



July 27, 2023

Mayor Barbara Buffaloe and City Council Members
City of Columbia
710 E. Broadway
Columbia, MO 65201

RE: FY2024 City of Columbia Annual Budget – Parks and Recreation Department

Dear Mayor Buffaloe and members of the Columbia City Council,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Parks and Recreation Commission to express our endorsement of the proposed FY2024 budget for the Parks and Recreation Department. The department is committed to improving our community's health, stability, beauty and quality of life by providing outstanding parks, trails, recreational facilities and leisure opportunities for all Columbia citizens and visitors. Your support of the proposed budget for the department is a key step in the process to meet the needs of our citizens and create a welcoming community for visitors to Columbia.

The FY2024 budget addresses multiple areas of need for the department including three new frontline positions that will improve daily customer service and the condition of our parks, trails and facilities. The implementation of the Class and Compensation Study will also address the pay and benefits of our current employees. This commitment to the employees of the department is extremely important as it relates to longevity of employment, employee morale and staff engagement. The proposed budget also allows the department to manage rising costs related to the prices for labor, materials and supplies through small increases to different budget categories across multiple areas of the department.

The Commission also strongly recommends that General Fund support to the Department remains at the current level or is increased in the upcoming years. The City states they are maintaining the allocation to the General Fund as promised in 2001; however, with inflation over the last 23 years, the Commission is concerned that the City is not actually keeping up with this allocation. Please take this concern under advisement as you review the budget for FY2024.

Thank you for your attention and the opportunity to offer our comments related to the FY2024 budget for the City of Columbia. We are proud to assist the City as it works to achieve your goal as the best place to live, work, learn and play.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Dan Devine'.

Dan Devine
Chair
Columbia Parks and Recreation Commission