. In 1964, the stadium was dedicated to Phil Welch, a mayor of St. Joseph from 1936-1946 who was responsible for securing matching federal funding and bond issues that paid for the stadium, a police station, and several fire stations.

Several minor league, semi-pro, collegiate, high schools, and American Legion teams have called the stadium home through the years. Currently, the stadium serves as the home field for the St. Joseph Mustangs and four of the five local high schools.

### *Hyde Park*

The initial donation of land by the Hyde family was made in 1911. It is located on the south side of St. Joseph, adjacent to East Hyde Park Avenue. The 93 acres of this park include the southernmost section of the urban trail system, a playground, a variety of picnic shelters, a gazebo, restrooms, six baseball fields, a bandstand, open green space, three horseshoe courts, a concession stand, three tennis courts, disc golf course, and splash park. Hyde Park is connected to the parkway system by a bridge that extends from the park, over a roadway, and ends at East Hyde Park. This

park is popular for the annual Easter egg hunt, the playground, many picnic areas, the ball field complex, and the annual Southside Fall Festival.

### *River Bluff Trails Park*

Located among the bluffs is the newest addition to the parks department: River Bluff Trails Park. Development began in the fall of 2020, and construction of trails and amenities continues with an expected completion date of fall 2023. Offering recreational escape, bikers, joggers, hikers, and those who love to explore nature can find enjoyment here. The park boasts miles of multi-use cross-country and dedicated downhill mountain bike runs and flow lines. From youth skill zones to expert-only drops and gaps, there's something for all rider levels. Boulder-lined pathways meander along the ridges with scenic overlooks to enjoy relaxing sunsets over the beautiful Missouri River and Kansas skyline.

### *Additional Parks Information*

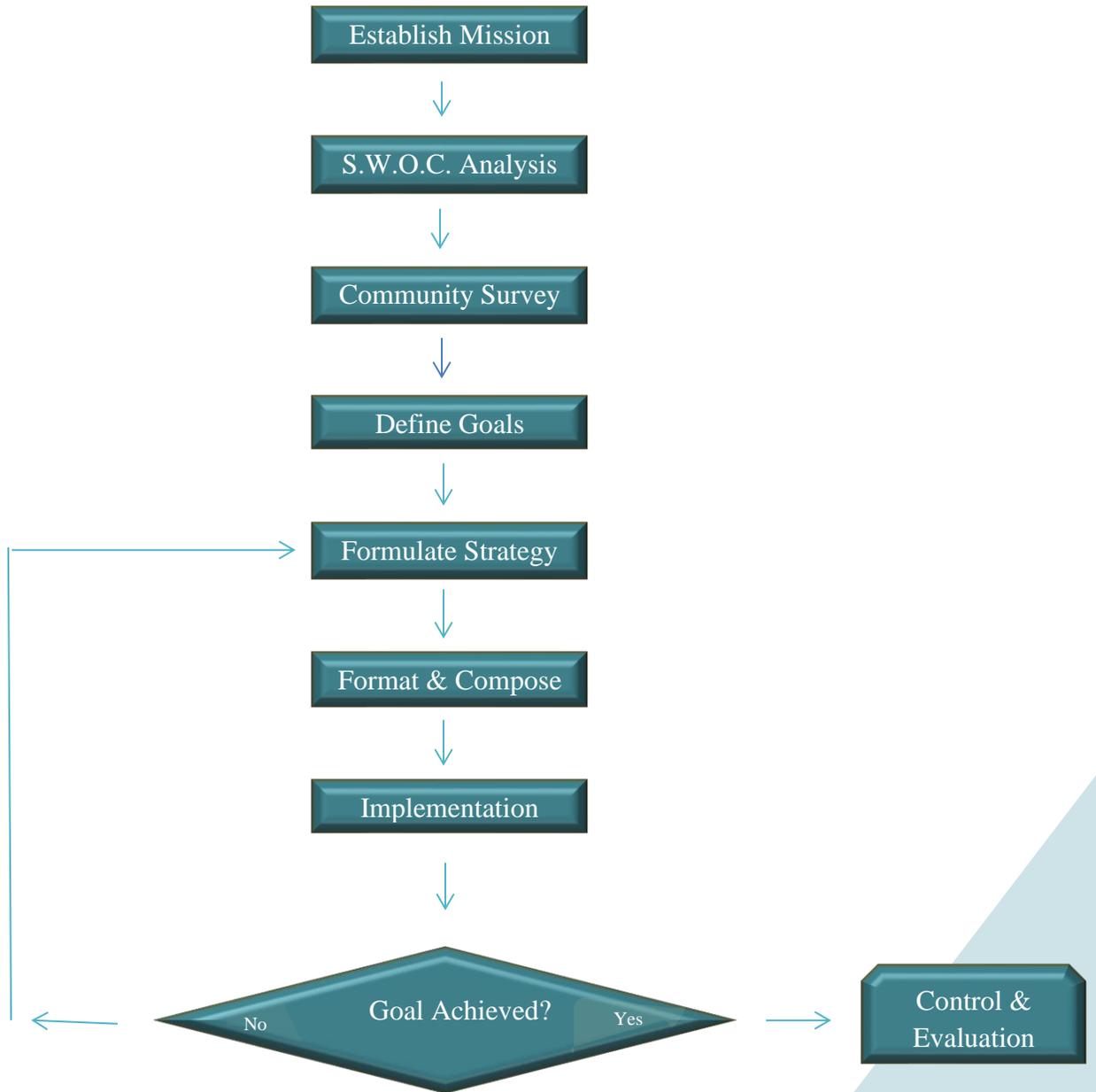
The Parks, Recreation, & Civic Facilities Department's primary objective is to provide a variety of programs, services, activities, facilities, and infrastructure to enhance the quality of life, health, and wellness for citizens and visitors of St. Joseph. The department focuses on areas of health and wellness, resource conservation, and social equity. The services provided are extremely diverse, ranging from both indoor and outdoor recreation, sports, and fitness activities, to historical, educational, cultural, social, leisure, and natural experiences. The parks department also offers a variety of facility usage for a large number of groups and community partners, as well as citizens and visitors of all ages.

