



Communications Department  
Marketing and Communications Plan  
May 2015

## **Introduction**

As a public service agency, the Richland County Recreation Commission understands the need for and the importance of informing the public about recreation, facilities, services and programs available to them. More importantly, the Commission is committed to educating the public about the benefits of quality recreation services for individuals, families and the community, especially as our services are designed to respond to community needs and wants.

RCRC has a dedicated staff member, the Community Relations Division Head, who is responsible for marketing and communications planning and for oversight of all functions related to public relations and communications, both internally and externally. The Graphic Designer/Webmaster is responsible for overseeing design of all flyers, posters and other printed materials, as well as the agency's website.

## **Philosophy**

### **Create and maintain a recognized community brand.**

Most of our parks, recreation centers, community centers and other facilities are located in centralized communities. Each community identifies with the facilities that are unique to their neighborhoods. Generations of families utilize our facilities and participate in our athletic leagues, programs and classes. With our agency being spread out over 700 square miles, it is important that we create and communicate a brand that our patrons identify with, not only through their community park, but with the entire agency as a whole.

### **Tell the story of the benefits of parks and recreation.**

It is important that the Commission provide quality programs and services to the residents of Richland County. It is just as important that we educate the community and all of our target audiences on the benefits of those programs and services to children, adults and families, on the community, on our health, and on our quality of life.

### **Maintain an information delivery system that is cutting edge.**

Every effort is made to stay on top of new modes of communication, especially technology. Through the use of emerging social media outlets, such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, there are many innovative ways to communicate with Richland County residents. Using these popular methods to promote the mission of the Agency and our specialty programming, we can reach a broader audience of current and potential new patrons. The Marketing Team maintains an agency Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/richlandcountyrecreationcommission](http://www.facebook.com/richlandcountyrecreationcommission)) a Twitter account (RichRec) and our YouTube Channel (Richland Rec).

### **Transparency**

As a public service agency, primarily funded by County property taxes, our public wants to be informed about the management and inner workings of the Commission. Our goal is to assist the management team with clear messages and information to be presented to the public. We must be financially responsible with the public's money and in order to do that, we have several ways that the public can keep up-to-date with bond projects and strategic planning.



## **Target Audiences**

The programs offered by RCRC are broad, in order to meet the needs and interests of our community. Richland County includes a diverse population. According to the US Census Bureau's 2014 Population Estimates, the population of Richland County is 401,566. Estimates also show that children 5 years and younger is 24,093 and it is estimated that households with those 65 years and older is 43,369. As part of the 10 Year Comprehensive Master Plan, a community survey was conducted. The Communications Department utilizes the results of this survey to help promote the agency, future capital improvements and programming. **(Please see Attachment at the end of Document-Community Survey and the Results)**

In order to provide recreation to these audiences, we must have innovative programming at our facilities that offer a wide-range of activities for the young and old.

Other audiences include community leaders, churches, businesses and athletic leagues.

### **Elected Officials**

As a special purpose district, the Commission is overseen by the Richland County State Legislative Delegation. Members of the Delegation need to be kept informed by management on bond projects, Commission notes and ongoing projects. Relationships with Richland County Council are also important to maintain, due to the nature of our funding and future planning for projects in the Council's respective districts. County Council provides a network of communication, through the elected officials, to constituents and our patrons.

## Key Messages

All divisions of RCRC are guided by the mission statement and philosophy in determining their overriding annual goals.

The Richland County Recreation Commission has adopted the theme of “Enriching Lives and Connecting Communities.” Programs and services and the way we promote them focus on this important theme.

In addition, the mission statement summarizes the overall goal of the Commission:

Dedicated to Enriching Lives and Connecting Communities  
through Diverse Recreational Opportunities.

Lastly, communications will support the basic philosophy of the Commission, as stated below:

### Philosophy

The philosophy of the Commission is reflected in the following (selected) goals, actions, and position statements adopted by the Commission on various occasions.  
*(10 Year Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Comprehensive Plan)*

The Commission will:

- Base decisions for programs and facilities on the law, common sense, good data and statistics, national standards, resident input, and fiscal responsibility;
- Include meaningful public participation in the decision-making process;
- Given available resources, provide the best parks and facilities to meet the diverse recreation needs of the population within the service district;
- Systematically maintain and improve existing facilities in accordance to the 10 Year Comprehensive Plan;
- Promote cooperative efforts for shared recreation;
- Continue to acquire park land for recreation;
- Hire, develop, and retain a high-quality, diverse workforce.



