

**Performance Audit
Park Conditions**

November 2002

City Auditor's Office

City of Kansas City, Missouri

November 5, 2002

Honorable Mayor, Members of the City Council, and Members of the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners:

This performance audit was initiated by the City Auditor pursuant to Article II, Section 13 of the city charter and focused on the condition of parks.

The condition of the city's parks is not good. Our June and July observations of 50 city parks spread throughout the city found problems at every park. The landscaping and mowing conditions were good; however, litter and disrepair were common. Some facilities, such as some restrooms, were in deplorable condition.

Some of the conditions could be characterized as short-term. For example, litter accumulates quickly and can be cleaned up quickly. Other problems, such as rusted and broken structures, rotting boards, and wide cracks on courts, suggest long-term neglect. Some parks contained safety hazards; we reported these conditions to Parks and Recreation management and they were quickly corrected.

The condition of the city's parks could affect citizen perception and use. In the most recent citizen survey, a third of Kansas City residents' households reported that they seldom or never visit a Kansas City park. In addition, the respondents rated the overall quality of city parks and recreation programs lower than the ratings given by citizens of other large cities and other cities in the metropolitan area to their own parks.

The Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department is well-funded compared to other cities. However, the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners has not monitored the condition of parks. The board does not require managers to report on the condition of parks and does not hold management accountable for conditions. We recommend that the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners, acting as trustees for the citizens of Kansas City, improve the city's parks by focusing its attention on their condition. To achieve this focus, the board should require management to publicly and routinely report citywide performance data on the condition of city parks and should hold management accountable for improving conditions.

We provided a draft of the report to the Director of Parks and Recreation on September 20, 2002. His response is included as an appendix. We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation extended to us during this project by the staff in the Parks and Recreation Department. The audit team for this project was Sue Polys, Martin Tennant, and Michael Eglinski.

Mark Funkhouser
City Auditor

Park Conditions

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Park Conditions

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Introduction

Objectives

This audit of the city's parks was conducted pursuant to Article II, Section 13 of the Charter of Kansas City, Missouri, which establishes the Office of the City Auditor and outlines the City Auditor's primary duties.

A performance audit is an objective, systematic examination of evidence to independently assess the performance of a government organization, program, activity, or function in order to provide information to improve public accountability and facilitate decision-making.¹ This audit was designed to answer the following question:

- What are the observed conditions of the city's parks?

Scope and Methodology

Our review of park conditions was conducted in accordance with government auditing standards. Audit methods included the following:

- Developing a rating form of park conditions based on current performance rating practices and literature.
- Generating a sample of developed city parks made up of varying sizes and amenities, and distributed evenly by council district and park maintenance district.
- Inspecting and rating conditions of 50 city parks in June and July 2002. (See Appendix A for a list of the parks inspected.)
- Photographing park conditions to support inspection ratings.
- Reviewing Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners meeting minutes from January 4, 2000 to June 18, 2002.

¹ Comptroller General of the United States, *Government Auditing Standards* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994), p. 14.

- Comparing the Parks and Recreation Department's per person figures to other cities as reported by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA).

See Appendix B for a detailed description of our methodology. No information was omitted from this report because it was deemed privileged or confidential.

Background

Legislative Authority

The Parks and Recreation Department operates under the direction of a five-member board, appointed by the Mayor. Under the city charter, the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners is responsible for operating all public playgrounds, swimming pools, grounds for games or sports, and other recreation facilities. The board is also responsible for managing and maintaining the city's park and boulevard systems. The board also appoints the Director of Parks and Recreation.²

Kansas City Parks System

The Kansas City parks system is made up of about 200 parks including some that are undeveloped. The parks are located throughout the city. Their close proximity to residents makes them a very visible resource. Eighty-three percent of residents live within one-half mile of a Kansas City park (including undeveloped parks) and 97 percent live within one mile of a park.

Previous Recommendations Regarding Park Conditions

The Parks and Recreation Department does not report data on the condition of parks. The City Auditor's Office made recommendations in February 1996 that the Parks and Recreation Department develop standards for and monitor the quality of maintenance. In March 2000, we recommended that the department report the percent of facilities and grounds maintained to standard as measured by trained observers.

² Charter of Kansas City, Missouri, Article III, Sections 50, 51, 55, and 55.1.

Findings and Recommendations

Summary

We identified problem conditions in all 50 of the parks inspected. Parks were rated on cleanliness; condition of playgrounds, courts, ball fields, restrooms, other amenities and structures; and landscaping. The conditions were rated as not applicable, no problem, limited problem, or widespread problem. All inspected parks had conditions that were limited or widespread problems. Conditions that were considered hazardous were reported to Parks and Recreation management and corrected.

Citizen perception and use could be affected by these observed park conditions. The conditions found are consistent with comparatively low ratings by citizens. Citizen survey data for 2001 show that Kansas City residents rate the overall quality of their parks and recreation programs and facilities lower than citizens of other large cities and other cities in the metropolitan area rate their parks. Additionally, a third of Kansas City households report that they seldom or never visit a Kansas City, Missouri, park.

The Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners should improve park conditions by holding management accountable. The Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department is well funded compared to other cities. However, the board has not been monitoring park conditions by asking for or receiving regular performance information from management about conditions. As trustees for the citizens of Kansas City, the board should hold management accountable for park conditions by regularly monitoring progress towards improved conditions.

City Parks Littered and in Disrepair

Auditors identified problem conditions, both limited and widespread, in all 50 city parks inspected. Park cleanliness, playgrounds, courts and playing fields, restrooms, and other amenities and structures all rate as problems. Landscaping and mowing conditions were good. Possible hazards were identified in some of the inspected parks. They included conditions auditors thought could result in serious harm. These conditions were reported to parks management and have been corrected. Pictures are included in the following section to illustrate observed park conditions. Percentages in this section refer to the proportion of parks

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which were rated with problems on the inspection item. Not every park has every amenity; therefore not every item could be rated for each park. See Appendix B for more information on how ratings were assigned. See Appendix C for inspection ratings at each park.

Litter and Illegal Dumping Were Found in City Parks

Many city parks were not clean. Of the 50 parks inspected, 54 percent had some scattered or piled litter. Forty percent of the inspected parks had illegal dumping. We defined illegal dumping as large items of trash or piles of yard waste discarded in the park. Additionally, graffiti was a problem in 24 percent of the parks inspected. Graffiti was seen on almost all types of park amenities including playground equipment, tennis courts, basketball backboards, park signs, benches, and tables. (See Exhibit 1.)

Exhibit 1. Park Ratings - Cleanliness

Problem		Number of Parks With			Number of Parks Rated on Question	% of Parks Rated That Had Problems
		No Problem	Limited Problem	Widespread Problem		
Litter	Trash piled or scattered	23	24	3	50	54%
Illegal dumping	Large items of trash are discarded in the park	30	18	2	50	40%
Graffiti		38	8	4	50	24%

Source: Inspection ratings, June and July 2002.



Dugout full of litter – Holmes Park, 7/8/02

Litter, including beer bottles, cans and paper, floating in lake - Spring Valley Park and Plaza, 7/23/02



Graffiti covering wall - Observation Park, 7/9/02



Graffiti covering park sign – Blue Hills Park, 6/14/02



Litter scattered around shelter - Budd Park, 7/1/02



Graffiti covered picnic table - Blenheim Park, 7/2/02



Illegal dumping in ravine - Vineyard Park,
6/25/02



Broken beer bottles surround the base of drinking fountain -
Budd Park, 7/1/02

Playgrounds Had Equipment and Surface Problems

More than a third of the parks with playgrounds had limited or widespread problems with the equipment and the surface underneath. We inspected 42 playgrounds in 38 parks. Of those parks, 34 percent had play equipment with broken parts and 47 percent had equipment defaced with graffiti or in need of repainting. The sand, gravel or resilient play surfaces in 40 percent of the parks was littered or weedy, 45 percent had surfaces that were not soft, level or loose, and 24 percent contained broken glass. (See Exhibit 2.)

