



Park Rangers at South Platte Park

South Suburban
Parks & Recreation 2022

Strategic Plan



Adopted April, 2023



*Display garden at
The Hudson Gardens
and Event Center*

A message from the Executive Director and Board

For the past 63 years, South Suburban Parks and Recreation has provided exceptional parks, trails, and facilities to the south Denver metro area. Defining a clear direction allows our dedicated staff to embrace the future and continue to lead in the industry.

This 2022 Strategic Plan and the 2022 Master Plan Update set the framework to continue to meet the needs of our diverse population of more than 150,000 residents in six cities and three counties.

The Strategic Plan identifies our mission, vision, and values and builds on feedback collected from public outreach meetings and interviews with staff. It will outline our path to excellence as a community-driven organization and guide us as we build for the future. The four overarching strategic goals of Operate Strategically, Serve Our Diverse Communities, Innovate Future Planning, and Value Our Staff will drive decision making for the next 5-10 years.

The expectation is that both plans will be used by staff in their day-to-day operations, decision making, and long-term planning. By clearly outlining our priorities, we will ensure that, as a CAPRA Accredited organization, we are living up to our promise of providing the best in parks and recreation.

The Board of Directors and Executive Director would like to thank all of the participants for their contributions to both plans. Our partners, residents, and staff drive the success of the District. Continuing these meaningful relationships will enhance South Suburban's ability to foster healthy living for the communities we serve.

Rob Hanna, Executive Director
Board of Directors

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*Fall at Centennial
Ridge Park*

STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION STATEMENT:

South Suburban will lead the industry as an exceptional organization that provides innovative park and recreation opportunities for our diverse communities.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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*Strategic Plan
Staff Workshop*

Photo Credit:
Design Workshop

PLAN BACKGROUND

Plan Summary



Figure 1: Strategic and Master Plan Components

INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1959, South Suburban Parks and Recreation District (South Suburban or SSPRD) is a unique community-driven organization providing both indoor and outdoor recreation amenities to six municipalities and three counties south of Denver. In 2017, South Suburban initiated a planning process, resulting in a Master Plan and Strategic Plan. South Suburban realized many of the goals outlined in the 2017 Strategic and Master Plans and, in response, introduced a new planning process and framework to guide the next five years with a 2022 Master Plan and Strategic Plan update. These plans build upon the work completed in the 2017 plans while identifying new recreation needs and integrating fresh input from the community, staff, and partners.

The Strategic Plan is an internally focused document that will help South Suburban identify and address its vision and goals for the next five years. It compares South Suburban's current status with the future goals and vision and develops a strategy for bridging the gap between reality and vision. The Strategic Plan will also provide direction on how South Suburban can implement the recommendations of the Master Plan and will serve as a guide for developing future annual work plans.

The 2022 Strategic Plan is a companion document to the 2022 Master Plan, as shown in Figure 1. Like the Master Plan, the Strategic Plan supports a critical opportunity for South Suburban to respond to the needs of its diverse communities and envisions how this award-winning system can find fresh ways to implement its mission and serve the community.

PLAN CREATION

The Strategic Plan and Master Plan were developed simultaneously and share much of the same research and analysis. Input from partners, the community, and South Suburban staff was critical to developing the Strategic Plan. Community and partner input was collected through focus group meetings, an online survey, and outreach events. Input from South Suburban staff was generated through an online survey and collaborative workshop. In addition, South Suburban's operations were evaluated to determine the current capability to implement Master Plan recommendations.

Where We Are Today

ANALYSIS OF CURRENT OPERATIONS

South Suburban owns and manages a wide variety of parks, trails, open spaces, recreation facilities, and golf courses, including over 3,000 acres of land. See Map 1 on the following page for an overview of South Suburban's system. Ninety-eight percent of the 153,251 residents in the District are within a half mile or less of a recreation opportunity. South Suburban provides above average service to its residents compared to other Colorado Front Range park and recreation agencies. The new South Suburban Sports Complex rebuilt outdoor pools and other recent upgrades have greatly improved the quality of South Suburban offerings. However, the Master Plan includes a conditional assessment that indicates fair and poor conditions for some park properties and recreation buildings, showing that aging facilities require continual prioritization for improvements.

Additionally, while the park and recreation system serves residents, recreation trends continuously change as interests change, portions of the population age, and demographics shift. South Suburban serves many communities with a wide range of demographic backgrounds and priorities. Careful prioritization and communication with the community, municipal, and county partners are essential to provide improved services and facilities over the next five years.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As part of the Master and Strategic Planning process, the planning team conducted robust community engagement to understand citizens' recreation needs and interests. Efforts included focus groups, an online survey, and pop-up community engagement events. Community feedback focused on how residents currently view the parks and recreation system and where improvements and recreation amenities are needed. This input helped shape the Master Plan and Strategic Plan goals and recommendations, outlining a clear path to actualizing community needs and desires.

Refer to Chapter 2 of the Master Plan for more information on the current conditions of South Suburban and the results of the community outreach efforts.

