



Public Engagement

Chapter 5



Public Engagement

Introduction

The Manhattan Parks and Recreation Strategic Facility Improvement Plan was greatly informed through input, comments, and engagement of citizens. While the focus of this Plan is to identify short, mid, and long-term indoor and outdoor athletic facilities needs, the input received through this process will enable MPRD to better understand from a system-wide perspective what parks and facilities users value most and what unmet needs exist in the community today. This diverse range of user input coupled with the demographic summary, market review, level of service analysis, parks and facilities assessment, and community survey data will enable more informed decisions impacting MPRD to be made by city leaders far beyond the scope of this Plan.

Citizens

Manhattan residents were encouraged to participate in the Plan development process through a variety of avenues. A Public Open House was facilitated early in the process to afford individuals interested in learning more about the overall sequence of the Plan evolution to learn more and express their thoughts and concerns related to existing facilities, unmet needs, and considerations for future parks and facilities improvements. Citizens were invited to several City Commission and Park Board sessions facilitated during the Plan process for updates and discussion.

In addition to formal meetings and sessions, citizens were provided with updates, opportunities to review presentations, announcements, and other Plan-related information on the project web page hosted with the MPRD website.

Lastly, the statistically valid community survey that was administered as part of the Plan process provides a rich balance of broad citizen-based data related to the delivery of parks and recreation facilities and services in Manhattan. See Chapter 6: Community Survey for results and interpretations of this data.

Focus Groups

As part of the public engagement strategy for the Plan, listening sessions with over fifteen focus groups were facilitated to establish a better understanding of opportunities, challenges, and unmet needs for parks and facilities in the City of Manhattan from a diverse range of users. These sessions combined with citizen input and other engagement strategies provided insight and perspective on areas of priority to be addressed in the community survey. Representatives from 187 different leagues, clubs, institutions, not-for-profits, community service entities, religious organizations, health and wellness providers, and arts and humanities were invited to participate in the focus group sessions. Focus groups were organized to group similar activities and interests together and facilitated to enable like-minded entities to share opportunities, challenges, and ideas for improvement together. The following is a summary of discussions with each of the focus groups part of this Plan process:

	11:30-12:45pm	1:00-1:45pm	2:00-2:45pm	3:00-3:45pm	6:00-6:30pm
1 Manhattan Parks and Recreation					
Active Recreation & Sports Programs Arts & Humanities Programs & Activities Therapeutic Recreation Programs and Activities	Douglas-Tubman Room				
2 Sports Tourism					
Fieldhouse Project Manhattan Area Sports Council (Manhattan CVB)	Douglas-Tubman				
3 Baseball/Softball					
Amateur Softball Association American Legion Baseball Grand Slam Sports Manhattan Baseball Optimist Club Midwest Sports Productions NBC/HP Diamond USSSA		Douglas-Tubman Room			
4 Basketball/Volleyball					
Manhattan Basketball Association Mid-America Youth Basketball (MAYB) Kortz Volleyball Club		Jung Room			
4 Riley County					
Riley County Staff		Douglas-Library			
6 Disc Golf					
Big Red Disc Golf Club (Fort Riley) Disc Fanatics of Kansas Goose Grass Disc Golf Club K-Steele Disc Golf Club Lutheran Campus Ministry Disc Golf				Jung Room	
7 Football/Soccer					
Firm Hills Football League Little Apple Football Association Manhattan Area Football Association Firm Hills Soccer Club Global Sports, Inc. Jim Nichols Latho Soccer Club Little Apple Soccer Club Real Kansas United Soccer Club				Douglas-Tubman Room	
8 Religious Organizations					
Abundant Life Church of God Agape Family Church Baptist AME Church Blue Valley United Methodist Church Calvary Chapel Manhattan Calvary United Methodist Church Christ Fellowship Church Christ Lutheran Church Christ the Redeemer Church Christian Disciples Fellowship Christian Science Church Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints College Avenue United Methodist Church College Heights Baptist Church Community of Christ Church Crestview Christian Church Emmanuel Southern Baptist Church Faith Baptist Church Faith Evangelical Free Church Fellowship Temple First Assembly of God First Baptist Church of Manhattan First Christian Church First Church of the Nazarene First Congregational Church First Free Methodist of Manhattan First Lutheran Church First Presbyterian Church of Manhattan First United Methodist Church Grace Baptist Church Harvest Baptist Church Harvest Fellowship Hope Lutheran Church Ikhlas MJK Islamic Center of Manhattan Korean Church of Manhattan Korean Presbyterian Church Living Water Ranch Church Living Word Church Louisville United Methodist Church	Manhattan Baptist Church Manhattan Christian Fellowship Manhattan Church of Christ Manhattan Friends Church Manhattan Jewish Congregation Manhattan Mennonite Church Manhattan Wesleyan Mount Zion Church of God New Life Pentecostal Church New Hope Community Church Ogden Baptist Church Ogden Bible Church Ogden Christian Church Pigeon Baptist Church Saint Francis Episcopal Ministry Saint Luke's Lutheran Church Saint Mary Magdalene Orthodox Christian Mission Saint Paul's Episcopal Church Sedalia Community Church Seven Doctors Catholic Church Savannah Day Adventist Church St. Luke's Catholic Student Center St. Luke's Lutheran Church St. Thomas More Catholic Church Trinity Center Trinity Presbyterian Church Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship of Manhattan United Pentecostal Church Unity Church of Manhattan University Christian Church Village Faith Church Vineyard Community Church The Well Westview Community Church Word of Faith Family Church Zealand Community Church Young Life Manhattan Central Kansas Youth for Christ			Douglas-Tubman Room	

