

# *Geneseo* Park District

## GENESEO PARK DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2022



Approved by Geneseo Park District Board of Commissioners  
February 7, 2017

# GENESEO PARK DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2022

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## Acknowledgements

### Board of Commissioners

Kathleen Repass, President  
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Caryn Vandersnick, Commissioner  
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### Executive Steering Committee Members

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Paula Verbeck, Supt. Finance & Admin.  
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Chuck Balling  
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*The **Mission** of the Geneseo Park District is to enhance the quality of life in our community by providing a positive recreational experience for all.*

*It is the **Vision** of the Geneseo Park District to provide quality parks and recreational opportunities for the benefit and enrichment of our community today and in the future.*



[www.GeneseoParkDistrict.org](http://www.GeneseoParkDistrict.org)

**Geneseo Community Center**

541 East North Street  
Geneseo, IL 61254

(309) 944-5695 Phone  
(309) 944-8395 Fax

**Central Theater**

111 North State Street  
Geneseo, IL 61254

(309) 944-3603

**Anderson Memorial Park**

**Athletic Field**

**Indoor Pool**

**Aquatic Center**

Dear Friends and Community Members of the Geneseo Park District,

It is my pleasure to present the Geneseo Park District's strategic plan for 2017–2022. In recent years, we have found that close consultation and collaboration with the input of our community has assisted us in providing the needs and services that are most important to our supporters.

The information that we have gathered, combined with financial resources, opportunities and partnerships with a variety of organizations allows us to thoughtfully and strategically make decisions that contribute to the excellence of the Geneseo Park District.

This plan was formulated over the past six months in three phases:

1. Community, Board and staff input
2. Staff research and planning
3. Board of Commissioners review and approval

Please take the time to read the Executive Summary on page 3 and review the entire report.

This plan establishes a roadmap for the Park District to achieve success in all areas of its operation and to provide the community with an increased sense of pride in the Park District.

Thank you for taking the time to review this plan. If you have any questions please feel free to call Andy Thurman, Executive Director at 309-944-5695 or [athurman@geneseoparkdistrict.org](mailto:athurman@geneseoparkdistrict.org).

Sincerely,

**Kathleen Repass**

President

*Geneseo Park District Board of Commissioners*

## Executive Summary

### *A few words about Geneseo...*

The City of Geneseo is a city in [Henry County, Illinois, United States](#). The population was 6,586 at the 2010 census. Geneseo is located 20 miles east of the [Quad Cities](#), at the intersection of [Interstate 80](#), [U.S. Route 6](#) and [Illinois Route 82](#).

Geneseo offers the values and advantages of a small, safe town while having close access to big town services.



### *The Geneseo Park District...*



The Geneseo Park District is a subdivision of the State of Illinois and is organized under the Park District Code of the State of Illinois; contributions made to the Park District are tax deductible as a charitable contribution by the donor.

The Geneseo Park District was organized in May of 1953 by the vote of its people. The District encompasses 144 square miles and takes in the City of Geneseo and parts of nine other townships (Hanna, Phoenix, Loraine, Osco, Atkinson, Cornwall, Munson, Edford,

and all of Geneseo). It is governed by a Board of five elected commissioners who serve four year terms.

The Park District provides wholesome recreation opportunities that contribute to the well-being of all citizens, by establishing and maintaining a comprehensive public park and recreation system. The District offers a variety of recreational activities for all ages such as youth and adult sports leagues, fitness and aquatics programs, pickleball, gymnastics, roller-skating, tae kwon do, preschool programs, and summer camps.

Park District assets include the following:

- *Community Center* – an all-purpose facility that includes a cardio/weight room, indoor pool, elevated walking track and a Lifefitness Room
- *John & Carla Edwards Aquatic Center* - the recently completed outdoor aquatic center

- *The “Athletic Field”* – outdoor location supporting multiple outdoor recreational activities - basketball, tennis, pickle ball, running/walking on the newly resurfaced track or just lounging on the grass
- *Anderson Memorial Park* – a downtown park that is “*A Wayside Stop for Weary Walkers*”
- *Central Theater* – a unique asset operated by the Park District that offers state of the art entertainment

***What the Geneseo Park District has done recently...***

***Facilities***

Over the past year, the Geneseo Park District has successfully completed a \$6.5 million Aquatic Center on the site of the former Outdoor Pool. This project was made possible by community donations, one contribution of \$1 million, and the State of Illinois PARC Grant (Park and Recreational Facility Construction Grant Program). The Aquatic Center opened on time for the community to enjoy the entire summer on the new amenities including; a rock climbing wall, drop slide, lily pad walk and splash pad. The John and Carla Edwards Aquatic Center saw almost three times the daily admittance as years past and memberships more than doubled.



***Programs***

- The Geneseo Park District has added a competitive swimming program for ages 5 – 14 and competes against area swim programs.
- The Junior Olympics Gymnastics program continues to provide competitive gymnastics at the Park District.
- The Park District held the first Day Camp program in over 20 years in 2015. The enrollment tripled in 2016. The Day Campers spend their days at the Park District participating in games, activities and crafts throughout the morning and in the afternoon, spend time at the Aquatic Center.
- The Bright Beginnings Preschool has reached capacity in most of the morning and afternoon sessions in 2016. The program offers the only two-year-old



preschool in the area and has continued to gain popularity with changes in other area child care facilities.

- Land and Water Fitness classes continue to be a major staple in our members' regular workout routine. The Park District installed the Fitness On Demand system in 2015 to allow members to choose from over 150 classes at any time to meet their fitness needs.

### ***Awards and Recognition***

- In 2013, the Geneseo Park District became an Illinois Distinguished Agency. This recognition confirms that the agency provides exceptional parks and recreation services to their community. It came after a lengthy review process conducted by a committee of the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association.
- The Geneseo Park District reached a 99.34% on their overall safety audit in 2016 from PDRMA (Park District Risk Management Agency).
- The Park District has been awarded GFOA Certificates of Excellence in Financial Reporting and Budgeting every year since 2012.



## ***Geneseo Park District Strategic Planning for 2017-2022...***

In the spring of 2016, the Geneseo Park District Board and staff initiated a five-year strategic planning process for the years 2017-2022. There were three phases to this process.

- **Phase 1: Research and Issue Identification** - The Park District conducted stakeholder (Board, staff and community) research to identify strategic issues, focusing on those items that were most important to the future success of the Park District over the next five years. For details see **Attachment A** on page 29, SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis developed by the Park Board and staff. Also see **Attachment B** on page 30 with a summary of issues, opportunities and themes identified by various stakeholders.
- **Phase 2: Strategic Initiative Development** – Park District staff clarified and developed the strategic initiatives and identified associated goals, objectives, tasks and action timelines.
- **Phase 3: Review and approval** – The Geneseo Park District Board of Commissioners approved the plan.



## ***More details about the Geneseo Park District strategic planning process...***

To gather feedback and input for the Strategic Plan (2017-2022), the District conducted:

- A community-wide interest and attitude survey which yielded 425 completed surveys
- A workshop with the Strategic Plan Executive Steering Committee (ESC). The ESC consisted of board members and senior-level Park District leadership
- Leader-to-Leader interviews with local civic leaders
- Two open house community meetings

This research allowed the District to identify major issues that need to be addressed over the next five years. Issues were grouped by themes. These themes were consolidated into four forward-looking strategic initiatives for the 2017-2022 timeframe.