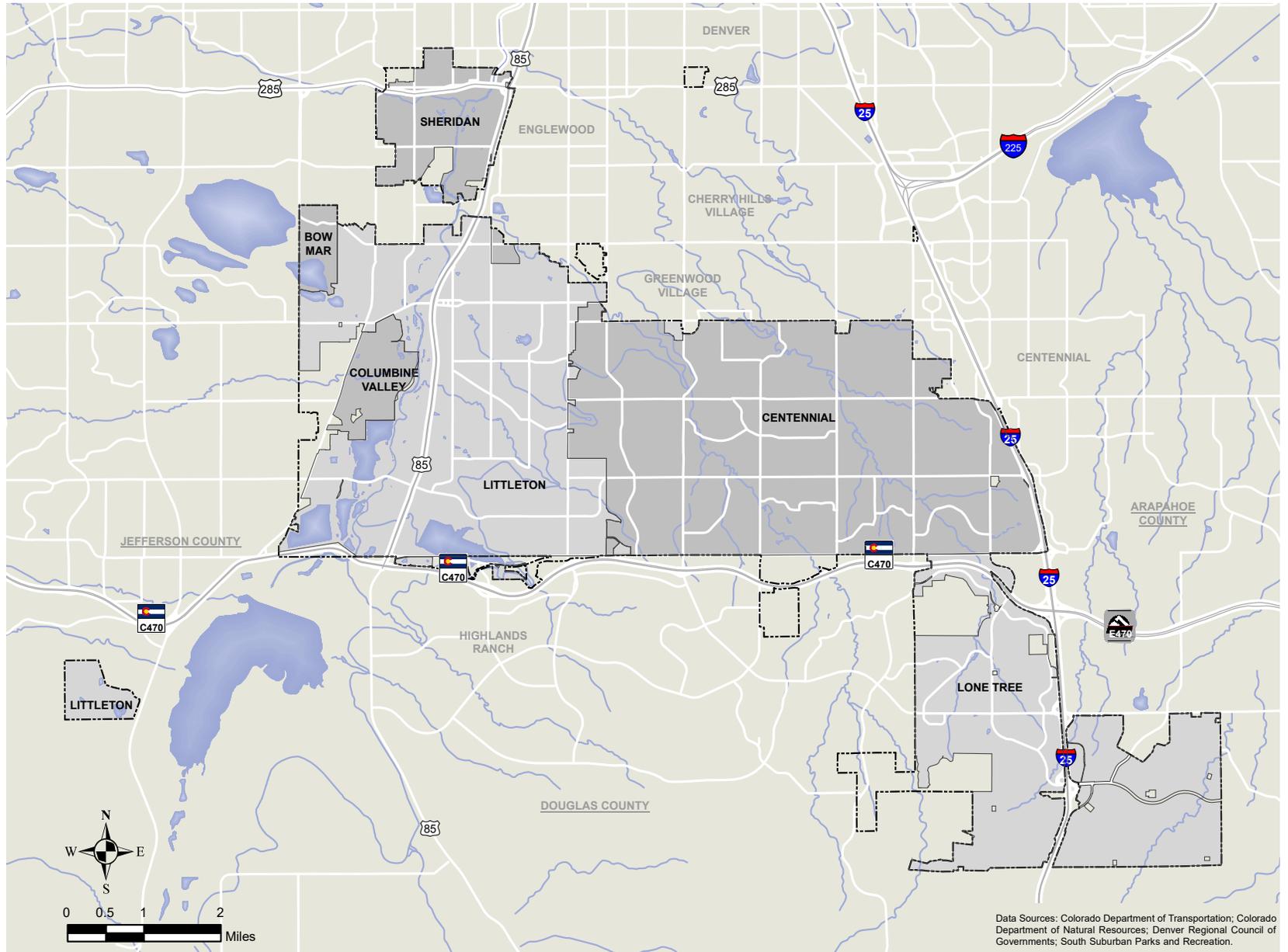


Figure 2: 2022 SSPRD Master Plan Community Survey Results

SOUTH SUBURBAN PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM MAP

Legend

-  District Boundary
-  Waterway
-  Lake or Reservoir



Data Sources: Colorado Department of Transportation; Colorado Department of Natural Resources; Denver Regional Council of Governments; South Suburban Parks and Recreation.

Staff-Generated Plan

STAFF WORKSHOP

As part of the strategic planning process, a staff survey and workshop helped define strategic direction and refine guidance for South Suburban's future goals. Over 50 staff members collaborated to form a plan vision and identify values that guide the strategic plan's objectives and goals. These targeted objectives will help to evaluate long-term progress, support future budgeting efforts and guide actions and staff work plans.

SWOT INPUT

South Suburban staff conducted a SWOT analysis, identifying the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The analysis assessed the gaps between current SSPRD operations and the vision of SSPRD presented in the Master Plan. Together with the mission, vision, and values, the SWOT analysis was used to create the strategic goals. The staff SWOT input is outlined below.

Strengths

- SSPRD focuses on "Quality First" and provides exceptional facilities, services, and programs.
- The public supports SSPRD, and the board and district leadership support staff.
- Overall, South Suburban has an excellent staff and an innovative culture that embraces change.

Weaknesses

- South Suburban has aging infrastructure and facilities that need updates.
- SSPRD has faced challenges recruiting staff in the current economic climate and job market.