## Shared Responsibilities

### Public Relations and Marketing Staff:

- For the Communications Department, the goal is to develop a public information and communications system designed to increase public awareness and understanding of and support for recreation services;
- Promote the agency and its activities and programs by utilizing a diverse array of public relations and marketing strategies and tools, including publications, print and broadcast media, electronic technologies (website, email and social media), and other creative avenues to maintain a consistently visible and credible presence in the community;
- Coordinate internal and external communications to enhance dialogue and promote trust among the staff (*Team Times*, employee newsletter; *TimeOut*, monthly e-newsletter; *The GamePlan*, quarterly program brochure); Facebook, Twitter and our YouTube Channel;
- Coordinate all forms of communications for consistent, timely and accurate messages;
- Serve as spokesperson for the agency;
- Coordinate media relations and communications. The media have an essential role in effectively communicating the Commission's key messages. It is the responsibility of the Communications Department to develop positive, ongoing relationships with the media, including proactive approaches to initiating stories and ideas that reinforce those messages;
- Plan and implement communications trainings, policies, and procedures;
- Plan and implement crisis and emergency communications plans;
- Develop and submit agency programs for a variety of awards and other recognition;
- Network with other communications professionals to stay informed on new methods and facilitate the use of potential partners.

### Park and Community Center Directors, Managers & Supervisors:

- Provide consistent, quality customer service;
- Implement programs that are responsive to the needs of the community;
- Establish and maintain relationships with park patrons and community groups;
- Work with Recreation Enrichment Committees to keep them informed about happenings at the park;
- Understand and follow guidelines and policies developed by the Communications Department with regards to publicity and the media;
- Make all communications as effective as possible, whether communicating with the public, with vendors or with each other;
- Utilize involvement in community organizations as communications opportunities.

## Internal & External Communications

A variety of methods are used to inform the public, including:

- Distribution of *The GamePlan*; our quarterly program guide which is printed and distributed at all of our facilities;
- Our agency brochure;
- Time Out (monthly e-newsletter);
- Our website ([www.richlandcountyrecreation.com](http://www.richlandcountyrecreation.com));
- Media releases for events, announcements or Commission projects;
- Business cards;
- Advertising in the local media;
- Social Media sites to include Facebook, Twitter and YouTube;
- Ties with the Columbia Convention and Visitors Bureau;
- Signage at all parks;
- Flyers distributed at schools;
- Community Events;
- The Rec Connect Video Series featured on our YouTube Channel;
- On-line registration system [www.richlandrec.com](http://www.richlandrec.com) provided by MyRec.

In addition, we have developed a strong network of support groups with which we communicate regularly. These include Recreation Enrichment Committees, community athletic leagues, afterschool parents, senior clubs, and neighborhood associations that meet at our facilities. We participate in expos throughout the year to generate interest in the Commission (i.e., Business Expo, Chamber's Making the Connection, Palmetto Health's Grand Affair, etc.). Our partners (area malls, hospitals, Senior Resources, Richland County Sheriff's Department, etc.) represent another vital link to the community.

## **Measuring Success**

As part of the 10 Year PROST Comprehensive Master Plan, community surveys were conducted. The responses to the survey provided information about the needs and wants of our patrons. Even though funding deficits have prevented the Commission from fully funding an outside marketing agency to perform such surveys and conduct market analysis, the Communication staff has made strides on developing new marketing tools that can assist with measuring the success of the Commission's goals. The main goal is to make an impact on the Commission's bottom line and to direct residents to their local recreation center or community center.

By monitoring social media outlets, conducting customer satisfaction surveys, adding software to monitor email lists and mailing lists, better equips the Communications Department with information that is beneficial to future planning and programming.



IMPLEMENTED BY RICHLAND COUNTY RECREATION COMMISSION

DATE: 5/20/15  
(Date Approved)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR APPROVAL: James Brown, III  
James Brown, III

For more information about this policy, contact the Community Relations Department.