- 1. Revitalize and Expand Aging Facilities**
- 2. Enhance Resident Experiences at Programs and Events**
- 3. Strengthen Community Relationships and Increase Community Awareness**

#### **4. Financial Planning for Long-term Sustainability**

A team leader was assigned to each strategic initiative along with staff team members to:

- Study and analyze each initiative
- Clarify and define the initiative
- Identify internal and external factors that may impact the District's ability to move forward on the initiative
- Develop recommendations with specific steps that must be taken to address the stated initiative
- Define measures of success to monitor the progress towards achievement of the initiative



Drafts of these initiatives and associated recommendations were presented and reviewed at the December 2016 Park Board meeting.

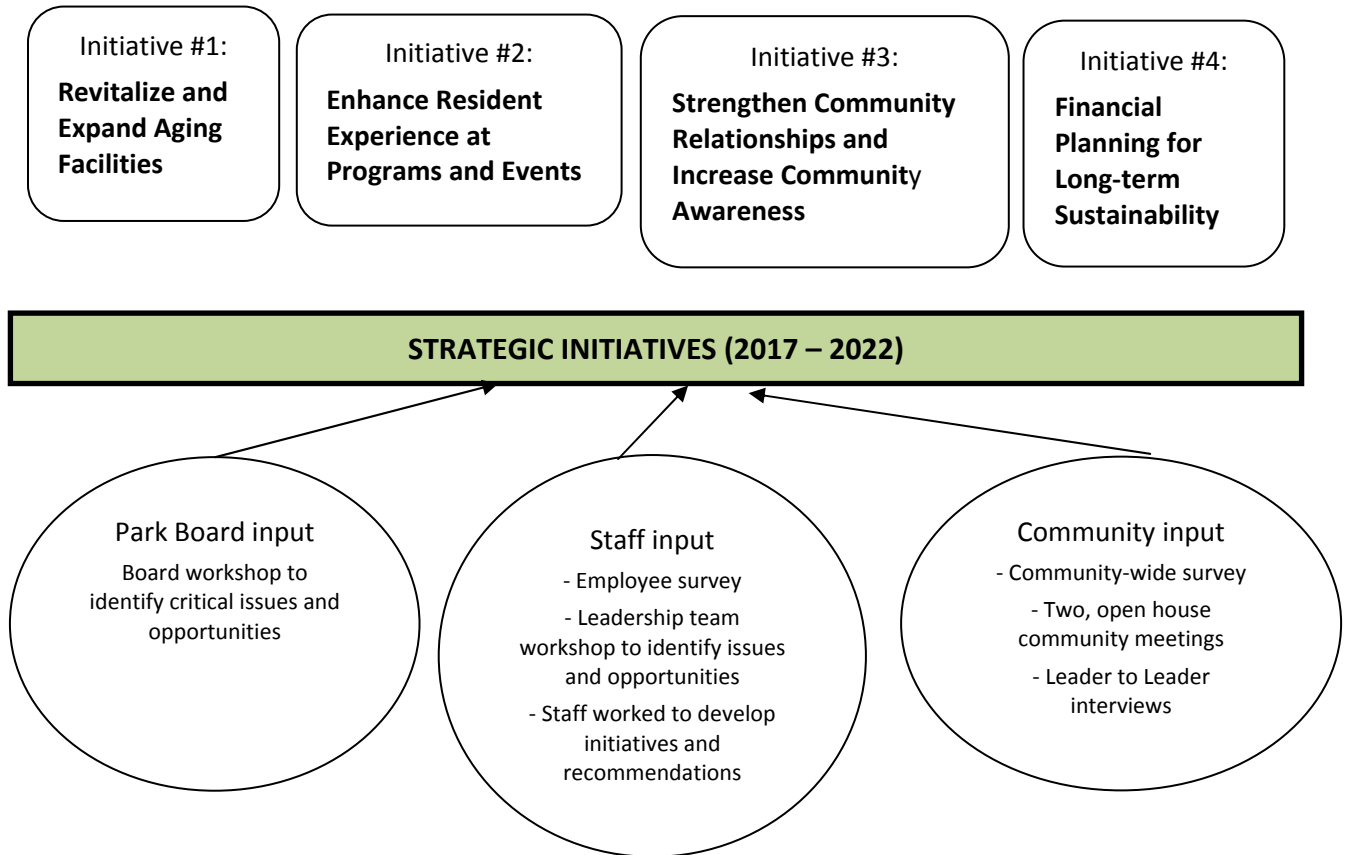


**The illustration and text below summarizes the research input and resulting strategic initiatives.**

The **Mission** of the Geneseo Park District is to enhance the quality of life in our community by providing a positive recreational experience for all. The Board, Administrative and support staff are committed to fulfill the mission.

It is the **Vision** of the Geneseo Park District to provide quality parks and recreational opportunities for the benefit and enrichment of our community today and in the future.

**Geneseo Park District Strategic initiatives for (2017-2022)**



**The table below summarizes the recommended objectives to achieve each strategic initiative.**

Strategic Initiative	Objectives to achieve initiative
1. Revitalize and Expand Aging Facilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop plan for maximizing and renovating existing space at the Community Center.</li> <li>2. Develop plan for maximizing and renovating existing space at the Athletic Field.</li> <li>3. Develop plan for improving the operations of ongoing maintenance of the Community Center.</li> </ol>
2. Enhance Resident Experiences at Programs and Events	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyze and apply demographics to drive programming.</li> <li>2. Research and apply trends/analytics to drive programming.</li> <li>3. Adjust fees when necessary to balance affordability and participation.</li> </ol>
3. Strengthen Community Relationships and Increase Community Awareness	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore partnerships with other Community organizations and businesses.</li> <li>2. Evaluate facilities for special events.</li> <li>3. Work with Chamber of Commerce to promote these events.</li> <li>4. Secure research grants and sponsorship funding for projects and events.</li> <li>5. Promote Board engagement and onboarding procedures.</li> <li>6. Rebrand Park District’s image within and outside Geneseo.</li> <li>7. Maintain an excellent working relationship with all City staff.</li> <li>8. Update all Affiliate and Intergovernmental Agreements and continue to develop and maintain excellent working relationships.</li> </ol>
4. Financial Planning for Long-term Sustainability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annually review and update the long term financial plans both for capital projects and for operations.</li> <li>2. Continue to meet and maintain fund balance levels set forth by the Park District Board.</li> <li>3. Maintain current tax rate.</li> <li>4. Continue to build alternate funding sources such as sponsorships or grants.</li> <li>5. Continue to develop and strengthen Geneseo Park District Foundation.</li> <li>6. Evaluate all contracted professional services.</li> </ol>

## ***Initiative #1: Revitalize and Expand Aging Facilities***

Improve cleanliness and operational maintenance at the Community Center. Develop a comprehensive plan to revitalize and expand aging Park District facilities to include a thorough existing conditions report to modernize each facility while maximizing usage of available space.

### **DEFINE THE INITIATIVE**

The Geneseo Park District facilities are capital assets. In order to continue operating efficiently, all areas require some level of investment to insure they remain viable. The 2016 Geneseo Park District Needs Assessment Survey showed 91% of the respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the Central Theater. While the Community Center and Athletic Field currently require the most significant improvements, the cost of improvements could be prioritized over several years, spreading out the fiscal impact on the Park District.

