



Vision 2020 Strategic Plan

for Parks and Recreation in Vandalia, OH

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | JUNE 2014



Vision and Values

VISION
The Vision 2020 Strategic Plan is designed as a planning document to guide future improvements to facilities and programs offered by the parks and recreation department over the course of the next 10 years. The plan is intended to be specific to the unique characteristics of Vandalia; the needs and desires of city residents; and our demographics.

- VALUES
The Vandalia Parks and Recreation Department is committed to:
- Promote healthy living through diverse recreation and leisure activities
 - Promote the economic competitiveness of Vandalia as a place for business to locate through a robust parks and recreation system.
 - Promote a sense of community and civic pride
 - Provide lifelong learning opportunities
 - Shape a healthy, safe, green community
 - Collaborate with partners to provide sustainable, accessible and diverse leisure opportunities
 - Engage a diverse community and proactively respond to changing demographics, needs and trends
 - Acquire, maintain and manage a parks and recreation built environment

Mission Statement

The Vandalia Parks and Recreation Department’s mission is to enhance the lives of our citizens and our community by providing quality and diverse leisure facilities, programs and services.



ABSTRACT

Title	Vision 2020 Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation in Vandalia, Ohio Executive Summary
Author	Prepared by Vision 2020 Strategic Plan Committee, Vandalia Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and Vandalia Parks and Recreation Department.
Subject	A summary of the Vision 2020 Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation in Vandalia, Ohio.
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Abstract	This document, based on the Vision 2020 project research and outreach, summarizes the recommendations that will address current and future park and recreation needs for the next 10 years in Vandalia, Ohio.

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Introduction

Vandalia, Ohio is recognized for an extensive parks and recreation system that greatly contributes to the high quality of life in the community.

In order to maintain the high quality of this valuable parks and recreation system into the future, the Parks and Recreation Department, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Vision 2020 Strategic Plan Committee have collaborated on the development of a long-term strategic plan to guide parks and recreation services for the next 10 years. This plan is called the Vision 2020 Strategic Plan.

Purpose

The purpose of the Vision 2020 Strategic Plan is to:

- Develop a shared vision for the parks and recreation system in Vandalia.
- Articulate clear strategies to address current and future needs.
- Collaboratively provide parks and recreation facilities and services.

Through this plan, we seek to address the following questions:

- How do we maintain the appropriate level of service for people who live, work and engage in recreation in Vandalia now and in the future?
- How do we most effectively and efficiently deliver the parks and recreation services that are most important to the residents of Vandalia?

Why is this Plan important?

The Vision 2020 Strategic Plan will help the Vandalia Parks and Recreation Department respond to:

- Changing population and service demands
- Aging infrastructure
- Emerging trends in parks and recreation
- Organizational sustainability
- The need for greater dependence on revenue generation and alternative funding
- Changing population and service demands



Challenges and Opportunities

Throughout the Vision 2020 planning process, members of the committee repeatedly voiced their support for the value and benefits of Vandalia Parks and Recreation Department.

Growing demand and shrinking resources will continue to be a challenge for parks and recreation services in Vandalia. With strong leadership and a guiding vision, the department has a unique opportunity to maximize operational sustainability by:

- Focusing on core services
- Balancing future construction with the maintenance and repair of existing facilities.
- Proactively responding to changing demographics, emerging trends and changing priorities.
- Continuing to “green” the park system – including facilities, equipment and operational programs.
- Maintaining the emphasis on customer service and participant safety.
- Collaborating to more efficiently deliver quality services.
- Planning for future growth.

As we move forward in the next 10 years it is even more important to realize the benefits of parks, recreation and open space and the value to our residents. The National Recreation and Parks Association “Benefits of Parks and Recreation” report states:

- Physical activity makes people healthier and increases with access to parks.
- Residential and commercial property values increases.
- Value is added to community through economic development and tourism.
- Trees improve air quality, act as natural air conditioners, and assist with storm water control and erosion.
- Crime and juvenile delinquency are reduced.
- Stable neighborhoods and strong communities are created.



