

VENUES PARKS & ARTS

STRATEGIC PLAN

2017 - 2021

# CONTENTS & ABBREVIATIONS

CONTENTS

Letter from the Executive Director	Page 2
Aaron Perri	
Who We Are	Page 3
Mission, Vision, Primary Focus Areas	
What Guides Us	Page 4
Impact Drivers & Core Values	
Your Voice	Page 5
Community & Employee Input	
Planning Process	Page 6
Strategic Focus Areas	
Overview	Page 8
Major Capital Investment	Page 9
Asset Management	Page 11
Event & Program Optimization	Page 13
Customer Engagement	Page 15
Employee Development	Page 17
Planning Participants	Page 19
Appendix	Page 20





NGS Neighborhood Groups & Proximate Stakeholders
PS Public Safety - Police & Fire Departments\*
PW Department of Public Works

Rec

RP

SBCSC

Venues

Venues Parks & Arts Recreation Division Relevant Interest Partners (ex. Library, South Bend Civic Theater, Michiana Soccer) South Bend Community School Corporation Morris Performing Arts, Palais Royale,

& Century Center

VPA Department of Venues Parks & Arts

VPA-ED Executive Director of VPA

VPA-DD Deputy Director of VPA

VPA-F Venues Parks & Arts Foundation

VPA-F&G Facilities and Grounds Division

VPA-X Experience Division

\*City of South Bend Department



# LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Executive Director** 

The Venues Parks & Arts Department has continued to create a more livable South Bend through its commitment to our City values of accountability, inclusion, excellence, innovation, and empowerment. This strategic plan expands on this commitment with intentional goal-setting, including the largest investment in our shared public spaces in South Bend's history. Our rejuvenated parks and trails system will support community health, safety, equity, and our economy. By incorporating extensive resident input, we're enabling residents to shape the future of our community. It is through our public venues and green spaces that we can best empower residents to thrive.

Mayor Pete Buttigieg City of South Bend



Through strategic planning sessions, informal conversations and group meetings, our entire department – skilled trades staff, custodians, recreation programmers, event and marketing professionals, managers and administrators – has provided input on the state and direction of the South Bend's Venues Parks & Arts Department. The department consults some of the most sophisticated data available alongside industry trends and benchmarks. It includes

the diverse input of very important partners and advocates from within the city and beyond. Compiling this information results in this meaningful and lasting plan that provides a clear vision for our department and a set of values to guide us as we work. Our 2017-2021 Strategic Plan sets forth our focus areas and objectives, and lays out some specific initiatives for us to achieve - things like acquiring new park land, expanding the impact of our recreational programming, caring for our natural and built environment, providing opportunities for our workforce and creating sustainable resources for future successes. If we follow the plan, I am confident we will inspire a more livable city for all, fueling our mission for generations to come.

Aaron Perri

# WHO WE ARE

# OUR MISSION

Venues Parks & Arts inspires a more livable South Bend for all, connecting us to emotionally engaging experiences and to one another.

# **EVERY RESIDENT,** EVERY YEAR.



**Every resident** of South Bend is positively engaged at least once every year.

# PRIMARY FOCUS AREAS



& Culture



Recreation Parks Wellness Nature



SURPRISE & DELIGHT

# WHAT GUIDES US

## DEPARTMENTAL IMPACT DRIVERS

The places we care for and the services and programs we offer have a significant impact on:



**Erasing societal** divides and ensuring the ability to thrive for all, regardless of income level, race, gender, ability, orientation or age.



**Creating strong** and safe neighborhoods and providing significant return on investment.



**Enhancing the** physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of individuals.



Responsible use and protection of the natural environment through conservation and sustainability practices.

# CITY OF SOUTH BEND CORE VALUES



For each major area of service delivery, establish South Bend as the best in the state, and/or in the top 25% nationally, measuring and reporting progress.



Establish a work environment that enables employees to contribute richly to the administration and the community, taking pride and ownership in our work.