Exhibit 2. Park Ratings - Playgrounds

Problem	Number of Parks With			Number of Parks Rated on Question	% of Parks Rated That Had Problems
	No Problem	Limited Problem	Widespread Problem		
Play equipment has broken, corroded, loose, or missing parts	25	12	1	38	34%
Equipment is defaced or in need of painting or refinishing	20	9	9	38	47%
Sand, gravel or resilient play areas have weeds, debris	23	9	6	38	40%
Sand, gravel, or wood chips under play areas not level and soft or loose	21	13	4	38	45%
Broken glass hazard	29	6	3	38	24%

Source: Inspection ratings, June and July 2002.



Playground without problems - Park Forest, 7/8/02



Playground bridge with missing board - Noble Park, 7/18/02



Tube slide missing from playground - Ashland Square, 7/22/02



Weeds covering sandy surface of playground - Agnes Park, 7/22/02



Twisted and broken swings with no soft surface underneath - Liberty Park, 7/22/02



No soft surface under swings – The Parade, 6/27/02

Courts and Playing Fields Rate High for Problems

Both court and ball field inspections found a large number of problems. Of the 25 parks in our sample with basketball or tennis courts, 22 parks had courts with problems. Some of the conditions were so widespread or extreme that the courts could not be played. Ball fields and related amenities had significant numbers of problems with backstops, bleachers, and dugout benches.

Some court surfaces are completely unusable. Some of the tennis courts and basketball courts had either weeds so tall or cracks so wide they were unplayable. We inspected 29 half and full basketball courts and 40 tennis courts. The combined rating of tennis and basketball courts showed 88 percent of parks with these amenities had limited or widespread problems. Other tennis and basketball court problems included surfaces that were crumbling away, missing basketball rims, and ripped tennis nets. (See Exhibit 3.)

Exhibit 3. Park Ratings - Basketball and Tennis Courts

Problem	Number of Parks With			Number of Parks Rated on Question	% of Parks Rated That Had Problems
	No problem	Limited problem	Widespread problem		
Basketball/tennis court lines or surface in poor condition; tennis nets in poor condition ³	3	10	12	25	88%

Source: Inspection ratings, June and July 2002.

³ During inspections this question was expanded to cover other conditions that were problems with tennis or basketball courts including problems with tennis court fencing, basketball rims, and backboards.



Ruler measuring 6" crack on basketball court - Crews Square, 6/27/02

Missing rim from basketball backboard
- Town Fork Creek Greenway, 7/2/02



Waist high weeds on tennis court -
Town Fork Creek Greenway, 7/2/02



Torn tennis net - Central Park,
6/25/02

Tennis court surface with no problems -
Arbor Villa, 6/27/02



Crumbling tennis court surface – The Parade,
6/27/02

Ball diamonds and related amenities have problems. Backstops, dugout benches, and bleachers rated high for problems. We inspected 53 ball diamonds in 30 parks. About 63 percent of the parks had backstops that were damaged or not stable. Twenty-one parks had a total of 74 sets of bleachers. Fourteen of the 21 parks had bleachers that were broken, rotten, or had chipped and weathered paint. Of the 28 parks with dugout benches, 64 percent had benches rotting, broken or in need of paint or repair. (See Exhibit 4.)

Exhibit 4. Park Ratings – Ball Diamonds and Related Items

Problem	Number of Parks With			Number of Parks Rated on Question	% of Parks Rated That Had Problems
	No Problem	Limited problem	Widespread problem		
Backstop/fences are not stable or have holes	11	17	2	30	63%
Field is not level, has ruts and/or infield has weeds	23	5	2	30	23%
Bleachers broken, rotted, need paint/repair	7	4	10	21	67%
Dugout bench broken, rotted, needs paint/repair	10	6	12	28	64%
Broken glass hazard ⁴	24	9	2	35	31%

Source: Inspection ratings, June and July 2002.

⁴ This item rated both ball diamonds and courts.



Damaged backstop post - Liberty Park,
7/22/02



Partially collapsed backstop - Sheffield Park,
6/25/02



Dugout bench with no problems -
Cleveland Park, 7/2/02



Splintered dugout bench - Crews Square,
6/27/02



Rotting bleacher seats - Observation Park, 7/9/02



Bleachers with no problems - Englewood Park, 7/26/02

Unsanitary Conditions Existed in Some Park Restrooms

While many of the restrooms inspected did not have problems, some of the ones that did were extremely unsanitary. We inspected 7 permanent structure restrooms and 19 portable restrooms. Of the parks with restrooms, about 31 percent had problems with dirty sinks and toilets. A third had problems with inoperable, broken, or missing fixtures. (See Exhibit 5.)

Some of the unsanitary restroom conditions were deplorable. In Loose Park's permanent restrooms near the tennis courts, the toilet bowls were completely stained brown, and the women's floor was littered and grimy. Sinks had been removed from both the men's and women's restroom. At Sunnyside Park's permanent restrooms roaches were crawling in the toilets. Liberty Park's restroom had a clogged toilet, no running water, a feces soiled wall, and a dirty floor covered with broken glass.

Exhibit 5. Park Ratings - Restrooms

	Problem	Number of Parks With			Number of Parks Rated on Question	% of Parks Rated That Had Problems
		No Problem	Limited Problem	Widespread Problem		
Cleanliness	Sinks and toilets are dirty	9	0	4	13	31%
	Walls are dirty or stained	11	2	1	14	21%
	Trash, water or dirt on floors	10	2	2	14	29%
Maintenance	Lack of toilet paper or towels	11	1	2	14	21%
	Fixtures – inoperable, leak, broken, missing	10	2	3	15	33%
	Interior/exterior – faded or chipped paint, and/or marked with graffiti	10	3	1	14	29%

Source: Inspection ratings, June and July 2002.



Clean toilet - Englewood Park, 7/26/02

Unsanitary toilet and floor in men's restroom - Loose Park, 7/9/02



Stained toilet bowl - Loose Park, 7/9/02



Dirty restroom floor littered with paper - Loose Park, 7/9/02



Men's restroom with rusted walls and peeling paint – Sunnyside Park, 6/24/02

Roaches crawling in toilet - Sunnyside Park, 6/24/02



Clogged toilet, with littered and dirty restroom floor - Liberty Park, 7/22/02

Amenities and Other Structures Are in Disrepair

The parks with picnic tables, benches, drinking fountains, grills, paths, and other structures were rated high for problems with these amenities. A smaller percentage of parks had problems with overflowing trash cans, park signs, and parking areas.

Tables, drinking fountains, grills, paths, and other structures have problems. Parks with picnic tables, drinking fountains, grills, paths, and other structures showed a high percentage of problems with these amenities. We inspected 170 picnic tables in 32 parks. Of those parks, 56 percent had tables that were broken or damaged. We saw 25 drinking fountains in 21 parks. Thirteen of those parks had inoperable or damaged fountains. Sometimes there was no running water, or the water was flowing from a rusty pipe, or the structure or base was crumbling or cracked. Fifty-nine percent of the parks with grills had limited or widespread problem. Ash was piled in grills or spilled on the ground; grill chimneys were plugged up with trash or debris; stone work was crumbling; or grills were rusted or broken. Paths or walks were identified in 29 parks. Thirteen of those parks had paths that were overgrown, rutted, muddy or blocked. Of the 26 parks with other structures (including shelters, a storage shed, stone walls and steps), 18 had structures that were damaged or broken. (See Exhibit 6.)

Exhibit 6. Park Ratings - Picnic Tables, Drinking Fountains, Grills, Paths, and Other Structures

Problem	Number of Parks With			Number of Parks Rated on Question	% of Parks Rated That Had Problems
	No problem	Limited problem	Widespread problem		
Picnic tables broken or damaged	14	14	4	32	56%
Picnic tables dirty or greasy	29	1	2	32	9%
Picnic tables in need of repainting or refinishing	21	6	4	31	32%
Drinking fountains not operational, are visibly damaged or don't drain properly	8	4	9	21	62%
Grills are dirty and filled with ashes; grills are damaged	11	10	6	27	59%
Paths and walks overgrown, rutted, holes, muddy, blocked	16	9	4	29	45%
Structures damaged or broken	8	13	5	26	69%
Structures in need of repainting (due to graffiti, etc.)	14	3	6	23	39%

Source: Inspection ratings, June and July 2002.