Organized groups that use parks facilities for their programming include the St. Joseph School District, St. Joseph Home School Association, St. Joseph Hockey Club, St. Joseph Figure Skating Association, Missouri Western State University, YMCA, Pony Express Baseball, Midland Empire Sports Association, Midland Empire Youth Football, Wood Bat Baseball League, St. Joseph Mustangs, St. Joseph Retired Teachers' Association, Young Champions Karate, Allied Arts, Performing Arts Association, St. Joseph Symphony, Robidoux Resident Theatre, Missouri Department of Conservation, Bartlett Center, South Side Progressive Association, North Side Association, Baptist Softball League, local swim teams, St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce, and Downtown Association. Many other organizations and non-profits use park facilities for one-time events and activities for fundraising and social gatherings. These events consist of runs/walks, tournaments, field trips, family fun days, health fairs, dinners/auctions, concerts, and festivals. The list alone indicates the importance of the parks department to the success of others and the community-wide impact the department has in St. Joseph.

In addition to all of the park's divisions and facilities, an advisory park board meets once per month to discuss park department projects, activities, programs, and policies. The board consists of nine community members appointed by the City Council. The Parks Advisory Board doesn't have any decision-making authority but serves as a sounding board for the director and staff to propose ideas and projects and discuss challenges within the department. Board members can provide insight, ideas, and advice regarding projects and programs from a different perspective than that of staff.

## The Process

St. Joseph Parks, Recreation & Civic Facilities Department Strategic Planning Process



## **Establish the Mission**

The parks department management team met to analyze the purpose of parks, recreation, and civic facilities for the community; the most important values for our department; where we are today; where we would like to be in the future; the role that our department plays in the lives of our residents and visitors; and to evaluate our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and constraints. From this analysis and evaluation, a rough draft of our mission statement was formed. This was taken back to the employees in each division for their input. During the S.W.O.C. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Constraints) analysis sessions, the rough draft of the mission statement was introduced and input was obtained from our community partners. Based upon all of the information gained, the following mission statement was formulated, “Provide a variety of quality-of-life programs and services to promote a healthy community through fitness, recreation, and entertainment.” It will be accomplished through continued enhancement of existing facilities, providing more variety of recreational opportunities, improving security in the parks, better utilization of technology and equipment to increase efficiency and improve communication, and in identifying and securing additional funding.