The Geneseo Park District has made various improvements to facilities over the past five years highlighted but not limited to: John and Carla Edwards Aquatic Center, digital cinema conversion at the Central Theater, replacement of the indoor pool dehumidification system, paved Athletic Field track, Americans with Disabilities Act transitions, tree replacements, new indoor pool roof and water boiler.

The Community Center is our largest and most utilized facility and has the greatest potential for increased usage. The 2016 Geneseo Park District Needs Assessment Survey showed 48% of the respondents said they or a member of their household currently are a member of the Community Center. According to the survey, 78% of the respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the cleanliness of the Community Center. However, the Community Center has an infrastructure that is dated (rooms and amenities designed and purposed in 1982). Along with underutilized space, there are other areas of the facility that become overcrowded.

The District's cardio/weight room (55%) and gymnastics program (35%) are competing with each other for limited space while the senior citizens room, cycling room, Dedrick room and gym locker rooms are underutilized. The District needs to improve the cleanliness and operational maintenance of the Community Center, especially the indoor pool. Operation manuals and procedures need to be developed and implemented to improve customer satisfaction levels at this facility. The infrastructure of the facility is outdated; improvements are needed to the physical plant inside and out as well as cleaning and updating bathrooms and locker rooms.

#### **Park District Employee Survey:**

##### **Recommended updates for the Community Center**

1. Gym locker rooms (40% of respondents)
2. Elevated walking track (38% of respondents)
3. Indoor pool (33% of respondents)
4. Indoor pool locker rooms (33% of respondents)

5. Main gym lighting (31% of respondents)

Greatest demands for additional space

1. Cardio/weight room (55% of respondents)
2. Gymnastics program (34% of respondents)

While the Athletic Field has ample space, it also has aging amenities in the tennis courts, basketball court and restrooms.

According to the survey, Central Theater and Anderson Park are currently meeting our citizens' needs and do not require major changes. Therefore, these two facilities will strive to continue the current level of satisfied service.

A project study with a comprehensive plan is needed in order to maximize the Community Center's available space. This, along with engaging an architectural firm, will provide the first steps toward modernizing and solving space issues within the Community Center.

The Park District must also be able to maintain and improve current amenities while progressing toward the Athletic Field future. Tennis courts, basketball courts and restrooms are examples of these amenities.

## **GOALS STATEMENT FOR THE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE**

- Improve and maintain all assets to better meet community expectations
- Adapt facilities to become more competitive and customer-driven
- Develop plan for maximizing existing space
- Develop a plan for modernizing existing amenities at the Community Center
- Improve existing Athletic Field amenities
- Implement maintenance plan to forecast and plan for major component replacement and repairs at Central Theater and Anderson Park

## **INTERNAL FACTORS**

*What things within the organization, both positive and negative, will affect our ability to move forward with the initiative?*

- The ability of the District to fund renovation upgrades
- Use of existing space necessary to build or renovate new amenities
- The ability of the District to maintain and manage existing facilities while creating new amenities within existing facilities
- The need for staff and Board support in prioritizing projects
- Incorporating new equipment and amenities into new facility designs

## EXTERNAL FACTORS

*What things outside the control of the organization, both positive and negative, will affect our ability to move forward with the initiative?*

- Level of competition within the community and surrounding area
- Current and projected customer interests and needs
- Search and selection of quality design and construction team
- Analyze future use of space as it compares with current leases and agreements of existing space

## ACTION PLAN

		Objective	Fiscal Year	Assigned to:
1		Develop plan for maximizing and renovating existing space at the Community Center		
	a.	Review available sites	2018	Supt of Facilities/ED
	b.	Interview Architectural firm/consultant	2019	Supt of Facilities/ED
	c.	Estimate construction costs and funding	2020	Supt of Facilities
	d.	Initiate plan	2021	Supt of Facilities/ED
2		Develop plan for maximizing and renovating existing space at the Athletic Field		
	a.	Review sites and amenities	2017	Supt of Facilities/ED
	b.	Interview Architectural firm/consultant	2018	Supt of Facilities
	c.	Estimate construction costs and funding	2019	Supt of Facilities/ED
	d.	Initiate Plan	2020	Supt of Facilities/ED

3		Develop plan for improving the operations and ongoing maintenance for the Community Center		
	a.	Develop a Community Center Operations Manual	2019	Supt of Facilities
	b.	Create and implement maintenance standards and plan	2020	Supt of Facilities
	c.	Incorporate more advanced housekeeping and training	2018	Supt of Facilities
	d.	Define and prioritize facility conditions and needed repairs	2019	Supt of Facilities
	e.	Initiate plan	2020	Supt of Facilities

### MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Implementing short term fixed asset and capital replacement plan
- Implementing long term fixed asset and capital replacement plan
- Maximizing use of all existing facilities and parks
- Increasing revenue generation and participation at facilities
- Improved satisfaction levels on the cleanliness and upkeep of the Community Center
- Existence of a comprehensive conditions and space study for the Community Center



## ***Initiative #2: Enhance Resident Experience at Programs and Events***

Develop programs for all demographics, add new programs that coordinate with current trends, and re-evaluate membership and program fee.

### **DEFINE THE INITIATIVE**

The Geneseo Park District serves a wide demographic through the variety of programs and services offered. The Community Wide Survey shows that 85% of respondents indicated that current programming was “good to excellent”. It also showed that 80% of respondents would recommend Geneseo Park District programs, facilities and activities to a friend. Swimming lessons serve children six months of age through adulthood. Preschool instructional and activity classes serve two years-six years. Athletics and leagues serve kindergarten through adults. Water fitness classes, fitness classes, and pickleball are examples of the programs that serve Baby Boomers as well as the senior population. There are still constant needs to reach the untapped markets that will arise from current trends or community wants/needs. There will be a need for specialized instructors as we try to meet the needs for current trends. According to the employee survey, 98% of staff members indicated that they would recommend working at the Park District. This, coupled with the fact that respondents from the community survey would recommend our programs, can lead us into new and exciting programming options.

New programming developed from current trends could lead to increased partnerships with other entities. These could include the City of Geneseo, the Geneseo School District, community groups, as well as other community businesses. We have forged a relationship with the City of Geneseo, the Geneseo School District, Kiwanis, Quilt Club, Smith Studio and Gallery, Richmond Hill Players, etc. The future visions potentially shared while partnering can help our community businesses as well as the people we serve.

The Geneseo Park District is consistently monitoring fees and charges for memberships and programs. We have created a membership structure that is easier to understand while maintaining an affordable rate. Most program rates have not seen an increase in several years. We will monitor similar sized agencies in our region, explore options for fee changes, and make the necessary adjustments.

In the future, the Geneseo Park District will continue to offer programming for all ages while monitoring trends that could lead to more age specific programs. We will continue to retain our experienced instructors as we recruit and train those that can assist with current trends and help build for the future. The core programming will remain strong and focused, meeting the needs of our core customers for each major program area while adding new and exciting opportunities for the community.

Fees and charges will continue to be assessed, but we will strive to afford the community with the best possible pricing that is value oriented. This will be accomplished by utilizing volunteers whenever possible, as well as continuing to minimize direct and indirect expenses. We will recruit volunteers for the special events that the community survey shows as a need/want.