Opportunities

- Staff are supported by leadership and board members that provide empowered freedom.
- Overall, there is momentum and support for SSPRD initiatives.
- There are great opportunities through existing and potential organizational partners.
- Operations and maintenance could collect data about park and facility users.

Threats

- Current and future organizations offering services that compete with South Suburban.
- Communication and technology are continually changing, and South Suburban will need to stay current.
- Economic and political uncertainty could create challenging conditions for the organization.

Both Opportunities and Threats

- South Suburban could focus on creating district-wide equity in many ways.
- Community outreach and data collection could better inform organizational adoption.
- Building awareness for those that are not current users is a challenge.

STRATEGIC PLAN VISION

Staff leaders formed a vision statement to understand what they wanted South Suburban's Master Plan and Strategic Plan goals to accomplish. The resulting vision statement reads:

South Suburban will lead the industry as an exceptional organization that provides innovative park and recreation opportunities for our diverse communities.

STRATEGIC THEMES

With the newly-formed vision as a guide, the next step was to outline strategic themes that would help to achieve the vision. Staff generated themes that were refined into specific goals, objectives, and supporting actions. These goals, objectives, and actions, along with relevant goals from the 2017 Master Plan, form the 2022 Strategic Plan recommendations. The 2022 Strategic Plan recommendations are outlined in Chapter 3 of this document.

SSPRD Staffing

STAFFING

South Suburban generally has a significant number of young and entry-level staff. About 65 percent of staff have been working for four years or less, and about 48 percent are under the age of 30. Another 20 percent of staff are between 30 and 50 years of age. Full-time staff has typically worked for SSPRD the longest, followed by part-time staff with benefits. The most common employees are part-time year-round staff, representing slightly more than half of SSPRD's workforce.

Like most organizations, South Suburban has recently been challenged with filling vacancies post-pandemic. This has left SSPRD with full and part-time staff vacancies. The current number of staff and number of vacant positions at SSPRD are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: SOUTH SUBURBAN STAFF BY DEPARTMENT

DEPARTMENT	# OF TOTAL EMPLOYEES	# OF SUPERVISORS	# OF FTE	# OF PTE	# OF FTE VACANCIES
ADMINISTRATION	4	3	4	0	0
COMMUNICATIONS	4	1	4	0	0
FINANCE	7	2	6	1	0
GOLF	259	6	33	226	1
HOSPITALITY	151	3	13	138	1
HR	4	1	3	1	0
IT	6	1	6	0	0
PARKS	111	18	70	41	3
PLANNING	5	1	5	0	1
RECREATION	909	25	81	828	5
TOTALS	1,460	61	225	1,235	11

