



NORTHBROOK PARK DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN



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NORTHBROOK PARK DISTRICT
STRATEGIC PLAN

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INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning is the formal consideration of an organization's future course, a process that determines where an organization is going and how it will get there. Developing a strategic plan defines the purpose of the organization; establishes realistic goals consistent with a mission in a defined time frame; provides a base from which progress can be measured; and focuses resources on the key priorities.

The resulting document is the Strategic Plan. The Northbrook Park District has developed a Strategic Plan to provide direction in serving the community for a five-year period from 2010 through 2015. This Plan is the result of the collaborative efforts of the District staff, Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Commissioners and prepared in partnership with PROS Consulting, Inc.

STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The starting point for the strategic planning process is establishing Mission and Vision Statements to clearly define the purpose of the Park District. These statements represent the core of the organization. The Guiding Principles reflect our set of values as individuals, a team and an organization, defining how we intend to relate to each other and to our community. The Strategic Themes represent our broad level of direction and are supported by Strategic Goals. Strategic Initiatives are specific tasks to support the Goals.

STRATEGIC PLAN DEFINITIONS

Mission—a statement that describes the business of our District. The Mission also defines our core purpose and why we exist.

Vision—the desired future of our District. Our Vision describes where our organization wants to be in approximately five years. The Vision should resonate with all members of our team and help us feel proud, excited, and part of something much bigger than ourselves. A Vision should stretch our capabilities and should state a measurable achievement.

Guiding Principles—our set of beliefs that establish how we will relate to each other and to our customers (residents).

Strategic Themes— primary components that include customer, financial, internal business, and employee growth and development. These define the organizational direction based on the concept of the Balanced Scorecard.

Strategic Goals—concise statements describing the specific actions the District must execute to achieve our strategy.

Strategic Initiatives—the specific programs, activities, projects, or actions that our District will introduce to meet our performance targets.

Measurements—standards used to evaluate and communicate performance against expected results. Measurements are normally quantitative indicators and capture numbers, dollars and percentages, allowing the Board and staff to determine organizational performance.

OUR MISSION

To enhance our community by providing outstanding services, parks and facilities through environmental, social and financial stewardship

OUR VISION

To be recognized as a national leader in delivering innovative park and recreation services based on responsiveness, trust and accountability to our community

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Building Strong Relationships and Community

- We recognize the positive impact we have on people's lives and constantly strive to improve the quality of life for the people we serve.
- We build meaningful and lasting relationships based on strong values, a common purpose, and mutual respect.
- We value diversity and actively seek people with different perspectives and experiences.
- We support achieving balance in our professional and personal lives.

Honesty and Integrity

- We maintain the highest ethical standards.
- We communicate honestly and transparently.

Accountability and Respect

- We strive to deliver results that add value to the community we serve.
- We recognize that each of us has a choice in what we do and how we do it.
- We learn from our mistakes and focus on continuous improvement.

Professional Growth and Innovation

- We support efforts to enhance, educate and develop our employees.
- We encourage creativity and innovation.

Teamwork

- We appreciate that all of us are more effective than any one of us.
- We encourage collaboration and collective problem solving.
- We create an integrated organization free of boundaries.
- We embrace the diversity of our team.

Pursuing Excellence

- We believe our efforts make a difference as stewards of our community.
- **We recognize that being good is simply not good enough.**

STRATEGY MAP

The Northbrook Park District Strategic Plan (2010-2015) is designed to ensure that elements of the Mission and Vision shape the Strategic Plan implementation. Strategic Themes, Strategic Goals, Strategic Initiatives and Measurements create the framework for decision-making during the next five years. The Themes provide the primary focus for the Plan's implementation. The Strategy Map outlines the four Themes, supporting Goals and Measurements.