**Ensure the City** administration. as an employer and as a purchaser, reflects the community it serves and includes diverse voices in our decision-making and actions.



Deliver better services more efficiently by introducing approaches to government operations, questioning habits and using evidence to



COUNTABILI

Put residents first always, offering services at the greatest value to the taxpayer, with clear and transparent indications of how the government is using public resources.



# PLANNING PROCESS

# CURRENT CONDITIONS & ASSET ANALYSIS

The first step in setting the bold strategy for transformation of the system involved a complete study of the current conditions of the system's parks and services. A comprehensive inventory of the facilities, public lands and services was then informed by benchmarking with comparative communities. Establishing the baseline of our current level of service prepared us to begin future planning. A study of changing trends and shifting user preferences was used to create an understanding of the gaps and likely needed changes to the current inventory for the future.

# STAKEHOLDER & COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

Extensive public feedback was gathered from community meetings, statistically valid surveying, stakeholder and issue-centric focus group discussions to ensure South Bend's particular needs and desires for their public system was captured. This was done at the neighborhood level, the city level and was also targeted at specific park, region and program improvement requirements.

## PRIORITIES & PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

Using both the analysis of current conditions and assets in addition to community feedback, VPA identified priorities that best captured the future needs of our parks system, venues and public spaces. Previous planning efforts, including the Parks Master Plan, Reginal Cities Economic Plan, City Comprehensive Plan and other neighborhood specific plans, also informed the priorities. The goals of these planning efforts are identified in the strategic plan as supporting documents.

# **DEVELOPMENT OF OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES**

To help refine the strategic goals of VPA, the VPA Strategy Team, consisting of leaders in all department divisions, finalized a set of defined focus areas with objectives and strategies. These objectives were developed following several leadership team meetings, SB Stat evaluations, leadership development retreats, Drucker Institute training sessions, and facility experience audits.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Strategic Plan was reviewed by the VPA Strategic Team and presented to the Board of Park Commissioners for review and adoption. Each of the targeted strategies has an assigned owner to lead the issue towards completion. Each strategy will be further broken down into actionable steps, led by the owner, with a particular focus on the key considerations. Review of the overall Strategic Plan will be on at least an annual basis.

# OUR ACTION PLAN FOR A MORE LIVABLE South Bend



# STRATEGIC FOCUS-AREAS

MAJOR CAPITAL INVESTMENTS



ASSET MANAGEMENT





EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT



# MAJOR CAPITAL INVESTMENTS



Objectives	Key Considerations	Lead Role/	imeline 18 2019 2020 2021	forming Documents
Objective 1.1  PROJECT IDENTIFICATION  Identify a suite of projects that meets the community's needs as defined through public feedback, professional research and consultance, industry benchmarks and pertinent data sources.	•Data-Driven •Consistent/Complements Other Plans	VPA-ED/	1.1a 1.1h 1.1c 1.1c 1.1f 1.1f 1.1f 1.1g	GRASP Index Trust for Public Land City Comprehensive Plan, Community Building Goal #1, 2, 3, 4 Land Use Policies, Public Facilities Goal #1 Riverfront Conceptual Framework 2014 Parks Master Plan, Master Capital P City Cemetery Plan
Objective 1.2  PROJECT SCOPE, IMPACTS, & COSTS  Define conceptual scope of each project, explore potential societal impacts and gather preliminary opinions of cost.	Social Equity Ecological Stewardship Neighborhood & Economic Impact Health & Wellness Public Safety	VPA-ED/ VPA-F&G, 3RD	1.2; 1.2! 1.2; 1.2; 1.2;	Project Scoping & Impact Scores Parks Master Plan Goal #7
Objective 1.3  PUBLIC COMMUNICATION  A comprehensive communication strategy designed to educate residents, to engage with them throughout the project, and to inspire civic pride.	Dedicated Website Engaging Content Feedback Tools Project Tracking Physical Collateral/On-Location Educational Elements	VPA-ED/ Mayor's Office	1.3.	a Parks Master Plan Goal #6
Objective 1.4	·Private Investment / Fundraising	VPA-ED/	1.4.	a Parks Master Plan Goal #2

Objective 1.5

does not raise taxes.

