

AUDIT REPORT TRACKING SYSTEM (ARTS)

SECTION I: SUMMARY INFORMATION			
Audit Title:	Preserve and Restore Parks Ecology with Sustainable Maintenance Approach	Audit Release Date:	04/30/2018 Full Report / Highlights
Department:	Parks and Recreation Department	Last Report Date:	03/12/2019
Department Director:	Terry Rynard	This Report Date:	05/29/2020
Contact Person/Phone:	Stephen Van Rhein 816-513-7562	Expected Presentation Date:	TBD
SECTION II: PRIOR ARTS REPORTS			
1st ARTS Report 03/12/2019			
SECTION III: RECORD OF RECOMMENDATION STATUS			
1. Implemented January 2020		7. Implemented November 2018	
2. Implemented March 2018		8. Implemented January 2020	
3. In Progress		9. In Progress	
4. In Progress		10. Implemented January 2019	
5. In progress		11. Implemented January 2020	
6. In Progress			
SECTION IV: SUMMARY OF IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS			
Recommendation 1: The director of parks and recreation should reduce mowing and replace turf grasses with native plants when possible, shift flowerbeds to native or regionally appropriate perennial beds, and systematically plant and prune city trees.			
<i>Status of Recommendation: Implemented January 2020</i>			
<p>Two parts of this recommendation are addressed in the Departments Sustainability Plan, conversion of turf grass to natives and the shift to native perennials in flower beds. The third is addressed in two documents the KCMO Urban Forest Master Plan and an updated tree inventory survey. As previously reported, 9 annual beds have been switched to native perennials. Ten additional beds will be converted this year however, there remains an issue with maintenance. It is imperative to have proper maintenance on native beds during establishment. The Environmental manager will train internal staff on proper maintenance. Non-profit partners will be engaged to help with maintenance where appropriate. Plans are in place to begin turf grass conversion in at least one new area (5acres greater) in each district this year.</p> <p>A TRIM grant has been submitted to the Department of Conservation for a partial street tree inventory this year. For addressing city tree pruning the Department is considering temporarily redeploying internal resources to begin establishing a three-year pruning cycle. This will involve a temporary increase in contract services to cover reactive services like downed limbs/trees etc. The feasibility of this move is still being evaluated.</p> <p>With assistance from the Department, Heartland Conservation Alliance was awarded a \$240,000 NRPA grant for restoration in Blue Valley Park. The goals of the grant are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore 40 acres of riparian corridor with significant removal of invasive honey suckle. • Engage 10 community advisory board members • Design single-track trails for community access • Create a habitat management plan for the newly restored natural area • Train 50 Green Guard Stewards in maintenance and stewardship of the park 			

<p>Recommendation 3: The director of parks and recreation should adopt water conservation practices to track the amount of water applied annually for parkland maintenance and minimize the overall application of water for landscape irrigation after plant establishment periods.</p>
<p><i>Status of Recommendation: In Progress</i></p>
<p>This recommendation is addressed in the Sustainability Plan. Changing to native perennials that require little to no water once established should reduce water usage. A more comprehensive water usage tracking system is being developed and will be implemented before then end of the 2020 growing season. A complete assessment of water usage will be used to discover areas where changes in practices, plant material, or equipment can reduce usage by.</p> <p>While not related to park maintenance, the department is working to reduce water consumption at our golf courses. Upcoming irrigation project at Shoal Creek to use on-site water source to reduce City water (potable) consumption.</p> <p>For 8 fountains that pass-through water, the pressure was reduced to the minimum needed to operate them. This resulted in a nearly two thirds reduction in water usage for these fountains.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: The director of parks and recreation should develop additional practices to minimize or eliminate the use of synthetic pesticides in parks.</p>
<p><i>Status of Recommendation: In Progress</i></p>
<p>Partially addressed with the use of native perennials in beds, native plants do not need herbicides or fertilizers. Currently, use of pesticides is low. An integrative pest management program still needs to be developed and implemented. It should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of Action Thresholds for pest management. • Create a chart/methodology for choosing non-chemical solutions first, such as, prevention, cultural, physical, mechanical and biotic before choosing chemical use. • Prioritize training and management of high use areas like golf and athletic fields. • Require certification of management staff overseeing chemical applications and annual training for all staff who use chemicals. • Require all landscape and mowing contractors to adhere to the same requirements. <p>Parks is in the process of reviewing and implementing the existing “Operations and Maintenance Manual”, current recommendations will be modified to focus on organic solutions when applicable. A full plan for implementation is due to the Director for review by December 2020.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5: The director of parks and recreation should ensure staff adhere to the department’s and city’s adopted pesticide policies and procedures.</p>
<p><i>Status of Recommendation: In Progress</i></p>
<p>Staff continue to integrate pesticide safety into the safety training. Supervisors and staff will obtain additional training and certification on an annual basis. This year 3 staff attended Certified Public Operators training and passed the required tests for licensing. All staff that handle pesticide will eventually have this level of training and certification.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6: The director of parks and recreation should implement sustainable fertilizer observation and planning practices.</p>
<p><i>Status of Recommendation: In Progress</i></p>
<p>Current policies and procedures are being updated in the Operations and Maintenance Manual that will require site specific fertilization plans based on soil testing. The use of Phosphorus will be limited to times of over seeding if soil samples indicate it is necessary.</p>