**Staffing numbers in Table 1 were taken on December 31, 2022.*

SSPRD Organizational Chart

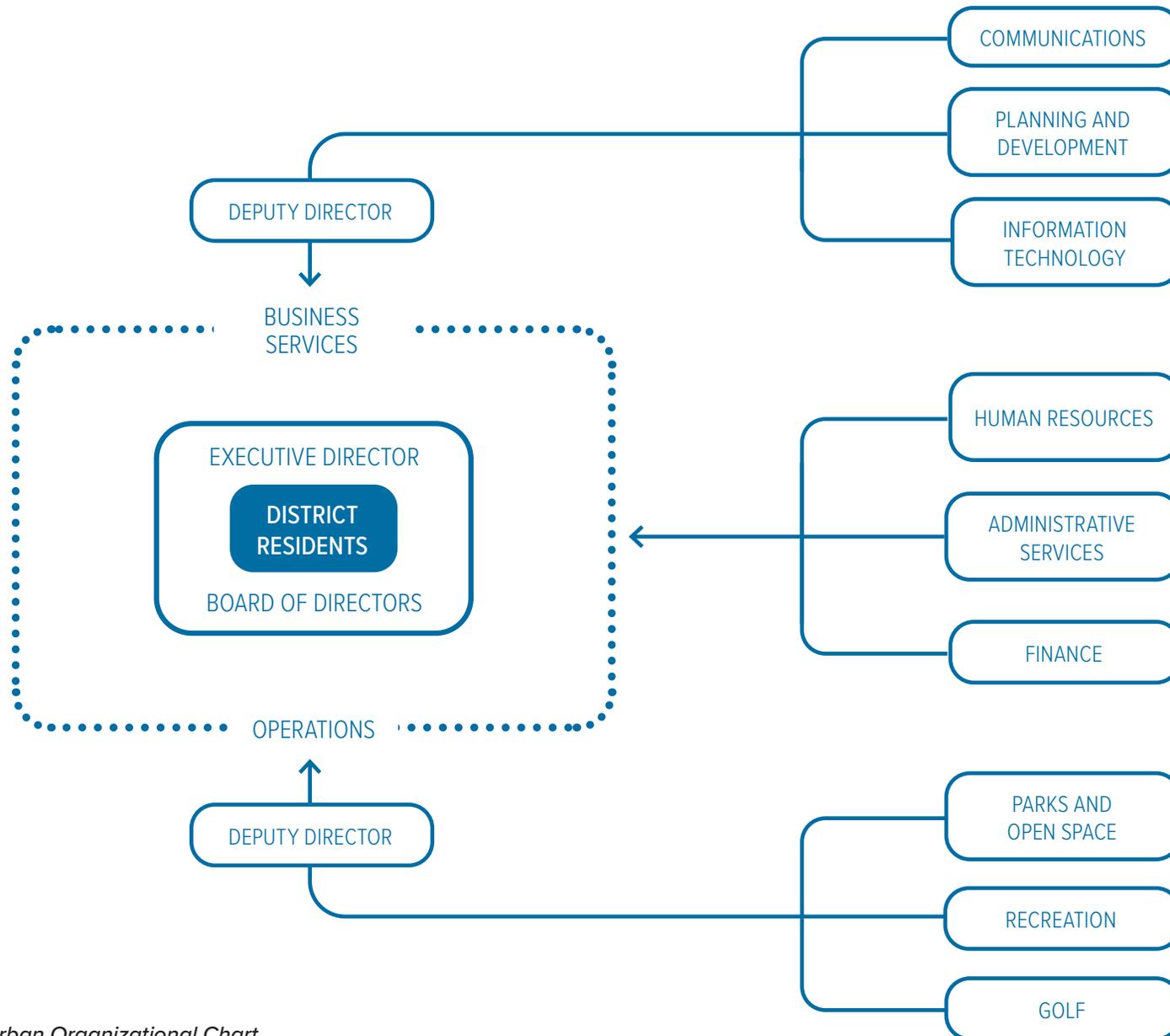


Figure 3: South Suburban Organizational Chart



Lone Tree Golf Club and Hotel Check-in

VALUES, PRINCIPLES, AND GOALS

How to Use This Document

STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK

The Strategic Plan framework, shown in Figure 4, begins with broad, visionary ideas and ends with actions to realize them. The Strategic Plan mission, vision, and values were generated from community engagement and staff input. They help to inform the guiding principles and strategic goals. Guiding principles are broad initiatives describing what South Suburban aims to achieve and are shared between the Strategic Plan and the Master Plan. The 2022 guiding principles have evolved out of community engagement, staff input, and foundational planning efforts of the 2017 Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan supports the guiding principles through the strategic goals and provides implementation recommendations outlined by specific strategic objectives and actions. These actions will be incorporated into annual work plans where staff leaders of various South Suburban departments will continue to refine and implement plan actions.

USING THE PLAN AS SSPRD STAFF

The Strategic Plan is the road map to South Suburban's future. All staff should be familiar with the Strategic Plan and use it to guide and inspire their work. Staff should carry out the values and principles presented in the Strategic Plan and will be held to these standards. Staff, specifically those in management positions, should work toward implementing the Strategic Plan recommendations.



Figure 4: Strategic Plan Framework

Mission, Vision, and Values

OUR MISSION

Founded in 1959, South Suburban Parks and Recreation District (SSPRD) is a unique, community-driven organization that provides indoor and outdoor recreation amenities to six municipalities and three counties south of Denver.

South Suburban's mission is to foster healthy living through stewardship of the environment, parks, trails, and open space and by providing recreational services and programs.

STRATEGIC PLAN VISION

South Suburban staff created a vision statement to lead the 2022 Strategic Plan, which reads:

South Suburban will lead the industry as an exceptional organization that provides innovative park and recreation opportunities for our diverse communities.

OUR VALUES:

South Suburban values articulate organizational expectations that serve as a tool for internal and external evaluation. Employees are expected to uphold these values while meeting community expectations.

Professional

Have the competency and skill to carry out our mission with honesty and dedication

Active

Be a constant presence in the community by providing services and facilities that inspire recreation and play

Innovative

Incorporate stewardship, recreational trends, and our community's current and future needs into our organization's practices

Inclusive

Incorporate the different needs of our diverse communities and partners into our work and decision-making

Our Guiding Principles

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles are broad initiatives describing what South Suburban aspires to achieve. The mission, vision, and guiding principles chart a course toward ensuring SSPRD's long-term sustainability and ability to contribute to the community's physical, emotional, and social wellness.



Quality First

We aim to consistently create positive experiences for our community. We strive to maintain and improve the quality of our offerings and customer service with innovations to remain industry leaders.



Connect Community

We create an inclusive culture that engages, welcomes, and connects all members of the community to feel a sense of belonging in our spaces and programs. We effectively communicate and provide diverse offerings which are accessible to all ages, abilities, and cultures.



Enrich Wellness

We prioritize wellness by offering indoor and outdoor recreation that strengthens bodies, engages minds, and refreshes a person's spirit. We facilitate wellness by providing recreation opportunities that represent the characteristics and needs of our diverse neighborhoods and communities.



Stewards of Nature and Sustainability

We conserve and enhance natural systems with green spaces, wildlife areas, and water recreation that promote interaction and respect for nature. We provide environmental education and volunteer opportunities to encourage community stewardship. Our spaces are designed and managed to be resilient environmental assets.



Fiscal Responsibility

We make investments with a long-range view of fiscal responsibility, balancing emerging needs while maintaining the quality of indoor facilities, outdoor spaces, and programs. We use funding responsibly and are transparent about priorities. We manage resources through extensive planning processes, investing in infrastructure, efficient operations, and strategic partnerships.

