

Planning a **MORE
LIVABLE**
South Bend
for all



VENUES PARKS & ARTS
STRATEGIC PLAN

2017 - 2022

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* ABBREVIATIONS

3rd	Outside Professional Contractors
A&F	Administration and Finance*
BPW	Board of Park Commissioners
CC	Common Council
CCBM	Civic Center Board of Managers
CI	Community Investment*
DTSB	Downtown South Bend, Inc.
EAC	Ecological Advocacy Committee
ENV	Environmental Coalition
	- DNR, EPA, IDEM, Army Corps
F&G	Facilities & Grounds Division - VPA
HI-ED	Higher Education Institutions
HPC	Historic Preservation Commission
HR	Human Resources*
IT	Innovation & Technology*
Legal	Legal Department*
NGS	Neighborhood Groups & Proximate Stakeholders
PS	Public Safety - Police & Fire Departments*
PW	Department of Public Works
Rec	Venues Parks & Arts Recreation Division
RP	Relevant Interest Partners (ex. Library, South Bend Civic Theater, Michiana Soccer)
S&R	Safety & Risk*
SBCSC	South Bend Community School Corporation
Venues	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

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 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 a meaningful and lasting plan that provides a clear vision for our department and a set of values to guide us as we work. Our *2017-2022 Strategic Plan* sets forth 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.

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Perri'.

Aaron Perri
Executive Director

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.**

* OUR PRIMARY FOCUS AREAS



**Arts
& Culture**



Recreation



**Public
Placemaking**

{ SURPRISE & DELIGHT }



OUR VISION *

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

WHAT GUIDES US

DEPARTMENTAL IMPACT DRIVERS

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



SOCIAL EQUITY

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



NEIGHBORHOOD & ECON IMPACT

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



HEALTH & WELLNESS

Enhancing the physical, mental and emotional wellbeing of individuals.



ECOLOGICAL STEWARDSHIP

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

CITY OF SOUTH BEND CORE VALUES



EXCELLENCE

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.



EMPOWERMENT

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



INCLUSION

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.



INNOVATION

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



ACCOUNTABILITY

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.

YOUR VOICE

200



sticky note comments
produced at
public meetings



72%

employee participation
in communication
and needs survey

Staff participation in
Drucker Institute
training sessions
to develop a mission
statement for the
Recreation Division.



60+

neighborhood
meetings &
focus groups



18 public
open houses



2,000 online
comments
& survey responses

Department participation in the
Center for American Progress
CitiStat Model,
an 18-month long,
inter-department evaluation
of program and
process improvements.