#### **PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

Realistic, yet aggressive timelines, that are attentive to community needs and concurrent projects.

**PROJECT FINANCING** 

A fiscally responsible funding strategy

that leverages outside investment and

Prioritization/Phasing

·Redevelopment Funding

Operational & Maintenance (2.3)

·Parks Bond

·Other Public/Private Projects

Project Management & Owners

# 3rd/

Mayor's Office,

A&F. CI. PW.

VPA-F, VPA-X

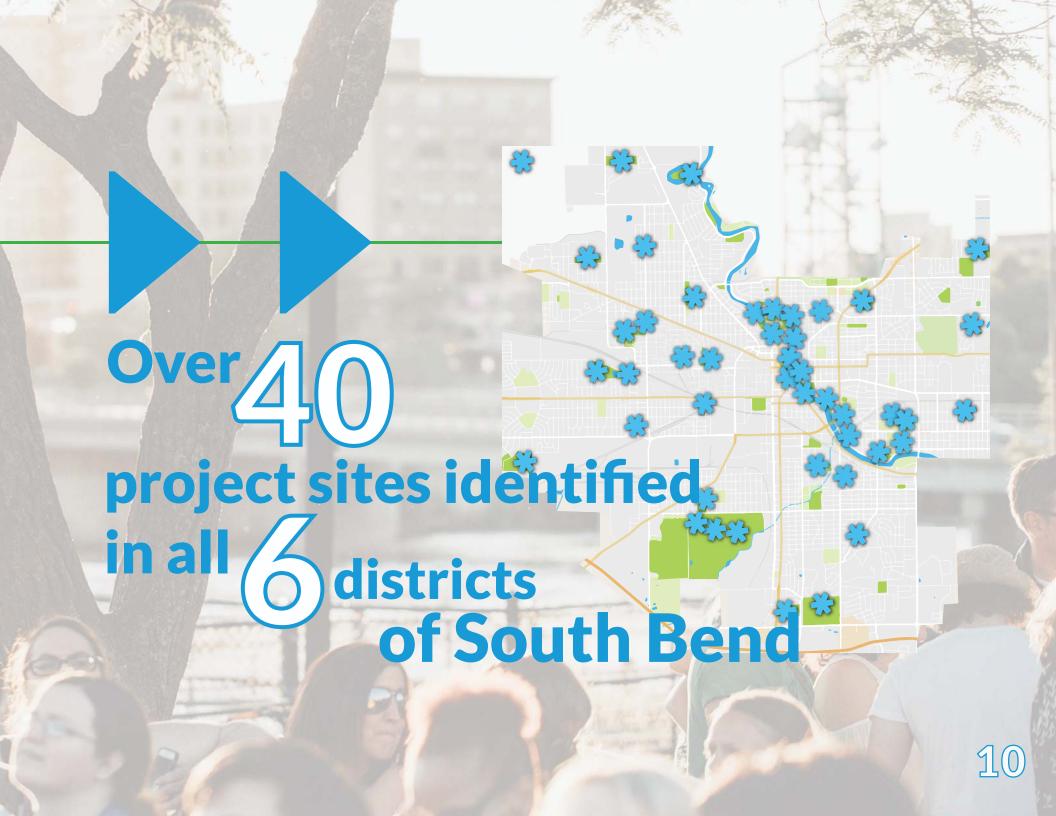
VPA-ED, PW. CI, PS, RP



1.5a My SB Parks & Trails Project List



begin





# MANAGEMENT

#### **Objectives**

#### **Key Considerations**

#### Lead Role/ Contributor

#### **Timeline**

#### **Informing Documents** 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

#### Objective 2.1

#### **FACILITY MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE**

Identify and institutionalize a software system to increase effectiveness of preventative and routine maintenance.