Recommendations

The Vision 2020 Strategic Plan recommendations are organized by five broad vision themes with a common goal of maintaining quality park and recreation lands and facilities for efficiency, safety, attractiveness and long-term sustainability:

- Theme 1: Parks and Facilities
- Theme 2: Community Recreation Center
- Theme 3: Cassel Hills Swimming Pool
- Theme 4: Vandalia Senior Center
- Theme 5: Programs and Activities

Theme 1: Parks and Facilities

Observations and summary of recommendations:

Sports Complex

- Construct a sidewalk in front of Sports Complex along Stonequarry Road.
- Design and implement a crosswalk from Copperfield Development to Sports Complex.
- Add electric source to batting cage area and ball diamonds at Sports Complex.
- Redesign Sports Complex entry to include 2 lane entry and exit.
- Install lighting around perimeter of walking/jogging path at Sports Complex.
- Install a lightning prediction and warning system at Sports Complex.
- Addition of covered dugouts on the ball diamonds would protect youth baseball and softball participants from the sun and rain.
- Recommend planting an evergreen tree on the grounds of the VRC that would become a permanent City Christmas Tree.
- Extend the walking/jogging path from the Ricci Cul-de-sac around the sand volleyball courts and tie back into the path way at the ball diamonds. This will allow park users a safe alternative to walking on the main driveway in this area of the park.
- Add walking/jogging path from the southwest corner of the complex to the existing pathway next to ball diamonds #1-3. This will give Copperfield residents a non-motorized entry into Sports Complex and improve safety for walk-ins.
- Look to replace aging play structures and surfacing on baseball side of Sports Complex.
- Replace wood picnic tables with aluminum or recycled material tables at baseball concession.
- Add picnic table pads in 3-5 areas of the park as well as a concrete pad near soccer concession stand that would allow for 3-5 picnic tables in this area.



Parks and Facilities (cont.)

- Complete asphalt overlay and repairs to aging parking lots, driveways and pathways.
- Update all park lighting with energy efficient fixtures.
- Add water source to baseball fields for skinned surface up keep/maintenance during dry conditions.
- Look to add a grass infield to at least one large diamond as a signature field for the complex.
- Sponsorship/naming rights opportunities for Sports Complex fields.
- Perimeter fencing and ball diamond fencing needs to be replaced or updated.
- Design a crossfit workout area near the sand volleyball courts.

Helke Park

- Helke Park is a nice park but looks run-down/shabby. Needs updated.
- Helke Park restroom building needs improvements.
- Vandalism at Helke Park continues to be a problem. Security measures need to be considered (cameras, volunteer watch program or employee park monitors)
- Consider a redesign of Helke Park, much like the Robinette Park redesign.
- Helke Park is a good location for a skate park.
- Helke Park is a good location for a splash pad/spray ground feature.
- Walking/Jogging path around perimeter of Helke Park.
- Install a Frisbee Golf course at Helke Park
- Install a lightning prediction and warning system at Helke Park.
- Improve park drainage. A water retention area needs to be considered.
- Replace the 2-5 year old play structure and surfacing.
- Refurbish the tennis and sport court areas of the park including an overlay of all surfaces, new net stanchions and new fencing.
- Install a third shelter house which would allow for more family and group outings at the park.
- Redesign sand box area and add new features to this area.
- Replace lighting throughout the park with more energy efficient fixtures and maintenance friendly hardware (poles).
- Consider adding a basketball court, possibly on one of the current tennis courts.
- Remove dead and/or dying trees from the wooded area west of the park.



Parks and Facilities (cont.)

Jeffers Park

- Jeffers Park is a good location for a community garden program.
- Jeffers Park is a good location for a baseball practice area.
- Replace existing shelter and restroom building with open shelters much like the one at Robinette Park. Add small functional restroom to this area.
- Add walking/jogging path around the perimeter of the park and include several benches and picnic table pads along the pathway.
- Complete asphalt overlay and repairs to tennis, basketball and volleyball courts.
- Improve and enlarge the parking lot area.
- Replace aging play structure and surfacing.
- Plant additional trees to the park.