Picnic table with no problems - Heim Park, 7/23/02



Picnic table with splintered crosspiece - Brookside Park, 7/18/02



Working fountain - Crews Square, 6/27/02



Fountain with missing faucet and no running water - Blenheim Park, 7/2/02



Damaged and inoperable drinking fountain - Lykins Square, 7/23/02



Rusted grill at shelter - Budd Park, 7/1/02



Damaged and rusted grill with weeds growing out of it - Blenheim Park, 7/2/02



Clean grill - Wildberry Park, 7/26/02



Deteriorating asphalt path - Westwood Park, 7/18/02



Hole in shelter roof - Englewood Park,
7/26/02



Crumbling and debris covered stone steps -
Crews Square, 6/27/02



Peeling roof tiles and boarded up opening
at pool building – Budd Park, 7/1/02



Peeling paint on boarded up outbuilding -
Crews Square, 6/27/02



Missing clay roof tiles on stone shelter - Budd Park, 7/1/02



Structure with no problems - Arbor Villa, 6/27/02

Benches, trash cans, park signs, and parking areas showed fewer problems. In 29 parks, we inspected 165 benches. Over a fourth of those parks had benches that were broken or in need of painting or refinishing. Only 8 of 44 parks had overflowing trash barrels. Park signs had problems with visibility or damage at 26 percent of the 42 parks rated. Parking areas had problems in 5 of the 22 parks rated. (See Exhibit 7.)

Exhibit 7. Park Ratings - Benches, Trash Cans, Park Signs, and Parking Areas

	Problem	Number of Parks With			Number of Parks Rated on Question	% of Parks Rated That Had Problems
		No problem	Limited problem	Widespread problem		
Park benches	Benches broken or damaged	21	7	1	29	28%
	Benches need repainting or refinishing	20	6	3	29	31%
Trash cans	Trash cans are overflowing	36	4	4	44	18%
Park signs	Sign not visible or sign damaged	31	8	3	42	26%
Parking areas	Parking lot/driveway has pot holes	17	2	3	22	23%

Source: Inspection ratings, June and July 2002.



Overflowing trash barrel -
Sunnyside Park, 6/24/02



Trash receptacle with no problems -
Arbor Villa, 6/27/02



Collapsed bench -
Central Park, 6/25/02



Park sign with no problems - Clark-
Ketterman Athletic Field, 6/18/02



Rotted corner of the fitness trail dedication
sign - Mill Creek Park, 6/27/02

Landscaping Conditions Were Good

Inspection results showed that overall parkland was mowed and trimmed, and looked healthy. All 50 parks were rated on items about grass and trees. Only 6 percent of parks had overgrown grass and 14 percent of inspected parks had untrimmed grass around trees and fencing. Forty-two percent of parks had dead trees, shrubs or hanging limbs. (See Exhibit 8.)

Exhibit 8. Park Ratings - Landscaping

	Problem	Number of Parks With			Number of Parks Rated on Question	% of Parks Rated That Had Problems
		No Problem	Limited Problem	Widespread Problem		
Grass	Grass is overgrown	47	2	1	50	6%
	Grass brown, unhealthy or worn	40	9	1	50	20%
	Grass not trimmed around fencing, walls and trees	43	7	0	50	14%
Trees and shrubs	Dead trees, limbs, and/or shrubs	29	19	2	50	42%
	Shrub beds and plantings have weeds	7	2	0	9	22%

Source: Inspection ratings, June and July 2002.

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Mowed, green grass - Strathbury Park, 6/20/02



Mowed grass - Klapmeyer Park, 6/24/02



Flower bed free of weeds - Mill Creek Park, 6/27/02



Dead tree - Garrison Square. 7/1/02



Bare landscape fabric at edge of pond - Loose Park, 7/9/02

Parks Department Corrected Potential Hazards

In 20 percent of the parks inspected, auditors observed conditions they felt could pose a threat to the safety of park visitors. There were 12 potentially hazardous conditions in 10 parks that were reported to Parks and Recreation Department management. Parks management quickly corrected those conditions. Damaged electrical equipment, boards with nails left on a playground, large accumulations of broken glass in playground sand, damaged play equipment, and unsound bleachers were some of the hazards identified in city parks.



Nails sticking out of boards left on playground under construction
– Barry Road Park, 6/20/02



Cover hanging off breaker box -
Observation Park, 7/9/02



Broken support member on back of
bleachers - Crestview Park, 6/12/02



Pins sticking out of play
equipment - Westwood Park,
7/18/02

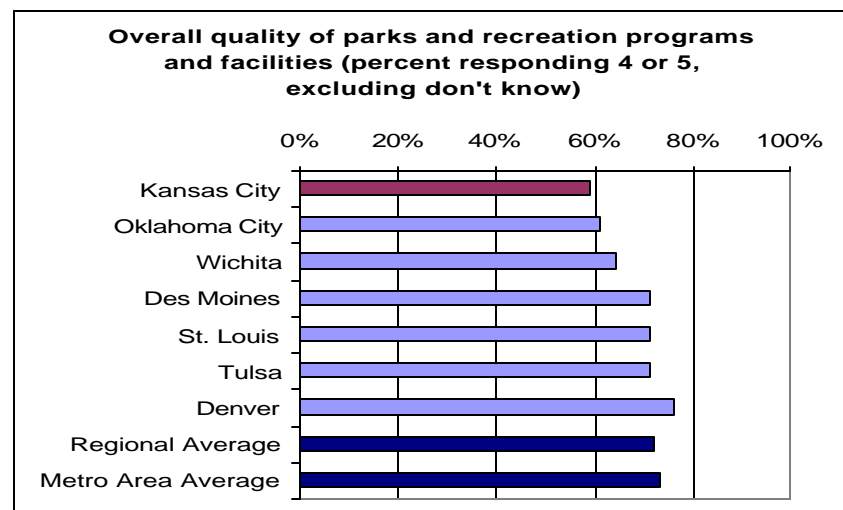
Park Inspection Ratings Consistent with Citizen Satisfaction

We saw conditions that could affect park visitors' perceptions and use of parks. The conditions we observed were consistent with the comparatively low ratings by citizens. Citizens in Kansas City rate the quality of parks lower than citizens in other cities rate their parks. Surveys also show that some citizens are not using parks.

Kansas City Citizens Are Less Satisfied with Parks Than Citizens of Other Cities

Citizen survey data shows Kansas City at the low end of cities for the overall ranking of the quality of parks and recreation programs and facilities. Most Kansas City respondents to the 2001 citizen survey were satisfied with the overall quality of park and recreation programs and facilities; 54 percent of the respondents rated the overall quality as 4 or 5 on a 1-5 scale where 1 is very dissatisfied and 5 is very satisfied. However, survey data comparing Kansas City residents rating to other large cities and 18 metropolitan cities shows Kansas City has the lowest ranking in overall satisfaction of quality of parks and recreation programs and facilities. (See Exhibit 9.) Citizen satisfaction response rates tend to draw positive responses in all services and across jurisdictions, therefore it is important to understand their context by comparing them to other jurisdictions.⁵ Kansas City residents rating their parks lower than other cities, suggests more serious dissatisfaction.

Exhibit 9. Comparison of Kansas City Parks with Other Cities



Source: *City Services Performance Report for Fiscal Year 2001*.

⁵ International City/County Management Association, *Citizen Surveys: How to Do Them, How to Use Them, What They Mean*, 2000, p. 128.

Many Kansas City Households Do Not Visit City Parks

A third of citizen households indicate they seldom or never visit a Kansas City, Missouri, park. Eighteen percent of households visit parks less than once a month. Forty-eight percent of citizens, or someone in their household, visits monthly or more often. Dissatisfaction with park conditions is consistent with low park use.

