

ROCKFORD PARK DISTRICT  
ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS

# MEMO

**To:** Jack L. Armstrong  
Douglas J. Brooks  
Chuck Brown  
Nate Martin  
Tyler Smith

**From:** Tim Dimke, Executive Director

**Subject:** Annual Internal Monitoring Report of Priority Result I Policy  
January 1 – December 31, 2009

**Date:** February 23, 2010

Your **PRIORITY RESULT I Policy** states that, *Well maintained park space and recreational facilities meet the recreational needs of this and succeeding generations of District residents.* (Adopted 10-10-2006; Revised 10-13-2009)

**CEO INTERPRETATIONS:**

“Well maintained” is interpreted as meaning that all current parkland and recreation facilities shall be maintained at the highest level for their intended use and the safety of users. While the District will maintain and repair existing assets, we will consider the retirement/closing of under-utilized or obsolete facilities.

“Park space and recreation facilities” is interpreted as land and amenities for the passive and active leisure pursuits of residents and visitors to the District.

“...meet the recreational needs” is defined by the Board in the subsequent provisions (A-C) of this policy, each of which is interpreted below.

“...this and succeeding generations of District residents” means that RPD will take a long-term view, including assessment of both population growth trends and geographic distribution, to ensure that both the array of amenities and their proximity help make park space and recreation ‘essential for the quality of life’ throughout the District, both now and in the future.

Acquisition and development of park space will be driven by:

1. The standards the Board has provided in A through C of this policy;
2. The recreational needs of District residents.

This report sets forth the basis for my assurance that, as reasonably interpreted, the District is in compliance with the majority of the Priority Result I Policy, with the exceptions that the established standard for providing neighborhood parks is not attainable within current resources, nor is the capital budget adequate to meet the District’s deferred repair and replacement projects.

Signed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tim Dimke, Executive Director

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **I-A. Park space growth priorities:**

- i. Open space and recreational use along the Rock River**
- ii. Neighborhood parks in existing and rapidly developing neighborhoods within reasonable walking distance from citizens homes, with access unhindered by major barriers;**
- iii. Recreational paths and trails**

### **CEO INTERPRETATIONS:**

These are the District's three priority areas for expansion of park space and recreational facilities. Where the District is actively seeking to acquire land for open space along the Rock River, neighborhood parks, or rec paths, these areas will be minimally maintained and preserved for later development as resources allow.

With the exception of the three priorities listed above, the District is not seeking to add land or facilities at this current time. Any donation of land not meeting the criteria in A – C of this policy is subject to sale through the Foundation. The District is not obligated to hold it, develop it, or use it.

If any new land is acquired through donation, it may be preserved for future development and may require its development and perpetual maintenance to be completely funded with non-tax resources. Similarly, any recreational development shall be completely funded with non-tax resources.

Any new capital project must be totally funded for operations, development, and maintenance with non-tax sources.

Finally, my interpretation is that any parkland acquisition and/or capital projects that are in progress will be completed to comply with previously incurred obligations, e.g., grants, legislative initiative funds, donations, etc., within available resources.

### **SUCCESS INDICATORS:**

1. Current capital projects previously committed to through grants, donations, and legislative initiatives will continue their development until completion, within available resources.

### **REPORT:**

- The Skatepark located at Flodin Boys & Girls Club at Elliot Park was completed in 2009. This was the last component in the IDNR OSLAD grant for Elliot Park Renovations. ✓ *Achievement*
  - Nicholas Conservatory construction is underway. The conventional building is about 20% complete. A new greenhouse vendor, Rough Bros. has been selected and the plans are being redesigned to accommodate the necessary structural design. *In process*
  - Puri Park development is 75% complete. The playground, paths, and concrete work have been completed. The shelter, grills and drinking fountain will be completed before the June 11<sup>th</sup> dedication. This project is funded by an IDNR OSLAD acquisition/development grant, private donor funding, and limited Rockford Park District funds. ✓ *Achievement*
2. Scheduled repair and replacement projects will have achieved 85% completion by the end of the year.