OUR MISSION: To enhance our community by providing outstanding services, parks and facilities through environmental, social and financial stewardship

OUR VISION: To be recognized as a national leader in delivering innovative park and recreation services based on responsiveness, trust and accountability to our community



STRATEGIC THEMES

The District has developed Strategic Themes that are broad organizational descriptions to provide direction. They include:

- Provide nationally recognized facilities, programs and services
- Optimize and leverage financial position
- Achieve operational and environmental excellence
- Foster a motivated and accountable team culture

The Strategic Themes are geared not only for the employees of the organization but also the Board members, given their role in organizational strategy. The Mission and Vision shape these strategic recommendations. The Themes provide the overall focus for the Plan's implementation.

CUSTOMER THEME

PROVIDE NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED FACILITIES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Goal 1: Create Programs, Services and Facilities that Promote Lifelong Leisure The District intends to develop customers for life by providing programs, services and facilities for all age segments. The goal is to have people involved in programs and services from an early age and continue to participate throughout their lives. This requires an ongoing commitment to creating customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Goal 2: Develop Loyalty through Customer Satisfaction In order to create a customer-focused culture, we will measure customer satisfaction and loyalty on a regular basis and continually develop processes to improve the customer experience. This will be achieved using surveys, focus groups, and customer contact points combined with a commitment to staff training.

Goal 3: Align Services with Community Need The District completed a statistically valid household survey to determine the priorities of Northbrook residents. The results provide essential information about the types of programs and services our community wants. We will focus on providing programs, services and facilities with the greatest unmet needs.

FINANCIAL THEME

OPTIMIZE AND LEVERAGE FINANCIAL POSITION

Goal 1: Develop Best Practice Financial Systems Best practice financial systems and processes require sophisticated pricing strategy, the ability to forecast financial needs, and maintaining the Triple A bond rating. This goal indicates the need for a financial performance measurement system. Implementing best practice systems can lead to effective decision making, analysis of trends, and staff alignment with our financial position. Staff will receive financial training in order to understand the complexity of the District budget.

Goal 2: Align Resources Efficiently It is imperative for the District to utilize human resources as efficiently and effectively as possible. Ongoing workforce analysis, developing processes to increase efficiencies, and reviewing capacity demand usage of facilities will be integral in reaching this goal. In addition, we will continuously review resident needs to ensure resources are aligned with those needs.

Goal 3: Maximize Funding Opportunities The District intends to seek alternative funding such as grants, donations, sponsorships and advertising. Reducing the reliance on tax support provides the District with much greater flexibility in resource allocation as well as the ability to maximize earned revenue potential.

INTERNAL BUSINESS THEME

ACHIEVE OPERATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE

Goal 1: Identify and Streamline Critical Processes to Improve Services Excellence in external customer service begins with developing well-honed processes for all of the support functions of the District. Support functions include Human Resources, Risk Management, Finance, Technology, Marketing, Parks and Facility Maintenance. A method to achieving good processes includes a continuous commitment to an internal customer satisfaction measurement system.

Goal 2: Foster Productive Collaborations and Strong Partnerships The continued development of strategic partnerships is vital to the District's overall success. Resident taxpayers expect government agencies to work collaboratively with other agencies and partners, and the District can benefit by continuously measuring satisfaction in working relationships.

Goal 3: Develop Innovative Communications This goal relates to both internal and external customer communications. Good government transparency through communication standards and managed internal communications through guidelines will result in enhanced service delivery. The District will continue to seek the best communication sources for our residents.

Goal 4: Develop Environmental Best Practices The District includes environmental stewardship as part of its Mission statement and intends to improve sustainability by efforts such as the expansion of recycling, improved energy efficiency, and the development a long-term sustainability plan for the District.

EMPLOYEE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT THEME

FOSTER A MOTIVATED AND ACCOUNTABLE TEAM CULTURE

Goal 1: Promote Teamwork The District encourages a collaborative environment in which employees have the opportunity to participate in decision making and the future direction of the District. Teams work best when the organization develops accountability for performance. This objective suggests alignment between the use of teams and performance management systems.