	7:00-7:45am	8:15-9:00am 8:30-9:15am	9:15-10:00am	10:00-10:45am	1:00-11:45am	2:00-12:30pm	12:45-1:30pm	6:00-6:45pm
9 Manhattan High School Athletics								
Baseball Basketball Bowling Crane Country Golf Soccer Softball Swim and Dive Tennis Track & Field Volleyball Wrestling XC/SSA		MHS Alumni Meeting Rm Manhattan HIGH SCHOOL Meet @ 8:45 to set up						
10 Colgate Athletics Programs								
K-State CrossFit K-State Rehabilitation Services K-State Sports Center Manhattan Area Technical College Manhattan Christian College		1st Floor V/U Center McClellan Conf Rm						
11 K-12 Athletics Programs (Shared Facilities)								
Chief (Intramural Group) Firm Hills Christian School Firm Hills Job Corps Manhattan Catholic Schools USD 383 Athletics Activities		Firm Hills WHS Tennis						
12 Swimming								
K-State Natatorium Manhattan Marine Swim Team LHM		KSU Diggins Conf. Rm		Arkansas Indoor Dive A				
13 Trail Users (Bicycling/Jumping)								
Bad Goat Racing (mountain & cyclocross) Big Poppy Bicycle Company Dirty Apple Bike Polo Firm Hills Area Bike Club Outdoor Club (bicycling, canoeing, hiking) The Pathfinder Treygrass Cycling Team Firm Hills Triathlon Running Club Grip on the Rain Manhattan Cross Country Club Manhattan Running Community Manhattan Track Club		Arkansas Diggins Dive A Dive B		Douglas Tubman Room				
14 Private Service Providers								
Academy Sports Bart Fitness Body First Fitness & Fitness Center Cross Fit 785 Cross Fit Manhattan Cross Fit Meet Get Mean CrossFit Manhattan Gymnastics Academy Max Fitness Maximum Performance Fit Fitness Wildcat Golf and Fitness Wildwood Zipline Ropes						Douglas Tubman Room		
15 Health, Wellness & Therapeutic Recreation								
Big Lakes Development Center Manhattan Special Olympics K-State Fitness Therapy Riley County Senior Service Center K-State Riley County Extension MERC Regional Health Center Riley County Health Department					Jung Room			
16 Arts & Humanities								
Art & Handprints Association of Manhattan K-State Performing Arts K-State Union Program Council Manhattan Arts Center MKS Performing Arts Department Golf Openness Harvest Band Banks Dance Studio Covers Dance Studio @ Community H Davenport University Theater Riverside Church Washington Dance Studio						Jung Room		
17 Community Service Organizations/Providers								
Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Manhattan Boys and Girls Club Boy Scouts Fraternities Order of Eagles Girl Scouts Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support G Greater Manhattan Community Foundation Lions Club (Manhattan) Lions Club (Spartanburg) Manhattan Jaycees Manhattan Kiwanis Club Manhattan Solar Kiwanis Club Manhattan Rotary Club Sedalia Evening Club Sedalia Luncheon Club LHM						Douglas Tubman Room		
18 City Manager's Office								
City Representatives							Jung Room	