- ·GIS Integrated
- ·Work Order Tracking
- ·Mobile Inputs/Management
- ·Maintenance Logs & Information
- ·Digitize all Physical Files
- ·Compatible with COSB Systems

IT/ VPA-F&G



2.1a Parks Master Plan Objective 1.5

2.1b City Comprehensive Plan, Public Facilities, Goal 5.1.1

#### Objective 2.2

#### STANDARD OPERATIONAL **PROCEDURE**

Create written policy and procedures for all recurring tasks or situations to reduce waste, improve efficiencies and empower workforce.

- ·Easy to Follow & Readily Available
- ·Training Videos
- ·Building Captains
- ·Measurement Tools
- ·Install & Empower Creativity

#### VPA-F&G/



2.2a VPA Admin Policies & Procedures. Storm Damage Manual

2.2b Parks Master Plan Goal #1

#### Objective 2.3

#### **STANDARDS OF CARE**

Defined specifications for the level of service that each facility or property receives.

- ·Trails 365 ·Trees
- ·River Banks ·Recycling
- ·Wi-Fi
- ·Lighting
- ·Cleanliness
- ·Nuisance Animal
- ·No Mow/Prairie
- ·Invasive vs Native

#### **VPA-F&G**



2.3a Natural Resources Management Plan

NRPA Maintenance Modes I-V

Parks Master Plan Goal #1

2.3d City Comprehensive Plan, Urban Design Goal #1, 3, 4 Public Facilities, Goal 1,5 Transportation, Goal 3,4

Ecological Management Goal #3, 4, 7, 8

#### Objective 2.4

#### **CAPITAL FUND**

A dedicated, self-sustaining capital fund with consistent cash flows available for capital projects.

- ·Foundation Combination & Positioning
- ·Donor and Memorial Program
- ·Endowment
- ·Contract Consolidations
- ·Energy Savings
- ·Not Routine Maintenance

#### VPA-DD/

A&F. VPA-F&G. VPA-X, VPA-F



2.4a Parks Master Plan Goal #2

#### Objective 2.5

#### **VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

A sustainable volunteer program that increases civic engagement and improves levels of service throughout city.

- ·Volunteer Tracking / Software
- ·Training
- ·Needs Database
- ·Recognition
- ·Corporate & Non-profit Partnerships

#### VPA-X/ HR





2.5a Parks Master Plan Objective 2.2.10











#### **Objectives**

#### **Key Considerations**

# **Lead Role/**Contributor

#### **Timeline**

2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

#### **Informing Documents**

Objective 2.6

#### "FRIENDS OF..." GROUPS

Healthy partnerships with neighborhood and special interest groups to influence direction, gather resources and input work to act as multiplier within the system.

·Systematize "Friends of..." Groups

- Neighborhoods & Pocket ParksExpectations/MOUs/Authority
- ·Topical Advocacy Groups
- -Ecological, Recreation, Arts, ADA, etc.

VPA-X/ NRC



2.6a Parks Master Plan Objective 3.1

Objective 2.7

#### **SAFETY & SECURITY**

Enhanced, modernized and formalized systems for more consistency and care.

Building Protocols (Entry, Emergency)

- •Equipment Inspections/Lock Out
- ·Safety Committee
- ·Ambassador & Volunteer Coverage

**VPA-F&G/**SBPD, S&R,
SC



2.7a Parks Master Plan Objective 3.1.1

Objective 2.8

#### **PUBLIC ART**

Employ a displayed art strategy for outdoor, public spaces that empowers artists and respects public assets.