**Richland County Recreation Commission 10 Year Master Plan  
Meeting Notes from Key Leadership, User Groups & the General Public  
October 27 & 28, 2014**

**Consolidated Notes from Meetings with:**

**RC Recreation Commission Staff/Community Center Directors:**

Andre Marks- Asst. Park Manager-Trenholm Park	Michael Marshall- Program Manager
Charlene Lyles-Manager-Ballentine Community Center	Ira Thomas-Athletic Coordinator
Kami King- Park Manager-St Andrews Park	Jeffrey Brown-Park Lane Adult Activity Center
Derrick Pugh- Afterschool/Summer Programs	Lisa Smarr- Adult Services Coordinator
Shaunta Cleveland-Park Manager-Bluff Rd	Matthew Parker- Park Manager-Blythewood
Andrew Scott-Manager-Adaptive Recreation	Kendrick Roach - Athletic Coordinator

**Key Leadership and User Group Meetings with:**

Wes Furgess, RC Recreation Commission, Board of Commissioners  
Marie Green, RC Recreation Commission, Board Chair  
Norman Jackson, Richland County Council, Chair  
Dr. Cynthia Cash-Greene, Superintendent- Richland County School District 1  
Vince Lowry, Athletic Director, Richland County School District 2  
Julie-Ann Dixon, Richland County Council  
Cheryl Mack Thompson- President, Pop Warner Football  
Ron Tryon, President, Columbia United Soccer  
David Stringer, Wheelchair Recreation, Division Head Human Resources RC Recreation Commission  
Comilla Sampson- RC Recreation Commission, Compliance Manager/ Responsible for CAPRA  
Rubin Salahuddin, President, Meadowlake Baseball League  
Lieutenant Myers, Richland County Sheriff's Dept.  
George Flagg, President, Friarsgate Basketball Association  
Jerry Odom, President, Columbia Tennis League  
Toya Scott, SC Youth Advocate Program

Neelay Bhatt reviewed the three pillars of our planning process (based on National Recreation and Park Association): health & wellness; conservation; & social equity. These will be weighed as we move forward with recommendations for the next 10 years.

Questions Posed:

1. *What does RCRC do well that you would like to continue over the next 10 years (and build upon)*  
*OR: What are RCRC's strengths?*
  - a. Community wide events. People enjoy coming, they get info there, the events are accessible (free) and they provide opportunities to socialize with other people.
  - b. Having a variety of offerings and opportunities to choose from.
  - c. Youth sports- Have a wide variety of sports all year long and kids are exposed to all.
  - d. Adult services and senior programming is well appreciated in the parks and community centers. Have a wide variety such as arthritis exercises- with good participation.
  - e. Good programs for seniors- safe, variety, entertainment
  - f. Competent staff; people that care for the community and the people they serve...to them it's more than just a job. It's the heart of what they do.
  - g. After school programs serve the community well.

**Richland County Recreation Commission 10 Year Master Plan  
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October 27 & 28, 2014**

- h. Communication- lots of information is being sent out to the community.
  - i. Excellent facilities and grounds- working on upgrading the ones that aren't nice. They are clean.
  - j. Amount of talent that they have already in staffing. That talent should be further nurtured and supported.
  - k. How staff uses their creativity- need to tap into staff as a resource.
  - l. Facilities are well used and are a good asset.
  - m. The RCRC is doing a good job with the dollars they have to work with- but need additional monies as the population grows.
  - n. Accessibility to facilities has increased over the years.
  - o. Good job of educating families about healthy living. Make it a part of their thought patterns.
  - p. Summer camps and recreational activities for youth are being done well.
  - q. RCRC serves the community well.
  - r. Used to work closely with RCRC before joining County Council, and there are a wide variety of services offered. Also the public utilizes their facilities.
  - s. The quality of the activities offered is very good.
  - t. As a resident, believes RCRC communicates well. Gets emails about programs and services from staff in a timely fashion.
  - u. As long as people are willing to drive, the offerings and facilities are acceptable /excellent.
  - v. Significant improvements have been made in adding staff resources.
  - w. RCRC has streamlined processes for reserving the fields, working with one person, etc. but it needs to be improved by moving things online.
  - x. Staff is very friendly and responsive- good partners to work with.
  - y. RCRC has good communicators and keep the Sheriff's Department updated on what is happening. They have a good working relationship with the Sheriff's Department.
  - z. RCRC does a good job offering parks and programs for children but must keep doing more.
  - aa. Facilities are their strength- they need to keep updating.
  - bb. Have a knowledgeable staff.
  - cc. Staff in recreation centers and community centers communicate well and build good relationships with people in the community.
  - dd. One of their strengths is having parks in their neighborhoods.
  - ee. RCRC Staff is responsive and they are good communicators.
  - ff. At any facility- users can seek out what is going on in that park; or they can find flyers.
  - gg. Good cross-promotion & good relationships between RCRC and the community.
  - hh. They are good partners and the park areas are always clean and well maintained.
2. *What are the unmet opportunities?*
- a. Marketing-
    - 1. Lack of marketing staff; need more advertising & publicity of programs.
    - 2. Need more digital marketing to spread the word in the community.
    - 3. Flyers and posters don't help bring in non-users, they only target users.
    - 4. Everything is now digital and they are missing the boat.