## **S.W.O.C. Analysis**

In preparation for the development of our strategic plan, department staff met with community partners. Our community partners provided their opinions and evaluated the Parks, Recreation & Civic Facilities Department’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and constraints. These meetings were intended to receive input, information, and opinions from a variety of user groups, residents, and viewpoints. Participants attending these sessions were selected by the diversity of their backgrounds and experiences. Community partners were selected from the following areas: city (non-parks) departments, county agencies, the business community, the Chamber of Commerce, Air National Guard, non-profit support agencies, St. Joseph School District, Missouri Western State University, Girl Scouts of America, Boy Scouts of America, and user groups.

## **Community Survey**

A community survey was dispersed throughout the community to determine the needs and wants of community members and visitors. The survey was made available to the community and visitors as a paper form and an online fillable form. Advertisement to promote completion of the survey was done through a media release, Facebook, Twitter, the City of St. Joseph website, e-mails, and fliers distributed throughout parks facilities and inside restroom stalls at city facilities. The survey and the S.W.O.C. analysis data were sent to an analyst, new to our community, for analysis and evaluation. This analysis included a report of findings that was helpful in the strategic planning process.

## **Define Goals**

Once the S.W.O.C. analysis and community survey responses were analyzed, a committee established a list of challenging, achievable, and, when possible, measurable goals so that the department would easily be able to monitor progress and determine areas where corrections need to be made. The committee reviewed the S.W.O.C. analysis data, survey responses, and the analyst report while focusing on the most important points and information that were obtained through the S.W.O.C. analysis, community survey, organizations structure, staffing levels, workload, budget, and technological capabilities to determine the goals that and definitions to guide us in the future.

## **Formulate Strategy**

Once the goals were established it was important to determine what needed to be done to reach these. The approach taken was to establish the steps needed to reach the goals. These were then prioritized and larger projects were broken down into more manageable steps so that they did not seem as overwhelming and could be achieved successfully over time.

## **Format & Compose**

After the goals and strategies were established, decisions were made regarding how these should be documented in the strategic plan document. We wanted the document to be professional and easy for anyone to understand, as well as clearly define the mission and values and serve as a guide to keeping the department on track as we work towards completing our goals.

## **Implementation**

Implementation of any planning document requires dedication and support from everyone associated with the organization, but even more so from the administrative level of the department. As the various strategies are put into practice, adjustments to budgets, staff priorities, and policies may be necessary. Various members of the parks department management and administrative team will have responsibilities to various parts and elements to ensure the completion and success of the plan.

## **Control and Evaluation**

This planning process is continuous and requires constant assessment to determine whether each goal is being accomplished. If the objective is not being accomplished, the actions must be reexamined and adjusted as needed. In future strategic plans, some goals will be altered due to changes in the needs and expectations of the community. The Parks Advisory Board, supported by community input, will be tasked with continual monitoring of the progress of parks department staff in implementing and accomplishing the goals currently established with this plan.

### **Mission Statement**

Provide a variety of quality-of-life programs and services to promote a healthy community through fitness, recreation, and entertainment.

### **Vision Statement**

Dedication to quality programs, quality facilities, and quality service to enhance quality of life.

### **Value Statement**

In an effort to provide high-level service to everyone, the St. Joseph Parks, Recreation, & Civic Facilities Department will listen and respond with timely, relative, and consistent communication, strive to continually improve in all areas of planning, service, communicating, and utilization of modern technology and innovation; be fair, honest, and responsible, while working with each other and with community partners to the benefit of the city in the great responsibility to protect and properly utilize the resources entrusted to us by the community.