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

* EVENT & PROGRAM OPTIMIZATION

* CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

* EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT



MAJOR CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

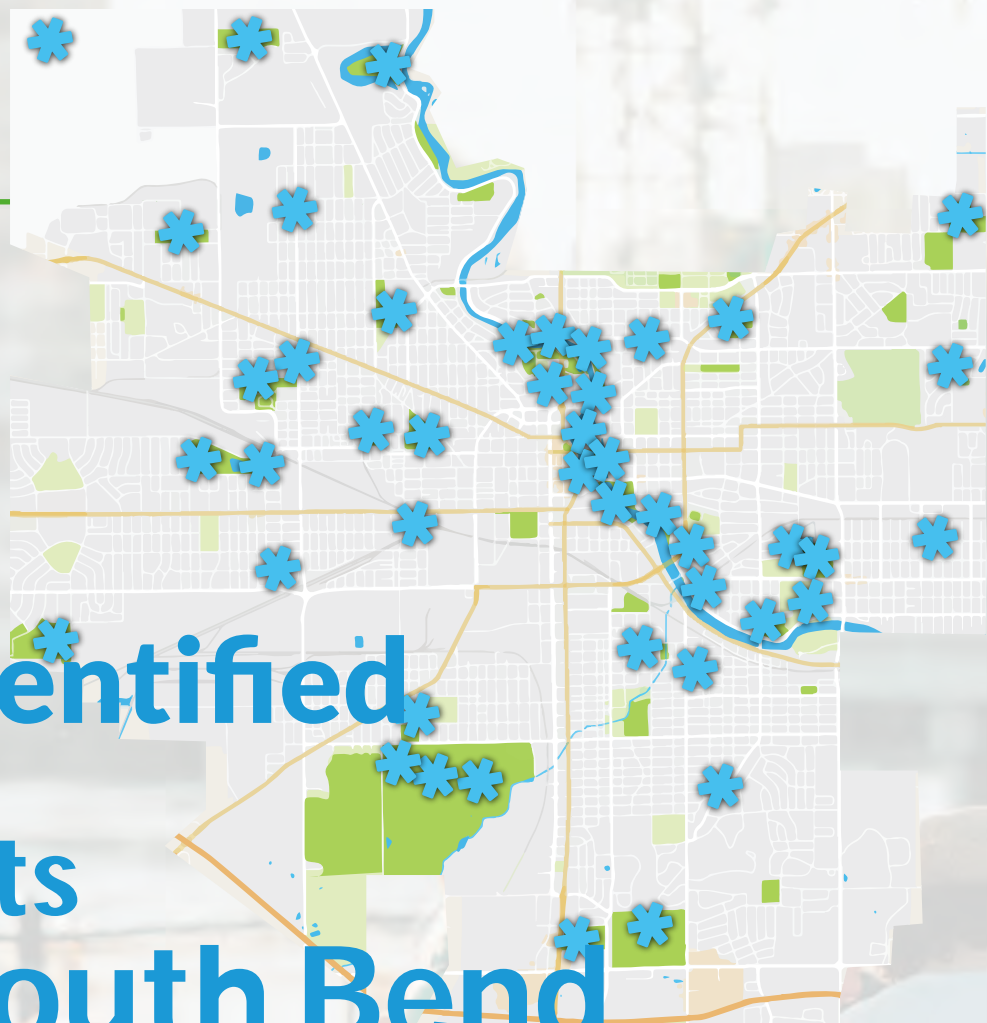
STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 1

Objectives	Key Considerations	Lead Role/ Contributor	Timeline					Informing Documents
			2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Objective 1.1 PROJECT IDENTIFICATION Identify a suite of projects that meets the community's needs as defined through public feedback, professional research and consultancy, industry benchmarks and pertinent data sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">·Data-Driven·Consistent/Complements Other Plans	VPA-ED/ All						<div>1.1a My SB Parks & Trails Project List</div> <div>1.1b GRASP Index</div> <div>1.1c Trust for Public Land</div> <div>1.1d City Comprehensive Plan, Community Building Goal #1, 2, 3, 4 Land Use Policies, Public Facilities Goal #5</div> <div>1.1e Riverfront Conceptual Framework</div> <div>1.1f 2014 Parks Master Plan, Master Capital Plan</div> <div>1.1g City Cemetery Plan</div> <div>1.1h Coal Line Trail Plan</div>
Objective 1.2 PROJECT SCOPE, IMPACTS, & COSTS Define conceptual scope of each project, explore potential societal impacts and gather preliminary opinions of cost.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">·Social Equity·Ecological Stewardship·Neighborhood & Economic Impact·Health & Wellness·Public Safety	VPA-ED/ VPA-F&G, 3RD						<div>1.2a Project Map</div> <div>1.2b Project Cost Opinions</div> <div>1.2c Project Scoping & Impact Scores</div> <div>1.1f Parks Master Plan Goal #7</div> <div>1.1g City Comprehensive Plan</div>
Objective 1.3 PUBLIC COMMUNICATION Develop a comprehensive communication strategy designed to educate residents, to engage with them throughout the project, and to inspire civic pride.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">·Dedicated Website·Engaging Content·Feedback Tools·Project Tracking·Physical Collateral/On-Location·Educational Elements	VPA-X/ Mayor's Office						<div>1.1f Parks Master Plan Goal #6</div>
Objective 1.4 PROJECT FINANCING Institute a fiscally responsible funding strategy that leverages outside investment and does not raise taxes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">·Private Investment / Fundraising·Redevelopment Funding·Parks Bond·Operational & Maintenance (2.3)	VPA-ED/ Mayor's Office, A&F, CI, PW, VPA-F, VPA-X						<div>1.1f Parks Master Plan Goal #2</div>
Objective 1.5 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION Create realistic, yet aggressive timelines, that are attentive to community needs and concurrent projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">·Prioritization/Phasing·Other Public/Private Projects·Project Management & Owners	3rd/ VPA-ED, PW, CI, PS, RP						<div>1.1a My SB Parks & Trails Project List</div>