### **REPORT:**

- 94% of the scheduled repair and replacement CIP projects were completed. ✓ *Achievement exceeded Success Indicator, even with \$150,000 CIP planned projects on hold in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter order to balance the budget*
- \$2,582,383 or 82.1% of available CIP funding was budgeted for repair and replacement projects in 2009. This included \$90,000 of Pepsi funding. ✓ *Achievement of Board's Policy 2.5 B.2 to allocate no less than 80% in the CIP budget for repair and replacement of existing assets.*

3. The land plan will be updated annually in cooperation with municipalities for future park space and development needs identified in the three priority areas, including linkages for greenways for rec paths and trails.

**REPORT:**

- Updates to the Land Plan were completed in concert with municipal land use plans (City of Rockford, Winnebago County, City of Loves Park), and current development trends. RMAP also reconvened the agencies (including the Rockford Park District) involved with the Boone/Winnebago Regional Greenway Plan in 2009. This companion document to the Land Plan, with the assistance of a grant award, will undergo a needed update in 2010. ✓ *Achievement*
- As identified on the master plan for Washington Park, a pathway loop was installed for fitness activity and improving access to the center from the neighborhood. ✓ *Achievement*

4. New revenue sources are secured for land purposes.

**REPORT:**

- On November 10, 2009, the Board approved revisions to the District easement policies. Approval of easements in the future will be contingent on a financial contribution to compensate for the encumbrance or a future waiver of fees/permits commensurate with the easement. ✓ *Achievement*

5. Deferred maintenance will be reduced by 15%. *Note: this is a 2010 Success Indicator.*

**REPORT:**

- At the end of 2009 there remains a shortfall of \$12,315,508 for deferred maintenance of capital repair and replacement projects. This is an increase of \$321,437 over the 2008 shortfall of \$11,994,071.  
\* *Not able to achieve within current resources*

6. Intergovernmental agreements will leverage financial resources to secure land for future park use.

**REPORT:**

- District staff had ongoing negotiations with the City of Rockford in 2009 for three agreements with ties to the Keith Creek Greenway. The primary issues and failure to execute the agreements dealt with minimizing risk to the District (leasing land rather than taking ownership of parcels with past environmental issues) and determining improvement/maintenance responsibilities. These agreements will likely be executed early this year. *In process*
- The Board approved the Riverwalk agreement with the City on December 8, 2009. The Board has identified development along the riverfront as a priority achievement of the Board's Priority I Result to add recreational paths. The Riverwalk also provides a connection with the Museum Campus.  
*In process*

## **I-B. Park space will meet residents' needs for active recreation**

- i. There will be a minimum of 10 acres of parkland for more highly organized recreation activities per 1,000 population;**
- ii. Any growth in the acreage of parkland for active recreation will be preserved for later development.**

### **CEO INTERPRETATION:**

“Active recreation” is interpreted to include high-use and highly organized parkland (sports fields, tennis courts, etc.) and facilities (ice facilities, golf courses, waterpark/pools, Indoor Sports Center, Lockwood Park, Atwood Environmental Center, etc.).

### **REPORT:**

Total park space in the District available for active recreational purposes is 2,878.44 acres for a population of 212,497, or 13.54 acres/1,000 population. The Board’s standard for active recreation is exceeded by 3.54 acres. ✓*Achievement*

Since the District has achieved the Board’s standard in this area, the District will seek land only in the priorities listed in (A) of this policy.

### **SUCCESS INDICATORS:**

1. Land acquisition and development will occur only in the three priority areas listed in Priority Result I.A, and only within available resources.

### **REPORT:**

- The exceptions to this land acquisition policy in 2009 were 1) a long standing acquisition commitment with the Andersons/Spring Creek Development for the former Carroll property near ISC/Sportscore II which was needed for soccer field expansion as previously approved by Board agreement and 2) an acquisition of railroad right-of-way along the Sinnissippi Riverfront. The right-of-way was needed to accommodate the site plan for the Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens, a priority signature project and area as designated by the Board. ✓*Achievement*
2. Existing park acreage not needed for active recreation will revert to a natural condition with minimum management/maintenance.

