

BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

1.1 METHODOLOGY

PROS Consulting with assistance from Derby Public Works Department, Parks Division (“Department”) identified operating metrics to benchmark against comparable parks and recreation agencies. The goal of the analysis is to evaluate how the Department is positioned among peer agencies. The benchmark assessment is organized into specific categories based on peer agency responses to targeted questions that lend an encompassing view of each system’s operating metrics as compared to Derby.

Information used in this analysis was obtained directly from each participating benchmark agency, when available and information available through the National Recreation and Park Association’s (NRPA) Park Metrics Database.

Due to differences in how each system collects, maintains, and reports data, variances may exist. These variations can impact the per capita and percentage allocations, and the overall comparison must be viewed with this in mind. The benchmark data collection for all systems was complete as of May 2022, and it is possible that information in this report may have changed since the original collection date. The information sought was a combination of operating metrics that factor budgets, staffing levels, and inventories. In some instances, the information was not tracked or not available from the participating agencies. The agencies listed below were selected to be benchmarked because they were communities of similar size and socioeconomic characteristics as that of Derby, as well as being communities on the outskirts of a larger metro area similar to Derby. They represent agencies that are both similar in nature to Derby, as well as potentially aspirational in some respects. These benchmarked agencies were:

- Lenexa, KS Parks and Recreation Department
- Garden City, KS Parks and Recreation Department
- West Des Moines, IA Parks and Recreation Department
- Westerville, OH Parks and Recreation Department

The table below lists each benchmark agency in the study, arranged by total population served. Peer agencies represent broad geographical coverage across the Midwest/Great Plains. It should also be noted that Derby is unique as the Department is solely responsible for the provision of parks in the community and organizing a small set of community special events. They are not a provider of recreational programming, which is a function of their partner Derby Recreation Commission.

For all agencies examined, Derby represents the benchmark median for population density (2,483 residents per sq. mi.) falling just below Garden City (2,928 residents per sq. mi.) and Westerville (3,105 residents per sq. mi.).

Agency	State	Jurisdiction Type	Population	Jurisdiction Size (Sq. Mi.)	Population per Sq. Mi.
Lenexa Parks and Recreation Department	KS	City	57,434	34.00	1,689
West Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department	IA	City	68,723	38.59	1,781
Derby Parks Division	KS	City	25,625	10.32	2,483
Garden City Parks and Recreation Department	KS	City	32,000	10.93	2,928
Westerville Park and Recreation Department	OH	City	39,190	12.62	3,105

1.2 BENCHMARK COMPARISON

PARK ACRES

The following table provides a general overview of each system’s park acreage. Assessing level of service for park acres, Derby ranks highest of those agencies evaluated for amount of “developed” park acres per 1,000 residents (17.78 acres) but is last among the agencies for total park acres per 1,000 residents with 19.63 acres indicating a low amount of undeveloped greenspace or parklands. Derby is well above the 2022 NRPA median for similar-sized agencies of 10.4 acres per 1,000 residents.

Agency	Population	Total Developed Acres	Total Developed Acres per 1,000 Residents	Total Acres Owned or Managed	Total Acres per 1,000 Residents
Derby Parks Division	25,625	456	17.78	503	19.63
Garden City Parks and Recreation Department	68,723	570	8.29	1,500	21.83
West Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department	32,000	392	12.25	408	12.75
Westerville Park and Recreation Department	39,190	646.64	16.50	666	17.00
Lenexa Parks and Recreation Department	57,434	887	15.44	1,394	24.27
NRPA Median 2022 = 10.4 Acres per 1,000 Residents					

TRAIL MILES

The information below reveals the service levels for dedicated trails within each system. By comparing total trail mileage to the population of the service area, the level of service provided to the community can be determined, which is expressed as trail miles for every 1,000 residents. Derby represents the benchmark’s second-lowest agency in terms of total trail mileage (25.3 total miles) but is the second highest agency for trail mileage per capita (0.99 miles per 1,000) among agencies assessed. With 0.99 miles per 1,000, Derby is well above the national best practice of 0.25-0.5 of trail miles per 1,000 residents.

Agency	Population	Total Trail Miles	Trail Miles per 1,000 Residents
Garden City Parks and Recreation Department	32,000	7.3	0.23
Lenexa Parks and Recreation Department	57,434	50.4	0.88
West Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department	68,723	65.0	0.95
Derby Parks Division	25,625	25.3	0.99
Westerville Park and Recreation Department	39,190	52.7	1.34
Best Practice = 0.25-0.5 Trail Miles 1,000 Residents			

STAFFING

This section compares staffing levels for each system by comparing full-time equivalents (FTEs) to total population. Total FTEs per 10,000 residents is a key performance metric that assesses how well each system is equipped, in terms of human resources, to serve its jurisdiction. In general, agencies participating in the benchmark study are very well staffed, with all but West Des Moines being above the national median of 8.9 FTEs per 10,000 residents. Among peer agencies, Derby is second lowest in regards to staffing relative to the population served with 9.2 FTEs per 10,000 residents. This is largely explained by the fact that Derby only provides parks and facilities, and not recreational programming which can be staff-intensive.

Agency	Population	Total FTEs	FTEs per 10,000 Residents
West Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department	68,723	55	8.0
Derby Parks Division	25,625	24	9.2
Lenexa Parks and Recreation Department	57,434	130	22.6
Westerville Park and Recreation Department	39,190	113	28.7
Garden City Parks and Recreation Department	32,000	97	30.4
NRPA Median 2022 = 8.9 FTEs per 10,000 Residents			

OPERATING EXPENSE PER CAPITA

Agencies participating in the benchmark study are spending on parks and recreation operations at a substantial rate. Dividing the annual operational budget by each service area's population allows for a comparison of how much each agency is spending per resident. Derby ranks lowest among peer agencies for total operating expense (\$1.99M) and second lowest for expense per resident (\$77.74). This is lower than the 2022 NRPA median of \$93.01 per resident, but again is attributed to the fact that Derby Parks Division does not provide recreational programming.