Strategic Goals

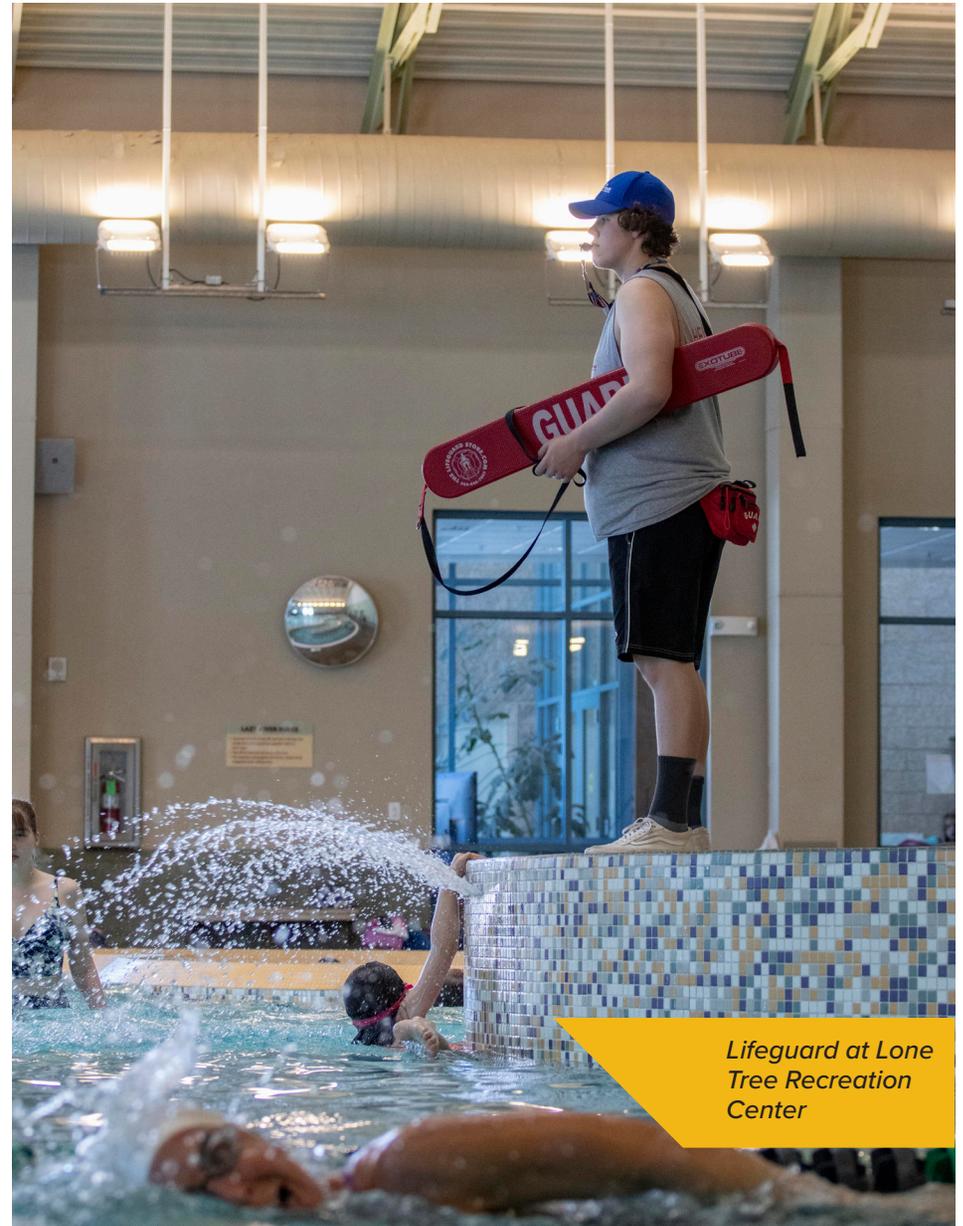
ESTABLISHING OUR FOCUS

The Strategic Plan identifies four overarching goals for South Suburban that reflect the mission, vision, and values. These goals build off the 2022 Staff Strategic Planning Workshop and the 2017 Strategic Plan and can be used to implement the guiding principles.

Each goal is meant to focus South Suburban on achieving a specific outcome within the next five years. Each goal has several recommended objectives and “areas of action,” which provide further direction on how the goals can be achieved. They are discussed in more detail on the following pages.



Figure 5: Forming the Strategic Goals



Lifeguard at Lone Tree Recreation Center

Strategic Goals

OPERATE STRATEGICALLY

...to maintain fiscal and environmental sustainability

OBJECTIVES

- Objective O-1: Maintain our financial sustainability.
- Objective O-2: Improve organizational efficiencies that add value and enhance experiences for staff and the public.
- Objective O-3: Improve and maintain the quality and value of our parks, trails, facilities, and services.
- Objective O-4: Continue sustainability improvements that fulfill our mission as stewards of the environment.
- Objective O-5: Develop public/private partnerships to manage resources effectively.

INNOVATE FUTURE PLANNING

...to remain a leader in the parks and recreation industry and ensure we can continue to serve our communities well into the future

OBJECTIVES

- Objective P-1: Deliver new projects and improvements that support our Master Plan guiding principles.
- Objective P-2: Define and understand the differing recreational needs of the community.
- Objective P-3: Maintain, improve, and expand municipal partnerships to benefit SSPRD and the surrounding region.
- Objective P-4: Remain a recognized industry leader.