## **GOALS STATEMENT FOR THE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE**

- Maintain core programming focus while expanding programming to meet the demands of changing demographics
- Monitor trends in programming
- Create value and financial sustainability in programming
- Collaborate with other entities, utilize volunteers, and seek efficiencies and value for our residents

## **INTERNAL FACTORS**

*What things within the Park District (both Positive and Negative) will affect our ability to move forward on this initiative?*

- Ability of the Park District to subsidize current core programs
- Ability to find/train qualified program instructors/leaders
- Facilitate ongoing communication and collaboration among administration, program instructors and desk attendants
- Recruit volunteer assistance for programs and special events
- Retention of qualified/certified staff
- Creative options for program space
- Continuing educational opportunities for instructors
- The evaluation of instructors and core programs along with prioritizing future trends

## **EXTERNAL FACTORS**

*What things outside of the control of the Park District (both positive and negative) will affect our ability to move forward on this initiative?*

- Marketing to reach all demographics
- Partnering with other agencies for programming
- Ease of registration process
- Patrons' wants as it relates to their discretionary income
- Other agencies duplication of programs and services
- Fulfilling community needs while minimizing costs
- Participant feedback on program evaluations



**ACTION PLAN**

**Enhance Residents Experience at Programs and Events**

	Objective	Fiscal Year	Assigned to:
1	<b>Program Demographics</b>		
a.	Annually study demographics and implement changes to serve needs not being met.	2017	Supt of Rec/Aquatics Rec Manager
b.	Identify current core programs, their financial sustainability, and their importance to the residents.	2018	Supt of Rec/Aquatics Rec Manager
c.	Evaluate current programs and modify or discontinue if little participation, are not revenue generating, and/or are core programs within our mission.	2019	Supt of Rec
d.	Recruit qualified instructors in order to serve future trends.	2018	Supt of Rec/Aquatics Rec Manager

2	<b>Program Trends</b>		
a.	Continue obtaining fresh ideas for untapped programming areas through the Advisory Committee or create an independent focus group to study current trends.	2018	Supt of Rec
b.	Annually review core programming with instructors and gain insight on trends.	2017	Supt of Rec
c.	Coordinate with other agencies to provide new recreational opportunities.	2019	Supt of Rec
d.	Expand on the programs that are youth based, well attended and have no competition.	2018	Supt of Rec
3	<b>Membership/Programming Fees</b>		
a.	Collaborate with other agencies to share financial responsibility.	2019	Supt of Rec
b.	Recruit volunteers to minimize expense, especially for special needs.	2020	Supt of Rec
c.	Maintain financial sustainability in core programming areas.	2019	Supt of Rec
d.	Increase membership by enhancing and building upon the core programming areas.	2020	Supt of Rec

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Increased use of park services to over 65% of the community in five years (currently 59%)
- Improved evaluations internally and externally
- Recruitment program for staff and volunteers
- Employee and professional service evaluation procedure
- Program success rate
- Systematic approach to pricing of programs and services
- Reinforce team-based approach throughout the Park District

***Initiative #3: Strengthen Community Relationships and  
Increase Community Awareness***

The Geneseo Park District will improve collaboration, communication and cooperation with the City of Geneseo and other community organizations while increasing awareness of Park District programs, services and offerings.

The Park District will encourage volunteerism and engage the community and improve the “perceived” value within the community.

**DEFINE THE INITIATIVE**

The Geneseo Park District prides itself on its community involvement through partnerships with local businesses, collaboration with the City of Geneseo and the Geneseo School District. The Park District has a long-standing partnership with the School District to provide facility space for programs and work with local students through service hours and providing their first job experience. Many local businesses have purchased Business Memberships through the Park District, which provides discounted memberships to their employees.

The Park District has a positive working relationship with community organizations, but with increased need for space, education and services, it is imperative that our organizations continue to maintain a good understanding on needs and goals of our various partnerships in the future.

The Park District will continue to volunteer and assist with community organizations and events while maintaining the relationships to reciprocate “in the spirit of cooperation”, working for the betterment of the community to provide events and programs. These relationships include having a presence on the Chamber of Commerce Board and events, city-wide programs and participation in events deemed necessary to continue to show our support.

While attending these meetings and events, the Park District will use this as an opportunity to strengthen our relationships with our community partners and educate residents on upcoming projects and events. As we strive for transparency as a trusted community organization, timely information will be provided to the community through local media outlets, social media, website and seasonal activities guides.

Future agreements may include collaboration with the Geneseo School District for team or gym class space, business membership advertisement, joint promotions and city agreements to use space. Other opportunities include outside organizations and recreation providers to collaborate efforts to bring quality recreation to the community.

## **GOALS STATEMENT FOR THE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE**

- Increase collaboration with other organizations
- Take a leading role on the Chamber of Commerce
- Increase community awareness and the value of Park District services
- Increase in volunteerism at Park District events

## **INTERNAL FACTORS**

*What things within the Park District (both positive and negative) will affect our ability to move forward with this initiative?*

- Limited financial resources
- Hire and retain qualified staff and train accordingly
- Lack of uniform customer service
- Increase volunteer program
- Educate staff on Park District happenings
- Communication between all departments and part-time staff
- Buy-in by all staff on policies and procedures
- Team approach by all staff

## **EXTERNAL FACTORS**

*What things outside of the control of the District (both positive and negative) will affect our ability to move forward with this initiative?*

- Review other community programs to not duplicate services
- Feedback from the community
- Research alternate revenue sources
- Collaborate with other organizations during events and programs
- Explore local partnerships
- Provide non-traditional programs
- Balance community needs and wants for new programs and events
- Approximately 50% of the respondents to the community survey saw value in the Park District
- Marketing

**ACTION PLAN**

		Objective	Fiscal Year	Assigned to:
1		<b>Explore Partnerships with other Community Organizations and Businesses</b>		
	a.	Create new, free special events yearly	2017	Supt of Rec
	b.	Meet with local businesses, city and Chamber	2017	ED and Supt of Rec
	c.	Partner to eliminate duplication of service	2018	Supt of Rec
	d.	Develop a master calendar/list of recreation facilities, related programs events by all community groups and organizations	2018	Supt of Rec
	e.	Acknowledgement of outside services provided as either a supplement to GPD services or serves the need in lieu of GPD services	2019	Supt of Rec
2		<b>Evaluate facilities for special events</b>		
	a.	Schedule a yearly Calendar of Special Events	2017	Supt of Rec
	b.	Create a large event or event series at the Athletic Field	2018	Supt of Rec
3		<b>Work with the Chamber of Commerce to promote events</b>	2017	ED
4		<b>Research grants and sponsorship funding for projects and events</b>	2018	Marketing/ED
	a.	Meet with local businesses to establish long term sponsorships	2018	Supt of Rec/ED
	b.	Develop and implement a plan to increase alternate revenue	2019	ED/Supt of Finance

5		<b>Promote Board engagement and onboarding procedures</b>	2018	ED
	a.	Schedule yearly Board retreat/workshop	2018	ED
	b.	Participate in Board/staff trainings	2018	ED
	c.	Review Board Policy Handbook	2019	ED
	d.	Develop a new Board member orientation program	2020	ED

