

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

### ***Overview***

As a critical part of the master planning process, the Parks and Recreation Department actively collected input from the public as to their views of Columbia's parks and recreation needs. In 2001 the Department conducted the following public, focus group, and school meetings:

#### **Public Meetings**

- 4/04/01 - Public Meeting
- 4/10/01 - Public Meeting
- 4/11/01 - Public Meeting

#### **Focus Group Meetings**

- 3/01/01 - Columbia Disc Golf Club
- 3/15/01 - Parks & Recreation Staff
- 4/09/01 - MO Department of Conservation
- 4/17/01 - Douglass Coalition
- 4/18/01 - Diamond Council (youth baseball/softball)
- 4/19/01 - Parks & Recreation Commission
- 4/26/01 - Central City Focus Group
- 4/26/01 - Environmental Focus Group
- 4/26/01 - Entertainment/Performing Arts
- 4/30/01 - Northern Cherokee Nation
- 5/01/01 - Misc. Sports/Athletic Associations
- 5/02/01 - Eco Recreation Focus Group
- 5/02/01 - Columbia Soccer Club
- 5/10/01 - Boone County Historical Society
- 5/14/01 - Columbia Youth Football League
- 5/15/01 - Columbia Youth Basketball League
- 5/18/01 - PedNet
- 5/23/01 - Stephens Property
- 5/29/01 - Russell Family Donors
- 5/30/01 - Russell Property
- 8/09/01 - Disabilities Commission

#### **School Meetings**

- 4/24/01 - West Junior High School
- 5/08/01 - Hickman High School
- 5/24/01 - Ridgeway Elementary School

The public meetings were advertised in advance in the newspaper, on the radio, and on the Parks and Recreation website. After a presentation by Parks and Recreation staff, those attending the public meetings were divided into smaller groups and asked to list parks and recreation needs for the community. The smaller groups were then gathered back into one group, and the ideas were compiled into one list. Each attendee cast votes for his/her personal top five choices.

In addition to updating the *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan*, the Department needed to develop master plans for the Russell property and Stephens Lake Park. Both properties drew high public interest as to how they were going to be developed. A public meeting was held regarding each of these properties to obtain public input and incorporate these ideas in the overall master plan. These meetings were conducted in a similar manner to the other three public meetings.

Focus group meetings were held to ascertain needs of specific groups that might not stand out in the public meetings or surveys. For example, lack of practice soccer fields might not be a concern to the public in general, but may impair the growth and operation of the Columbia Soccer Club. Similarly, issues that concern the Disability Commission (such as providing lower basketball rims to accommodate persons of various skill levels) would not likely be a priority matter to the general public. However, these type of issues are important to the Department in its commitment to satisfy the parks and recreation needs of all its citizens.

In addition to the public meetings, the Department contracted with a private firm, ETC Institute/Leisure Vision, to conduct a random citizen survey. ETC Institute/Leisure Vision obtained 527 completed household surveys. The purpose was to determine citizen usage, satisfaction, needs, priorities, and funding support for parks and recreation services. In conjunction with this random survey, the Parks and Recreation Department conducted a similar survey with its active park users. The Department obtained 430 completed park user surveys.

Adding to the information collected through meetings and surveys, the Department accepted e-mails, phone calls, and participated in informal discussions with citizens regarding their ideas and concerns for the future city-wide master planning of parks and recreation.

This chapter includes summaries of the public meetings, focus group meetings, surveys, and the conclusions drawn therefrom. Supporting survey instruments and charts can be found in Appendix B.