**Richland County Recreation Commission 10 Year Master Plan  
Meeting Notes from Key Leadership, User Groups & the General Public  
October 27 & 28, 2014**

5. If people don't know RCRC exists- they can't attract them.
6. There is a perception that they are youth sports. There is more to what they offer.
7. Electronic marquees and social media presence must be increased.
8. Having billboards in each of the four regions would be helpful.
- b. In terms of the three pillars: Health and wellness- they do well; but in conservation and social equity- work is needed and it will be important to "tell the story".
- c. Need online parent registration- which they don't have now. Outside of stopping by the facilities, or going online to their website- they don't get the word out. Need help marketing to new area residents. Have signs at some parks with marquees that can be changed. Need to let people know about programs through these. Lots of people are driving by the parks and they could let everyone know about programs- could also be done with changeable letter boards. Should be at every park. Nothing electronic, now.
- d. Create a brand/central theme of health & wellness for the agency. SC is 4<sup>th</sup> in obesity rate. The agency could address this and have overall weight loss initiative throughout the County.
- e. Cultural special events could bring in diverse groups such as the Hispanic community that isn't being reached....they should be brought into the fold.
- f. Expand non-traditional sports. (i.e wheelchair rugby for wounded warriors, active adult population, canoeing, kayaking, outdoor recreation among others). Need to reach out.
- g. Target teenage population for recreation opportunities. Mentoring program could partner with law enforcement, the community and other local agencies to address teenagers.
- h. Intergenerational activities should be expanded. (E.g. teens and seniors could be paired). The Commission currently compartmentalizes ages.
- i. Facility maintenance and cleanliness is an important area to ensure a great customer experience.
- j. Buildings need to be open in the AM for moms with small children, for homeschoolers, for retirees during the day, etc. Staffing and budget limitations hinder having centers and facilities open all day.
- k. Phones ring with no answering machines during the day in some community centers. There are unmet needs out there. Sometimes buildings don't open until 6PM or later. People work round the clock and would like access to varied programs at varied times. While this may not be possible at every facility- there could be a highbred solution- i.e. MWF. Especially important is access to fitness equipment.
- l. Could reach out to other providers and large companies (private entities) and create niches for them in off- hours. Could also create hours that are specific to their needs.
- m. Focus on business mindset and revenue generation is very important.
- n. More security of parks and community centers is important.
- o. Document the programs that they offer- and communicate that story better.
- p. Buildings and facilities are underutilized and RCRC needs to look at creative programs to bring in new groups of people.
- q. If you have morning program numbers, then you open it up, otherwise you do not.
- r. Add marquees to each park and outline activities so folks know what's coming up.
- s. Could put ads on the County News station about what's going on.
- t. Need to focus more information through the website.

**Richland County Recreation Commission 10 Year Master Plan  
Meeting Notes from Key Leadership, User Groups & the General Public  
October 27 & 28, 2014**

- u. Not enough daytime programming for seniors. They can't drive at night. They are less comfortable participating at night.
- v. Focus on intergenerational activities.
- w. Need more daytime programming to fill up the parks and facilities.
- x. Provide more events and offerings that help target the international melting pot of people that live in Richland County.
- y. They are doing a good job keeping up with the demand. But, when people travel- they are exposed to different things and their expectations change/increase. Keep up with trends of best practices from all over the country.
- z. Provide for growing trends such as multi-use rectangular fields, Lacrosse, etc.
- aa. Focus on revenue and revenue-generating programs. Facilities should be open to capture revenue from programs that bring in dollars (e.g. day care and after school programs). Facilities should reflect this focus.
- bb. Provide for workers that work at all times of day and night. Also provide for single parents, grandparents as parents, etc.
- cc. There is a lack of access in the rural parts of the County.
- dd. Need to have increased programming for baby boomers which is a growing population in the County. Need to have adult activity and recreation centers with program offerings for adults. Need things for retirees like tennis, exercise, swimming, etc. which is important for their health & well-being.
- ee. If ranked 1-10; would say that RCRC is currently operating at an 8.
- ff. Want RCRC to be revenue generating- but don't anticipate them being totally self-sustaining. Some Council representatives need to be reminded that RCRC has limited funds, and when they build new parks/facilities, they also have to have monies to operate them.
- gg. Aquatic Center for the entire community.
- hh. Identify needs and proactively plan to meet them.
- ii. Be more creative in offerings to generate revenue.
- jj. Focus on how to communicate the importance of parks in the quality of life for the community.
- kk. Use an RCRC Foundation to help bring in revenues to provide additional support.
- ll. Want more facilities for all ages.....not just youth. Caughman Rd. Park has walking trails, fishing, things that can be used by all.....there should be more opportunities like this.
- mm. Community recreation should be accessible to all in the community and people should be able to use recreation opportunities without paying too much.
  