Robinette Park

- Improvements to ball field area of park are needed to make it usable (pitcher mound, home plate, infield area).
- Vandalism at Robinette Park continues to be a problem. Security measures need to be considered (cameras, volunteer watch program or employee park monitors)
- Keep the nets on tennis courts and basketball courts in good condition.
- Wooded area on east end of park along pathway very dark in the evening. Look to add some sort of security lighting in this area.
- Look to allow private sport groups (soccer and baseball) to use for practices under Facility Use Policy. Possible revenue source.
- Complete asphalt overlay and repairs to tennis and basketball courts as well as walking/jogging path.
- Replace play structures and surfacing.
- Plant additional trees in the park.
- Replace wood picnic tables with aluminum or recycled material tables and add picnic table pads and tables at various locations near pathway.
- Add a small functional restroom to the park.

Lichtenfels Park

- Partner with Historical Society and Public Art in Vandalia Committee to redesign and blend the park and historical grounds.
- Contour the grounds to be more visually appealing from the street. Incorporate pathways and ground contour for future artwork if desired.
- Install walking/jogging pathway around perimeter of park. Add



Parks and Facilities (cont.)

several picnic table and benches along pathway.
Plant additional trees in the park.

Copperfield Park

- Dog Waste Stations needed in Copperfield Park
- Consider some sort of playground type feature (climbing rock or small playground)
- Add a walking/jogging pathway to the perimeter of the park.
- Plant additional trees in the park.

Ashbury Farms Park

- Consider some sort of playground type feature (climbing rock or small playground)
- Plant additional trees in the park.

Brown School Woods Park

- Consider some sort of playground type feature (climbing rock or small playground)
- Plant additional trees in park.

Victory Park

- Develop a plan to work with neighbors of park to replace fence line that is looking rusty and old.
- Replace aging play structure and surfacing.
- Install a couple of picnic tables and concrete pads and a small open shelter.
- Plant additional trees in park.

Warner Park

- Replace the existing play structure and surfacing.

Seeger Park

- Repair paver pathways and install additional paver pathway through the park.
- Install additional paver pathway connecting to north sidewalk of park.
- Replace ash trees throughout the park.

Maple Street Lot

- Develop into downtown green space with pathways, benches, picnic tables, perennial flower beds, shrubs and trees.

Cassel Hills Golf Course and Clubhouse

- Complete Clubhouse exterior building maintenance including paint and stucco repair.
- Clubhouse roof replacement.
- Clubhouse HVAC replacement
- Parking lot and driveway asphalt overlay and repairs.
- Golf course - clear well roof, repair/replace.
- Golf course irrigation system replacement project



Golf Course and Clubhouse (Continued)

- Refurbish current golf maintenance building or consider replacing existing building with a new shell building that would provide more space.
- Golf course power lines to wellfield - clear trees and/or bury power lines.
- Golf course chemical building - add pitched roof to extend life of building.
- Consider hiring a consultant to review sandtraps and bunkers as well as tee improvements.
- Landscape improvements at golf course circle in front of club house.

Overall Comments and Recommendations

- If budget restraints continue during the course of the next 10 years concentrate on our most used parks (Sports Complex, Helke and Robinette) as far as improvements and/or renovations.
- Only if budget conditions improve should we consider adding static play structures (climbing rock) or art sculptures to neighborhood pocket parks.
- Work closely with Police Department concerning vandalism issues at parks.
- Work with community groups to establish park clean-up days in which volunteers can work with staff to make improvements to park grounds.
- Research grants for funding of park projects.
- Work to implement a bike path connector plan.
- Continue with ash tree removal due to Emerald Ash Borer infestation in all parks.
- Beautification of parks and facility entrances.

Expand park and recreation facility “green” opportunities

- Develop a comprehensive “green” operations and maintenance initiative.
- Train employees in green operations.
- Recycle and compost Parks green materials.
- Develop cycles for standard replacement items and annual refurbishment task lists for each facility.
- Develop a process for deciding whether to repair, renovate, replace or remove a facility or piece of equipment.
- Install energy efficient lighting at all park facilities.
- Attend DRG-3 sustainability meetings.

