



*Shaping the  
Professional  
Association,  
Parks,  
Recreation,  
and  
Conservation  
of the Future*

## **STRATEGIC PLAN 2020**

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## letter from the board of trustees

Since June 9, 1928, the New Jersey Recreation and Parks Association (NJRPA) has played a significant role in shaping parks, recreation, and conservation professionals in the great Garden State. NJRPA's role has been to support the shared interest of individuals and communities. The association remains steadfast to drive positive outcomes for its members and the public served.

NJRPA has achieved much in its 92 years. It has grown from 100 members to now representing 690 professionals across the state. There are 200 volunteers who are passionate about advancing the professional association. There are seven districts representing the entire state. Members build their network through the districts, at live and virtual educational events, at social events and at the Annual Conference in March.

To face and prepare for the future, NJRPA has created a strategic plan to guide the Association. We surveyed past, present, and future leaders of our professional association, taking a closer look at individual member expectations as well as association needs. We intend to develop and enhance the capabilities of members and the association.

The overall goal of our new strategic plan is to emphasize public awareness of the value of our professional members and the Association, particularly to legislators, decision makers, and the communities we serve. NJRPA intends to provide significant support and opportunities to members throughout their professional journey—from their first professional interaction to retirement!

In embarking on this strategic journey, NJRPA is committed to ongoing support of the benefits and value of parks, recreation, and conservation through its professional members, stakeholders, and associated advocates.

Our new inclusion statement drives home that we welcome everyone. NJRPA is respectful and responsive to meeting the needs of all we serve.

The Board of Trustees supports strategic planning and its implementation that will keep delivery of services impactful and relevant for the next 92 years.

Cordially,

2020 Board of Trustees



## our inclusion statement

As a core value, NJRPA believes in and is committed to diversity, inclusion and equality among its Staff, Board of Trustees and Members. We seek to establish and maintain a culture that fosters equitable participation for all members and the communities they serve.

The Association, the membership and associated communities will embrace initiatives, programs and services that foster **diversity**.

The **inclusion** of all people with different identities will be valued and welcomed at facilities, parks and programs. People of all types and lifestyles will be provided with the opportunity to learn, grow and enhance their health and well-being.

NJRPA is committed to providing or enabling programming and education which sustains foundations of a diverse and inclusive culture across dimensions of diversity including but not limited to age, race, sex, class, national origin, creed, educational background, religion, gender identity, disability, geographical location, income, marital status, sexual orientation and work experiences.

NJRPA wholeheartedly supports the delivery of parks, recreation and conservation, and is committed to removing barriers and providing access to, and participation in parks, programs and recreational services for ALL throughout the State of New Jersey.

# our inclusion statement

*continued*

## Key tactics to support NJRPA' s inclusion statement to establish a sense of belonging for everyone...

- Remove barriers for access to and participation to create opportunity for all
- Build and create welcoming environments that enhance access to parks, programs, and services
- Enact policies and best practices to increase the health and well-being of all, particularly welcoming racial and ethnic minorities, new populations, veterans, those with physical and cognitive disabilities, and the LGBTQ community
- Consider it a “RIGHT” that all persons should have access to opportunities to enhance their health and well-being in non-discriminatory settings that is appropriate to their individual desire and need
- Support parks, recreation, and conservation as an essential service by providing adequate funding, staffing, open space and facilities, and trained professionals
- Partner with key community stakeholders to provide access to parks, programs, and services to all members of the community
- Provide continuing educational opportunities so that NJRPA members can gain skills in serving marginalized persons in their communities
- Develop NJRPA programs that better meet the needs of marginalized professionals
- Specifically target and develop programs that address the needs of the community and individuals
- Engage the community in the planning of parks, programs, and services
- Measure the effectiveness through individual and community qualitative and quantitative feedback and data measurement
- Monitor economic and health indicators of individuals and the community to measure effectiveness
- Communicate progress of inclusion efforts

# our roadmap & strategic goals

## Strategic Focus

The NJRPA will influence and sharpen its decisions, direction and focus with guidance from its mission, vision, and values. These are core beliefs of the organization and the convictions of its members.

## Mission

*The mission of the New Jersey Recreation and Park Association is to unite the public and professional interests in parks, recreation, and conservation throughout the State of New Jersey.*

## Vision

*The vision of the New Jersey Recreation and Park Association is to be the lead organization in the State of New Jersey inspiring and promoting the development of healthy communities and lifestyles.*

## Values

**Community** development through parks, recreation, and conservation

**Health and Wellness** opportunities to enhance well-being and prevention of disease

**Leadership** to engage the shared interests of the public and professionals

**Making a Difference** to the environment and to people

**Professionalism** committed to competent delivery of parks, recreation, and conservation

## Goals

### Education and Professional Development

To provide educational opportunities that will improve the knowledge and skills of our members to better prepare them for performing their responsibilities.

### Membership Development and Services

To provide information, programs, and services that attract the shared interests of the parks, recreation, and conservation community.

### Public Policy and Advocacy

To provide resources and guidance on issues related to legislation, regulations, and policies affecting parks, recreation, conservation, and leisure services.

### Public Awareness

To promote the benefits and value of parks, recreation, and conservation delivered by trained professionals as essential to all lifestyles and communities.

### Organizational Development and Sustainability

To secure the financial, leadership, staffing, and volunteer resources necessary to support the Association's mission, vision, values, and goals.