•Public Arts Commission (2.6)

- ·Policies
- ·Temporary vs Permanent
- ·Promotion
- ·Financing (2.3)

VPA-X/



2.8a Parks Master Plan Objective 3.8

8b City Comprehensive Plan, Arts & Culture Goal #1-6





# EVENT & PROGRAM-OPTIMIZATION

#### **Objectives**

#### **Key Considerations**

# **Lead Role/**Contributor

#### 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

**Timeline** 

#### **Informing Documents**

Objective 3.1

#### **REALIGN OFFERINGS**

Optimize public resources and personnel to provide most value to the residents of South Bend through elimination, alteration or addition of programs and events.

- ·Identify Gaps & Redundancies
- ·Leverage Partnerships
- ·Quality & Quantity Measures

### REC/



- .1a Recreation Mission Statement
- 3.1b Program Audit
- 3.1c 2014 Master Plan
- 3.1d Riverfront Conceptual Framework
- 3.1e Parks Master Plan Objective 4.5.5, 4.5.3
- 3.1f City Comprehensive Plan, Public Facilities Goal 5, 7.2

Objective 3.2

#### **COST RECOVERY**

Balance of public resources and user fees to allow sustainable and accessible programming.

- ·Target of 40%
- Scholarships
- ·Foundation Combination & Positioning
- •Sponsorship/Donations

**VPA-DD/** A&F, VPA-X



- 3.2A Cost Recovery Methodology
- 3.2b Parks Master Plan Goal #2

Objective 3.3

#### MARKETING ALLOCATIONS

Understanding positions within the marketplace and budgeting an annual promotional schedule for each program or event.

•Experience Division vs Staff Created •Budget Marketing Allocations **VPA-X/** VPA-F



3.3a Marketing Plan, Sample Allocation





# EVENT & PROGRAMOPTIMIZATION



Objectives	<b>Key Considerations</b>	Lead Role/ Contributor	Timeline 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021	Informing Documents
Objective 3.4 CITY-WIDE SIGNATURE EVENT An annual occasion to celebrate the city's co	Regional Draw Highly Commercialized/Branded Private Funding Leverages Outside Groups/Orgs ulture, progress and creativity.	<b>VPA-X/</b> RP, VPA-F	*	3.4a City Comprehensive Plan, Economic Development Goal #9 3.4b City Comprehensive Plan, Community Building, Goal # 7
Objective 3.5  BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FUND  Consistently funded accounts available to increase economic impact.	•Self Promotion at Morris PAC •Buy-down Fund at Century Center	VPA-DD/ Venues, CCBM, A&F	<b>&gt;&gt;</b> *	3.5a AECOM Economic Report 3.5b Parks Master Plan Goal #2 3.5c City Comprehensive Plan, Economic Development Goal #9 3.5d City Comprehensive Plan, Arts & Culture Goal #5 & 6
Objective 3.6  MOBILE RECREATION PROGRAM A dynamic, traveling recreation program designed to increase geographic levels of service and improve relevancy.	·Concept & Manufacturing ·Programming ·Partnerships ·Policies & Scheduling ·Launch	REC/ VPA-X, RP, SBCSC, VPA-F&G	*	3.6a Parks Master Plan Objective 6.4 3.6b City Comprehensive Plan, Arts & Culture Goal #1 & 4 City Comprehensive Plan, Public Facilities Goal