6		<b>Rebrand our perception within and outside Geneseo</b>	2019	ED/Marketing
	a.	Schedule monthly articles in <i>Geneseo Republic</i> newspaper	2018	Marketing
	b.	Increase awareness of the Park District through public communication	2018	Marketing
	c.	Tell our story and what we do	2019	ED/Marketing
	d.	Market and promote summary of financials	2018	ED/Marketing
	e.	Public awareness and community involvement through education	2018	ED

7		<b>Maintain an excellent working relationship with all city staff</b>	2017	ED
	a.	Establish annual calendar of events and annual key leadership staff meetings	2018	Supt of Rec
	b.	Consider establishing Board/Staff Liaison for City Council	2019	ED

8		<b>Update all affiliate and intergovernmental agreements and continue to develop and maintain excellent working relationships</b>	2020	ED
	a.	Survey other area park districts for best practices and current trends in affiliate relations and agreements	2019	ED
	b.	Update a summary of all intergovernmental and affiliate agreements with revisions for next cycle	2020	ED
	c.	Conduct informal ongoing communication and attend annual meetings with each intergovernmental/affiliate group to identify and discuss areas of agreement that can clarify roles, responsibilities and expectations between both parties	2019	ED
	d.	Develop standards to measure and evaluate each affiliate and intergovernmental relationship	2021	ED
	e.	Review leader-to-leader comments for productive suggestions and set up follow-up meeting to review.	2018	ED

**MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

- Increase use of park services to over 65% in next community wide survey (currently 59%)
- Participation standards for events with outside organizations
- Develop new intergovernmental agreements and maintain a strong working relationship with school district
- Highly qualified and engaged staff
- Board succession plan
- Increase in alternate revenue (grants and sponsorships)



## *Initiative #4: Financial Planning for Long-term Sustainability*

### **DEFINE THE INITIATIVE**

The Geneseo Park District's overall financial picture is solid. The Geneseo Park District's main sources of revenue are property taxes and user fees.

The Board is committed to maintaining a stable tax rate and annually reviews the fees and charges schedule to assure that we remain competitive in the marketplace. In addition, the District strives to return value to our residents by enhancing property values and meeting the recreational needs of the community by providing quality facilities and programs.

The Geneseo Park District has historically taken a conservative and long-term approach to managing the District's finances. The District has several important components in place that contribute to our financial stability.

**Investment Policy:** The District's investment policy is conservative to protect the principal and currently has fund balances in Certificates of Deposit at a local bank.

**Fund Balances:** The District has sufficient fund balances to cover short term delays in tax receipts, temporary shortfalls in meeting budget expectations, or moderate unexpected expenses.

**Capital Replacement:** The District has a fixed asset report that is updated annually and used to strategize, plan and budget for capital replacement.

**Debt:** Through careful long term planning, the District achieved 100% funding status in IMRF and paid off all long-term debt in order to prepare for the Aquatic Center project. While this approach has served the District well, until the current debt is paid down, new major investments in capital will require identifying a payment stream other than taxes to finance the projects. In July 2015, for the first time in history, staff went through the Bond Rating procedure with the Moody's Rating Agency and received an A+ GO Bond rating and an A Debt Certificate rating.

### **GOALS STATEMENT FOR THE STRATEGIC INITIATIVE**

While the District continues to be financially stable, the District must remain diligent in monitoring participation levels and financial performance, strengthen internal controls and processes and continue to update long term financial plans. One of the challenges is to develop plans to meet both the ongoing operational needs of the District and the desire for new investment in capital items or increased services. Until the current debt is paid down, major investments in capital will require identifying a payment stream to finance the projects.



## INTERNAL FACTORS

*What things within the Park District (both positive and negative) will affect our ability to move forward on this initiative?*

- Continuation of a financially conservative approach
- Expense control, especially labor costs and debt
- Operations that can consistently operate on at least a break-even basis
- High expectations of maintenance and services levels while still trying to control costs and deliver value to our customers and residents
- Park District Foundation assists with fundraising for capital projects and scholarships

## EXTERNAL FACTORS

*What things outside of the control of the District (both positive and negative) will affect our ability to move forward on this initiative?*

- Competition from private sector service providers
- Weather-dependent facilities
- Number of participants supporting facilities and programs
- Maintaining a balance between revenue-generating assets and non-revenue generating assets
- Public's desire to keep taxes and fees to a minimum
- Escalating operating costs, particularly utilities and insurance
- Park District Risk Management Agency which can negotiate favorable insurance rates by representing its group of Park Districts
- Limited discretionary income for some families
- New sponsorships program
- IDNR (Illinois Dept. of Natural Resources) Park and Recreational Facility Construction Grant for the new Outdoor Aquatic Center
- Professional services/contracted fees



**ACTION PLAN**

**Financial Planning for Long-term Sustainability**

	Objective	Fiscal Year	Assigned to:
1	<b>Annually review and update the long term financial plans both for capital projects and operations</b>	2017	Supt of F & A
a.	Educate all departments on budgeting process	2018	Supt of F&A/AA
b.	Encourage ownership of each department's individual budgets	2018	Supt of F & A
c.	Work with all departments to formalize and keep a fixed asset list updated and within the INCODE Financial Software System	2019	Supt of F & A
d.	Develop a plan to pay off Aquatic Center Debt Certificates early	2020	Supt of F & A
e.	Formalize a five year financial plan	2019	Supt of F & A
2	<b>Continue to meet and maintain fund balance levels set forth by the Park Board</b>		
a.	Carefully monitor operational expenses	2018	Supt of F & A
b.	Budget forecasting for all major capital expenditures	2019	Supt of F & A
c.	Keep fund balances in CD's to secure principal	2018	Supt of F & A

3		<b>Maintain Current Tax Rate</b>		
	a.	Continue to strategize and plan for operational tax levy needs along with annual rollover bond (capital/maintenance) needs to balance the rate	2017	Supt of F & A
4		<b>Continue to build alternate funding sources such as sponsorships and grants</b>		
	a.	Educate and promote sponsorship program to business community	2019	Supt of F & A
	b.	Apply for grants that are applicable	2017-18	Supt of F & A
5		<b>Continue to develop and strengthen the Geneseo Park District Foundation</b>		
	a.	Recruit and expand Foundation Board	2017	ED Supt of F & A
	b.	Regular meetings	2017	ED
	c.	Education and promote Foundation within the community	2018	ED/Marketing/ Supt of F & A
6		<b>Evaluate all contracted professional services</b>		
	a.	RFP for banking services	2017	ED/Supt of F & A
	b.	Review all professional service agreements (audit and legal)	2020	ED/Supt of F & A
	c.	Review contract with Quad Cities Fitness	2018	Supt of Rec/ED
	d.	Review intergovernmental agreements and affiliate agreements	2020	Supt of Rec/ED/Supt of Facilities

## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- Stable tax rate
- Maintain or improve current bond rating
- Strategy to pay Aquatic Center long term debt off early
- Capital Replacement Plan for all departments
- Geneseo Park District Foundation Board expanded
- Recipients of the GFOA Certificates of Excellence in Financial Reporting and Budgeting



