

20 21

Annual Report



CITY OF
SUN PRAIRIE
Wisconsin

PARKS, RECREATION & FORESTRY

VISIONING &
STRATEGY

2021 IN
NUMBERS

DIVISION-
SPECIFIC
HIGHLIGHTS



Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission

*Kate Piela, Chair • Kristen Newell, Vice Chair • Barb Bailey • Seth Brody •
Janice Chestnut • Alder Bob Jokisch • Janet Rosseter*

Museum Board

*Dan Callies, Chair • Juanona Brewster • Lori Candelmo • Shana Lovings •
Alder Theresa McIlroy • Andy Schoenherr • Steve Stocker • Kyle Utech • Masaya Xiong*

Visioning & Strategy

In late 2020, the Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission underwent a visioning process to redevelop the department's purpose, vision, mission, and values. The subsequent adoption of these new statements in March of 2021 was the result of many discussions at both a staff and Commission level. A series of department goals and objectives were adopted to develop a work plan and focus for 2021.



OUR PURPOSE

To support the health, happiness, and wellbeing of our community.

OUR VISION

Inspiring the health, wellness, and connectedness of all those who live, work, and play in the Sun Prairie community.

OUR MISSION

- To provide and maintain an accessible, equitable, and sustainable park system
- To offer high quality recreational programming that is affordable and inclusive
- To restore, manage, and protect a diverse urban forest
- To promote and preserve open, natural spaces that provide local opportunities for exploration and connectedness to nature
- To serve the community and provide programs and services that contribute to a high quality of life in Sun Prairie



OUR VALUES

- **Quality:** We maintain a commitment to excellence in our programs, services, parks, and facilities.
- **Intentionality:** We proactively anticipate the needs of our community in order to provide programs, services, parks, and facilities that meet those needs.
- **Safety & Training:** We take a proactive approach to ensure the safety of our staff and those who utilize our programs, services, parks, and facilities. Training, skills development, and preparedness of our staff is a priority.
- **Inclusion & Accessibility:** We want everybody in the community to utilize our programs, services, parks, and facilities. We strive for equitable access and the reduction of barriers.
- **Collaboration & Engagement:** We develop and maintain community partnerships to broaden opportunities for the members of our community. We seek out feedback from stakeholders and believe that everybody has a say in the future of our programs, services, parks, and facilities.
- **Stewardship:** We value our community's natural open spaces and urban forest. We continuously look for ways to become more environmentally, fiscally, and socially sustainable in everything we do.
- **Customer Service:** We are committed to being responsive, professional, and respectful to all. We genuinely care about the members of our community.
- **Fun:** We believe in the power of play. We strive to create spaces and opportunities that provide memorable experiences for all those in our community.

2021 in Numbers

As part of the visioning process, the PRFC developed a set of three overarching goals for the department. Each goal is tied to specific objectives that were assigned key performance indicators to quantify progress towards the goals.

2021 OVERARCHING GOALS

Goal #1: Maximize resources and identify efficiencies that ensure sustainability and fiscal responsibility.

Goal #2: Increase accessibility and inclusivity of SPPRF parks, facilities, programs, and services.

Goal #3: Increase relevancy and value of department facilities, programs, and services.



A YEAR IN REVIEW

2021 was a year of great accomplishment. The PRF team utilized the 2021 overarching goals as a roadmap, which ultimately led to a number of successes and value added for the community. The impact and reach of PRF's efforts in 2021 was expansive which was evidenced through the number of people who visited our parks and facilities, participated in programs, attended events, and who utilized our services.



\$302,638

Alternative revenue
(donations, sponsorships,
and grants)

6

Major departmental
awards/staff recognitions

1,974

Total volunteer hours put
in for parks, recreation,
forestry & museum

55

Partnerships for
programs and services

1,630

Total staff
training/professional
development hours

16

Equivalent of full time staff
making it all happen!

Parks Highlights

10

Capital projects completed

5

Poured-in-place access pathways added to playgrounds

82%

Parks that are ADA accessible

4

Pollinator gardens added

3

Major recognitions awarded

WPRA Park Design under \$250,000:
Sunset Park

WPRA Park Design
\$250,000-\$499,999:
Vandenburg Heights Park

WRMCA Concrete Design:
Wetmore Park



Grand Opening of the Tom & Rita Tubbs Splashpad & Playground at Wetmore Park

- All backlogged Parks-related capital projects were completed!
- PRFC voted to resume cross country ski trail grooming at Sheehan Park, equipment needed to do this was approved in the 2022 CIP
- Secured \$1,000 Dane County Environmental Council Grant for Sheehan Park Woodland Restoration – Phase 1: Invasive Shrub Removal
- Staff initiated a parks and playground map-based asset inventory



- Installation of new park signage began
- Hosted successful Community Playground Build at Grandview Park
- Pollinator Gardens were planted at Wetmore, Vandenburg, Orfan & Liberty Parks
- Crew was trained on invasive plant species and noxious weed identification and removal

Recreation Highlights

537

Programs offered

81%

Program success rate

3,461

Program enrollments

131%

Cost Recovery of recreation programs (direct costs only)

15

Events offered

5,000

Estimated cumulative event attendance

- Hired School-Based Program Specialist to expand school-based programming
 - Launched a second Thursday early release afterschool program site in fall 2021



- Established a year-round comprehensive indoor archery program that includes various skill levels and age groups
- Trunk or Treat event hosted more than 2,000 attendees and 24 vendors
- Continued to offer virtual programs as a result of "outside the box" thinking that was required in 2020
 - Virtual programs proved to be successful with more than 200 registrations in 2021.