Focus groups provide a deeper understanding of opportunities, challenges, and unmet needs for parks and facilities in the Manhattan Community.



MPRD Staff



Parks and Recreation

MPRD Staff maintain outdoor and indoor parks and recreation facilities and provide recreational

programming to the Manhattan community. For this group the general consensus is that the City provides an adequate quantity of outdoor recreation fields and amenities to meet needs in the community, but the poor quality of these facilities adversely impacts the ability of MPRD to maximize services to the community. The group shares similar concerns related to the poor quality of indoor recreation spaces provided by the City to the community, but also is challenged by the limited quantity of adequate indoor recreation space provided by the City and available for MPRD programming.

The majority of outdoor recreation programs offered by MPRD are accommodated at facilities within parks owned, maintained, and operated by the City. The poor quality of many of these fields, courts, and facilities adversely impacts MPRD ability to maximize program offerings to the community and often presents scheduling challenges to serve current programs. Wet fields, poor drainage, excessive use, and limited maintenance resources result in frequent and extended programming delays, cancellations, and scheduling challenges due to field conditions. Improvements to playing field surfaces and field lighting at the most frequently utilized parks – Frank Anneberg Park, CiCo Park, and City Park would greatly enhance MPRD abilities to more adequately serve current programming needs and expand program offerings to the Manhattan

community in the future.

MPRD provides community programming in several City owned, maintained, and operated facilities. Community House, City (Peace Memorial) Auditorium, Douglass Community Center, and the Roundhouse provide indoor spaces for a variety of community programs. The size and poor condition of each of these facilities limits the type and capacity of usage that can be accommodated in the spaces.

The majority of indoor recreation programs offered by MPRD are accommodated in USD 383 school gymnasium spaces. The limited size of elementary school gymnasiums often presents challenges to maximizing effective delivery of these programs. Usage of elementary school gymnasiums by the City for programming is coordinated directly with Principals, which can present scheduling conflicts that result in City program times and/or locations being adjusted – reflecting poorly on MPRD.



Sports Tourism



The sports tourism focus group expressed enthusiasm and excitement for Manhattan's capacity

to attract sport activities to the community that net a positive impact on area businesses. Participation rates in competitive sports and traveling teams have continued to grow in Manhattan and across the state of Kansas.

The group believes hotel room capacity exists for large weekend events and tournaments to be hosted in Manhattan.

However several challenges to hosting events in Manhattan exist – such as scheduling conflicts with K-State events, conferences, and other regional activities, lack of quantity and quality of sports facilities available in Manhattan coupled with limited access to existing facilities, and competition from other communities with higher quality facilities and amenities.



Baseball/Softball



Many different organizations and leagues provide baseball and softball programming to the Manhattan community in

addition to MPRD. This presents Manhattan residents with a diverse range of options when selecting a service provider for these activities. However, challenges exist to delivering these services due inadequate quality of facilities-

specifically during wet conditions. Practices and games for recreational leagues are accommodated at facilities throughout the Manhattan park system. Manhattan-based competitive teams in general practice at facilities or open space within the Manhattan park system, but the majority of games are played outside of Manhattan due to lack of facility



availability. No indoor space is currently available for softball or baseball training during the winter months. The baseball and softball group expressed challenges with hosting recreational and competitive baseball or softball tournaments at Manhattan park facilities due to the existing quality of facilities and limited maintenance staff support during events.