KEY ▶ begin ▶ significant progress * completion



Over **40**
project sites identified
in all **6** districts
of South Bend



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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·GIS Integrated ·Work Order Tracking ·Mobile Inputs/Management ·Maintenance Logs & Information ·Digitize all Physical Files ·Compatible with COSB Systems 	IT/ VPA-F&G, Venues		▶	✱			1.1f Parks Master Plan Objective 1.5 1.1g 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Easy to Follow & Readily Available ·Training Videos ·Building Captains ·Measurement Tools ·Install & Empower Creativity 	VPA-F&G/ IT, Venues		▶	✱			2.2a VPA Admin Policies & Procedures, Storm Damage Manual 21.1f Parks Master Plan Goal #1
Objective 2.3 STANDARDS OF CARE Define specifications for the level of service that each facility or property receives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Trails 365 ·Trees ·River Banks ·Recycling ·Wi-Fi ·Lighting ·Cleanliness ·Nuisance Animal ·No Mow/Prairie ·Invasive vs Native 	VPA-F&G/ EAC, Venues		▶	▶	✱		2.3a Natural Resources Management Plan 2.3b NRPA Maintenance Modes I-V 1.1f Parks Master Plan Goal #1 1.1g 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 Create a dedicated, self-sustaining capital fund with consistent cash flows available for capital projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·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		▶	▶	▶	✱	1.1f Parks Master Plan Goal #2
Objective 2.5 VOLUNTEER PROGRAM Develop a sustainable volunteer program that increases civic engagement and improves levels of service throughout city.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Volunteer Tracking / Software ·Training ·Needs Database ·Recognition ·Corporate & Non-profit Partnerships 	VPA-X/ HR, Venues		▶	✱			1.1f Parks Master Plan Objective 2.2.10

Objectives	Key Considerations	Lead Role/ Contributor	Timeline					Informing Documents
			2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Objective 2.6 "FRIENDS OF..." GROUPS Build healthy partnerships with neighborhood and special interest groups to influence direction, gather resources and input work to act as multiplier within the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Systematize "Friends of..." Groups ·Neighborhoods & Pocket Parks ·Expectations/MOUs/Authority ·Topical Advocacy Groups ·Ecological, Recreation, Arts, ADA, etc. 	VPA-X/ NRG	▶	▶	✱			1.1f Parks Master Plan Objective 3.1
Objective 2.7 SAFETY & SECURITY Establish enhanced, modernized and formalized systems for more consistency and care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Building Protocols (Entry, Emergency) ·Equipment Inspections/Lock Out ·Safety Committee ·Ambassador & Volunteer Coverage 	VPA-F&G/ PS, S&R, Rec, Venues	▶	✱				1.1f 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Public Arts Commission (2.6) ·Policies ·Temporary vs Permanent ·Promotion ·Financing (2.3) 	VPA-X/ RP, Venues	▶	✱				1.1f Parks Master Plan Objective 3.8 1.1g City Comprehensive Plan, Arts & Culture Goal #1-6