# CUSTOMER-ENGAGEMENT

Objectives	<b>Key Considerations</b>	<b>Lead Role/</b> Contributor	<b>Timeline</b> 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021	Informing Documents
Objective 4.1 WEBSITE Create a new department website that is consistent with the VPA brand identity and optimized for accessing programs and events.	•Empowers Self Service •Integrated with Registration Software •Multiple Content Managers •Socially-Integrated •Mobile-First Design •Open Data for Resident Use	VPA-X/ REC, VPA-F&G	<b>*</b>	4.1a VPA Branding Guidelines
Objective 4.2  REGISTRATION SOFTWARE  Overhaul online and in-person registration processes and technology for ease of use.	•Encourage Online/Self Service •Maintain In-Person Options •Modernize Experience •Data Collection & Reporting •Review Morris PAC Ticket Window	IT/ REC, VPA-X	*	4.2a Customer Survey Results 4.2b Parks Master Plan 1.2.5
Objective 4.3 CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING Creating a culture that understands the customer's expectations and aligns resources and service standards to exceed them.	Reach All Staff "Surprise & Delight" -All Interactions = Service Opportunities -Technology to Assist -Measure Service Satisfaction -Internal Training/Outward Campaign	VPA-X/ VPA-F, Ambassadors, REC	<b>*</b>	4.3a Parks Master Plan Objective 4.3.3
Objective 4.4  BRAND MANAGEMENT  Development of a consistent visual identity and brand standards throughout VPA.	·Institutionalize VPA ·Unique Logos vs Brand Families ·Template/Locked Solutions ·Mascot	<b>VPA-X/</b> Mayor's Office	<b>&gt;&gt;</b> *	4.4a VPA Brand Guidelines
			<b>KEY</b> begin	significant completion

# CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT



**Objectives** 

**Key Considerations** 

**Lead Role/**Contributor

**Timeline** 

2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

**Informing Documents** 

Objective 4.5

**EXPERIENCE AUDITS** 

On-site visits to ensure brand is well represented and consistent and at all points of customer interaction.

Post-Construction EvaluationsMulti-level Staff Participation

VPA-F&G/ VPA-X. REC



4.5a Experience Audit Template & Results

Objective 4.6 **STORYTELLING** 

Shift marketing focus from solely promotional to engaging, real-life content that reinforces mission and goals.

Tie Activities to Mission
 Increase Digital Media Engagement
 Connect with Donors/Users
 Virality

**VPA-X/** REC, VPA-X



4.6a Marketing Plan

4.6b Parks Master Plan Goal #6







#### **Objectives**

#### **Key Considerations**

#### Lead Role/ Contributor

#### **Timeline**

2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

#### **Informing Documents**

#### Objective 5.1

#### HIRING PROCESS

Reinforce organizational mission and culture throughout search, hiring and orientation stages of employment.

·Diversity of Staff

·On-Boarding

·Culture Book

·City Policy Training (5.2)

·Mission Focus

·Peer Fellowship

HR/

**VPA-DD** 



- 5.1a Recent Employee Demographic Data
- 5.1b COSB Policy and Procedure Manual, **Human Resources Policies**
- 5.1c COSB Orientation Packet
- 5.1d COSB Inclusion & Diversity Guidelines
- 5.1e VPA Recreation Programming Orientation
- 5.1f Parks Master Plan Objective 6.2.1

#### Objective 5.2

#### CITY POLICY TRAINING

Formalized, written and definitive training for all manager-level staff and above to increase productivity, empower workforce and reduce ambiguity.

- ·Purchasing
- ·Human Resources
- ·Legal
- ·Finance & Budgeting
- ·Inter-Departmental Relations
- ·Consolidate Purchasers
- ·Emergency Preparedness

#### VPA-DD/

HR, D&I, S&R, Legal, A&F



- 5.2a Employee Handbook
- 5.2b COSB Policy and Procedure Manual, Purchasing Policy Guidelines, Diversity of Purchasing
- 5.2d VPA Administrative
  - Policies & Procedures Manual
- 5.2e Parks Master Plan Objective 4.2

#### Objective 5.3

#### **COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT**

A culture that reinforces a clear, consistent exchange of information and ideas while working to ensure all team members feel connected to their work product.