### **REPORT:**

- Rockford Park District land totals over 4,800 acres. Just over 1,500 acres (31%) of those acres are identified as natural areas. Preserving natural park space during 2009 included the following initiatives:
  - Conducted 20 acre prescribed burn at Searls Prairie Nature Preserve
  - Conducted 10 acre prescribed burn at Atwood Prairie
  - Cleared 15 acres of invasive brush at Searls Park & Prairie Nature Preserve, Atwood Prairie, Mulford Crest, and Rockford Arboretum with the Bobcat Forestry Mower
  - Sprayed Reed Canary Grass from 2 acre area of Searls Prairie
  - Volunteers planted ½ acre of 2,500 native plant plugs at Midway Village (on corner of Guilford and Perryville)
  - Over 50 lbs of native seeds from 68 species were collected from Searls Prairie Nature Preserve and planted in a 4 acre buffer area south of Searls Prairie Nature Preserve
  - The 10 acre Midway planting was overseeded with 100 lbs of seeds collected by volunteers and natural areas staff
  - Ponds at Park-er-Woods, Magic Waters, Mulford Crest, and Sinnissippi Lagoon are all treated with biological clarifier and pond dye to reduce algae growth and improve water quality

*In process*

3. Any increase in acreage for park space or recreation facility development will be funded by non property tax resources.

**REPORT:**

- With the exception of the former Carroll property and railroad right-of-way acquisitions mentioned earlier, no additional property has been acquired with taxpayer resources. Part of the 2009 efforts to update the Land Plan included mapping vacant land in public ownership (cities, county, school district, housing authority, etc.). Staff continues to negotiate as appropriate with these units of government for opportunities to increase park space through (1) land trades or (2) donation of surplus property. As dollars decrease and/or competition increases for some of the traditional state/federal grant sources, staff continues to seek out philanthropic agencies/individuals to fund new acquisitions. *In process*
- The Ballard building at Riverview Park was renovated in 2009 to accommodate a hockey training center for youth. This work was made possible by private donations and CIP funding. *✓ Achievement*
- Kaye Anderson Park development consisting of a new playground, path, and landscaping was completed and dedicated in 2009. The park land was donated by Clyde and Marjorie Anderson in memory of their daughter-in-law Kaye and the development was completed with another private donation from the Anderson family and CIP funding. *✓ Achievement*
- Puri Park commenced construction in 2009 with a new playground, path and concrete work. The shelter, drinking fountain and grills will be installed this spring with a dedication planned for June 11, 2010. This project was made possible with a private donation of land and cash and limited CIP funding. *✓ Achievement*
- A new maintenance barn was completed at Lockwood Park that was made possible with a private donation and CIP funding. *✓ Achievement*

4. Existing assets will be maintained for patron safety, revenue enhancement, or decreased costs.

**REPORT:**

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) funding is used to ensure that the District's recreation facilities, parks and equipment are well maintained for user safety and patron enjoyment. The following projects were completed during 2009 to achieve desired results:

- The long range plan at Magic Waters included the addition of a new ride, Typhoon Terror, five cabanas and a new bathhouse to increase revenue and patron enjoyment. These improvements were completed in time for the 2009 season. The Magic Waters south parking lot was replaced to improve safety, and as an added benefit to patrons, shaded picnic areas were added. *✓ Achievement*
- Alpine Pool concession area was modified to increase revenue and patron enjoyment. *✓ Achievement*
- Analysis of all operations at facilities, golf courses and parks including reductions in needed mowing contractor services during non-growing times, to more efficient use of fertilizer applications and use of labor resulted in an overall cost savings of \$160,000 (approx) in Maintenance Services. *✓ Achievement*
- Approximately 15,000 square yards of asphalt at our parks and facilities was replaced in 2009 as a part of routine maintenance. *✓ Achievement*

5. Under utilized or obsolete facilities will be brought to the Board for consideration of retirement or closing.

**REPORT:**

There is nothing to report in this area for 2009.

6. A 20-year comprehensive master plan will be developed for each major recreational facility or service area, which identifies future space needs, capital development, and program outlook based on participation trends and changing demographics. Two master plans will be completed and presented to the Board in 2010. The ADA physical accessibility plan is updated and implementation begun.

**REPORT:**

- Two master plans, Riverview Park and Sportscore Two/ISC, will be presented during 2010 to the Board *In process*
  - 90% of Phase 1 of the ADA audit was completed, with 45 major parks audited for accessibility and barriers. *In process*
7. District facilities and assets are well-maintained and positioned for long-term sustainability. Each has preventative maintenance systems in place, which will prevent any emergency repairs due to preventative maintenance systems.