Basketball/Volleyball



The basketball and volleyball organizations providing services to the Manhattan community equally expressed the most

challenging aspect of their programs is availability and accessibility to indoor gymnasium space for practices and games. The majority of these non-MPRD programs are utilizing USD 383 gymnasium spaces, outside of School District events and MPRD programming. Several volleyball teams do have limited access to K-State gymnasium facilities for practice purposes, but most games are played outside of Manhattan due to lack of gymnasium space.

Additionally, Douglass Center is the only indoor facility in Manhattan accessible to citizens for drop-in basketball play and no indoor facilities exist in Manhattan accessible to citizens for drop-in volleyball play.



Riley County



The existing relationship between Riley County and City of Manhattan to maximize park resources at CiCo Park and Fairmont

Park to citizens have been successful in the past and should be leveraged for future benefits as well. The County Parks and Recreation capital improvement budget is limited. The group indicated an interconnected County-wide trail study would be helpful to connect communities, greenways, and other destination points throughout the region. Additionally, the group noted establishment of a not-for-profit land holding entity would be beneficial as Manhattan continues to grow and expand to acquire and/or accept land donations and maintain these holdings until such time the County or City was prepared to convert the properties into parks, greenways, trails, or other publicly accessible spaces.

Disc Golf



The disc golf group indicated participation in the sport has been growing in Manhattan and throughout the state of Kansas in recent years. Warner

Park and Fairmont Park are the official disc golf facilities within the City. CiCo Park provides an objects course (no baskets) and University Park provides an unofficial practice area. Tuttle Creek State Park, north of Manhattan also provides disc golf facilities to the region. The group would like to see the existing 9-hole course at Warner Park expanded to 18-holes and is prepared to assist with fund raising and/or construction of these improvements. Permanent restroom facilities at Warner Park are desired as well. Expanded disc golf facilities within the community would greatly enhance the ability of disc golf groups to host larger, more frequent tournaments.

Football/Soccer



Football and soccer programs are offered to Manhattan citizens through a variety of leagues, associations and clubs. This

presents Manhattan residents with a diverse range of options when selecting a service provider for these activities. However, challenges exist to delivering these services due to the inadequate quality of facilities – specifically during wet conditions. Practices and games for recreational leagues are accommodated at facilities throughout the Manhattan park system as well as available open space on other public and private properties.

The Fairmont Park fields are heavily used, but lack of storage and potable drinking water at the Park is a challenge.



Some football groups currently have access to K-State facilities for practices and games. Coaching and field maintenance is typically provided by volunteers, which can be problematic. No indoor space is currently available in the community for football or soccer training during the winter months. If future improvements to convert natural turf fields to synthetic turf are pursued by the City, consideration should be given to having permanent inlaid markings for soccer and football.

Religious Organizations



Several religious organizations indicated usage of City Park and CiCo Park in the past for church events as well as Keats Park, a Riley County

Park. Availability of restrooms at City Park beyond the Pavilion is a challenge and the group expressed the idea of making the Aquatic Center restrooms available to Park users during events. Churches that have gymnasium and/or flexible indoor recreation rooms indicated those spaces are typically being fully utilized during evening and weekends and do not have any capacity for additional programming in these spaces. Several churches noted their congregations would benefit greatly from additional indoor multipurpose spaces being available and accessible within the community for potlucks, meetings, recreation activities, and other church events.

Manhattan High School Athletics

The MHS Athletics group included representatives from baseball, cross country, tennis, basketball, soccer, and swimming programs. The group noted the shared-use facilities agreement between USD 383 and the City of Manhattan has provided reciprocal benefits to each entity as well as residents over time and continuation of this positive relationship should be embraced and strengthened in the future to maximize resources available to the public.

Baseball



In general the field facilities utilized by MHS baseball at Eisenhower Complex meet the baseball needs of the program.

The Complex is owned and largely maintained by the City. The amount of parking available at the facility is inadequate and presents several challenges during games and events. Future consideration should be given to increasing the amount of parking available at the Complex as well as converting the competition field to synthetic turf and improvements to the backstop system. No indoor space is currently available in the community for baseball training during the winter months.