Attention by Board and Management Needed to Improve Park Conditions

Acting on behalf of the citizens, the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners can improve park conditions by paying attention to the condition of parks and holding management accountable. The Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department is well funded compared to other cities. However, the board has not been monitoring park conditions by asking for or receiving regular performance information from management about conditions. As trustees for the citizens of Kansas City, the board should hold management accountable for conditions by regularly monitoring progress towards improved conditions.

Department Spending Is Higher Than Other Cities

Kansas City's operating expenditures per person for parks and recreation is higher than the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) average for cities over 100,000 population. The ICMA average in 2000 for spending per person for parks and recreation was \$29, while Kansas City's spending was \$51.

Expenses used in the per person calculation are personnel costs such as wages and benefits, costs of services, and commodities, but excludes capital expenditures and non-tax revenue – fees and grants. Golf and zoo revenues and expenditures are excluded from the calculation to be consistent with the ICMA definition.

The Board Has Not Been Monitoring Park Conditions or Holding Management Accountable

The Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners does not monitor the condition of the city's parks. Board minutes do not contain references to the board receiving or asking for regular performance information about park conditions from management. In board minutes from January 2000 through June 2002, board members brought up isolated parks maintenance problems, and the minutes show that the board regularly approves contracts for construction projects, landscaping and repairs in

parks, but no reports or directives were routinely made to address park conditions citywide. Board meeting minutes are the record of the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners' actions and if the board, acting as a body, was monitoring park conditions and holding management accountable, then this should be evident in the minutes.

Board Can Improve Park Conditions

Board action is necessary to improve park conditions. The Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners represents the people of Kansas City. Kansas City citizens are the ultimate owners of city parks. As trustees for the citizens, the board should regularly monitor the organization's progress toward improved park conditions. The board should hold Parks and Recreation management responsible for the achievement of this organizational goal and should assess performance in terms of the organization's goal achievement. To monitor progress the board should require regular management reports on park conditions citywide.

In addition to requiring regular management reports on whether the organization is meeting its goals, the board should seek information from other sources independent of management such as surveys, focus groups, and communication with stakeholders and constituents.

The goal of the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners should be to make a difference in the lives of Kansas City residents. It is important that the board appreciate the different interests of various stakeholder groups, but still act based on the need to promote the interest of the people of Kansas City.

Recommendations

1. The Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners, exercising ownership of city parks on behalf of the citizens, should require management to publicly and routinely report city wide performance data on the condition of city parks.
2. The Director of Parks and Recreation should report park conditions performance data regularly to the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners and to the City Council.

Appendix A

Parks Inspected

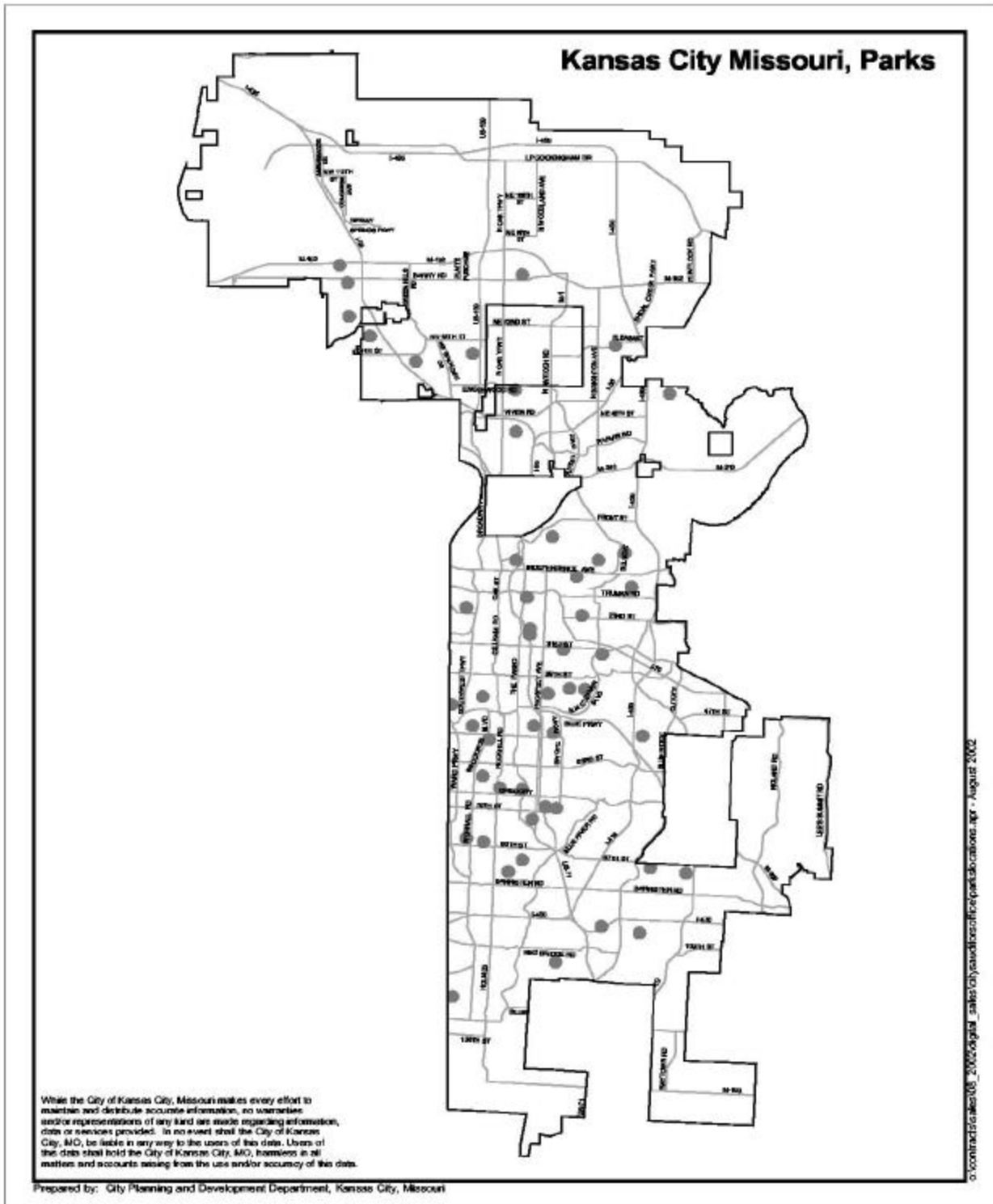
Below is a list of the parks the auditors inspected. Demographic information is from the Parks Reference Guide, Parks and Recreation Department, Kansas City, Missouri.

Park	Location	Acreage	Council District	Maintenance District
Budd Park	St. John Ave & Brighton Ave	26.39	1	1
Crestview Park	NE 43 rd St & N Troost Ave	9.07	1	1
Englewood Park	Englewood Road & N Troost Ave	50.75	1	1
Garrison Square	5 th St & Troost Ave	3.09	1	1
Heim Park	Chestnut Trfwy & Martin Ave	4.17	1	1
Lykins, Dr. Johnstone Square	8 th St & Myrtle Ave	4.95	1	1
Northeast Athletic Fields	6500 E St John Ave	18.99	1	1
Pleasant Valley Road Athletic Complex	6401 NE Pleasant Valley Rd	27	1	1
San Rafael Park	53 rd St & San Rafael Dr	16.16	1	1
Barry Road Park	7601 NW Barry Rd	10.96	2	1
Clayton Park	NE 64 th Terr & N Belleview	33.01	2	1
Highland View Park	NE 85 th Terr & N Virginia Ave	13.11	2	1
Observation Park	20th St & Holly St	8.88	2	2
Park Forest	NW 73 rd St & N Autumn Ave	10.03	2	1
Strathbury Park	I-29 & NW 60 th St	14.52	2	1
Wildberry Park	NW 87 th St & Pomona Ave	7.25	2	1
Woodsmoke Park	NW 70 th St & Hilldale	8.1	2	1
Ashland Square	23 rd St and Elmwood Ave	7.53	3	2
Central Park	Linwood Blvd and Bales Ave	11.89	3	2
Crews, Nelson C. Square	27 th and Woodland Ave	6.29	3	2
Liberty Park	34 th Terrace & Stadium Drive	17.78	3	2
Sheffield Park	12 th St & Winchester Ave	11.24	3	1
Spring Valley Park & Plaza	27 th St & Woodland Ave	32.73	3	2
The Parade	The Paseo & Truman Road	20.99	3	2
Vineyard Park	40 th Terr and Vineyard Dr	30.5	3	2
Arbor Villa Park	66 th Terr and Main St	1.11	4	3
Brookside Park	Brookside Blvd & 56 th St	5.67	4	2
Holmes Park	Holmes Rd & 69 th St	9.14	4	3
Loose Park	51 st St & Wornall Rd	74.08	4	2
Mill Creek Park	JC Nichols Pkwy & 48 th St to Ward Parkway	11.43	4	2
South Oak Park	83 rd St & Oak St	19.47	4	2
Sunnyside Park	83 rd St & Summit St	21.25	4	3
Westwood Park	47 th St & Wyoming St	9.33	4	2
Agnes Park	74 th St & Agnes Ave	1.95	5	3
Arleta Park	77 th St & Prospect Ave	4.62	5	3
Blenheim Park	Gregory Blvd & The Paseo	6.93	5	3
Blue Hills Park	53 rd St & Brooklyn Ave	10.37	5	2
Cleveland Park	43 rd St & Cleveland Ave	29.04	5	2
Noble Park	Cleveland Ave & 75 th St	14.3	5	3