- SPARK Dollars
- ·Newsletters
- ·Teamsters & Part Timers (No Email)
- ·Cross-Functional Teams
- ·Face-to-Face Interactions
- ·Meeting & Team Building Regimen
- ·Centralized Digital Filing & Information

#### VPA-ED/

VPA-X, Mayor's Office



- 5.3a VPA Administrative Policies & Procedures Manual
- 5.3b VPA Communication Survey Results
- 5.3c VPA Marketing Manual
- 5.3d VPA Branding Guidelines
- 5.3e Parks Master Plan Objective 4.1, 4.4















# EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT



#### **Objectives**

#### **Key Considerations**

# **Lead Role/**Contributor

#### **Timeline**

2017 2018 2019 2020 2021

#### **Informing Documents**

Objective 5.4

#### **INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

A meaningful program in every division, adding mutual value to the participant and City of South Bend.

·Higher Education Partners
·South Bend Affinity/Ownership

**VPA-X/** HI-ED, SBCSC



5.4a Parks Master Plan Objective 3.7

4b City Comprehensive Plan, Community Building, Goal 1.6 Economic Development Goal #3

Objective 5.5

## YOUTH JOB DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

An entry-level, youth employment program designed to teach work and life skills.

·Shift Summer Employment

- ·Professional Office Days
- ·Paid Positions
- ·South Bend Affinity/Ownership

VPA-F&G/ REC. HR



5.5a Parks Master Plan Objective 4.2.9

5.5b City Comprehensive Plan, Economic Development Goal #3.2 & 3.3 Education Goal #4

Objective 5.6

#### **CONTINUING EDUCATION**

All levels of staff receive formalized opportunities to improve professional and interpersonal skills.

Mentorship

- ·Site Visits
- Associations
- ·Jr. Level Participation

HR, VPA-DD/ HR, RP, HI-ED



5.6a Parks Master Plan Goal 4



# SPECIAL THANKS TO ...

# RESIDENTS

who engaged with planning processes that shaped this plan

# S VPA STAFF

who voiced their observations to identify areas of need in the department and the city

# **LEADERSHIP TEAM**

who guided this process by identifying priorities and refining our goals as a department

Jackie Appleman **Aaron Bauer Tammy Bennett** Mike Bueno Kari Bumgardner Jim Byers

**Ray Comer** Michelle DeBeck **Eva Ennis** Matt Esau **Dave Firestone** Nick Gaul

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John Martinez Gregory McGowan Paul McMinn Adam Miller Chris Moffitt Paul Moreland

Matthew Moyers Karen Myers Susan O'Connor Adam Oltman **Aaron Perri** Amy Roush

Maurice Scott **Patrick Sherman** Kristine Skoglund Courtney Sniadecki Jessica Spoor **Tony Stearns** 

Cynthia Taylor **Brent Thompson** Kimberly Williams Kara Wood Amanda Yasko Denise Zigler

# KEY CONSULTANTS

Smith Group JJR **Capraro Consulting Services**  Jones Petrie Rafinski **United Consulting** 

**Green Play LLC** Trust for Public Land Rundel Ernstberger Assoc. **Troyer Group** 

# CITY OF SOUTH BEND DEPARTMENTS

**Leadership of Mayor Pete Buttigieg** 

**Community Investment** 

Administration & Finance Public Works

Police Department

Fire Department



# APPENDIX

## **INFORMING DOCUMENTS**

My SB Parks & Trails Capital Development Project List1.1a
GRASP Index1.1b
Trust for Public Land Park Score
City Comprehensive Plan
Riverfront Conceptual Framework
Parks Master Plan
City Cemetery Plan1.1g
Coal Line Trail Plan
My SB Parks & Trails Project Map1.2a
Cost Opinions1.2b
Project Scoping & Impact Scores 1.2c
Parks Administration Policies & Procedures Manual2.2a
Natural Resources Management Plan
NRPA Maintenance Modes I-V2.3b
Recreation Mission Statement
Program Audit
Marketing Plan
AECOM Economic Report
VPA Branding Guidelines4.1a
Customer Survey Results4.2a
Experience Audit Template & Results4.5a
Recent Employee Demographic Data
COSB Employee Policies
COSB Orientation Packet
COSB Inclusion & Diversity Guidelines5.1d
VPA Communication Survey Results5.3b





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