Goal 2: Cultivate Personal and Professional Growth The Northbrook Park District emphasizes the importance of employee competency and personal/professional growth. This includes effectively deploying the Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles beginning with the orientation process and reinforcing them throughout employment. In addition, we will launch a comprehensive training program to advance staff skills.

Goal 3: Encourage Innovation and Creativity The District intends to become a national leader in providing parks and recreation services. We need to cultivate a learning environment and work culture that supports innovation in work processes, the use of technology, and new trends in recreation programs and facilities. Our organization will reinforce the importance of innovation through breakthrough teams, adopting best practices, and aligning reward and recognition systems.

STRATEGIC THEMES AND GOALS

The following are the Themes, Goals and Initiatives for the next five years between May 2010 through April 2015. Time period priorities are attached to each Initiative. These represent timeframes as follows:

- Short-Term Goals to be accomplished between May 1, 2010 and April 30, 2012
- Mid-Term Goals to be accomplished between May 1, 2012 and April 30, 2014
- Long-Term Goals to be accomplished between May 1, 2012 and April 30, 2015
- Ongoing Goals are included on an annual basis during the entire time period

Customer Theme: Provide Nationally Recognized Facilities, Programs and Services

GOALS:

- 1. Create Programs, Services and Facilities that Promote Lifelong Leisure**
 - Increase programming for active adults and seniors *Ongoing*
 - Determine program and service gaps through an age segment analysis *Mid term*
- 2. Develop Loyalty through Customer Satisfaction**
 - Develop a Service Quality Management System *Short – Short term*
 - Create service, maintenance, design and recreation program standards *Mid Term*

3. Align Services with Community Needs

- Pursue prudent and appropriate land acquisition *Ongoing*
- Develop parks in underserved areas that are accessible by walking *Ongoing*
- Develop a comprehensive annual program review process *Short term*
- Expand bike and trail connectivity *Short term*
- Develop Master Plans for community parks *Short term*
- Perform a review of similar providers of core services to determine the District's strengths and weaknesses *Mid term*
- Analyze program lifecycles to determine whether programs are growing, maturing, or declining *Mid term*
- Formulate a plan to address top reasons residents do not participate in recreation programs (too busy, program/facility not offered, times not convenient) *Mid term*
- Expand indoor space; identify activities, programming, services and space *Mid term*
- Implement golf course improvements *Mid term*
- Implement programming and facility needs based on community survey results *Long term*
- Address the need for fitness and wellness activities *Long term*
- Develop a process to track recreation and park trends regionally *Long term*

GOALS:

1. Develop Best Practice Financial Systems

- Update fees and charges policy and revenue philosophy *Short term*
- Develop a financial forecast and cost analysis *Mid term*
- Complete pricing audit and develop value-based pricing strategy *Mid term*
- Establish financial performance measurement system *Long term*

2. Align Resources Efficiently

- Complete a workforce analysis *Ongoing*
- Identify methods to increase financial efficiencies *Ongoing*
- Develop a Five Year Capital Improvement Plan based on survey results; invest in long term needs *Ongoing*
- Enhance technology and data mining/business intelligence *Ongoing*
- Perform a capacity usage analysis of facilities *Long term*

3. Maximize Funding Opportunities

- Obtain additional funds through grants *Ongoing*
- Obtain additional funds for sponsorships *Ongoing*
- Obtain additional funds through advertising *Ongoing*
- Maximize earned revenue opportunities *Ongoing*
- Maximize earned revenue through strategic pricing and innovative programs/services *Long term*
- Improve pricing sophistication through Tech U training *Long term*

GOALS:

1. Identify and Streamline Critical Processes to Improve Services

- Identify and document processes to improve service, including:
 1. Human Resources *Short term*
 2. Finance *Short term*
 3. Risk Management *Short term*
 4. Information Technology *Short term*
 5. Marketing and Communications *Short term*
 6. Parks and Properties *Short term*
- Translate Internal Satisfaction Survey results into actionable plans for improvement *Mid term*
- Develop an organizational performance measurement system *Midterm to Long term*