- nn. In certain parts of town, parks are at a minimum or not well-maintained. (e.g. Martin Luther King Park. Even a small park is important to a community; it needs to be inviting with things like benches, etc.)
- oo. Educate people in the community and push the resources.
- pp. Design more parks with inviting elements that can draw people to them.
- qq. Partner with the School District.

**Richland County Recreation Commission 10 Year Master Plan  
Meeting Notes from Key Leadership, User Groups & the General Public  
October 27 & 28, 2014**

- rr. Purpose-Built Communities: A new program that spotlights how healthy living components can be included in neighborhoods, including provision of multi-generation opportunities for families.
- ss. Need to promote programs more, especially by getting in the schools.
- tt. Get more media exposure, advertising, etc. to target parents in order to reach out to kids.
- uu. Tournaments- could attract people and revenue to the County.
- vv. Concentrate on Lacrosse, as it is growing in this region.
- ww. Aquatic waterpark would be a good addition to make use of the good weather.
- xx. Frisbee golf, Frisbee football (Ultimate Frisbee), and skateboarding facilities have been requested.
- yy. Increase the quality of the offerings and charge for participation like the High School has done- to reflect the value users get from it. They currently charge a \$25 participation fee for participation in high school athletics. If you want to continue to provide quality programs- you will have to pay a few dollars more. Many people expect this.
- zz. Use teens to identify offerings for what teens would like to do. Ask their opinions and involve them in the process.
- aaa. There could be a co-op with Athletic Directors, etc. Currently each individual school has their own individual booster club and there is no overall entity tying them together. Co-op getting the info out to the high school and that can encourage more kids to participate- especially the ones that don't participate in organized athletic programs.
- bbb. If you can connect middle-schoolers who don't participate in active athletics, with other programs - it will help them tremendously.
- ccc. Transportation for seniors should be reinstated.
- ddd. More focus on senior services is required.
- eee. A waterpark is coming. People are traveling to Charlotte, etc. to enjoy this activity. In doing so, they are taking their money out of the County.
- fff. Don't want to see prices move up too high, so that more individuals can be a part of different programs.
- ggg. The process for reserving fields has been simplified, but they need it to move online to make it even easier.
- hhh. Sports complex to add more football fields that could be used year-round. Would like to do offer football in spring, summer and fall. The issue in doing that is grass recovery- so would need artificial turf which is very expensive. The costs would need to be evaluated to provide increased use.
- iii. Fields have so much consolidated usage that the quality/conditions are an issue.
- jjj. Parents travel, come back home and want to know why they can't have the same level of quality in Richland County that they see in small towns that they visit (i.e. Rock Hill).
- kkk. There are fields that are covered with clover and have clay-based subgrades.
- lll. Not enough financial resources are dedicated to maintenance.
- mmm. Need to improve what they have- before building new places.
- nnn. Need more quality sports fields.
- ooo. Richland County School District 2 put up lights years ago, saying that recreation programming could use those fields and through the years they have been taken off-line.