Theme 2: Community Recreation Center

Observations and summary of recommendations

- Any future expansion of facility should relate directly to revenue potential. Recommend conducting a feasibility study.



Observations and Summary of Recommendations (Continued)

- Expansion plans for the gymnasium should include a space with a multi-purpose floor that would create additional revenue sources (indoor soccer, batting cages, floor hockey, etc.)
- Expansion plans for the aquatics center should include an additional 2 lap lanes or another body of water (therapy pool).
- Add a second water slide in aquatics center per original plans for facility.
- Consider special water features including a stationary flow pool and the possibility of a diving area.
- Improve outdoor lighting at entrances to facility for safety and visibility (main entry and west entry).
- Consider a teen room with pool table, ping pong table and other games in any expansion plans.
- Front desk improvements are needed (flow and customer service)
- Expansion plans for the fitness area should include larger free weight area as well as cardio area and a second group fitness room.
- Expansion plans should include additional meeting room/ multi-purpose space.

Overall Comments and Recommendations

- Consider developing a Parks and Recreation “Wall of Recognition” for those who have contributed to the advancement of parks and recreation in Vandalia.
- Lack of lap swim times is a concern. Would it be possible to keep one lane open during water classes?
- Additional cardio equipment on the second floor stretching area next to track is recommended. Keep a variety of cardio machines in this area.
- Fitness classes held on or around the track area sometimes impedes track users from getting to and from the track. Keep in mind the timing of classes and heavy track usage times when scheduling this area.
- Consider a self swipe system at the front desk. This would alleviate concerns over navigating through the front desk area during busy times.
- Concerns with overall customer service of employees at the front desk, especially during busy times. Front desk needs to keep a better eye on sneak-in entries to the facility.
- Staff needs to enforce the 14 and under rule in the fitness area. Doesn’t seem to be consistent. Suggest using a wrist band system for the fitness floor, much like the gym.
- Need to better market Recreation Center at Golf Course as well as the Golf Course at the Recreation Center. Currently no marketing materials at either location.



Observations and Summary of Recommendations (Continued)

- Provide guest passes to members to share the VRC with friends or neighbors.
- Provide free class passes with membership (entice new members to try fitness classes or climbing wall at no cost and get them hooked).
- Use social media to market VRC as well as programs and activities.
- Install directional signage at major intersections pointing people to the VRC.
- Improve marketing of VRC. Develop a website for VRC.
- Sponsorship/naming rights opportunities for VRC and/or components of VRC (climbing wall, indoor playground, gymnasium, etc.)
- Implement Healthways Silver Sneakers, Forever Fit and Prime programs.

Theme 3: Cassel Hills Swimming Pool

Observations and summary of recommendations

- Recommend a new bath house/concession building or at least a renovation of the current building. Consider a two story structure with office on second floor for better visibility of pool area as well as a deck area and meeting room area.
- Additional lighting on the pool deck area is needed so rentals can go longer into the evening.
- Need to keep the inventory of lounge chairs up to acceptable standards.
- New water features such as a portable climbing wall or a tube slide would be a nice addition to the pool.
- Recommend adding a canopy over the feature pool that would reduce direct sunlight on the infants and toddlers using this area.
- Recommend additional shade canopies on the grounds around the main pool.
- Better monitoring of radio station selection is needed.
- Add a food cart to pool deck concession area for quick sale items. This may help alleviate long lines during rest breaks.
- Provide members with a calendar of events for the summer at time of pass purchase.
- Conduct special events such as Dive-In Movie Night and Teen Night.
- Replace pump house including pool filter systems.
- Replace or refurbish the current feature pool due to age and condition of existing pool. Consider replacing feature pool with a spray ground/splash pad.
- Resurface parking lot area.
- Asphalt overlay and repairs to the basketball court area.
- Replace existing perimeter fencing of facility.
- Consider the addition of a splash pad/spray ground to the facility.