2. Foster Productive Collaborations and Strong Partnerships

- Formalize agreements with community partners and affiliates and pursue resource-sharing agreements that are beneficial to the community *Mid term*
- Measure value and satisfaction levels of partnerships/collaboration *Long term*

3. Develop Innovative Communications

- Create a marketing plan to improve brand and image *Short term*
- Identify internal communication process and guidelines *Short term and ongoing*
- Create annual Stewardship Report *Short term*
- Develop consistent brand and identity *Short term*
- Perform access (customer touch points) review to determine customer satisfaction, using the website, front desk operations, and registration system *Short term*
- Develop business plans for key program or facilities *Long term*
- Pursue local and national awards and recognition *Long term*

4. Develop Environmental Best Practices

- Improve environmental awareness of employees/community through education process *Ongoing*
- Develop current environmental practices and baseline carbon footprint *Short term*
- Revise the environmental policy *Short term*
- Expand and enhance recycling program *Short term*
- Create plan to reduce energy consumption *Mid term*
- Research and implement sustainable practices *Mid term*

GOALS:

1. Promote Teamwork

- Improve employee morale and communication *Short term*
- Develop employee accountability through performance management *Ongoing*
- Using accountability model, develop middle managers to drive Initiatives *Mid term*
- Identify and cultivate a knowledge management system *Long term*

2. Cultivate Personal and Professional Growth

- Establish leadership philosophy, core competencies and standards in Supervisory and Management staff *Short term*
- Revise job descriptions *Short term*
- Enhance performance appraisal process to include core competencies *Short term*
- Develop a comprehensive training process *Mid term*
- Develop an evaluation system for District training Initiatives *Mid term*
- Develop a Northbrook Leadership Academy for future leaders *Long term*

3. Encourage Innovation and Creativity

- Cultivate an environment that embraces creative thinking *Ongoing*
- Develop a process to celebrate successes and learn from mistakes (reward system) *Short term*
- Create an innovation team to research and recommend best practices *Long term*
- Develop a team to follow the standards of “Best Companies to Work For” and implement guidelines for work/life satisfaction *Long term*

REVIEW IN FUTURE YEARS

- Implement a program development process for recreation staff
- Implement innovations in the service delivery process

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

- All employees will receive a copy of the Strategic Plan or electronic access to the Plan.
- Elements of the Strategic Plan will be incorporated into the District's orientation process.
- The District will provide regular reporting on the Plan's progress. The Plan will be divided into separate fiscal years and reported on annually. At the beginning of each year, staff will be responsible for updating each initiative. Each initiative for the year will include a list of tactics that support the goal's completion. Managers are responsible for reporting on their goals in a monthly or quarterly report. Each Initiative will have an annual update.
- The District will update major stakeholders on the Plan's implementation and results on an annual basis.
- Our organization will conduct staff meetings on a quarterly or semi-annual basis to review the Plan's progress and report results to the Board.
- The performance appraisal process will reflect the completion of the Strategic Plan Initiatives as an evaluation criterion.
- Every employee's Goals (Work Plan) will have a direct correlation to the District's Strategic Plan.
- The measurement system will be tracked on a regular basis. Some of the measures will be calculated annually and an annual narrative about the results will be developed.
- We will review the inventory of measures on an annual basis and make adjustments as necessary to ensure the measures continuously add value to the decision making.
- After completing the first year of the Plan, targets will be initiated for the measurement system. There will be an annual "just-in-time" review of the next year's Initiatives to determine if priorities have changed. This would be included at an annual retreat in which successive years' Initiatives are discussed as part of the annual budget process. Initiatives will align with the budget process.
- Each year, the staff and Board will review the Plan process and address any parts of the process that need improvement.
- During the second year, the Plan will align with individual departments. Departments will have their own scorecard, aligned with the District's organizational strategy.