**Richland County Recreation Commission 10 Year Master Plan  
Meeting Notes from Key Leadership, User Groups & the General Public  
October 27 & 28, 2014**

- ppp. They would like to see new facilities (e.g. Garner's Ferry size) spread throughout. When they have tourneys they could then send folks to all areas of the County and they all benefit. They need the facilities to be well cared for, manicured, and include good, clean restrooms.
- qqq. Need to better control the use of fields for people not using it for the right purposes.
- rrr. Providing programs that guide and mentor students and youth.
- sss. Introduce more community activities involving RCRC and the Sheriff's Dept. throughout the County.
- ttt. Get more children involved in youth sports (baseball).
- uuu. Fields at Meadow Lake Park need to be improved.
- vvv. Find ways to get parents more involved. For example, there is a program started by a local pastor called the Parent Project (It helps parents by guiding and mentoring kids who might otherwise be in trouble).
- www. More playgrounds and activities for smaller kids.
- xxx. Costs can sometimes be a barrier to participation.
- yyy. Provide offerings for older youth after they are out of the Youth sports programs. Need mentoring programs for older children when they reach that age.
- zzz. Keep upgrading facilities.
- aaaa. Look for grant funding for projects like building a Miracle Field.
- bbbb. Could be pursuing funding through grants. They don't pursue/use grants a lot.
- cccc. Would like to have an accessible playground. E.g. rubberized surfacing below equipment. Everyone should have the chance to play.
- dddd. There are opportunities to partner with companies and emphasize health and wellness.
- eeee. Evaluate ADA accessibility throughout the system- parks, trails, facilities, etc.
- ffff. An ADA audit will be needed for CAPRA re-accreditation. Would like to start this in 2015.
- gggg. Evaluate having more community gathering spaces.
- hhhh. Need new revenue generating opportunities.
  - iiii. Outdoor basketball courts are missing in the community. There is also interest in special Olympic-type courts. There are examples of them in New Jersey.
  - jjjj. Form a tennis advisory committee for the RCRC. Feedback is important. Could meet twice a year to coordinate.
- kkkk. Create awareness about what is being offered by RCRC.
  - llll. Provide alternative activities at the gym for kids
- mmmm. When courts are updated/renovated, provide new lines for the Junior Team Tennis program.
- nnnn. Seek grant funding for youth tennis. The Columbia Tennis League would be happy to help RCRC submit for grants.
- oooo. Provide more free time use of facilities (vs. rental time).
- pppp. Create volunteer/internship opportunities.
- qqqq. Consider integrating programs & services with the City of Columbia.
- rrrr. Need clay tennis courts for active adults- standard courts are hard on their bodies.

3. *If you had to pick the one priority that the 10 year plan needed to address, what would it be?*
- a. Incorporate the use of technology in all that is done.

**Richland County Recreation Commission 10 Year Master Plan  
Meeting Notes from Key Leadership, User Groups & the General Public  
October 27 & 28, 2014**

- b. Increase social equity in Richland County.
- c. Build a water park- there is nothing local (unless you count Ft. Jackson, which is not open to all).
- d. Create a brand that focuses on Health & Wellness for the entire community (i.e. biggest loser competition against other agencies or communities).
- e. Flexible hours (for centers & programs).
- f. Transportation for all ages. The vehicles have to be handicapped accessible, which they currently aren't.
- g. Better marketing.
- h. Use technology so parents can register and pay online; develop an RCRC App which includes registration, payment, could also collect data, etc.
- i. Marketing and promotion- "tell the story."
- j. Build a therapeutic park.
- k. Build one health & fitness center in each of four regions of the County.
- l. Financial stability.
- m. Provide higher levels of service by keeping facilities open longer and serve community needs for all ages, cultures and backgrounds.
- n. Reach out to people that have been trained and are retired (i.e. military retirees). They can volunteer/become involved as mentors, etc.
- o. Provide enough facilities to allow everyone equal access and the opportunity to enjoy it.
- p. Opportunities for someone to safely use a bike throughout the City. This could include bike-sharing which is working in other cities.
- q. Communicate all that is being done by RCRC and provide offerings for disadvantaged youth to participate.
- r. Need to increase usage of facilities by the entire community. All racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds must feel welcome in the parks, facilities and programs. Would like to use the facilities to bring the community together.
- s. Would want a cluster of fields around the County for multiple sports.
- t. Family-oriented programs, including more things that are free- so cost doesn't limit their participation.
- u. Get parents involved more to create a sense of community.
- v. Accessible fishing; which could expand to include environmental education.
- w. Accessibility and inclusion opportunities for the community.
- x. Create a regimented maintenance schedule that includes renovations.
- y. Alternative activities for kids inside the gyms.
- z. Have a central location for the RCRC schedule- vs. having to travel to the gym or call someone to find out what is going on.