<p>Recommendation 8: The director of parks and recreation should incrementally develop environmental resource plans for parklands that utilize the existing work of the department, city programs, and area partners.</p>
<p><i>Status of Recommendation: Implemented January 2020</i></p>
<p>The Department has some environmental resource plans (ERP) in place for native areas, including Jerry Smith Park and now Minor Park. The Department recommends development of ERPs based on “use of space and programming type” (i.e. open space, athletic fields, ornamental, native, undeveloped etc.). Once these plans are created, they will be implemented on an incremental basis. There has been little progress on this goal since the last report. The Environmental Manager is reinitiating this effort. Two additional plans will be in place by the end of 2020.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9: The director of parks and recreations should incorporate plant, air, water, soil, and pest management sustainable practices into the department’s operations and maintenance manual.</p>
<p><i>Status of Recommendation: In Progress</i></p>
<p>The Parks and Recreation Department’s Operations and Maintenance Manual requires updating to integrate both the recommendations of the sustainability audit and the recommendations of the Sustainability Plan. The updated Operations and Maintenance Manual is due December 2020 to the director of Parks and Recreation.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11: The director of parks and recreation should train staff on the department’s adopted sustainable practices.</p>
<p><i>Status of Recommendation: Implemented January 2020</i></p>
<p>The Department has begun implementing small scale training for specific issues, such as Ozone Alert procedures and providing certification for chemical applicators through the Department of Agriculture. However, the Department must still develop a more comprehensive training plan which will be based on the revised Operations and Maintenance Manual. Items of training include, but are not limited to, native plant selection, soil testing, reducing of gas-powered equipment, best watering practices and integrated pest management. Scheduling for training of all staff has begun. The first training session is an introduction the Sustainability Plan and Native Landscaping. The goal of this training is creating buy-in from all staff at every level. Ultimately, implementation will take a cultural change. Staff need to have some intrinsic reward for adoption of new practices.</p>
<p>SECTION V: ADDITIONAL OUTCOMES</p>
<p>Due to a high degree of staff turnover there has been a slight lull in implementing the recommendations of the audit and Sustainability Plan. Most significantly, the hiring of the Environmental Manager resulting in the condensing of responsibility and resources into a dedicated position. The significance of this development is hard to understate. By the end of 2020 progress will be made on several fronts e.g., training, policy and procedures manual, integrated pest management plan, invasive species management planning, and on the ground progress.</p> <p>Recommendations #2 and #10 were reported implemented in the first ARTS report and are not included in this report. However, we want to report we are taking the additional step of giving preference to contractors who use low-emission equipment/mowers, and this will be added to all contracts when renewed in 2025. <i>Contracts for the 2019 mowing season also require contractors to maintain pesticide spray logs, to be presented upon request.</i> This will be changed from “upon request” required reporting. Additionally, signage alerting the public of pesticide application will be posted during and after application until it is safe to reenter the site.</p>