

Dickinson Parks & Recreation

STRATEGIC PLAN

2026-2028



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Dickinson Parks & Recreation District (DPRD) has served residents and visitors of Dickinson, North Dakota, for more than 75 years, providing quality recreation opportunities, green spaces, and community connections. Building on the 2025–2045 Master Plan and in alignment with the City of Dickinson’s Direction 2050 Comprehensive Plan, this Strategic Plan defines clear, actionable priorities for the years 2026 through 2028.



The plan represents a balance between maintaining and modernizing existing infrastructure and expanding inclusive, high-quality programming that reflects community needs. It serves as a three-year roadmap to guide decisions on resource allocation, partnerships, and performance outcomes, ensuring that DPRD continues to enhance the quality of life in Dickinson through recreation, wellness, and community engagement.

MISSION, VISION & CORE VALUES

Mission

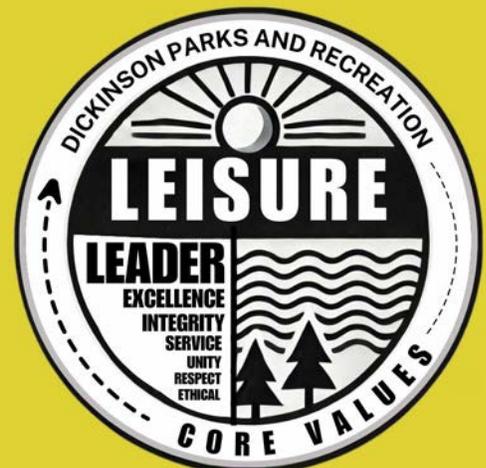
To enhance the quality of life for the community and its visitors by providing leisure opportunities.

Vision

To inspire area residents to become aware and involved in making positive contributions to the well-being of themselves and others in the community.

Core Values (L.E.I.S.U.R.E.)

- Leadership: Be leaders in the field of parks and recreation.
- Excellence: Strive for superior quality in all programs, services, and facilities.
- Integrity: Act with honesty, transparency, and accountability.
- Service: Deliver exceptional service that meets and exceeds community expectations.
- Unity: Foster partnerships and collaboration within the community.
- Respect: Ensure inclusive, equitable access and treatment for all people.
- Ethics: Uphold the highest professional and ethical standards.



Community Overview

Dickinson's population has stabilized at approximately 25,000 residents following rapid growth during the early 2010s oil boom. While population growth is projected at a modest 1.5% over the next decade, demographic trends show an increasingly diverse community and growing demand for accessible, affordable recreation options.

The community's geographic setting—anchored by Patterson Lake, the Heart River, and proximity to Theodore Roosevelt National Park—provides a unique platform for outdoor recreation and tourism. The anticipated opening of the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library in 2026 will position Dickinson as a regional destination for cultural and nature-based tourism.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Organizational Strengths and Challenges

STRENGTHS

- High-quality facilities such as the West River Community Center, West River Ice Center, and Heart River Golf Course.
- Strong partnerships with schools, local businesses, and civic organizations.
- Positive community reputation and engagement.

CHALLENGES

- Aging facilities require consistent maintenance and upgrades.
- Workforce recruitment and retention amid a competitive labor market.
- Rising operational costs and need for sustainable funding.
- Gaps in park access, particularly in growth areas.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Enhanced use of Patterson Lake as a tourism and recreation hub.
- Expanded youth and teen programming to fill local gaps.
- Stronger mental health and wellness partnerships.
- Modernization of technology and systems for operations, communication, and facility management.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1



Training & Development



Retention & Recruitment



Operational Efficiency

Priority 1: Organizational Excellence and Workforce Development

Build a high-performing organization that attracts, develops, and retains skilled, motivated employees committed to community service and innovation.

Goals & Objectives

1. Invest in Training and Development:

- Implement annual professional development plans for all full-time staff.
- Offer leadership training and cross-department collaboration workshops.
- Implement a customer service development program across all District facilities and programming.

2. Enhance Workforce Retention and Recruitment:

- Conduct a competitive wage and benefits review by 2028.
- Develop a succession plan for key leadership roles.

3. Operational Efficiency:

- Standardize policies, procedures, and SOPs across all facilities by 2027.
- Introduce and implement new technology for scheduling, registration, and work order management.
- Increase quality assurance and improvement through NRPA's Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) Accreditation process.

KEY METRICS

- 90% of FT staff complete annual training goals.
- Staff turnover reduced by 15% by 2028.
- Full implementation of uniform SOP's across facilities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2



Program Diversity



Community Partnership



Public Engagement

Priority 2: Community Access and Inclusive Programming

Ensure recreation opportunities are accessible, equitable, and responsive to all segments of Dickinson's population.

Goals & Objectives

1. Expand Program Diversity:

- Introduce new adaptive, multicultural, and intergenerational programs in alignment with the 2024-2029 Recreation Programming Plan.
- Establish a teen-focused recreation initiative by 2027.