SERVE OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

...to recognize and be responsive to the needs of the diverse communities

OBJECTIVES

- Objective C-1: Increase community engagement and broaden outreach.
- Objective C-2: Create a culture of stewardship among customers.
- Objective C-3: Recognize and be responsive to community culture and meet the needs of the diverse communities we serve.

VALUE OUR STAFF

...to remain a responsive, well-respected, and desired employer for parks and recreation professionals

OBJECTIVES

- Objective S-1: Continue to be a workplace of choice and a desirable place to stay.
- Objective S-2: Continue to invest in staff to support employee development.
- Objective S-3: Foster a collaborative culture at all levels and departments.
- Objective S-4: Foster a connection between employees and their work so the workforce is fully engaged.

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Welcome to the Sports Complex!
This 204,000 square foot regional facility was built from a community need for more indoor recreation opportunities. The unique facility includes 2 full fields, a gymnasium, 3 sheets of ice, administrative offices and a restaurant and bar, all under one roof. Construction began in May 2019 and completed in January 2021.

Sports
Complex
Community
Celebration

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Using the Recommendations

OVERVIEW

The Strategic Plan recommendations highlighted in Figure 6 incorporate the strategic goals, objectives, and actions. Each of the four strategic goals has several broader objectives that outline how South Suburban can implement the goals. Under each objective are “areas of action” – recommended strategies for SSPRD to help achieve the objectives. These areas of action should be used as a framework to guide future annual work plans developed by each department. SSPRD will also use the annual work plans to track progress toward achieving the goals of the Strategic Plan and the recommendations of the Master Plan.

Figure 5: Sample Work Plan

ORGANIZATIONAL INITIATIVES – HUMAN RESOURCE DEPARTMENT

Improve recruitment marketing efforts – Foster our brand image, attend recruitment events and create connections by focusing external relationships including with high schools and colleges. Look for ways to increase diversity with applicants. Research and utilize recruitment technology to post positions.

- Project Manager: Natalie Swanson, Sr. Human Resources Generalist
- Schedule: January – December
- Status:
 - Recruitment Status: All part-time and seasonal summer positions were posted on our careers page beginning in February. Communications helped to create fun “We’re Hiring” business cards for staff to hand out and to utilize at job fairs. We advertised over Littleton Main Street the week of March 7th and April 18th with a “We are Hiring” banner. SSPRD’s website was updated with a “Work where you play” pop-up that links visitors to apply now for open District positions.
 - Social Media: We are collaborating with Communications to market our open positions via social media. Communications added hiring links to our Golf web pages.
 - Partnerships with High Schools and Universities: HR has sent multiple flyers to High Schools on our PT seasonal positions. HR is using “Handshake” and Purple Briefcase” to post our opportunities with colleges and universities. HR began using Pickens Technical College’s “Career Coach” recruiting site to post our available Horticulture opportunities.
 - Additional Recruitment Resources: The HR Department created an account with the PGA to post available golf positions, HR also began posting open positions with GovernmentJobs.com.
 - Job Fairs: HR and staff have attended multiple job fairs this spring. On March 30, HR attended the in-person Arapahoe High School Job Fair with representatives from Aquatics, Children’s Programs and Parks. On April 11, HR attended the in-person Sheridan High School Job Fair with representatives from Athletics and Parks. On April 13, the HR Department attended the virtual Employment First Career Fair on behalf of the District. On May 10, the HR Department attended the in-person Youth Oriented Career Fair.
 - Open Hiring Events: HR and Communications assisted Ed Rockett, Golf Course Superintendent and Clint Floyd, 1st Assistant Supervisor of the golf maintenance team at the Lone Tree Golf Club & Hotel, implemented “On the Spot Hiring Events” on Mondays – Thursdays from 6am – 2:30pm and on Saturdays from 7am – 9am which resulted in Ed and Clint hiring additional seasonal staff.
 - Employee Referrals: HR and Communication has promoted employee referrals through Paylocity and flyers. All staff are encouraged to refer candidates for open positions. The referral must enter the employee’s full name on their employment application. For each referral who completes 30 days on the job, the employee will receive \$100!

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative – Assemble a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee. Develop goals and promote awareness around diversity, equity and inclusion with our workforce.

Project Manager: Lisa Narrell, Director of Human Resources

- Schedule: January – December
- Status: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEI). The committee was formed to provide direction, support and oversight to the District to become more diverse, equitable, and inclusive through its internal policies and practices. The committee has defined the terms diversity, equity, and inclusion. These definitions are the building blocks to the mission statement and objectives the group will develop.

Figure 6: Strategic Plan Recommendations and Plan Structure



Prioritization Criteria

PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

In conjunction with the Master Plan prioritization criteria, the Strategic Plan identifies additional criteria that SSPRD can use to evaluate capital projects and assist in decision-making. The criteria are linked to the core values and strategic goals identified in this plan.