**Geneseo Park District Consolidated SWOT Analysis Summary - 2016-Final**

Positives	Negatives
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Strengths</u></b></p> <p>(Factors or attributes of parks and recreation that are helpful to achieving GPD’s goals and objectives.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Professional, experienced, committed, long term leadership staff that buy in to the mission of the Park District and work well with Board of Commissioners.</i></li> <li>• <i>Variety of quality programs offered that serve all demographics of community.</i></li> <li>• <i>Unique facilities that are considered safe and family friendly.</i></li> <li>• <i>Supportive community organizations who are willing to partner.</i></li> <li>• <i>Financially stable and responsible. Newly formed GPD Foundation.</i></li> <li>• <i>Untapped assets in Edwards property and rental home, Senior Room, etc.</i></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Weaknesses</u></b></p> <p>(Factors or attributes of the organization that may be harmful or prevent the GPD from achieving its goals and objectives.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Aging equipment and facilities, including technology and computers. Some existing space underutilized.</i></li> <li>• <i>Fitness and teen programming need improvement. Need to offer latest trends.</i></li> <li>• <i>Limited tax/public financing options.</i></li> <li>• <i>Communication and buy in from part time staff. Small full time staff with large workload.</i></li> <li>• <i>Board member who represents younger demographic of community.</i></li> <li>• <i>Volunteers, partnerships and sponsorships needed.</i></li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Opportunities</u></b></p> <p>(Opportunities are factors or conditions that would help the GPD in achieving its goals)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Expand or remodel existing facilities.</i></li> <li>• <i>Partnerships. Work with other facilities in community and offer programs there.</i></li> <li>• <i>Increase public awareness of the services we offer.</i></li> <li>• <i>Continue to strive for excellence, certifications and recognitions to reinforce we meet industry standards.</i></li> <li>• <i>Capitalize on trends and increase programming. Expand volunteer base. Cultivate Park District Foundation.</i></li> <li>• <i>Continue to develop Scholarship Program.</i></li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Threats</u></b></p> <p>(Threats are factors or conditions that may be harmful or may prevent the GPD from achieving its goals and objectives.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Aging population and changing demographics. Population stagnant and not growing.</i></li> <li>• <i>Keeping the appropriate balance insuring that the Park District continues to demonstrate and delivers on its conservative approach to government and taxes while competing with other agencies in community.</i></li> <li>• <i>State of Illinois in financial crisis.</i></li> <li>• <i>Space and finances to expand or remodel.</i></li> </ul>

## **Initiative #1: Revitalize and Expand Aging Facilities**

### **Issues/opportunities:**

- 1. Improve cleanliness and operational maintenance at existing facilities.**
- 2. Expand and improve existing facilities.**

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### **Park Board and Executive Steering Committee**

- Aging equipment and facilities. Including technology and computers.
- Modern equipment and facilities with a fresh clean look.
- Renovate or build an addition to address deteriorating facilities.
- Facilities need to be expanded and remodeled, variety of programs.
- Expand cardio/weight/fitness rooms to better meet resident needs and demand.
- Multi-sports athletic facility for area to use and draw participation (tournaments, festivals, film festivals, music).

### **Leader-to-Leader Interviews**

- More services
- More weight equipment
- Update/remodel center facilities (3)
- New uses for Athletic Field (i.e. people bring their dogs often)
- Infrastructure is dated
- Old Athletic Field -
  - Tennis courts
  - Playground equipment
  - Pickle ball courts (2)
- Weight area and cardio – expand and improve (3)
- Things look good now - nothing jumps out at the moment.
- Upgrade on existing physical plant; the building needs some love and addressing
- Analysis and upgrades to locker rooms
- Athletic Field improvements – needs to reflect how awesome it is!
- Entrance to Center outdated - “70’s”.
- Keep Center growing and visible.
- Figure out how our land (Athletic Field) fits in with Richmond Hill and also Edward land, how to fit?
- Subdivision-north of town - opportunity for green space managed by - ?
- Outdoor or indoor ice rink
- Update Community Center inside and out
- Possibly help fix growth deficits

### **Community Feedback**

- Clean and update locker rooms/bathrooms at main facility and at old Athletic Fields (2)
- Richmond Hill & Richmond Hill West residents oppose a proposal to abandon tennis courts in Richmond Hill Park and install new courts in the primary soccer field in the park. It would create a

nuisance directly behind many homes and adversely affect property values. Many alternatives are available that should be considered instead.

- Love the movie theater (do not update) (2)
- Indoor dog walking facilities in the wintertime
- Something that meets all generations (needs)
- Taking out the dividing wall and adding a curtain
- Better maintenance and cleanliness of existing facilities (2)
  - Indoor pool/vacuum, vents, scum lines
  - Girls locker room and decks
- Maintain what you have – better (2)
  - Fitness center
  - Lockers - rusty
- Need vs. want (2)
- Would like a larger indoor pool
- Something to benefit the 55 and over age group
- Work together with the city rather than duplicate
- Update main building – make more inviting (2)
- Track – new flooring; wider?
- Weight room/cardio – expand & update - build up?
- Rock climbing wall
- Suspend track floor – replaced with fans
- Main building gym lighting needs to be updated - very poor
- Expand main building
- Bathrooms at parks! – and water fountains (2)
- Rubberized ground flooring
- Bike racks
- Small park at old Athletic Field
- Walking trails, bike riding trails
- Anderson Memorial – continue as is!
- Pool:
  - can't get into w. deep pool; ladders not good
  - Women's side – keep cleaner, deep clean pool locker rooms
  - Indoor pool – janitor (new) a plus
- Indoor pool room improved. Walls dingy - sound proofing falling apart
- Locker rooms – improved/ updated – rusty now
- Emerging trends – indoor or outdoor skateboard and bike facility

#### **Community Survey (425 completed surveys)**

- Residents have a positive perception of Park District recreation programs and facilities
- Top three priorities for investment in parks and facilities: outdoor walking path, large community parks and off-leash dog parks
- 83% of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with the Community Center desk staff
- 79% of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with program registration in person

- 74% of respondents were very satisfied/satisfied with cleanliness of facilities; however, 7% were dissatisfied
- 48% of the respondents said they or member of their household currently are a member of the Community Center (very high percentage)

**Park District Employee Survey (56 completed surveys)**

- Recommended updates for Geneseo Community Center
  1. Gym locker rooms (40% of respondents)
  2. Elevated walking track (38% of respondents)
  3. Indoor pool (33% of respondents)
  4. Indoor pool locker rooms (33% of respondents)
  5. Main gym lighting (31% of respondents)
- Greatest demands for additional space
  1. Cardio/weight room (55% of respondents)
  2. Gymnastics program (34% of respondents)
- “I’ve heard that the maintenance of the equipment and building needs to be a priority. People have shown concern that we need to take care of what we have before we take on more.”





## **Initiative #2: Enhance Resident Experience at Programs and Events**

### **Issues/opportunities:**

- 1. Provide programs and services that address all age groups.**
- 2. Explore possibilities for a variety of new programs.**
- 3. Regularly evaluate membership and participation costs (community is very cost sensitive).**

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### **Park Board and Executive Steering Committee**

- Address the different programming needs for the community's demographics (aging population and teens)
- More community free events
- Expanded Fitness Center hours with 24-hour access
- Recruitment and training to continue to have qualified instructors and invested employees
- Continue to achieve awards, certifications and recognitions to reinforce we meet industry standards
- Capitalize on trends and increase programming
- Expand volunteer base to offer special events

### **Leader-to-Leader Interviews**

- Continue programs to attract young families. Baby Boomers are moving out and we need to have younger people moving in. Programming for the young! We need to make this a place where they want to live and yet drive to the cities to work.
- On demand hours
- Better marketing of tailored fitness plans/personal trainer
- More personal trainers
- 60+ programming and personal training - reach out to this age group via direct marketing
- Activity guides are terrific
- Bounce house is a hit
- Bike Rodeo - or other activity - for community
- Continue incentives for school employees
- A misinformed viewpoint of the financial levels and requirements to be a member or participant of GPD offerings and services
- Increasing membership; what percent are members and why the others are not?