## our aspirations

NJRPA's aspiration is to be strategically focused to create a sustainable and valued organization.

To be successful and achieve our goals, we must empower the Board of Trustees and members to commit to achieving positive outcomes and results.

A vision has been crafted through the contributions of members. This plan will be used to build alignment and alliances. It will be dynamic and change as necessary to communicate the direction of the association. The successful execution of this plan will depend on the leaders and members of NJRPA to step up, champion, and commit to executing the initiatives identified.



# our initiatives

## Education and Professional Development

To provide educational opportunities that will improve the knowledge and skills of our members to better prepare them for performing their responsibilities.

- Continue mentorship program to develop leadership and succession
- Identify and communicate trends influencing parks, recreation, conservation within New Jersey and the region
- Facilitate discussions and communications on inclusion, social equity, conservation, and health and well-being
- Create and implement a Leadership Institute
- Promote relevant certifications pertinent to membership
- Create educational opportunities for land management professionals working in public and non-profit agencies
- Establish more webinar and CEU opportunities
- Continue to facilitate discussions and share best practices to meet the challenges of COVID-19
- Consider centralized future conference sites



# our initiatives

## *continued*

### Membership Development and Services

To provide information, programs, and services that attract the shared interests of the parks, recreation, and conservation community.

- Consider complimentary membership for mayors, council members, and municipal administrators/managers
- Implement a salary survey to justify competitive salaries
- Promote a professional online forum and encourage posting of best practices, policies, manuals, and training materials
- Create an outreach program to recruit student members from New Jersey and surrounding states
- Implement a professional recognition program for professional members
- Create a short annual membership survey
- Engage and recognize retirees
- Refresh communications processes to members
- Expand networking opportunities for all members
- Review NJRPA membership marketing materials and add key word descriptors from Strategic Plan survey
- Continually network and partner with state, regionally, and nationally affiliated organizations to identify trends, share information, and offer diversified programs to meet the needs of NJRPA



# our initiatives

## *continued*

### Public Policy and Advocacy

To provide resources and guidance on issues related to legislation, regulations, and policies affecting parks, recreation, conservation, and leisure services.

- To be recognized as a professional authority considering public policy and regulatory issues involving parks and recreation industry
- Provide information and resources to legislators regarding the impact of unfunded mandates
- Create informational packets for elected officials to better understand the benefits, impact, and value of parks, recreation, and conservation
- Educate NJRPA members, allied organizations, and the public about adopted legislation and regulations impacting parks, recreation, resource management, and leisure services
- Network and seek partnerships with industry leaders that share similar interests
- Identify key advocates and legislators who champion parks and recreation
- Solicit and retain volunteer medical professionals who can serve and advise NJRPA on medical issues in legislation and policy issues related to the health and safety of those we serve
- Continue to support New Jersey Green Acres Program
- Continue partnership with League of Municipalities by providing representation on the League Legislative Committee
- In conjunction with the Association's Legislative Services consultant, host a "Day at the State House" to provide education to policymakers on issues facing parks and recreation



# our initiatives

## *continued*

### Public Awareness

To promote the benefits and value of parks, recreation, and conservation delivered by trained professionals as essential to all lifestyles and communities.

- Annually recognize key advocates and legislators who champion parks and recreation
- Create a public awareness campaign to get youth off the phone and computer and to play outdoors
- Create a public awareness campaign that focuses on social equity, health and wellness, conservation, and professionalism
- Create an e-Sport event sponsored by NJRPA



# our initiatives

## *continued*

### Organizational Development and Sustainability

To secure the financial, leadership, staffing, and volunteer resources necessary to support the Association's mission, vision, values, and goals.

- Create a community engagement fundraising event
- Assess the corporate and volunteer structure of NJRPA
- Revisit the role, responsibilities, and expectations of Executive Director
- Implement a sponsorship program
- Establish a relationship with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Create a Foundation to support NJRPA initiatives
- Create a technology taskforce to identify ways to apply technology and automation for effectiveness and efficiency
- Update the website
- Create a vendor policy
- Consider revamping Discount Ticket Sales Program
- Consider a policy to raise fees and charges annually no less than the rate of inflation
- Consider paid ads as a service to the commercial members to generate new revenue
- Annually recognize excellence, outstanding achievement, and meaningful contributions to the association and industry
- Determine most appropriate IRS not-for-profit designation
- Gather NJRPA policies, consolidate into a manual, and review
- Explore upgrading the NJRPA app and support text alerts

# key performance indicators

## ► Members

- Total number of members
- Number of new members
- Number of students

## ► Networking

- Number of events
- Number of participants

## ► Revenue

- YTD total revenue
- Sponsorship revenue

## ► Communications

- Website traffic
- Key words that drive traffic



# plan developers and participants

*Thank you to all who participated in the process of developing this plan.*

## Members of the New Jersey Recreation and Park Association

The creation of the NJRPA Strategic Plan would not have been complete or possible without input and participation from the past and current members of the association.

### Board of Trustees

Romayne Eaker-Kelly, President

Lenny Celluro, President-Elect

Bill Foelsch, Past President

Janet Dellett, Vice President

Tom Barton, Treasurer

Jennifer Gander, Secretary

Ben Stentz, Member At Large

Jill Daggon, Member At Large

Kathleen Avitt, Executive Director, NJRPA

### Consulting Support

Greg Petry Consulting LLC