



## 2016-2019 Strategic Plan

### Foreword

The Centerville-Washington Park District embarked upon the development of a strategic plan for a number of valuable reasons. First, at the end of 2014, three-fifths of the District's senior management staff retired after a collective 85 years of service. These retirements created an obvious need to re-establish sound, unified direction for the coming years.

Second, the previous strategic plan had run its course, as all strategic plans do. The community and national economies were recovering from the extended economic recession. The previous plan was initiated at the start of the recession. Fortunately, things have improved throughout the community and the Park District's direction needs to be in concert with what is occurring in the community.

And, third, there is a desire among all stakeholders to sustain parks, amenities, programs at high-quality levels.

This strategic plan is intentionally succinct, short and focused while challenging the organization to improve upon an already superior park system.

The following summary attempts to explain how the plan will enable the District to meet the needs of its residents. However, the plan could not have been created without the direction and support of the Park Commissioners—Mr. David Lee, Ms. Lucy Sanchez, and Mr. Dan Monahan. Even more important to the plan was the input provided by so many residents of Centerville and Washington Township via surveys, focus groups and interviews. The Board and Staff of the Park District offer their thanks and appreciation to the hundreds of people who took time to give opinions, ideas and feedback.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### Purpose of Strategic Plan

Quite simply put, the Strategic Plan follows a clear vision of where the Park District should be headed, and a strategy to get there that is ***based on community needs and wants***.

The plan directs the allocation of resources to those areas that have been determined to be of most importance to the community. It sets priorities, aims efforts and creates an environment to measure levels of success from those priorities and efforts.



## **Process**

The process began with multiple efforts to “find out.” Beginning with input from residents and park patrons via surveys in 2012 and 2015, the District was able to find out what is important to residents; to learn what may be missing; and to learn what more was wanted.

Surveys were followed by an assessment of stakeholder opinions, conducted by Management & Planning Solutions, LLC (MPS). MPS utilized the [Strategic Planning Manual for Strategic Planning in Nonprofit and Public Sector Organizations](#) by Frank Martinelli of The Center for Public Skills Training as a guide. The final step of information gathering was an intensive meeting of the Park District staff, via a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and, Threats) analysis.

After gathering, sorting and organizing 1,000’s of pieces of input, MPS facilitated a planning meeting of Park District Commissioners and Management staff. This exercise led to the crystallization of key priorities for the Park District’s next 3-5 years.

## **Priorities**

Following some refinement, the priorities were determined to be as follows:

- 1. Preserve Habitats and Ecosystems**
- 2. Demonstrate Responsible Land Stewardship**
- 3. Provide a Variety of Programs and Activities to Meet Community Demand**
- 4. Develop Park and Facility Amenities to Meet Future Populations**
- 5. Continuously Engage the Community**
- 6. Improve the Organization’s Processes**

Internally, these priorities are self-explanatory. Following is a short illustration of each:

### **1. Preserve Habitats and Ecosystems**

Community input told the Park Board that natural areas, habitats and ecosystems were of highest value. Further, people told the District that more land should be acquired, but for the primary purpose of preserving natural areas.

### **2. Demonstrate Responsible Land Stewardship**

People in the community appreciate and value well-maintained parks; and well-cared-for natural areas. This priority intends to keep the Park District focused on meeting the expectations for having high quality parks, recognizing that the parks have different features, uses and value.

### **3. Provide a Variety of Programs and Activities to Meet Community Demand**



Overwhelmingly, the community placed the most importance and interest on programs and activities. Across the variety of programs offered, people told the District that they'd like to see more. In addition, the clear message was to offer more programs at times most convenient to residents. This priority sets the District on a path to meet the stated expectations and desires for programs and activities.

#### **4. Develop Park and Facility Amenities to Meet Future Populations**

This priority directs the District to take a keen look at the changing ways people use parks; at what amenities are of interest; at how to offer parks that meet the needs of all ages; and, to modify parks and amenities so that they are accessible to people of all abilities. Park improvements, redevelopment and/or repairs in the coming years will take these issues into consideration.

#### **5. Continuously Engage the Community**

Happily, residents asked the District to keep asking! People like to be able to contribute their ideas and suggestions to the improving parks and programs. Nearly 75% of survey respondents asked to be kept informed, and, welcomed future opportunities to be queried as to their thoughts. Similarly, folks asked the District to continue with a variety of information sharing, communication and interaction.

#### **6. Improve the Organization's Processes**

The final priority comes mostly from digesting all that residents and stakeholders had to say. It recognizes that the achievement of all the priorities of the Strategic Plan can only happen with modern, effective and productive processes. Any and all improvements to processes have one purpose—improve the quality of service to the community.

### **Implementation**

The work to implement the Strategic Plan begins in January 2016. The Goals as shown in each of the Priorities set the broad directions. The Park District's able staff develops objectives and tactics in order to achieve the goals.

Of primary importance with the implementation is the creating of meaningful measurements. This task becomes one of the first under the priority of Improving Processes.

The objectives and tactics are what define the work being done in the parks, in the programs and in the offices. These will be the steps in annual allocation of resources via budget, assignments, people and material.



### **Closing Comments**

The Centerville-Washington Park District Strategic Plan is both challenging and achievable. It will require good management, good governance and good production from all of the personnel. Fortunately, the Park District has many exceptionally smart, proficient and capable people who will most certainly provide all that is asked, and more.

By working this plan, a really good park system will certainly get better and better.

Respectfully,  
Arnold J. Biondo, Director  
January 2016

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## **2016-2019 Strategic Plan**

### *Key Priorities with Goals*

#### **1. Preserve Habitats and Ecosystems**

- A. Acquire appropriate land
- B. Conduct a habitat preservation and conservation management program
- C. Actively participate in multi-party efforts to preserve habitats and ecosystems within or impacting CWPD

#### **2. Demonstrate Responsible Land Stewardship**

- A. Determine true cost to maintain lands
- B. Allocate resources commensurate with community priority/expectations
- C. Modify care and maintenance standards as necessary

#### **3. Provide a Variety of Programs and Activities to Meet Community Demand**

- A. Learn community need and demand for programs
- B. Build programs to match stated needs
- C. Evaluate program effectiveness

#### **4. Develop Park and Facility Amenities to Meet Future Populations**

- A. Precede development, expansion or improvements with operational cost data analysis.
- B. Design and build for accessibility, adaptation, and/or expansion
- C. Extend and increase trail system
- D. Complete park system comprehensive master plan
- E. Introduce new or alternative park amenities to meet community needs



## **5. Continuously Engage the Community**

- A. Complete a statistically valid needs assessment
- B. Increase personal contact opportunities
- C. Consistently apply the CWPD brand
- D. Implement multiple ongoing, two-way communication vehicles

## **6. Improve Organization's Processes**

- A. Identify District systems, processes, and procedures needing improvement
- B. Revise processes for effectiveness and efficiency
- C. Build a system to measure the success of processes
- D. Apply performance measurements to District functions
- E. Deliver more or better services for the tax dollars received