Objectives	Key Considerations	Lead Role/ Contributor	Timeline					Informing Documents
			2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Gaps & Redundancies Leverage Partnerships Quality & Quantity Measures 	REC/ IT, VPA-X		▶ *				3.1a Recreation Mission Statement 3.1b Program Audit 1.1e Riverfront Conceptual Framework 1.1f Parks Master Plan Objective 4.5.5, 4.5.3 1.1g City Comprehensive Plan, Public Facilities Goal 5, 7.2
Objective 3.2 COST RECOVERY Balance public resources and user fees to allow sustainable and accessible programming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target of 40% Scholarships Foundation Combination & Positioning Sponsorship/Donations 	VPA-DD/ A&F, VPA-X		▶▶ *				1.1f Parks Master Plan Goal #2, Cost Recovery Methodology
Objective 3.3 MARKETING ALLOCATIONS Develop an understanding of positions within the marketplace and budgeting an annual promotional schedule for each program or event.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience Division vs Staff Created Budget Marketing Allocations 	VPA-X/ VPA-F		▶ *				3.3a Marketing Plan, Sample Allocation

KEY ▶ begin ▶ significant progress * completion



EVENT & PROGRAM OPTIMIZATION

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 3

Objectives	Key Considerations	Lead Role/ Contributor	Timeline					Informing Documents
			2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Objective 3.4 CITY-WIDE SIGNATURE EVENT Host an annual occasion to celebrate the city's culture, progress and creativity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Draw Highly Commercialized/Branded Private Funding Leverages Outside Groups/Orgs 	VPA-X/ RP, VPA-F	*					1.1g City Comprehensive Plan, Economic Development Goal #9 City Comprehensive Plan, Community Building, Goal # 7
Objective 3.5 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FUND Establish consistently funded accounts available to increase economic impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self Promotion at Morris PAC Buy-down Fund at Century Center 	Venues/ CCBM, A&F	▶	▶	*			3.5a AECOM Economic Report 1.1f Parks Master Plan Goal #2 1.1g City Comprehensive Plan, Economic Development Goal #9 City Comprehensive Plan, Arts & Culture Goal #5 & 6
Objective 3.6 MOBILE RECREATION PROGRAM Build a dynamic, traveling recreation program designed to increase geographic levels of service and improve relevancy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concept & Manufacturing Programming Partnerships Policies & Scheduling Launch 	REC/ VPA-X, RP, SBCSC, VPA-F&G	▶	*				1.1f Parks Master Plan Objective 6.4 1.1g City Comprehensive Plan, Arts & Culture Goal #1 & 4 City Comprehensive Plan, Public Facilities Goal

Objectives	Key Considerations	Lead Role/ Contributor	Timeline					Informing Documents
			2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Objective 4.1 WEBSITE Create a new department website that is consistent with the VPA brand identity and optimized for accessing programs and events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·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, Venues		▶ *				4.1a VPA Branding Guidelines
Objective 4.2 REGISTRATION SOFTWARE Overhaul the online and in-person registration processes and technology for ease of use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Encourage Online/Self Service ·Maintain In-Person Options ·Modernize Experience ·Data Collection & Reporting ·Review Morris PAC Ticket Window 	IT/ REC, VPA-X, Venues		*				4.2a Customer Survey Results 1.1f Parks Master Plan 1.2.5
Objective 4.3 CUSTOMER SERVICE TRAINING Create a culture that understands the customer's expectations and aligns resources and service standards to exceed them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·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, Venues		▶ *				1.1f Parks Master Plan Objective 4.3.3
Objective 4.4 BRAND MANAGEMENT Develop a consistent visual identity and brand standards throughout VPA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Institutionalize VPA ·Unique Logos vs Brand Families ·Template/Locked Solutions ·Mascot 	VPA-X/ Mayor's Office	▶ ▶ *					4.1a VPA Brand Guidelines