OPERATE STRATEGICALLY

SERVE OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

INNOVATE FUTURE PLANNING

VALUE OUR STAFF

STRATEGIC PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA CHECKLIST

The following questions are an evaluation of any new project to determine if the project supports South Suburban’s mission, vision, values, and strategic goals. The project may not receive a “check” for every question, but each question should be asked during the evaluation process **in conjunction with the Master Plan prioritization criteria**. If a project does not receive a “check,” critical questions need to be asked about how the project can be adapted to meet that criteria; or, if it cannot be adapted, whether the project meets enough other criteria between the Strategic Plan and Master Plan to justify moving forward.

- Does it improve the overall quality of our facilities and services?
- Does the project support opportunities to generate (net) revenue?
- Have partnership options been evaluated for opportunities for collaboration on services/facilities/etc.?
- Does it contribute to SSPRD’s overall sustainability?
- Does it provide an opportunity to increase staff or operational efficiency?
- Does it meet the needs and/or desires of the community?
- Will it build community engagement in SSPRD?
- Does it provide opportunities to broaden stewardship?
- Does it expand recreational choices or opportunities?
- Does it support SSPRD’s mission, vision, and values?
- Is the project eligible for outside funding?
- Does it advance industry best practices within SSPRD?
- Has the impact on staff been considered?
- Does the project provide any learning or growth opportunities for staff?
- Has the impact on operations and maintenance been considered?

Goal: Operate Strategically

Operating strategically ensures we maintain fiscal and environmental sustainability, add value for the community, and strengthen our ability to improve and maintain high-quality parks, facilities, and services.

OBJECTIVE 1	Maintain our financial sustainability.
Areas for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify our financial limitations using the established fee policy, market comparisons, operating expense to revenue comparisons, and internal and external audits.• Monitor and renegotiate agreements to identify cost savings or additional funding opportunities.• Evaluate the cost of revenue generating and funding opportunities to ensure a high return on investment.• Complete a detailed analysis of operational costs and revenue opportunities in a three-year financial plan.
OBJECTIVE 2	Improve organizational efficiencies that add value and provide quality experiences for internal and external communities.
Areas for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to improve technological capabilities to overcome challenges, improve operations and enhance customer experience.• Collect and analyze data to make informed decisions on enhancing operations and identify opportunities to improve efficiencies.• Evaluate internal communication processes and platforms, including interdepartmental and part-time staff communication, to improve efficiencies.• Provide staff training on electronic communications, programs, and processes.

Goal: Operate Strategically

OBJECTIVE 3	Improve and maintain the quality and value of our parks, trails, facilities, and services.
Areas for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritize park and facility improvements that support the needs and desires of the community.• Collect and analyze data to inform decisions on maintenance needs and priorities.• Continue to improve existing parks, trails, and facilities by designating funds for infrastructure upgrades.
OBJECTIVE 4	Continue sustainability improvements that fulfill our mission as stewards of the environment.
Areas for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retrofit facilities and parks where feasible for improved energy efficiencies.• Continue to implement current water conservation strategies while investigating new strategies to provide additional water savings, such as using non-potable water, where feasible.• Investigate and, where appropriate, implement landscape improvements and alternative maintenance strategies that will improve sustainability.• Find opportunities in parks, facilities, and operational practices to reinforce the “triple bottom line.”• Provide access to sustainability best practices education and training for staff to enhance our environmental stewardship.
OBJECTIVE 5	Develop public/private partnerships to manage resources effectively.
Areas for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborate with partners, local businesses, and community organizations to achieve organizational objectives.• Evaluate opportunities to expand and/or add public-private partnerships that improve efficiencies, reduce cost, or provide value to the community.• Evaluate the donation policy and sponsorship plan to enhance partnerships.

Goal: Serve Our Diverse Communities

We strive to serve and be responsive to the needs of our diverse communities through outreach, understanding recreational needs, and fostering a culture of stewardship.

OBJECTIVE 1	Increase community engagement and broaden outreach.
Areas for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand community engagement and grow our customer base by exploring new communication methods and investigating new opportunities for outreach and advertising.• Provide up-to-date and accessible websites.• Maintain our social media presence to distribute information on accomplishments, ongoing efforts proactively, and offers to residents within South Suburban's boundaries.• Define our core customers and use this to inform future marketing and outreach.• Review and update our Marketing Plan to incorporate a variety of tactics to reach a broad audience.• Participate in meaningful community committees to better understand and serve our diverse participants' needs.• Provide instructional tools to enhance our internal and external customers' use of digital platforms and applications.
OBJECTIVE 2	Create a culture of stewardship among customers.
Areas for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide opportunities for the community to engage with and celebrate nature.• Encourage environmental stewardship in the community through engagement, educational programming, and volunteer opportunities.• Provide diverse volunteer opportunities to engage various members of the community.• Recognize and celebrate the contributions of our volunteers.

Goal: Serve Our Diverse Communities

OBJECTIVE 3

Recognize and be responsive to community culture and meet the needs of the diverse communities we serve.

Areas for Action

- Evaluate language choice and materials to ensure all communities are well represented in communications and programs.
- Conduct public outreach and engage with stakeholders to help identify needs and opportunities for adaptation and remain up-to-date with trends and recreation desires of the community.
- Create opportunities representative of the community through placemaking in parks and facilities and offering diverse programming and recreation.
- Provide opportunities for scholarships, subsidies, and recreation money to support those in need through community partnerships.