Performance Audit: Park Conditions

Park	Location	Acreage	Council District	Maintenance District
Oak Park	43 rd St & Agnes Ave	6.49	5	2
Palmer Park	53 rd St & Smalley Ave	6.15	5	3
Town Fork Creek Greenway	51 st Blue Pkwy & Cleveland Ave	68.19	5	2
Clark-Ketterman Athletic Field	107 th St & Skiles Ave	35.51	6	3
James A. Reed Park	89 th St & James A. Reed Rd	12.13	6	3
Jerry Darter Park	105 th St & Hillcrest Rd	24.11	6	3
Klapmeyer Park	126 th St & Stateline Rd	13.5	6	3
Legacy East Park	91 st St & Brooklyn Ave	12.7	6	3
Legacy West Park	94 th St & Troost Ave	15.1	6	3
Terrace Park	115 th St & Cleveland Ave	4.29	6	3
White Oak Park	89 th St & Crescent Ave	24.67	6	3

Map of 50 Parks Inspected in June and July 2002



Appendix B

Methodology

Selection of Sample Parks

We identified and chose the sample of 50 city parks by using the Parks Reference Guide (a guide published by Parks and Recreation that lists parks and amenities). The parks in the sample were evenly distributed by council district and maintenance district. We chose parks of varying sizes, but eliminated the largest parks - those over 100 acres. Additionally, we chose parks with common facilities (shelters, ball diamonds, and tennis courts) to rate between the different districts. Some parks were ruled out of the sample because City Planning and Development was not able to establish that the Parks and Recreation Department owned the land. Park land leased to the Parks and Recreation Department was eliminated from the sample as were parks that are on boulevards, and/or on streets. Parks listed as undeveloped by the Parks and Recreation Department were initially eliminated from the sample. Two parks on the undeveloped list were actually developed and we added them to our sample.

Development of the Inspection Form

We developed our inspection form, which we used in our rating process, based on a rating form from *How Effective Are Your Community Services?*⁶; checklists developed by other cities for their rating of park conditions; and Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department inspection forms. We piloted the inspection form on three parks and then refined it. Parks and Recreation management reviewed the inspection form during our audit entrance conference. They agreed that it was a reasonable instrument.

Survey Method

Two auditors conducted fifty inspections during regular work hours between June 12 and July 26, 2002. They walked around the park together and discussed the conditions. If there was any problem with a park condition they recorded that on the inspection form and took at least one photo of it. The auditors discussed items on the inspection form when a rating was not obvious and not easily agreed upon. To test the reasonableness and consistency of their evaluations, they asked the questions, “would this condition give the average citizen a negative impression?”, “would we feel confident standing here with Parks management while pointing out this problem as we have chosen to rate it?”, and “how did we rate a similar condition in a previous inspection?” When

⁶ Harry P. Hatry, Louis H. Blair, Donald M. Fisk, John M. Greiner, John R. Hall, Jr, and Philip S. Schaenman, *How Effective Are Your Community Services?*, (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, ICMA, 1992), pp. 254-255.

the two auditors did not agree on a rating they discussed it in a team meeting with the audit manager and decided what the rating should be.

At the conclusion of each inspection, the auditors reviewed the entries on the form to be sure they agreed on their accuracy, consistency and reasonableness and together decided on a rating of “not applicable,” “no problem,” “limited problem,” or “widespread problem” for each item. Additionally, an amenity or structure could be rated as a hazard.

The ratings were defined as:

- “not applicable” if the amenity or structure did not exist in the park.
- “no problem” if the park amenity existed and there was no problem with it.
- “limited problem” when only a few of several of the same amenity had a problem, or a condition was only noted in a small portion of the park.
- “widespread problem” when one of one amenity had a significant problem, or if most of the same amenity had problem conditions, or if the condition was noted in a large portion of the park.
- “hazard” if we felt the conditions could pose a serious threat to safety.

We brought conditions we identified as hazards to the attention of Parks and Recreation management. We returned to the site of the hazard about two weeks later to confirm that the conditions had been corrected.

For the larger parks our inspections lasted as long as 3 hours. For smaller parks with no amenities it took us as little as 20 minutes. This allowed 3 to 6 inspections to be completed in a day.

In order to maintain a citywide perspective across all parks inspected, we changed council district on successive inspection days. Council districts and park maintenance districts were about evenly represented among all the parks inspected.

Quality Assurance

Audit supervisors visited several parks shortly after the parks were inspected. They carried copies of the completed inspection forms and walked around the parks looking for the conditions the raters had noted. They also looked for any problems that had been overlooked. The audit manager reviewed photos and discussed concerns or questions with raters.

After the 50 inspections were complete, the team reviewed the completed inspection forms, the database entries, and the photos to assure accuracy and consistency of the overall park evaluation process. About 1,400 digital photos were taken to support the observations. Most photos are of problems we encountered and a few were taken to provide examples of good conditions.

Analysis for Significant Differences

Although the audit was not designed to identify geographical differences in park conditions we were able to do some analysis for these differences. We analyzed whether there were differences in park conditions in the three park maintenance districts, in the parks east and west of Troost, and in parks north and south of the river. We looked at inspection items that showed high rates of problems to see whether there were any geographical differences in the condition of parks. Inspection items with a 40 percent or higher rate of problems were tested using chi square. To perform the chi square we combined limited and widespread problems into one category. This combined “problem” category was tested against the “no problem” category. Because certain minimum values must be present in the data to perform chi square, not every inspection item could be analyzed geographically. However, the three maintenance districts, which divide the city into north, central, and southern zones, were compared on ratings of litter, illegal dumping, playground equipment, and dead trees. All of these showed no significant differences by maintenance district. Comparisons between parks east and west of Troost showed that there was less litter in parks west of Troost than statistically expected, but illegal dumping, play equipment and play surfaces, paths, dead trees and picnic tables all showed no significant difference in prevalence. Comparisons between parks north and south of the Missouri river showed there are fewer parks with litter north of the river than statistically expected.

Appendix C

Inspection Results

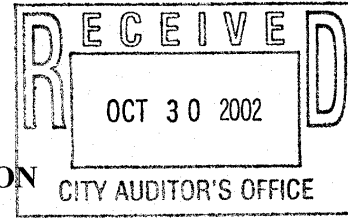
Appendix D

Director of Parks and Recreation Department's Response

Note: City Auditor's comments regarding the Director of Parks and Recreation's response can be found in Appendix E.



INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION



Date: October 29, 2002
To: Mark Funkhouser, City Auditor
From: Terry R. Dopson, Director, Parks and Recreation
Subject: Response to Park Conditions Audit

Following is the response of the Parks and Recreation Department to the Parks Conditions audit.