Cross Country



The cross country program trains at Warner Park, Anneberg Park, Northeast Park and others areas throughout the City

of Manhattan. Lack of permanent restrooms at Warner Park is a challenge – specifically when MHS hosts meets at the Park. Future consideration should be given to constructing permanent restrooms at Warner Park for use during practices and meets. Cross country participants train year-round and would greatly benefit from having access to an indoor running track.

Tennis



The outdoor facilities accessible to the MHS tennis program at the High School, City Park, and CiCo Park are in poor condition. The poor condition of existing

courts in the community coupled with the lack of a single location with a minimum of nine courts negatively impacts the ability for Manhattan to host tennis summer camps and tournaments. The School District is landlocked at the High School with limited space for expansion of the existing four courts at that location. The tennis program would greatly benefit from a nine court complex with access to permanent restrooms, a central shaded area and adequate parking for regular practices, meets, camps, and tournaments.

Basketball



The MHS basketball programs are accommodated primarily through usage of USD 383 indoor gymnasium facilities, although

the gymnasium at City Auditorium is utilized occasionally for summer camps and clinics. Offseason training for participants is challenging due to lack of available and accessible indoor gymnasium space in the Manhattan community. MHS basketball programs as well as youth development programs would greatly benefit from additional gymnasium space availability within the community.

Soccer



The majority of MHS soccer practices and games are accommodated on the synthetic turf field at Bishop Stadium. The alternative back-up facility for MHS

soccer programs is Griffith Park. Participants at the high school level consistently express concerns regarding poor quality of soccer fields in the Manhattan community leading to availability challenges ultimately resulting in inadequate youth development within the sport. Winter conditioning and training for participants is a major challenge due to lack of available and accessible indoor space in the community.

Swimming



The MHS swimming programs typically have 40 to 50 participants per year and utilize the existing K-State Natatorium facility.

The Natatorium is programmed extensively and open swim times beyond scheduled training sessions are limited. The future uncertainty of the Natatorium is of concern to USD 383, as there is currently no other facility in Manhattan that could accommodate MHS swimming programs if the K-State facility was closed and not replaced or unavailable to MHS.

Kansas State University Recreation Services



The K-State Recreation Center consists of 11 basketball courts, 14 racquet ball courts, two squash

courts, four exercise rooms, one spinning room, and one personal training room. The facility averages approximately 3,500 users per day, with usage typically peaking at over 5,000 per day in January. The facility is funded through student and membership fees. Student fees at \$120 per student per semester combined with faculty and staff memberships at \$28 per month and affiliate memberships at \$38 per month help fund \$1.2M for operations and \$1.8M to retire debt annually.

The Manhattan community can utilize the K-State Recreation Center by joining the K-State Alumni Association, currently \$50 per year, and paying a \$56 per month membership fee. Guests can utilize the facility with a member for \$5 per day. Complete membership details and eligibility requirements is accessible on the K-State Recreational Services webpage. Limited partnerships between K-State and the City exist for use of University gymnasium spaces. However, some volleyball camps and programs are allowed access to these gymnasium spaces. Ahearn Field House is a shared facility used by Kinesiology, Athletics, Training, UFM, Cross Fit, and ROTC amongst other groups.

K-State recreation fields are not actively monitored and thus do receive some unprogrammed community usage. K-State does not allow personal trainers to utilize these recreation fields. There are approximately 30 different K-State Sports Clubs run by Recreation

Services. The synthetic turf field at Memorial Stadium is used for some Club Sports, Marching Band, a few outside organizations and the community for some field sports. No formal system currently exists for community rental, reservation, or usage of K-State recreation fields.

Swimming



The K-State Natatorium provides a 25-yard, 8-lane competition pool, 6-lane warm-up pool, diving well, and spectator seating. The Natatorium is used by the Marlins Swim Team, MHS swimming programs, UFM, and other groups as well as the community.

Programs offered at the Natatorium include competitive swimming, swim lessons, water aerobics, hydro classes, scuba diving classes, life guard training, party rentals, and other uses. The facility is rented by multiple organizations in the community throughout the entire year and available open swim times are limited. K-State does not currently have swim teams and does not have plans to add this program in the future. Eventually the existing Natatorium will become too costly to operate and K-State does not anticipate replacing this competition pool venue when it is closed. Future development of a leisure pool, indoor and/or outdoor, by K-State Recreation Services may be a possibility, but would likely be many years off due to funding.