## **The Goals**

### *Goal 1: Maintain and improve existing infrastructure*

- Better utilize the existing asset management system to systematically track physical assets, maintenance activities, renovations, and work schedules
- Develop facilities in a manner that balances recreational and citizen needs, protects the natural environment, and uses sound planning methods to fully utilize our parks
- Utilize systematic approaches to make decisions for the greater good of the community and which will result in a purposeful approach to maintaining the department's infrastructure
- Create diverse, stable, and predictable funding strategies to provide the resources required to build, maintain and operate our system of parks and programs
- Better promote and support the "Adopt-a-Park" program to encourage local organizations, families, and individuals to volunteer to help maintain and improve existing parks, trails, parkways, and facilities

### *Goal 2: Increase recreational opportunities*

- Continuously evaluate programs, facilities, and services for operational effectiveness, efficiency, and need
- Increase community awareness of parks and recreational opportunities and resources with underrepresented groups to help them participate and engage
- Increase engagement in physical activities and enjoyment of the trails and parks to promote healthy living
- Expand programming into existing developed and undeveloped parks
- Create additional programs to address the needs and interests of the elderly and people with disabilities
- Maximize community resources through partnerships to provide a system of parks and recreation opportunities

- Revitalize park spaces and facilities to support the effort to become a destination location

*Goal 3: Improve park security*

- Provide accessible, convenient, safe, and attractive parks and facilities
- Maintain park-operated areas to remove obstacles that could be considered unsafe or promote criminal activity
- Install lighting, security systems, and signage to help reduce criminal activity in parks
- Intervene and communicate with the public to reduce safety concerns
- Enhance volunteer involvement to develop pride in the parks system

*Goal 4: Manage the use of technology and equipment to increase efficiency and improve communication between Parks and our citizens and visitors*

- Maintain and communicate programs, services, parks, facilities, and trails in a variety of media formats
- Increase community awareness of St. Joseph's parks, recreational, historical, and natural resources
- Branding and marketing the parks department using logos, hashtags, and mottoes via written and electronic communication venues
- Maintain and foster positive and cooperative relationships with print, internet, and other media outlets existing in our geographical areas
- Refine website usability, park history, trail and parks maps, and user group information pages

*Goal 5: Identify additional funding opportunities and options*

- Sell advertising and sponsorship for park facilities, fields, playgrounds, shelters, etc.
- Develop systematic, moderate, and equitable fee increases
- Seek grant opportunities to maintain and redevelop existing parks and facilities
- Utilize CIP and Park Tax programs to renovate existing facilities and provide new recreational opportunities

## **Acknowledgments**

The St. Joseph Parks, Recreation, & Civic Facilities Department would like to thank everyone who provided input into the creation of the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan. Without your interest, dedication, and contributions, this plan would not have been possible.

### **Contributors (Original Planning)**

Commander Mike Wilson, SJPD  
Dr. Linda Oakleaf, MWSU  
Park Board Members, Chairperson Joe Houts  
St. Joseph City Manager's Office  
St. Joseph Fire Department  
St. Joseph Health Department  
St. Joseph Parks, Recreation, & Civic Facilities Department  
St. Joseph Planning & Community Development Department  
St. Joseph Police Department  
St. Joseph Public Works & Transportation Department  
139<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing  
Allied Arts Council  
Bishop LeBlond High School  
Buchanan County Commissioners  
Commerce Bank  
Community Action Partnership  
Community Alliance  
Downtown Partnership  
East Hills Optimist Club  
Family Guidance Center  
Girl Scouts of NE Kansas & NW Missouri  
InterServ  
MERIL  
Missouri Department of Conservation  
Missouri Western State University  
MO-KAN Regional Council  
MOSAIC  
Northside Community Association  
Pony Express Baseball  
Pony Express Boy Scouts  
St. Joe Bicycle Club  
St. Joseph Chamber of Commerce  
St. Joseph Convention & Visitor's Bureau  
St. Joseph Flower Society  
St. Joseph Museums, Inc.  
St. Joseph Safety Council  
St. Joseph School District  
St. Joseph Youth Alliance

Second Harvest Community Food Bank  
Senior Citizen Foundation  
South St. Joe Progressive Association  
Special Olympics  
Sumner, Carter, Hardy, & Schwichtenberg  
United Way of Greater St. Joseph  
YMCA  
YWCA

The St. Joseph Parks, Recreation, & Civic Facilities Department would like to thank the staff and 2023 Park Board members who provided input into modifications and an extension of the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan which will now continue through 2026.

**Contributors (Strategic Plan Extension)**

Park Board Members, Chairperson Chris Clark  
Parks Department Management Staff  
2023 Community Survey (Community Alliance)  
2023 City Council Strategic Plan