### **Community Meetings**

- Offerings should have a constant core but always be evolving to meet community needs and improvements
- Partnership/fundraising, etc. to serve underprivileged and "in need" families
- Maintain balance – A community center should meet community needs - pediatric, adult, geriatric, special needs
- Could offer more for middle age (40-70) - Baby boomers
- We have a lot for the children and the older groups which is nice
- Would like to see more events in the park – art and wine festivals more often

- Something to bring outside people to town
- More free events/concerts
- Try to serve all age groups' needs (2)
- The Park District should look more green in five years, not grey as in concrete, as in buildings, parking lots – preserve the natural areas – trees, grasslands, etc.
- Special needs – space! To expand – where?
- Community garden
- Open up multipurpose room to be used by fitness center
- Balance between special needs and geriatrics – underserved markets
- Don't allow programs to become stagnant (2)
- Partner with other agencies (2)
- Memberships – segment (pool, fitness, classes, track)
- More daytime programs/availability –
  - Aerobic
  - H.I.T.
  - Spinning
  - CrossFit-style (2)
  - Hot yoga
  - Pickleball
  - Rowing
  - Volley tennis
  - Morning fitness boot camp
- Winter programs
- “Age based” clubs
  - Single parents
  - Dad/daughter
  - Adults
  - Friends
  - Accountability
- Night swims for adults only (dark, with pool lights)
- Outdoor cycling club (adult)
  - Triathlon? Bike/swim/run
  - Mountain bike?
- Walking club (adult)
- Running club (adult)
- Non fitness classes
  - Photography
  - Cooking (2)
    - kids
    - adults
- Provide programs for children and adults with special needs – Need instructors – age groups
- Utilize un-used space – Athletic Field
  - Playground equipment
- BMX track and lessons – 5-acre plot NW

- Publicity for senior citizens' activities – local paper reporter does articles for whatever we need – write articles on classes, teachers, and new offerings every two weeks. She sends to local newspaper and forwards it to Moline paper.
- Cooking classes for
  - Kids
  - Adults
- Babysitting for moms? Expand hours.
- United Health Care? Insurance? (UHC has offered some payment to Snap Fitness members when using their exercise equipment.)
- Membership fee – re-evaluate? (2)
  - Reduced senior fees
  - Higher discounts to members?
    - Maybe six free classes/year for members?
    - A lot of gyms offer free classes all the time for members
  - Offer alternative membership plans
    - Include plans with fitness classes and babysitting
- Cost and benefit analysis to be competitive
- Suggestion box – constant monitoring of programs
- Alternative fitness – skate parks, climbing walls, biking, etc.
- Organization
  - Consistent contacts
  - Ease of reservations/booking
- Speakers/talks
  - Tech – the youth teach the seniors
  - Nutrition – local athletes teach
- Visibility to programs
  - User-friendly website
  - Republic
  - School newsletters
- Increase membership
- Drop out-of-town member rates
- Fitness competition
- Youth punch cards
- Continue to provide jobs and opportunities for growth
- Park District does a good job now – keep it going
- Adult education – technology
- Staff working with the members to overcome issues that arise during the year
- Communities do not need to follow or copy other communities
- New trends are not always needed
- Need to increase classes offered: need to have signups for classes before day of! Too often cancelled due to not doing it. FYI necessary to public!
- Extend period of time outdoor pool (available)
- Keep fees affordable and programs safe

### Community Survey (425 completed surveys)

- Program participation is high
- The Geneseo Park District is by far the top provider of parks and recreation programs and services
- Top reason preventing the use of facilities and programs more often is *fees are too high (much higher than both state and national averages) and program times are not convenient*
- Top priorities for investment in programs: Group fitness classes, healthy cooking classes, senior day trips, outdoor adventure, yoga, water fitness, ballroom dance, active senior programming, community gardens and walking /biking club
- Aging demographic - 43 % over 55 with 18% under 35 (Opportunities and/or challenges)
- Bottom line: 80% of respondents indicated they would recommend Geneseo Park District programs, facilities and activities to a friend

### Park District Employee Survey (56 completed surveys)

- Program areas that should be improved or expanded
  1. Teen programs (59% of respondents)
  2. Fitness classes (28% of respondents)
  3. Cooking classes (28% of respondents)
  4. Nutrition classes (24% of respondents)
- “Consider free classes for members included with their membership or a combo between membership price and class price or lower class price to encourage greater participation in classes for adults.”
- Ninety-eight percent (98%) of the Park District employees responding to the survey would recommend working at the Geneseo Park District to a friend or relative.



## **Initiative #3: Strengthen Community Relationships and Increase Community Awareness**

### **Issues/opportunities:**

- 1. Improve collaboration, communication and cooperation with city and other community organizations.**
- 2. Encourage volunteerism. Engage the community.**
- 3. Increase awareness of Park District programs, services, offerings.**
- 4. Improve the “perceived” value of the Park District within the community.**

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### **Park Board and Executive Steering Committee**

- Partner with sports activities to host a regional event with the most family friendly environment.
- Partnerships eliminate duplication of services.
- Regain “Small Town Edge”; we are competing with the Quad City area community.
- Rebrand our perception within and outside our community. Co-operate with City, School District, Hospital, Library and Hennepin Parkway. Welcome Cambridge, Atkinson, Annawan, Erie, Colona, Orion.
- Higher percent of perception of “What my Park District is doing for me, my family and our community is fantastic!”
- Increase public awareness and community involvement through education and awareness.
- Target new audiences.
- Offer free quarterly events for the whole community.
- Foster a cross generational Board.

### **Leader-to-Leader Interviews**

- I hope to see the city and GPD work together more
- Community needs to feel ownership and keep a good positive attitude
- Collaborate with city, hospital and school to best serve our community and my business
- Open communication
- Communicate all events to Chamber
- Cooperation between Chamber/City/Park District
- School, hospital and park should work together on community health
- Chamber Board meeting attended by Executive Director to be on top of business and the “goings on” of Geneseo
- Keep an employee on Chamber Board. Knowledge means understanding which means support!
- Work with tennis group on improving courts
- Quarterly meetings, youth program collaboration (tennis?)
- Collaboration/partnership improvement between government bodies
- Organization is going but still needs to get outside to provide information to get what’s best
- More collaborative efforts with other taxing bodies and other jurisdictions (i.e. tennis courts, soccer, etc.)
- Hiring new executive director – key component
- Figure a way to get people on the Park District’s side. Appreciate conservative element. That allows District to do a lot more-be honest and work with them.