Aquatics Highlights

16,037

Visitors to the pool

17,000

Estimated visitors to the splashpad

52%

Cost Recovery of the pool
(direct and indirect costs)

832

Youth learned how to swim

- Re-opened the Family Aquatic Center after being closed in 2020
- No EAP (Emergency Action Plan) activations
- Tom & Rita Tubbs Splashpad and Playground Opened!
- Funding was secured to fully restore the large waterslide at the Family Aquatic Center (project occurring in 2022)



From Splashpad Grand Opening Event:

"Let this amazing facility be a place to play with the children in your life. Let this facility bring you back to being a kid. Let this facility be a catalyst for unleashing your imagination. Be an active participant, not just a witness, to the power of play when you are here. Let this be a place that 20 years from now, the children who are standing here today come back and remember how this facility played such an important part in their lives and created memories to last a lifetime." - Kristin Grissom, Parks, Recreation & Forestry Director

Forestry Highlights

505

Trees planted

90

Trees removed

141

Ash trees treated

\$17,469

Grant dollars awarded

320

Resident tree inquiries



- 21 new trees were planted for Arbor Day 2021 by volunteers and community groups
- City applied for and was awarded a WI DNR Urban Forestry Grant to assist in EAB-related removals and new plantings
- Approved street tree list was updated to include restricted trees

- City received its Tree City USA designation for the 28th year in a row
- Forestry Crew Leader/City Forester position was created and recruited for – candidate starts 1/31/22
- Staff participated in specialized tree care training through Whitney Tree Service
- Forestry staff worked with GIS Department to develop and begin implementation of a map-based tree inventorying system

Community Member Testimonial:

"Excellent, excellent work with the new trees at Stone Ridge. Walked dogs just now and saw new trees between parking lot and pavilion. Just love them. What great varieties. Thanks for leaving the tags on... Nice work and again please pass on my compliments..."

Museum Highlights

936

Total visitors

20

Total volunteers

488

Total volunteer hours

58

Total research requests

16

Community engagement events



Photos from an inspection on the Columbus Street Watertower. The inspection was completed in 2021 to determine necessary repairs for this City asset.

- Hired an LTE Registrar for 10 hours/week to assist with collections management and special projects
- Total volunteer hours increased by 19% from 2020 and Community partnerships tripled from 2020
- A Collections Management Team was formed to process donations and a Collections Management Policy was approved by the Museum Board
- Sidewalk in the back parking lot was reconstructed to provide better accessibility to the Museum



- Outreach and programming included working with Patrick Marsh 7th graders, SPHS German classes, PPA, Sacred Hearts 5th graders, Kicks Unlimited, Cub Scouts, and Westfall School in Verona

Neighborhood Navigator Highlights

881

Unduplicated residents served

94

Unduplicated youth and teens participated in mentorship programming

81%

Total funding through alternative revenue sources

SNAPSHOT: Stories of Impact

- *Navigator, Barry, saw a man walking to work with a trash bag along Main Street. Barry approached the man and found out that he was recently homeless and walking to his brand new job. Barry was able to connect the man with a taxi voucher for a ride and a gift card for food. The man was incredibly grateful - he teared up and gave Barry the biggest hug he's ever received.*
- *Navigator team facilitated a vehicle donation to Angel LLC that was then used to provide a free car to a victim of domestic abuse.*
- *Connected an anonymous donor to a family who wasn't able to provide Christmas gifts for their children. Testimonial from the mother: "THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR MAKING MY KIDS' CHRISTMAS GREAT!!!"*

- With community partners, provided residents at the Rolling Prairie, the Element, and Vandenburg neighborhoods with food, essential items, and activities on Monday nights
- Developed and implemented three youth mentorship programs, including one with Community Schools
- Assisted the Lakota Group and City staff with outreach and engagement for the City's housing study
- Hosted two neighborhood movie nights and one community movie night



- Navigators participated in the Pedestrian Safety Task Force and provided valuable input for the Element's driveway reconstruction.
- Participated in Distressed Property Task Force which resulted in significant changes in The Element.
- Partnered with Public Health Madison & Dane County to host two COVID-19 vaccination pop-up events at the Element
- Friends of the Neighborhood Navigators provided Navigator team with taxi vouchers and Visa gift cards for emergency stabilization purposes

Parks, Recreation & Forestry Department Team

includes FT, PT, and year round LTE staff

Kristin Grissom, Director
Ben Andrews, Office Assistant
Cindy Burtley, Parks & Forestry Division Manager
George Chavez, Neighborhood Navigator Program Specialist
Katrina Collins, Neighborhood Navigator Advisor
Deb Dreyer, Payroll Specialist
Oscar Escamilla, Parks Maintenance Worker
Jen Harper, Museum Managing Director
Vernard Johnson, Neighborhood Navigator
Adam Kanetzke, Parks Maintenance LTE
Barry Mahlum, Neighborhood Navigator
Kristi Ninedorf, Recreation Program Specialist
Alyse Peters, Community Events/Sponsorship Development Coordinator
Teran Peterson, Neighborhood Navigator Advisor
Holly Pohl, Administrative/Recreation Programs Coordinator
Emily Rebarchek, School-based Program Specialist
Monica Santiago, Neighborhood Navigator
Joe Seltzner, Parks & Forestry Crew Leader
Katie Scanlan, Museum Registrar
Chad Shelton, Recreation Supervisor
Theadora Smith, Neighborhood Navigator Advisor
Ryan Staege, Parks Maintenance Assistant
Darreon Steward, Youth & Teen Neighborhood Navigator
Richard Vernig, Parks Maintenance Worker
Steve Vernig, Parks Maintenance Worker
David Walden, Parks Maintenance Worker
Nick Winters, Parks Maintenance Worker



"The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team."

- Phil Jackson