We agree with recommendation 2, that park conditions be reported regularly to the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners, and to the City Council. Currently this is done through the budget process and through the Public Improvement Advisory Committee process. However, we will submit to the Board on a regular basis reports by region and citywide services on park condition issues.

See page 65
 Comment 1

We have some concerns with the content and findings of the audit report.

Issues reported in the audit, such as litter, illegal dumping, graffiti, and vandalism cannot be entirely controlled by Parks and Recreation staff. A park cleaned and maintained spotlessly in the morning may not appear clean by the afternoon or evening, depending upon park users, and other circumstances, such as weather conditions. Additionally, those conditions are not limited to parks, but are widespread throughout the city. Mowing and landscaping are the only conditions that the Parks and Recreation Department has complete control over, and these items were not reported as problems in the audit.

The report also suggests that the Parks and Recreation Department has more than enough resources to maintain the parks. The data used to substantiate this finding is found in a survey performed by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). The data is a department-operating budget per capita comparison with other cities. There are three issues that make this comparison irrelevant.

1. Kansas City, at 340 square miles, is one of the largest cities in the country, as big geographically as some counties. Yet, our population is much lower than cities that are smaller geographically. The acreage and distance of parks must be considered for maintenance spending purposes. Kansas City currently spends about \$10,600,000 for park maintenance. The 2000 census reports our population at 441,545. If you divide \$10,600,000 by 441,545, it shows that we spend \$24 per capita on park maintenance, not the \$51 reported in the audit.

See page 65
 Comment 2

2. The audit report fails to take into account that much of the funding in the department's operating budget is dedicated to specific programs. While the audit report mentioned that golf and zoo operating funds were excluded, it did not address such dedicated funds as those for community centers, recreation and youth programs, nor boulevard maintenance. Parks and Recreation is funded for specific positions in the merit system to fill the needs of the programs funded. According to the City Charter, funds appropriated for these purposes cannot be spent on park maintenance, cannot be re-appropriated to maintenance at the discretion of the Board of Parks and Recreation Commissioners, and should not be included.

3. Staff in Parks and Recreation has prepared a graph showing the reduction in human resources for parks maintenance over the past decade. In the auditor's "Review of the City Manager's 1992-93 Recommended Budget" dated March 1992, the auditor specifically recommends a decrease of 25 percent (\$500,000) of our resources for property and equipment maintenance. As a result, several positions were lost. In the auditor's 1989 Citizen survey, the quality of parks was rated highly by 80 percent of those surveyed (See attached). On the recent ICMA survey used for this audit, only 54 percent of those surveyed rated the quality of parks highly. Parks Department managers, given the resources available a decade ago, would be able to schedule more litter removals, and other maintenance that relates to park usage. Full-time equivalent positions paid from dedicated funds, such as the community center fund, or those for youth programs, funds from the boulevard frontage tax, and any other funds appropriated for other purposes cannot be used for maintenance.

See page 65
Comment 3

See page 66
Comment 4

See page 66
Comment 5

See page 67
Comment 6

The auditor used Board meeting minutes to report that commissioners do not receive information about the conditions of parks, and that commissioners do not hold management accountable for parks conditions. Relying on that one source of information (meeting minutes) does not reveal a complete picture of the way the department and the Board of Commissioners interact. It is inaccurate to report in the audit that the "Board Does Not Receive or Request Citywide Performance Data on Parks Conditions." Parks managers make maintenance decisions based on information received from their own inspections as well as from Board members, City Council members, the Mayor's office and from members of the public.

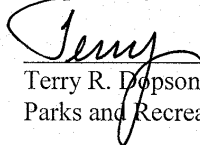
See page 68
Comment 7

Parks Commissioners are knowledgeable enough about park conditions that they make presentations to the Public Improvements Advisory Council (PIAC) to request funds to maintain parks. (See the attached report provided by a Commissioner).

Finally, management agrees that parks could be maintained as well as they were 10 years ago, but the reduction of 113 FTEs dedicated to that function has required us to reduce clean up and maintenance schedules. There has been no corresponding increase in funds for contracting to make up for lost positions. While the net reduction in citizen satisfaction and park conditions is less than the net loss of resources, there is a correlation between those factors.

See page 68
Comment 8

Respectfully submitted,

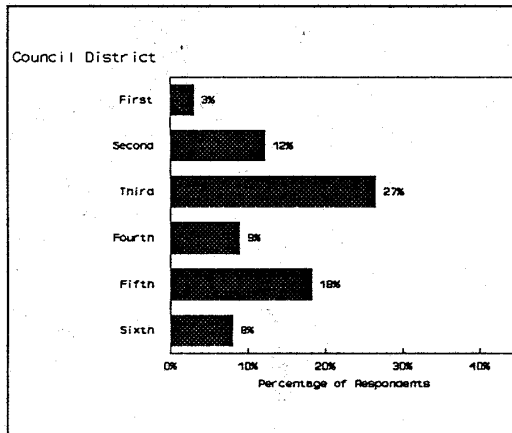


Terry R. Dopson, Director
Parks and Recreation Department

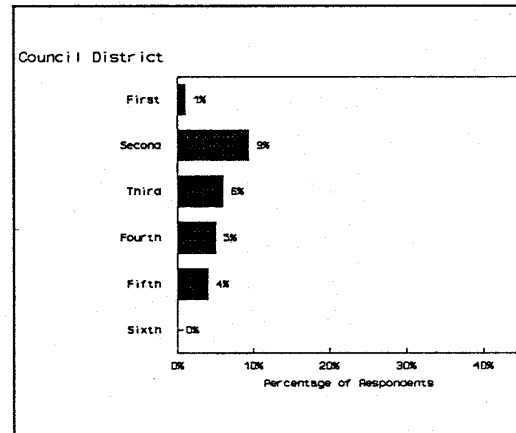
EXHIBIT 6 (Continued)

RESULTS OF THE 1989 CITIZEN SURVEY
PUBLIC WORKS ISSUES
IDENTIFIED AS "MAJOR PROBLEMS" BY DISTRICT

Clean Streets



Trash Collection

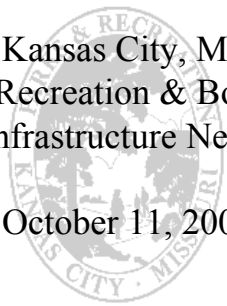


PARKS AND RECREATION

Most respondents (80%) expressed satisfaction with the City's parks and recreation facilities, and most (65%) reported using these facilities at least occasionally during the past year. Among those who said they were dissatisfied with the parks, the most frequent reason, given by 48 percent, was that the parks are littered or not maintained well. Other reasons included concern about crime and drugs in the parks (17%), inconvenient or lacked desired facilities (17%), and other miscellaneous or nonspecific reasons (18%). (See Exhibits 7 and 8.)

Kansas City, MO Parks, Recreation & Boulevards Infrastructure Needs

October 11, 2002



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Deferred capital maintenance continues to be the number one priority for Parks & Recreation. We are striving to take better care of our existing facilities, exploring new and innovative solutions to provide cost efficient, low maintenance facilities, and exploring partnerships, grant programs and other leveraging opportunities.

MAKING PROGRESS

Through the commitment of the PIAC Committee and City Council to fund deferred maintenance projects, we are beginning to make progress on the backlog of projects.

In the last year we have.....



Replaced over 116,000 square feet of sidewalk and 12,000 feet of curb



Replaced 17 playgrounds, making them ADA accessible and adding safety surfacing



Renovated 6 Fountains and 4 Monuments



Made significant progress on restoring or replacing park structures

CONTINUING EFFORTS

Although we have started to make progress, the backlog of deferred capital maintenance for Parks and Recreation alone, is estimated to be **\$219,202,164**.