**REPORT:**

- Refrigeration and HVAC preventive maintenance programs have been completed and have been implemented at both Ice Rinks. ✓ *Achievement*
  - An HVAC preventative maintenance program has been implemented at the Webbs Norman Center ✓ *Achievement*
  - The preventative maintenance program for the Indoor Sports Center is 80% developed and will be completed and implemented during 2010 *In process*
  - Through a state required permit, Park District plumbers annually coordinate backflow preventer and boiler inspections district wide for golf courses, pools, irrigation systems, and facilities to prevent emergency repairs. The backflow preventer at Ingersoll was replaced due to a deep freeze that occurred. The backflow preventer at the Tech Works building required emergency repair for a cost of \$1,000. ✓ *Achievement*
  - Inspections at all parks, buildings and playgrounds are performed regularly to identify needed repairs and prevent emergency repairs. Fleet vehicles have a 26 point preventative maintenance inspection at each oil change. Minor repairs that were discovered during regular inspections were completed, so there were no major repairs in 2009 required. ✓ *Achievement*
8. The 2010 Citizen Survey will indicate 85% or greater agreement that parks and facilities are well maintained.

**REPORT:**

- Citizen Survey will be taken in June-July and results reported in the Global Priority Results monitoring report in October. *In process*

## **I-C. Park space will meet residents' needs for passive recreation**

- i. There will be a minimum of 10 acres of natural parkland for passive activities per 1,000 population;**
- ii. There will be an increase in the acreage of existing parkland conserved and managed as natural areas.**

### **CEO INTERPRETATIONS:**

Passive recreation” is interpreted to mean non-programmed areas, such as parks, recreation pathways, natural areas, and gardens. People use these areas for relaxation, reflection, and peaceful purposes.

The established minimum of 10 acres/1,000 population is self-explanatory. The acreage of non-active land will be restored into natural areas, prairies, woodland, and waterways to meet residents' current and future needs for passive recreation. The land holdings of other public/non-profit agencies are considered as fulfilling the standard for natural parkland for passive activities.

### **REPORT:**

Total park District park space for passive recreation is 1,972.86 acres for a population of 212,497, or 9.28 acres/1,000 population, almost meeting the 10 acres per 1,000 population standard. Winnebago County Forest Preserve District and Rock Cut State Park provide 12,492 acres of land for passive recreation or 60.02 acres/1,000 population. When this acreage is combined with that of the Park District, our citizens have a total of 69.5 acres per 1,000 population of natural parkland available for passive recreation. This amount exceeds the Board's standard of 10 acres per 1,000 population. ✓ *Achievement*

Since the District has achieved the Board's standard in this area, the District will seek land only in the priorities listed in (A) of this policy.

### **SUCCESS INDICATORS:**

1. Land acquisition and development will occur only in the three priority areas listed in Priority Result I-A, and only within available resources.

### **REPORT:**

- Service requests continue for increased recreational opportunities from our citizens. However, the citizen survey responses have asked the District to “live within its means” resulting in very limited resources available for acquisition and development within the priority areas/service gaps. The exceptions to this land acquisition policy in 2009 were 1) a long standing acquisition commitment with the Andersons/Spring Creek Development for the former Carroll property at Sportscore Two that was needed for soccer field expansion; and 2) an acquisition of railroad right-of-way along the Sinnissippi Riverfront. The right-of-way was needed to accommodate the site plan for the Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens.
  - The Park District received a land donation for Puri Park and constructed a path through a wooded area, restored 13 acres of prairies, one acre of wetlands, and installed a playground. ✓ *Achievement*
2. Existing park acreage not needed for passive recreation will be converted to a natural condition, which long term will decrease maintenance costs.

### **REPORT:**

- Existing natural areas were expanded at Midway Village and Searls prairies. Several areas at Magic Waters were converted to no mow areas, and future plans are to gradually turn the areas into prairie plantings. ✓ *Achievement*
3. Any increase in acreage for park space or recreation facility development will be funded by non property tax resources.

**REPORT:**

- Washington Park Community Center had renovations and upgrades to the teen center area partially funded by Winnebago County Housing Authority (\$12,700) and the Mill Foundation (\$5,000)  
*✓ Achievement*
- Part of the 2009 efforts to update the Land Plan included mapping vacant land in public ownership (cities, county, school district, housing authority, etc.). Staff continues to negotiate as appropriate with these units of government for opportunities to increase park space through (1) land trades or (2) donation of surplus property to leverage limited resources. *In process*