**Public Workshop #1- 5:30 PM-Garner's Ferry Adult Activity Center**

**Strengths:**

1. The Garner's Ferry Adult Activity Center is great for active adults (21+).
2. The RCRC has something for everyone- all age groups. They have something for everyone from 4 years old up to 98- all age appropriate activities.

**Richland County Recreation Commission 10 Year Master Plan  
Meeting Notes from Key Leadership, User Groups & the General Public  
October 27 & 28, 2014**

3. RCRC hires people from within the community.
4. Summer camps.
5. The quality of facilities that RCRC has. Travel the state and you see other communities that don't have these sorts of facilities. Also the variety of offerings.
6. Willingness to partner- (i.e. students 5-18 ages for summer programs for kids- a Non-profit organization).

**Opportunities:**

1. Park hours make facilities un-accessible for use. Also at Crossroads- the existing gate stops access to things like parking for basketball courts.
2. Would like to see access to the park when it is currently closed. (Crossroads) It is currently closed at 5 when people get off work and could use it.
3. Would like to see more linear parks that connect things and are open all the time (and are easier/cheaper to maintain).
4. Would like to see the senior activity center open on the weekends (now only M-F).
5. Every community center that is built should include a gymnasium. "They should go together like a hand and glove".
6. For this location: have a youth center with gym, basketball, softball- with things for youth in this community to do. More multi-generational uses.
7. Indoor pool (at the same center).- Olympic-sized
8. Crossroads and the basketball court there....people have to park on the street to gain access. There's nothing else there -no gym, just a center (building).
9. Do better with Senior transportation that is handicap accessible.
10. Better signage- for this place.
11. Overall provide better publicity.
12. Trenholm park gym's roof/ceiling is going to fall in. The kitchen needs an update; need new chairs; building is only open on Tues & Thurs for two hours. Why can't this park be open more hours during the day? Seniors don't want to go out at nighttime. Provide programs that focus on health, CPR, etc. Trenholm could also use exercise equipment & a game room.
13. Can't get on a senior trip- they're all full.
14. Self-defense classes could be offered by the Sheriff's Dept.
15. Need to publicize programs.

**The One Thing:**

1. Get rid of the gates and provide access to Crossroads Park.
2. Need a gym.
3. Youth life-skills.
4. Safe entry road access to this facility (Garner's Ferry AAC). People coming over the hill on Garner's Ferry are going fast and those exiting the park can't cross safely. (This was important to many attendees).
5. Better signage-with a marquee.
6. Continue affordability of classes for seniors and others.
7. Inside heated pool (with well trained staff/instructors).



**Richland County Recreation Commission 10 Year Master Plan  
Meeting Notes from Key Leadership, User Groups & the General Public  
October 27 & 28, 2014**

8. Adult transportation for 15+ that is accessible (larger bus)/ more transportation linkages.
9. Trails, greenways, linear parks- connectivity.
10. Get parks open/provide access for seniors during the mornings. Kids can then use them after school is out.
11. Close communication gaps.
12. More programs that don't cost money- and don't require new staff (i.e. Sheriff's Dept. program).
13. Youth center.
14. Caughman Rd. Park needs a new gym- it is overused, needs more restrooms (there are only 2).
15. More learning activities for youth & safe places for them, including cameras.
16. Transportation for youth- also need sidewalks.
17. More resources for learning.
18. More community gardens.
19. More activities for young and middle age adults.
20. This plan has to marry with the 2020 plan being planned by County Council.
21. Park open more on daytime and evenings- Crossroads Park.

**Public Workshop #2- 7:15 PM- North Springs Park**

**Strengths:**

1. Young men in the community should continue to have free play. There was a time when the gyms didn't allow young people to come in and have free play basketball.
2. RCRC works really well with others. They are good partners/good communicators.
3. Improvement of facilities- in terms of lighting to draw people in, cleaner.
4. Providing youth activities that promote health and fitness.
5. Input is encouraged – flexibility and creativity in programming.
6. Hours are more available than they once were.
7. Staff is very well qualified.
8. Pricing of senior trips is fair, but they sell out quickly.

**Opportunities:**

1. Could have better intra-facility collaboration (share practices with other centers).
2. Health and wellness programming; including nutrition, healthy cooking classes, etc.
3. Leverage sports tourism for economic impact. Keep the dollars at home- "I'm tired of traveling."
4. Free play (youth volleyball opportunities).
5. Advertise better (social media, marquees, etc.)- let people know "we're right here."
6. "Tell the story" better/include school system in community outreach.
7. Accessibility – trails, tracks, nature trails, etc. Same is true for accessibility to ballfields- there are no paved access points to get to the fields.
8. Teen programs.
9. Provide programming for active seniors in the NE parks.
10. Provide more trips and activities for active seniors.
11. Invest in more busses and hire more professionally trained parks and recreation staff.
12. Open parks during the daytime.