Trail Users



The organized trail user groups in Manhattan range from bicycling groups, runners, and cross country clubs. Several run and walk events

are organized by these and other not-for-profit groups and held within the parks and along the trails in Manhattan each year. In addition to organized groups, the trails in Manhattan provide citizens with a number of safe and accessible recreational opportunities, alternative transportation corridors, and connections between community destinations. The group identified several areas of the trails system in Manhattan that could be improved, including connectivity of parks, schools, and other destination hubs within the community through trails, improved and expanded sidewalk system, incorporation of bike lanes, and improved trail head amenities such as drinking fountains, seating and shade provisions, restrooms, and bike repair stations. Completion of Linear Park and continued implementation of recommendations from previous trails and bicycle master plans was also a recommendation from the groups.

Private Service Providers



Representatives from several private sector recreation and athletic facility and service providers participated in this focus group. Each of these private sector facility providers are serving specific existing needs within the community. These facilities range from indoor spaces for strength training, physical therapy, gymnastics, tennis, and a

variety of small space uses. None of the private sector providers currently offer indoor aquatics of any kind. Outdoor facilities provided within the private sector include tennis, golf, driving range, mini golf, batting cages, and limited flexible open space. In general private sector providers believe an underserved population of the Manhattan community exists when it comes to indoor recreation facility accessibility due to economic demographics and affordability of memberships. However, competition and potential displacement of for-profit private sector facilities by subsidized public facilities is of concern should the City decide to pursue new recreation facilities in the future. The

program and facility offerings for a potential new public recreation center or centers should be strategically developed to serve



the unmet needs and undeserved demographic in the Manhattan community, not to compete with existing for-profit facility providers.

Arts and Humanities



The arts and humanities group included representatives from diverse ethnic dance groups, theatre groups, visual arts, and performing arts

groups. With the exception of the privately owned Manhattan Art Center – which is limited to occupancy of 150, these groups With the exception of the privately owned Manhattan Art Center – which is limited to occupancy of 150, these groups utilize public facilities such



as Community House, City Auditorium, and Roundhouse. None of these facilities are ideal for theatre performances or dancing due to inadequate HVAC systems, lighting, sound systems and acoustics, flooring materials, available space, and occupancy limits. The arts and humanities groups in Manhattan would greatly benefit from a performing arts theatre and large multipurpose space for dancing and community events that is available and economically accessible to these groups.



Community Service Organizations



Participation in programs offered by UFM and other community-based organizations continues to grow in the

Manhattan community. UFM currently serves in several capacities, including offering community recreation and education programming, acting as a liaison between K-State, Manhattan CVB, and event organizer/sponsors seeking to utilize K-State facilities, limited facility offerings, and other community outreach roles. One major challenge currently in Manhattan for community organizations is limited availability of accessible and affordable indoor meeting spaces – especially spaces with direct access to kitchen facilities for cooking classes, community dinners, and celebrations. In addition to multipurpose rooms for meetings, classes, and lessons, community organizations in Manhattan would greatly benefit from a large indoor multipurpose space such as a gymnasium with wood flooring that can be subdivided into separate spaces for smaller activities.



Steering Committee



The steering committee established to provide input, review, and guidance in development of this Plan consisted of 15

individuals representing a diverse range of interests and demographics in the Manhattan community. This committee was engaged several times throughout the Plan process to provide valuable insight and informed decision making at strategic milestones in the process. The implementation priorities, recommendations, and outcomes of the Plan have been developed through consensus and support of the committee.

City Commission and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board



The City Commission and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) were afforded multiple

opportunities throughout the Plan process to review information and data being researched, ask questions, and most importantly provide input and guidance to the process. Participation by Manhattan elected officials in the Plan process was an important consideration to ensure policy makers in the community fully understand research, information, and data developed to inform decisions during the Plan process.. This will hopefully pay tremendous dividends going forward as the community seeks support from city leaders to implement the Plan.