Park Building Infrastructure Needs

- The Park maintenance facility at 39th and Gillham Road needs to be replaced at an estimated cost of \$2.5-\$3 million
- The average age of all park buildings is 45 years.
- The life expectancy of a roof is 25 years, and the average age of a Park's roof is 30 years. 57% need immediate replacement
- The life expectancy of plumbing and restroom facilities is 20 years, and the average age of Park's plumbing and restroom facilities is 40 years

Boulevard Curbs & Sidewalk Infrastructure Needs

Of the City's 186 miles of Boulevards and Parkways:

21% or 39 miles of curbs, walks and driveway approaches require immediate replacement, representing an estimated cost of \$25,635,268

33% or 62.1 miles of curbs, walks and driveway approaches are currently acceptable, but will require replacement in the next 5-10 years, at an estimated cost of \$37,903,570



PASEO BOULEVARD AT MEYER BOULEVARD

Park Maintenance Infrastructure Needs

- There are 207 parks, containing 11,435 acres, in the City's Park system
- They are in need of playground replacements, ball field renovation, lake restoration, and renovation of walks, shelters, picnic facilities, landscaping and other recreational amenities
- According to the 2001 Park Needs Assessment, the total needed for park deferred maintenance is \$62,432,300

Tree Replacement Infrastructure Needs

There are approximately 452,000 street trees in the City, and 1,800 of these trees die each year
 An estimated 100,000 trees were lost or severely damaged in the January, 2002 ice storm
 There are an additional 100,000 planting locations for trees along the City's streets
 There is no citywide tree planting program to replace street trees. We currently plant approximately 375 street trees per year utilizing in-district PIAC funds
 The desired level to start replanting our street trees is 2,400 trees per year at a cost of \$200 per tree



FOUNTAIN & MONUMENT INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

- There are 40 fountains in the Parks system and the majority of them need to be repaired or replaced at an estimated cost of \$3,789,618
- There are 64 monuments and sculptures in the Parks system, and it would cost \$1,307,580 to restore them



Swope Memorial Restoration

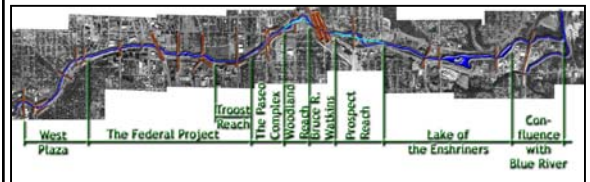
Brush Creek

Twelve people died in the 1977 Brush Creek flood and property damage totalled \$66,406,000



Eight people died in the 1998 Brush Creek Flood, seven at Prospect Bridge

Brush Creek State Line Road to The Blue River



Flood Mitigation Plan (ongoing)

Project Item	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Prospect									
Prospect Bridge (5020811)									
Prospect Channel (2200 R)									
Midway									
Midway Channel (2200 R)									
Forest									
Forest Channel (2200 R)									
West									
West Plaza Study									
West Plaza Channel (4200 R)									
Hawkins Bridge (5078841)									
Sullivan Bridge (5078842)									
Harold Parkway Bridge									
Stearns Lane River Bridge									

- Presented to Public Improvements Advisory Committee in 1999
- Served as basis for ongoing PIAC funding

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Park Enhancements Plan (Ongoing with Flood Mitigation Plan)

Project Item	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Prospect										
Prospect Bridge										
Prospect Channel										
Midway										
Midway Channel										
Forest										
Forest Channel										
West										
West Plaza Study										
West Plaza Channel										
Hawkins Bridge										
Sullivan Bridge										
Harold Parkway Bridge										
Stearns Lane River Bridge										

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Park Enhancements on Brush Creek

Park enhancements are defined as anything that is added to the flood control work, including:

- Walls to provide flood protection, stabilize slopes and create areas for walks and other improvements
- Fountains & Pools to recirculate the water and improve water quality
- Pedestrian/Bicycle Walks & Ramps to provide access from commercial and residential areas to Brush Creek
- Lighting for security and to deter vandalism
- Landscaping to stabilize banks and prevent erosion
- Recreational Facilities as determined by the neighborhoods (last priority)

21

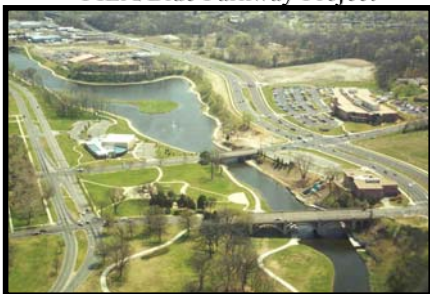
Brush Creek Federal Project Enhanced Flood Control



- Used as a model for flood control in other cities

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Brush Creek First Parks Project Lake of the Enshriners & PIEA/Blue Parkway Project



23

AQUATIC FACILITIES

Aquatic facilities are the greatest unmet recreational need in the City. The Park Board has adopted a new aquatic master plan, which included the following:

- Evaluated 10 of the oldest, existing pool facilities.
- Studied locations both north and south of the river, for placement of new facilities.
- Prepared a variety of options for new facilities based on need, staff and citizen input.
- Developed a pro forma operating statement for the highest rated new facility, on the park site at North Congress and Tiffany Springs Road.

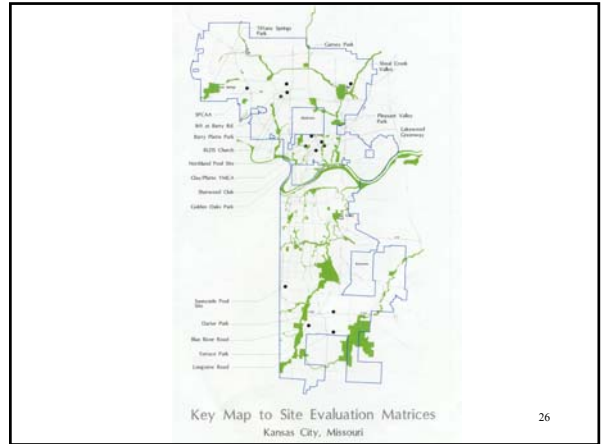
24

EXISTING FACILITIES

After inspecting the ten existing neighborhood pools, several deficiencies were identified.

- Just to renovate the ten existing neighborhood pools would cost \$1,079,364. This would improve the physical condition of the pools, but they would still be functionally obsolete
- Existing pools are designed as neighborhood facilities but are functionally deficient because they no longer offer the types of activities the citizens want. Neighborhood pools need to be phased out and replaced with spraygrounds
- Deficiencies have increased further in the northland with the closing of the Northland Pool.
- The Sixth Council District has never had a City operated pool facility.
- Facilities for competitive swimming are deficient both north and south of the river.

25



26

AQUATIC FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The City can reposition itself in the aquatics market by implementing the following recommendations.

- Modify the policy of providing small neighborhood pools to one including larger modern community leisure pools.
- Provide for construction of a new indoor/outdoor facility north of the river at the 72 acre park on North Congress and Tiffany Springs Road. A partnership agreement is being negotiated with Platte County for the construction and operation of this facility
- Provide for construction of a new indoor/outdoor facility at the recently closed YMCA on Blue Ridge Boulevard in the Sixth Council District. The City is currently purchasing this site and exploring partnering options with Jackson County.
- Provide for construction of a new indoor/outdoor facility including a community center at Sunnyside Park at 83rd Street and Wornall Road, in the Fourth Council District.

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SWOPE PARK/ ZOO/ STARLIGHT THEATRE

Swope Park is one of the largest urban parks in the country, containing Starlight Theatre, the zoo, Lakeside Nature Center and many other recreational activities and programs.

The Friends of the Zoo continue to raise private contributions to help maintain and operate the zoo

The Starlight Theatre Association has raised over \$12 million to renovate and improve the facilities at Starlight Theatre. They continue to pledge matching private funding to continue these efforts.

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STRETCHING OUR DOLLARS

Last year Parks & Recreation was able to leverage over \$6 million in private investment for Parks projects. These included:

- Satchel Paige Stadium
- Montgall Park Playground
- Bloch Fountain
- Loose Park Rose Garden Fountain
- Tiffany Springs Park Athletic Fields

In order to conserve our dwindling maintenance funds, Parks and Recreation has contracted for private management of its golf courses and the zoo, and we are continuing to explore other options to reduce maintenance and operation costs while providing a high level of service

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Loose Park Rose Garden Fountain

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Appendix E

City Auditor's Comments Regarding the Director of Parks and Recreation's Response

This appendix is the City Auditor's written comments on the response by the Director of Parks and Recreation. The numbers listed for each comment refer to specific passages in the Director of Parks and Recreation's response (Appendix D).