2. Strengthen Community Partnerships:

- Collaborate with health agencies to deliver wellness and mental health programs.
- Continue work with the Dickinson Parks and Recreation Foundation's youth scholarship program.

3. Increase Public Engagement:

- Conduct annual community satisfaction surveys.
- Coordinate focus groups for specific programs and facilities.

KEY METRICS

- Program participation increases by 5% annually.
- At least two new partnerships per year targeting under-served groups.
- 85% community satisfaction rating by 2028.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3



Modernize



Sustainability & Energy



Future Growth

Priority 3: Facility Stewardship and Infrastructure Investment

Maintain and enhance DPRD's physical assets to ensure safe, high-quality, and sustainable recreation facilities.

Goals & Objectives

1. Modernize Existing Facilities:

- Prioritize maintenance of aging infrastructure through a rotating capital improvement plan, specifically at the West River Community Center and West River Ice Center.
- Complete lighting, restroom, and irrigation upgrades at priority parks (Eagles Park, Patterson Lake, Veterans Memorial) by 2028.

2. Promote Sustainability and Energy Efficiency:

- Implement energy audits at major facilities by 2028.
- Incorporate native landscaping and water-efficient irrigation in all new projects.
- Implement tree planting program and development of a tree nursery.

3. Plan for Future Growth:

- Address "park desert" areas identified in the 2025-2045 Master Plan through acquisition or partnership development.
- Secure grant funding for at least two new recreation amenities or facility upgrades.
- Expand Heart River Golf Course facilities to accommodate increased demand.

KEY METRICS

- 100% of high-priority maintenance projects funded and underway by 2028.
- 10% reduction in energy use at major facilities.
- 2 new park or trail development projects initiated.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4



**Optimize
Funding**

Priority 4: Financial Sustainability and Partnerships

Diversify funding sources and strengthen partnerships to support long-term recreation and facility goals.

Goals & Objectives

1. Optimize Funding Streams:

- Expand the Dickinson Parks & Recreation Foundation's role in fundraising and sponsorship development.
- Apply for federal and state recreation grants annually (RTP, LWCF, OHF).

2. Maximize Return on Facilities:

- Conduct cost recovery and pricing analysis for programs and rentals by 2027.
- Introduce tiered membership and rental models for equity and revenue balance.

3. Leverage Partnerships:

- Formalize joint use and maintenance agreements with schools, City, and County.
- Expand corporate and tourism-based sponsorship opportunities tied to events and facilities.



Maximize Return



**Leverage
Partnerships**

KEY METRICS

- 10% increase in non-tax revenue annually.
- Foundation raises \$250,000 in sponsorships or donations by 2028.
- Cost recovery analysis completed for all major facilities.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5



Trail Connectivity

Priority 5: Trails, Connectivity, and Outdoor Recreation

Expand Dickinson's trail and park network to improve connectivity, accessibility, and regional tourism appeal.

Goals & Objectives

1. Improve Trail Connectivity:

- Close identified trail and sidewalk gaps within city limits by 2028.
- Expand Crooked Crane Trail and establish linkages to neighborhoods north of I-94.

2. Enhance Outdoor Recreation Access:

- Develop Patterson Lake as a year-round recreation destination with upgraded amenities.
- Improve signage and way-finding across the park system.
- Identify locations and develop additional athletic field spaces.
- Develop improved outdoor ice amenities.

3. Promote Active Lifestyles:

- Partner with schools and employers to promote trail-based wellness programs.



Outdoor Recreation



Active Lifestyles

KEY METRICS

- 3 additional miles of connected trails completed or funded.
- Annual community outdoor participation event attendance exceeds 2,000 participants.

IMPLEMENTATION & EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

This Strategic Plan will be reviewed annually by the Dickinson Parks & Recreation Board and staff leadership team. Each year's budget cycle will align capital and operational priorities with the goals outlined here.

Implementation Timeline

- **2026:** Launch workforce development, initiate capital maintenance projects, conduct baseline assessments.
- **2027:** Expand inclusive programming, implement new technology systems, complete facility energy audits.
- **2028:** Achieve target metrics, finalize major infrastructure upgrades, and evaluate progress toward the 2029–2031 Strategic Plan.

Performance Monitoring

- Annual report to the Park Board on key performance indicators.
- Public transparency through dashboards and community updates.
- Mid-term review in 2027 and comprehensive plan evaluation in late 2028.

CONCLUSION

The **Dickinson Parks & Recreation District Strategic Plan 2026–2028** provides a focused roadmap for maintaining excellence in recreation services, advancing equity and accessibility, and investing in sustainable infrastructure. Guided by the principles of leadership, integrity, and community service, DPRD will continue to inspire residents and visitors alike to live active, connected, and vibrant lives in Dickinson.