Goal: Innovate Future Planning

We seek to remain an innovative leader in the parks and recreation industry and ensure we can continue to serve our communities well into the future.

OBJECTIVE 1	Deliver new projects and improvements that support our Master Plan guiding principles.
Areas for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide innovative parks and facilities to deliver recreation opportunities for the community.• Follow the Master Plan prioritization criteria for identifying and implementing new projects, improvements, and programs.• Evaluate the different levels of growth within SSPRD communities and use this analysis to determine a prioritized plan for improved, expanded, and new parks and facilities.• Investigate various funding options and use the most appropriate means to fund capital projects.
OBJECTIVE 2	Define and understand the differing recreational needs of the community.
Areas for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accommodate more communities and interests by providing outdoor recreation and programming beyond organized sports.• Provide additional opportunities in outdoor recreation for exploration and connecting with nature.• Collect community and user data to inform new programming, park and trail design, and facility offerings.
OBJECTIVE 3	Maintain, improve, and expand municipal partnerships to benefit SSPRD and the surrounding region.
Areas for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborate with our partner cities and counties to provide value to the community.• Expand and create partnerships for new parks and facilities and assist with improving existing parks and facilities.• Review and formalize existing partnership agreements to clarify responsibilities and provide consistency.

Goal: Innovate Future Planning

OBJECTIVE 4

Remain a recognized industry leader.

Areas for Action

- Retain our Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) designation by providing the required documentation, updating policies and procedures, and implementing CAPRA standards in our operations.
- Strive to obtain a National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Gold Medal Award through demonstrated excellence in long-range planning, resource management, and innovative approaches to recreation programming.
- Remain a leading park and recreation organization by participating in industry organizations, tracking current trends and practices, and sharing our knowledge.
- Implement appropriate national, state, and local initiatives that support healthy communities, enhance our parks and facilities and provide desirable places to recreate.
- Follow Best Management Practices (BMPs) for parks and facility management and maintenance.

Goal: Value Our Staff

By valuing our staff, we aim to remain a responsive, well-respected, and desired employer for parks and recreation professionals.

OBJECTIVE 1	Continue to be a workplace of choice and a desirable place to stay.
Areas for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to recruit qualified candidates using appropriate sources.• Continue to provide an overall compensation and benefits package that is competitive within the parks and recreation industry.• Update and enhance our Wellness Program by providing and encouraging offerings that support physical, emotional, social, environmental, and financial well-being.• Review policies, procedures, and practices to facilitate more flexible and blended working options to broaden our access to diverse talent.• Implement a strategy to foster employee pride and a sense of ownership in their work.• Engage staff by providing employee events and internal awards and recognition opportunities that reinforce our values.
OBJECTIVE 2	Continue to invest in staff to support employee development.
Areas for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure information for learning opportunities and resources is readily available, clear, and easy to find.• Continue to offer a blended learning design of on-demand, self-paced learning, and instructor-led training.• Provide and recommend opportunities for leadership, career growth, and skill development.
OBJECTIVE 3	Foster a collaborative culture at all levels and departments.
Areas for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage improved relationships and collaboration between departments to explore new ideas and opportunities.• Provide team-building activities and opportunities for staff to interact across departments.• Continue to seek diverse perspectives to understand community and staff values and evolving programs and priorities.• Encourage staff to provide feedback, input, and suggestions.

Goal: Value Our Staff

OBJECTIVE 4

Foster a connection between employees and their work, so the workforce is fully engaged.

Areas for Action

- Create a workplace culture that advances Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) objectives and supports staff.
- Review SSPRD policies, practices, and opportunities to identify better ways to increase diversity, foster inclusive dialogue, and boost cultural competency.
- Build a culture of community and stewardship among staff and customers.
- Engage with staff to reinforce organizational direction and its correlation to the Master and Strategic Plans.
- Empower staff where appropriate to make decisions and lead initiatives to improve operations using the Strategic and Master Plan as their guide.



Parks and
Trails Staff
Appreciation
Event

CONCLUSION



Centennial Ridge
Park Dedication

A Strategic Outlook

NEXT STEPS

The Strategic Plan is part of a larger planning effort that includes the 2022 Master Plan, annual budgets and work plans, a Three-Year Financial Plan, and a Five Year Capital Improvement Plan. The recommendations in these efforts will begin implementation in 2023 and will be updated periodically as needed. For the plans to be successful, South Suburban must ensure that these documents are incorporated into future planning efforts within the organization. For instance, the Strategic Plan should be used in developing the annual work plans for South Suburban and in evaluating proposed capital projects.

Existing data will be identified and used to create baselines for tracking progress on performance measures. Baselines and performance measures from the 2017 Master and Strategic Plans will need to be updated to align with 2022 plan goals. Comparing the performance measures from year to year would serve as a tool to track the progress South Suburban is making toward achieving the goals of the Strategic Plan and the recommendations of the Master Plan.

The recommendations of the Strategic Plan are not all immediately achievable – it will take planning and effort by South Suburban and the community to see them successfully implemented. But by striving toward these strategic goals, South Suburban can foster healthy living for all of its residents.



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PARKS & RECREATION