Theme 4: Vandalia Senior Center

Observations and summary of recommendations

- Recommend better marketing of the facility. The facility and its activities should be more visible in the community.
- Recommend upgrading the tables and chairs throughout the facility.
- Additional funding through grants and foundations could assist with programs and activities at the center.
- Market to younger seniors (55-65 age group)
- Landscape improvements.
- Patio improvements on East side of building.

Theme 5: Programs and Activities

Observations and summary of recommendations

Athletics

- Work with golf course or local golf expert to provide youth golf lessons or a week-long camp.
- Offer youth tennis camp.
- Consider additional recreational sports that schools don't offer such as Lacrosse, Boys Volleyball and Field Hockey.
- Cornhole Leagues
- Billiard League
- Sports Camps

Aquatics

- Develop aquatics special events at both Cassel Hills Pool and VRC. Events such as Dive-In Movies and Teen Nights as well as other aquatic related activities.
- Build on the Junior Lifeguard Program.
- Continue to promote and market the Cassel Hills Swim Team.
- Lifeguard Camp
- Aquatics Fitness Camp
- Triathlon Training
- Private Swim Lessons
- Home Pool Operator Training
- Lap Swim Workshops

Special Events

- Holiday events for children such as "Craft and Cocoa with Santa."
- Battle of the Schools Competition (much like Corporate Challenge)
- Bring a Dress Take a Dress Event (Prom and school dance type dresses)
- Halloween Party
- Kids Garage Sale
- Change Vandalia Idol to Vandalia's Got Talent



Observations and Summary of Recommendations (Continued)

- Harvest Party and Hayrides
- Touch a Truck Event
- Family Camp Out
- Fitness Programs
- Fitness assessments (body fat/nutrition counseling)
- Make personal training at VRC completely controlled through the VRC.
- Mommy and Me Fitness Classes
- Educational Programs
- Self Defense Classes for Women
- Foreign Language Classes
- Calligraphy Class
- Art Classes (maybe in conjunction with a studio)
- Couponing Classes
- Photography Classes
- Guitar Lessons
- Geocaching Program
- Fencing Class
- Home Maintenance/Safety Classes
- Sewing Classes
- Cooking Classes
- Computer Classes
- Floral Arrangement Classes
- Social Internet Classes
- Scrapbooking Classes
- Tai Chi
- Environment Classes
- Youth Programs (Pre-School thru Teens)
- Offer a Ski club for school age children.
- After School Camp with transportation included from school to VRC.
- Outdoor Activities such as horseback riding, canoeing and hiking.
- Offer a summer camp program that focuses on education as well as recreation.
- Pre-School Programs focusing on interaction and learning
- Snow Day Camp
- Grand Camp for grandparents and grandchildren
- Holiday Camps
- Field Trips
- General Items
- Use social media for promotion and marketing of programs and activities.
- Expand email list to increase the number of people receiving



Observations and Summary of Recommendations (Continued)

email blasts about programs and activities.

Adaptive Programs

- Adaptive homecoming event.
- Adaptive game night.
- Adaptive arts and crafts night.

The Vision 2020 Process

The Vision 2020 Plan resulted from an extensive, collaborative planning process that engaged residents, community leaders, parks and recreation advisory board members and staff over a 12 month period.

Because the Vision 2020 Plan reflects a broad consensus among the participating members of the Strategic Plan Committee, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Parks and Recreation staff, it will help to ensure that Vandalia's Parks and Recreation system continues to play a major role in shaping the high quality of life enjoyed by city residents.

Next Steps

The Vision 2020 Strategic Plan provides goals that will shape the parks and recreation system for many years to come. This plan positions the Vandalia Parks and Recreation Department to meet the challenges and opportunities of our community.

Based on the information contained in this plan an implementation plan to guide staff will be developed. The plan will include specific action steps that include timeline, budget impacts and responsibility. The plan will be reviewed and updated regularly to align with changing circumstances and evolving community issues, needs and interested as well as resources.