**Richland County Recreation Commission 10 Year Master Plan  
Meeting Notes from Key Leadership, User Groups & the General Public  
October 27 & 28, 2014**

13. Provide service excellence training program throughout RCRC with staff trained in customer service.
14. Add water activities for NE Columbia area.
15. Provide attractive ecological landscaping. Too many trees and shrubs have been removed. There does not seem to be a comprehensive landscaping plan, and as a result, playgrounds are hot.
16. Make all electronic communication accessible to blind people.

**The One Thing:**

1. Diverse activity/ sports facility that is used by both the local community and external users.
2. Fishing, fishing, fishing with accessible route and dock.
3. More youth baseball/softball fields (a complex) in the Blythewood area (vs. Kelly fields that are under construction and planned in larger sizes).
4. More baseball diamonds in the Trenholm Park area with updated amenities (i.e. bathrooms).
5. Complete adherence to the Commission's mission.
6. Teen programming for young ladies (ages 10-16).
7. More visibility so folks know what's going on.
8. Marketing and visibility (important).
9. Accessible programs and facilities.
10. Revenue generating sports facilities that are dual use (important).
11. More employee training programs/development.
12. More multi-generational programs.
13. Make all electronic communication accessible to blind people.

**October 28, 2014**

**Public Workshop #3- Meadowlake Park: 5:30 PM:**

**Strengths:**

1. Activities for all children, including sports.
2. Upkeep/maintenance of parks is excellent.
3. Adult activities including dance and knitting (at Parklane?).
4. The number of and access to recreation facilities throughout the County.
5. The wide variety of programs that are offered.
6. Great customer service.
7. Good value for money- what is offered is affordable.
8. Knowledgeable staff.

**Opportunities:**

1. More nature based activities and walking trails, mountain biking trails.
2. Greater collaboration between schools and the RCRC.
3. More mentorship and leadership opportunities.
4. Teen programs.
5. Seek grant funding for national initiatives (childhood obesity, etc.).



**Richland County Recreation Commission 10 Year Master Plan  
Meeting Notes from Key Leadership, User Groups & the General Public  
October 27 & 28, 2014**

6. Promote activities for young girls (after 4 yrs. of age).
7. Better communication and outreach- increase marketing resources.
8. More focus on health & wellness opportunities.
9. Offer more multigenerational programs and spaces.
10. ADA accessibility.

**The One Thing:**

1. Large conservation areas for nature based activities.
2. More walking trails.
3. More transportation (busses) & more daytime recreation for seniors.
4. Modern exercise equipment.
5. Partnership between schools and RCRC.
6. Align offerings with current trends.
7. Increased utilization of current and emerging technologies (social media, online registration, mobile apps, etc.).
8. Be the health & wellness provider of choice.
9. Improved access to the parks (i.e. Ridgewood Park and walking trails).
10. Ensure safe experiences.
11. More playgrounds for 12 and over, including more swings.
12. Increased number of mentoring programs.

**Public Workshop #4- 7:15 PM St. Andrews Park:**

**Strengths:**

1. Good communication and responsive Staff.
2. Good follow-up from Staff.
3. Good employees & Staff.
4. Wide variety of program offerings.
5. Listening & responding to public input.

**Opportunities:**

1. More opportunities for teenage/youth.
2. Make the centers a destination.
3. Better communication to promote RCRC to the community (in Richland County Community).
4. Partner with local schools.
5. More staffing to insure buildings are available for community use (i.e. Ballantine).

**The One Thing:**

1. A larger building in Ballantine, to act as a destination (important).
2. Pine Grove center- walking trails, additional picnic tables, a new sign.
3. Outdoor community gathering shelter at Pine Grove center.
4. Getting the information out about what's being offered.

**Richland County Recreation Commission 10 Year Master Plan  
Meeting Notes from Key Leadership, User Groups & the General Public  
October 27 & 28, 2014**

5. Marquees.
6. Build a volunteer support program.
7. Tell our story (the publication named *Game Plan* doesn't mean anything to anyone).

End of Meeting Minutes