KEY ▶ begin ▶ significant progress * completion

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 4

Objectives	Key Considerations	Lead Role/ Contributor	Timeline					Informing Documents
			2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Objective 4.5 EXPERIENCE AUDITS Conduct on-site visits to ensure brand is well represented and consistent at all points of customer interaction from major Venues to smaller park facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Post-Construction Evaluations ·Multi-level Staff Participation 	VPA-F&G/ VPA-X, REC, Venues						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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Tie Activities to Mission ·Increase Digital Media Engagement ·Connect with Donors/Users ·Virality 	VPA-X/ REC, VPA-X, Venues						3.3a Marketing Plan 1.1f Parks Master Plan Goal #6



Objectives	Key Considerations	Lead Role/ Contributor	Timeline					Informing Documents
			2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Objective 5.1 HIRING PROCESS Reinforce organizational mission and culture throughout search, hiring and orientation stages of employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·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 1.1f Parks Master Plan Objective 6.2.1
Objective 5.2 CITY POLICY TRAINING Formalize a written and definitive training for all manager-level staff and above to increase productivity, empower workforce and reduce ambiguity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Purchasing ·Human Resources ·Legal ·Finance & Budgeting ·Inter-Departmental Relations ·Consolidate Purchasers ·Emergency Preparedness ·Natural Resource Management Plan 	VPA-DD/ HR, D&I, S&R, Legal, A&F		▶	▶	✱		5.1b COSB Policy and Procedure Manual, Purchasing Policy Guidelines, Diversity of Purchasing 1.1b VPA Administrative Policies & Procedures Manual 1.1f Parks Master Plan Objective 4.2
Objective 5.3 COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT Cultivate 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·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		▶	✱			2.2a VPA Administrative Policies & Procedures Manual 5.3b VPA Communication Survey Results 3.3a VPA Marketing Manual 4.1a VPA Branding Guidelines 1.1f Parks Master Plan Objective 4.1, 4.4

KEY ▶ begin ▶ significant progress ✱ completion



EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 5

Objectives	Key Considerations	Lead Role/ Contributor	Timeline					Informing Documents
			2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Objective 5.4 INTERNSHIP PROGRAM Institute a meaningful program in every division, adding mutual value to the participant and City of South Bend.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher Education Partners South Bend Affinity/Ownership 	VPA-X/ HI-ED, SBCSC	▶	▶	✱			1.1f Parks Master Plan Objective 3.7 1.1g City Comprehensive Plan, Community Building, Goal 1.6 Economic Development Goal #3
Objective 5.5 YOUTH JOB DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM Create an entry-level, youth employment program designed to teach work and life skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shift Summer Employment Professional Office Days Paid Positions South Bend Affinity/Ownership 	VPA-F&G/ REC, HR	▶	▶	✱			1.1f Parks Master Plan Objective 4.2.9 1.1g City Comprehensive Plan, Economic Development Goal #3.2 & 3.3 Education Goal #4
Objective 5.6 CONTINUING EDUCATION Offer all levels of staff formalized opportunities to improve professional and interpersonal skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mentorship Site Visits Associations Jr. Level Participation Natural Resource Management Plan 	HR, VPA-DD/ HR, RP, HI-ED	▶	▶	▶	✱		1.1f Parks Master Plan Goal 4



SPECIAL THANKS TO...

RESIDENTS

who engaged with planning processes that shaped this plan

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
Todd Brill
Suzanne Brill
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Trust for Public Land

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CITY OF SOUTH BEND DEPARTMENTS

Leadership of Mayor Pete Buttigieg

Community Investment
Police Department

Administration & Finance
Fire Department

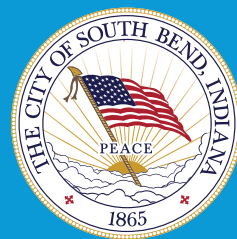
Public Works
Innovation & Technology



APPENDIX

INFORMING DOCUMENTS

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Morris Performing Arts Center