Agency	Population	Total Operating Expense	Operating Expense per Resident
West Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department	68,723	\$ 4,074,684	\$ 59.29
Derby Parks Division	25,625	\$ 1,992,114	\$ 77.74
Westerville Park and Recreation Department	39,190	\$ 3,896,525	\$ 99.43
Lenexa Parks and Recreation Department	57,434	\$ 10,373,927	\$ 180.62
Garden City Parks and Recreation Department	32,000	\$ 7,756,016	\$ 242.38
NRPA Median 2022 = \$93.01 Operating Expense per Residents			

REVENUE PER CAPITA

By comparing each agency’s annual non-tax revenue to the population, the annual revenue generated on a per resident basis can be determined. Although Derby \$27.75 of revenue generated per resident represents the second lowest of those agencies evaluated in this analysis, this level of earned income is higher than the national median of \$22.08 of revenue per resident. This is impressive given no recreational programming provided by Derby Parks which is most often the major driver of earned revenues.

Agency	Population	Total Non-Tax Revenue	Revenue per Resident
West Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department	68,723	\$ 1,226,839	\$ 17.85
Derby Parks Division	25,625	\$ 711,142	\$ 27.75
Westerville Park and Recreation Department	39,190	\$ 3,043,073	\$ 77.65
Lenexa Parks and Recreation Department	57,434	\$ 6,068,140	\$ 105.65
Garden City Parks and Recreation Department	32,000	\$ 3,961,585	\$ 123.80
NRPA Median 2022 = \$22.08 Revenue per Capita			

1.2.1 OPERATIONAL COST RECOVERY

Operational cost recovery is a key performance indicator, arrived at by dividing total non-tax revenue by total operating expense. This measures how well each agency’s revenue generation covers the total cost of operations. Overall, agencies participating in the benchmark study have a wide range of cost recovery, with all achieving above industry best practice levels. Derby has the second lowest cost recovery rate among peer agencies, but its 36% operational cost recovery is still above the NRPA median (26.6%) for communities of similar size.

In addition, Derby is also responsible for maintaining acreage not included as parks (e.g., in-town beautification, medians, etc.) which add to their operating expenses but are non-revenue generating services.

Agency	Total Non-Tax Revenue	Total Operating Expense	Operational Cost Recovery
West Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department	\$ 1,226,839	\$ 4,074,684	30%
Derby Parks Division	\$ 711,142	\$ 1,992,114	36%
Garden City Parks and Recreation Department	\$ 3,961,585	\$ 7,756,016	51%
Lenexa Parks and Recreation Department	\$ 6,068,140	\$ 10,373,927	58%
Westerville Park and Recreation Department	\$ 3,043,073	\$ 3,896,525	78%
NRPA Median for Agencies Serving 20k-50k Residents= 26.6% Cost Recovery			

CIP SUMMARY

Due to the volatility of Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budgets and availability of funding from year to year, the table below reveals the last three years of actual investment from 2019 through 2021. These figures were then utilized to show the average annual capital investment for each agency. The top performing benchmark agencies are investing significant dollars into CIP efforts each year, as all agencies are investing above the NRPA median for agencies serving communities of similar size. Derby is averaging \$4,027,751 annually in CIP expenses which is well about the national media of agencies serving communities of 20k-50k residents (\$2.9M annual average).

Agency	CIP Budget 2019	CIP Budget 2020	CIP Budget 2021	Avg. Annual CIP
Derby Parks Division	\$ 6,173,090	\$ 2,923,232	\$ 2,986,931	\$ 4,027,751
Lenexa Parks and Recreation Department	\$ 5,883,475	\$ 6,942,000	\$ 716,080	\$ 4,513,852
Garden City Parks and Recreation Department	\$ 645,933	\$ 3,958,632	\$ 14,619,381	\$ 6,407,982
Westerville Park and Recreation Department	\$ 1,381,721	\$ 12,284,063	\$ 5,616,403	\$ 6,427,396
West Des Moines Parks and Recreation Department	\$ 5,401,250	\$ 8,775,008	\$ 17,597,165	\$ 10,591,141
NRPA Median for Agencies Serving 20k-50k Residents= \$2.9M CIP Budget				

1.3 SUMMARY OF BENCHMARK FINDINGS

As a whole, the peer agencies selected are well performing park systems which allows Derby to benchmark itself. Specific areas where study participants perform to an exceptional level include: acres per 1,000 residents, trails per 1,000 residents, staffing levels, operational spending, earned income, and capital expenditures.

The benchmark comparison validated the strong performance of Derby in many areas, such as park acres per 1,000 residents, trail per 1,000 residents, operating expenses per resident, and revenue per resident. These strengths speak to the investment in the system by the City, as well as the ability of the staff to offer high quality parks and services for the community. Derby is also above the NRPA Median for operational cost recovery at 26%.

Overall, the benchmark analysis reveals that Derby is a strong park system, especially given the number of parks it operates and maintains. The only area that could be potentially be improved upon which can be reflected in the master plan is increasing undeveloped greenspaces or parklands in the community. The perspective gained through the peer comparison is valuable in identifying areas for improvement and establishing strategic goals to pursue (E.g., Derby should use this analysis as a baseline comparison that provides key performance indicators (KPIs) to be tracked and measures over time.