1. Management does not regularly report on the condition of parks to the Board. The Board does not receive regular performance measures and condition assessments.

The annual budget process and the PIAC process do not substitute for monitoring performance information on the condition of city parks.

2. The \$24 the director reports is for maintenance, the \$51 we report is for operating the department (excluding golf and zoo operations and net of fees and grants).

The Parks and Recreation Department's net operating expenses are much higher than the average for cities of more than 100,000 people. In Kansas City, net operating expenses per capita were \$51 in 2000 compared to an average of \$29 among cities of over 100,000 people.⁷

Each person in Kansas City pays a "price" of \$51 a year for the park and recreation function. People in other cities pay, on average, \$29 a year for park and recreation functions.

3. Most of the department's operating funds are available for maintaining parks. Only about \$3 million (11 %) of the \$22.2 million budgeted for operating in 2002 (excluding golf and zoo operations) was dedicated in ways that would prevent the department from using it for maintaining parks.

Fee and grant revenues and the front foot tax are unavailable for maintaining parks.

The maintenance tax and the vehicle license fees are dedicated to particular purposes; however, the purposes include maintaining parks.

Money that is appropriated for one general fund purpose and not limited because of a commitment to the voters or the Hancock Amendment is available to be used for park maintenance. And although the City Charter, Section 55.1, provides that money

⁷ *City Services Performance Report for Fiscal Year 2001*, Office of the City Auditor, Kansas City, Missouri, March 2002, p. 34.

appropriated by the Council for recreation purposes cannot be used for any other purpose, it does not prohibit reappropriation of money by the Council. The level of support given recreation programs may be changed by the Council during the year. Unless encumbered, money can be shifted as an amendment to the budget. Charter Section 91 clearly provides that money can be shifted between departments by the Council as well as within a department upon the recommendation of the department head and the approval of the director of finance and the city manager. The city manager must report transfers to the council. Much of the department's operating budget could be reappropriated for park maintenance because it is not dedicated by law to other purposes.

4. In our March 1992 budget review, we recommended cuts of \$500,000 to property and equipment maintenance and \$750,000 to park maintenance services – the recommendations were not implemented.⁸

In 1992, we made a series of recommendations as an alternative to across the board cuts proposed by the City Manager. Our recommendations were intended to increase funding for core programs that protect the life and property of residents while providing them with basic infrastructure required for safety and commerce.

5. In fact, citizen survey ratings from 1989 and 2001 are essentially the same and show no statistically significant difference once the results are adjusted to reflect the different rating scales used in the two surveys. In 1989, citizens were asked to rate quality on a scale with four points, while in 2001, citizens were asked to rate quality on a scale with five points. Direct comparison of the results is not appropriate. However, survey researchers have developed an approach called “percent to maximum” to allow for comparisons.⁹

When the 1989 and 2001 ratings are compared as percents to maximum, the difference between satisfaction is very small – just 0.8 percent – and isn't statistically significant.

Exhibit 1. Comparison of citizen satisfaction ratings for parks

1989 survey	2001 survey
65.0 percent	65.8 percent

⁸ *Review of the City Manager's 1992-93 Recommended Budget*, Office of the City Auditor, Kansas City, Missouri, March 1992.

⁹ Thomas Miller and Michelle Miller, *Citizen Surveys: How to Do Them, How to Use Them, What They Mean* (International City/County Management Association, 1991).

Percent to maximum converts survey ratings to a single number on a scale of 0 to 100. A score of 0 would mean that everyone who answered a question gave the lowest possible rating such as “very dissatisfied.” A score of 100 would mean everyone who answered questions gave the highest possible rating such as “very satisfied.”

6. The Parks and Recreation Department’s expenditures and staffing levels have grown substantially from 1991 to 2001 and have remained a significant portion of the total city budget.¹⁰ (See Exhibits 2 and 3)

Exhibit 2. Parks and Recreation Expenditures (1991 – 2001)

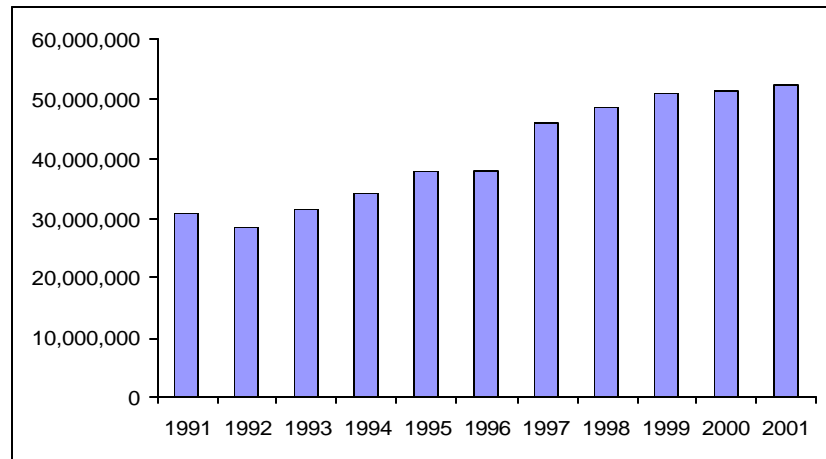
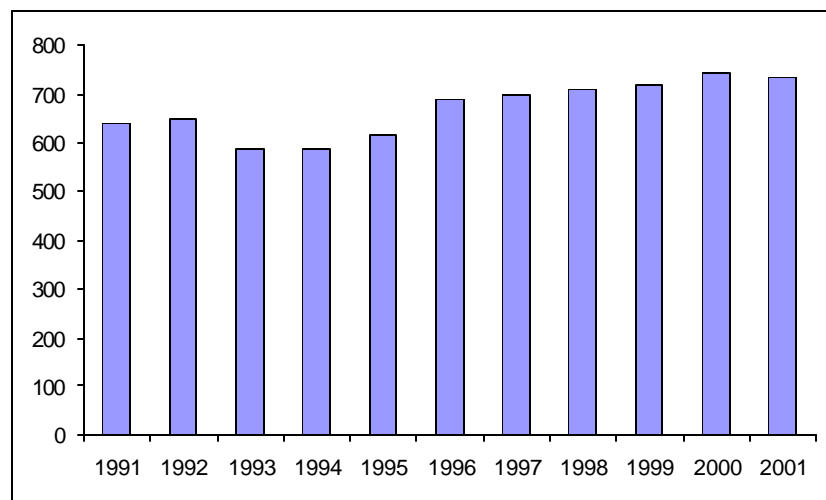


Exhibit 3. Parks and Recreation Full-Time Equivalent Positions (1991 – 2001)



¹⁰ Memorandum from City Auditor Mark Funkhouser to Evert Asjes III and members of the Finance and Audit Committee, October 17, 2001; and memorandum from City Auditor Mark Funkhouser to Evert Asjes III and members of the Finance and Audit Committee, October 24, 2001.

Park and Recreation Department spending as a portion of the total city budget has remained constant. In 1991, the department represented 5.9 percent of the total city budget and in 2001, the department represented 5.9 percent of the total city budget.

Park maintenance expenditures were 25 percent of department operating expenditures in 1991, but decreased to 21 percent in 2001.

To the extent that the department has reduced expenditures related to maintaining parks, it has been a decision to reduce the priority of maintaining parks.

7. Minutes of Board meetings are the primary place to find out whether the Board asks for and receives regular information on the condition of parks. The Board is a governing body and can only act as a body. Board meeting minutes are the public record of the Board's actions and if the Board was monitoring park conditions and holding management accountable this should be evident in the minutes.
8. The Parks and Recreation Department does not measure and report on the condition of parks; it is impossible to know how the condition of parks has changed over the last ten years or even the last year. While staff levels budgeted to park maintenance declined over the last ten years, the department's staffing and expenditures have grown. The department has made maintaining the parks a lower priority now than ten years ago.