- Communication (clearly an expectation to new director). The Board has to have Executive Director be collaborating with all entities
- No problem with collaboration and communication. Keep an open door with communication
- Director - new leadership must be strong

### **Community Meetings**

- Stop copying other communities – Naperville, Peoria, St. Louis, etc.
- Work with other programs within the community and outside the community
- Do a good job at what you do.
- Community wellness – diet – machines
- Regarding employment of students – there are many young adults and seniors who would and could work part time to fill in some spots and perhaps even with no wages involved – for pool!
- Look forward – need a larger Community Center, parking
- Geneseo serves more communities; business, parks, hospital areas that are served
- Community health
- Do not become stagnant – keep high quality
- Expand district? - Atkinson, Cambridge, Annawan
- More teenage employment opportunities
- Competitiveness to draw in good community members
- Park District must remain competitive with other communities to draw in good community members (2). Utilize partnerships. Balance is important.
- Volunteerism-engage community, trust in community
  - Community service
  - Local help/projects/engagement
  - Seniors/children mentorships?
  - Employees volunteer xx hours/mo.

### **Community Survey (425 completed surveys)**

- 59% of respondents have used parks and recreation services, next closest churches (36%), hospital (35%) and schools (34%)
- The Park District Activity Guide is the top way that residents learn about the Park District - 78% of respondent households learn about the Geneseo Park District programs, facilities and activities from this brochure
- 30% of the respondents would be interested in volunteering at the Park District events - great opportunity
- 54% of the respondents lived in the Geneseo Park District for 21 years or more (very stable)
- 49% of the respondents were satisfied with the value received from the parks and recreation department - below state and national averages (opportunity to build community awareness of the many benefits derived from the Park District)

## **Initiative #4: Financial Planning for Long-term Sustainability**

### **Issues/opportunities:**

- 1. Don't raise taxes. Pay down debt before entering into new projects. Do not overextend financially.**
- 2. Build a solid Geneseo Park District Foundation.**
- 3. Look for sponsorship and alternative revenue opportunities.**
- 4. Continuously assess pricing and membership costs. (Theme also occurs under Programs and Events)**

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### **Park Board and Executive Steering Committee**

- Financial challenges because we have limited ways to increase revenue and part of community cannot afford price increases
- Limited capital funds available for major capital improvements due to Aquatic Center debt
- Financial challenges with private competition
- Revisit fee structure with possible revisions
- To build a solid GPD Foundation to secure funding for future capital improvements
- Fiscally responsible forward thinking
- Sponsorships for programs and memberships

### **Leader-to-Leader Interviews**

- Make certain from a financial perspective that the cash flow moves well
- Don't jump into next project for 3 - 5 years.
- The most significant factor to be recognized as you move forward is taxes! Hope to be conservative with ideas - do not spend in the next few years.
- Pay down debt before next round of improvements
- Take conservative approach because that's the type of community we have. Do homework and make positive, honest presentations. Explain correctly.

### **Community Meetings**

- Many communities would give an arm and leg to have the facilities that Geneseo now has. We need adequate - not the best in the world; live within the means of the city.
- No new taxes (2)
- The Park District is getting too big – too much increasing of taxes, etc.
- Taxes and fees low (2)
- Critical issues – funds: taxes vs. affordable – safety – don't become stagnant
- Maintain highest quality; don't cut corners
- Use what we have – do not extend ourselves! We already have enough taxes!
- Be Geneseo – do not raise taxes
- Put major projects on ballots before moving forward
- Pay off new pool
- Expenses and expenditures. Where does the money come from?
- Do not overextend; live within means (2)

- More information on bond
  - Capital fund
  - State park grants
- Social concern about being able to afford

**Community Survey** (425 completed surveys)

- 54% of respondents would be willing to pay more in taxes (ranging from \$1-\$30 for improvements to the parks/facilities that they rated as the most important...46% would not pay anything.







**National Recreation  
and Park Association**

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## **Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services**

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Parks and recreation have three values that make them essential services to communities:

1. Economic value
2. Health and Environmental benefits
3. Social importance

Just as water, sewer, and public safety are considered essential public services, parks are vitally important to establishing and maintaining the quality of life in a community, ensuring the health of families and youth, and contributing to the economic and environmental well-being of a community and a region.

There are no communities that pride themselves on their quality of life, promote themselves as a desirable location for businesses to relocate, or maintain that they are environmental stewards of their natural resources, without such communities having a robust, active system of parks and recreation programs for public use and enjoyment.

### **Economic Value**

- Parks improve the local tax base and increase property values. It is proven that private property values increase the value of privately owned land the closer such land is to parks. This increase in private property value due to the proximity to parks increases property tax revenues and improves local economies.
- A Texas A&M review of 25 studies investigating whether parks and open space contributed positively to the property values of surrounding properties found that 20 of the 25 studies found that property values were higher. "The real estate market consistently demonstrates that many people are willing to pay a larger amount for property located close to parks and open space areas than for a home that does not offer this amenity,"
- American Forests, a national conservation organization that promotes forestry, estimates that trees in cities save \$400 billion in storm water retention facility costs.
- Quality parks and recreation are cited as one of the top three reasons that business cite in relocation decisions in a number of studies.
- Parks and recreation programs produce a significant portion of operating costs from revenue generated from fees and charges
- Parks and recreation programs generate revenue directly from fees and charges, but more importantly, provide significant indirect revenues to local and regional economies from sports tournaments and special events such as arts, music, and holiday festivals. Economic activity from hospitality expenditures, tourism, fuel, recreational equipment sales, and many other private sector businesses is

of true and sustained value to local and regional economies.

### **Health and Environmental Benefits**

- Parks are the places that people go to get healthy and stay fit.
- Parks and recreation programs and services contribute to the health of children, youth, adults, and seniors.
- According to studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, creating, improving and promoting places to be physically active can improve individual and community health and result in a 25 percent increase of residents who exercise at least three times per week.
- A study by Penn State University showed significant correlations to reductions in stress, lowered blood pressure, and perceived physical health to the length of stay in visits to parks.
- Parks and protected public lands are proven to improve water quality, protect groundwater, prevent flooding, improve the quality of the air we breathe, provide vegetative buffers to development, produce habitat for wildlife, and provide a place for children and families to connect with nature and recreate outdoors together.

### **Social Importance**

- Parks are a tangible reflection of the quality of life in a community. They provide identity for citizens and are a major factor in the perception of quality of life in a given community. Parks and recreation services are often cited as one of the most important factors in surveys of how livable communities are.
- Parks provide gathering places for families and social groups, as well as for individuals of all ages and economic status, regardless of their ability to pay for access.
- An ongoing study by the Trust for Public Land shows that over the past decade, voter approval rates for bond measures to acquire parks and conserve open space exceeds 75%. Clearly, the majority of the public views parks as an essential priority for government spending. Parks and recreation programs provide places for health and well-being that are accessible by persons of all ages and abilities, especially to those with disabilities.
- In a 2007 survey of Fairfax County, VA, residents of 8 of 10 households rated a quality park system either very important or extremely important to their quality of life.
- Research by the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods indicates that community involvement in neighborhood parks is associated with lower levels of crime and vandalism
- Access to parks and recreation opportunities has been strongly linked to reductions in crime and to reduced juvenile delinquency.
- Parks have a value to communities that transcend the amount of dollars invested or the revenues gained from fees. Parks provide a sense of public pride and cohesion to every community.

### ***National Recreation and Park Association***

*For more information on the value and benefits of parks go to [www.nrpa.org](http://www.nrpa.org)*