

~ CITY OF IOWA CITY ~



Adopted September 19, 2017





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*Iowa City is committed to the ongoing examination of organizational policies and practices to identify areas of potential bias and to work to dismantle systemic barriers to park and recreation users. Iowa City residents and leaders value parks as a means to support a strong and diverse economy, foster healthy and active lifestyles, advance environmental sustainability and enhance quality of life.*

*More than 425 Iowa City residents participated in the development of this plan.*



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4H Club	Association	Iowa City Senior Center	Mercy Hospital Foundation
Access Independence	Iowa City Boy Scouts	Iowa City Kickers	Metropolitan Planning Organization
ARC of Southeast Iowa	Iowa City Boys Baseball	Iowa Soccer Club	Normandy/Park View Terrace Neighborhood Association
Backyard Abundance	Iowa City Community School District	Iowa State University	Peninsula Neighborhood Association
Bicyclists of Iowa City	Iowa City/Coralville Area Convention and Visitors Bureau	Johnson County Conservation Board	Project Green
City of Iowa City—Neighborhood & Development Services Department	Iowa City Cyclocross	Johnson County Community Foundation	Skogman Realty
City of Iowa City—Public Works Department	Iowa City Girl Scouts	Johnson County Master Gardeners	Take a Kid Outdoors (TAKO)
College Green Neighborhood Association	Iowa City Girls Softball	Johnson County Public Health	The Dream Center
Diamond Dreams Baseball	Iowa City Home Builders Association	Kirkwood Community College	United Action for Youth
Downtown Iowa City Association	Iowa City Noon Optimists	Linn County Public Health	University of Iowa
Friends of Hickory Hill Park	Iowa City Pilot Club	Little Hawks Baseball	Urban Acres Real Estate
Grant Wood Neighborhood	Iowa City Police Department	Longfellow Neighborhood Association	Wetherby Neighborhood Association
	Iowa City Rotary Club	Lucas Farms Neighborhood Association	World of Bikes

We also thank the hundreds of individuals and residents within these organizations and the community's neighborhoods who gave their time to participate in small group discussions, answer survey questions, attend a stakeholder workshop or participate in public open house events. The input has been invaluable in the development of this plan. The Parks and Recreation Department looks forward to seeing all of you in Iowa City's parks and along the city's trails and greenways. A hearty THANK YOU!

# How to Read and Use this Plan

## Reading the Plan

### Chapters 1, 2, 3

This document is driven by Iowa City's commitment to equity. Iowa City values diversity as a community asset and is committed to creating inclusive spaces that promote the dignity and respect of all users of the City's Parks & Recreation facilities. The background work in this report, from demographic analysis to public engagement (Chapters 1 and 2), intends to capture the many voices this plan should serve. The inventory analysis (Chapter 3) identifies basic needs to achieve physical accessibility throughout the system while considering neighborhood and park character, programming, open space and education/recreation services required for a vibrant system today and tomorrow.

### Chapter 4

This work leads directly to the Master Plan itself (Chapter 4). A publicly-driven strategic document drives this plan and leads off this plan chapter. It articulates the vision, mission, guiding principles and goals this plan hopes to achieve. Then the plan looks specifically at district-by-district needs of the parks, addressing long-term, ambitious goals related to open space needs and to "park character."

What do we mean by "park character?" This plan includes a way to look at parks that goes beyond park acres per 1,000 population. This plan also considers how a park is used, understood and appreciated. For example, it might be a park focused on education (a "learn" park) or adventure (a "thrill" park). The primary and secondary "character" of each park has been analyzed in this report and appears in Chapter 3 and again in Chapter 4 as the "character" needs of a district are identified.

Chapter 4 also includes more tangible and specific "Maintenance and Renovation Targets." These targets for considering park accessibility/maintenance and/or renovation needs for a given year were sequenced after looking at five factors:

1. **Accessibility Needs** – does a given park in this district have relatively minor (primarily maintenance) or significant (largely design-oriented) needs to address physical accessibility of the park's features?
2. **Maintenance** – similar to accessibility, does this park require major renovation/significant improvements to its features or are the maintenance needs more routine?
3. **Age of Equipment/Features** – play equipment, for example, typically has a shelf life in the range of 20 years. Where does this park's play equipment fall on a timeline for replacement?
4. **Neighborhood Needs** – how do changing needs of the area surrounding a given park have an impact on that park's needed features/improvements?
5. **Future Trends** – how do recreation and community trends influence this park's future facility, open-space and programming needs?

After looking at these considerations, parks were prioritized and scheduled for inclusion in the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP). This district-by-district parks schedule appears in Chapter 4. This chapter concludes with an outline of the overall park system needs of the future.

### Chapters 5, 6

In Chapter 5, architectural and signage guidelines are provided to aid in future park renovations and communications with the public.

Finally, Chapter 6 addresses implementation, including some analysis of costs, schedule/phasing and operational considerations. The Maintenance and Renovation Targets that appeared in Chapter 4, district by district, are rolled up here into an 11-year CIP schedule.

## Using This Plan

This plan is first and foremost a strategic document. As with all strategic plans, as unexpected situations emerge, the strategic course (vision, mission, goals) can guide decision-making. Toward that end, this plan suggests the high-level strategic approaches of "access, play, restore, educate, sustain and measure" stay in front of staff, commission members and the public as over-arching guides to the work ahead.

This document can also be used to shape opportunities that arise—for example, if land becomes available in a given district, is securing that land a fit for this plan? If so, how does this plan provide guidance for development of that park? At the same time, this plan offers a specific schedule of parks that will be considered for accessibility, maintenance/renovation or other features. As a park comes up for consideration on the CIP schedule (or as land might be acquired), this plan can be used to prepare that park for the future.

In either scenario (existing or new park), this plan urges involvement of park users, neighbors and other stakeholders in the development of the park. Park character should be a consideration—how can it be reinforced in an existing park? What is a character component that might be missing that could apply in a new park? Working with the public, what are the elements of access, play, restore, educate and sustain that will achieve the desired character and help ensure all are welcome?

Then as new or renovated features are needed, the architectural and signage guidelines help that park maintain its distinctive characteristics, while still being identified as part of the overall system. Finally, sections of the implementation chapter assist with early cost estimates and creating strategies for funding of park, trail and signage improvements.





# BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

This plan has been developed over ten months by RDG Planning & Design and HBK Engineering, working in concert with the steering committee and Iowa City Parks and Recreation staff. The plan's foundation is multi-fold:

- Ongoing guidance throughout the process by the steering committee and parks and recreation department leadership and staff
- Important input from the Parks and Recreation Commission
- Public engagement and stakeholder input through focus groups, on-line questions, public open houses, and a well-attended stakeholder workshop
- Past planning efforts by the City planning department and others to ensure alignment with Iowa City's future vision and goals
- Inventory of the existing parks system to identify maintenance and accessibility needs
- A strategic direction for the system including vision, mission and high-level goals
- Mapping of the system
- Coordination with other recent and current parks planning efforts, including recent park-specific master plans, an ongoing natural resources study of the park system and current work in trails and overall bike-pedestrian improvements within Iowa City
- Comparison of this park system to communities of similar characteristics in the Midwest
- An overview of sustainable funding approaches for the future park system
- Analysis of the current park system and its future needs addressing social equity, primary park uses and current/desired levels of service

Additionally, this plan addresses park aesthetics and architecture in ways that make sound economic sense while also considering way-finding, signage and the system's overall future image.



# Executive Summary

## Background and Introduction

The first step in the planning process was an inventory of more than forty parks to assess their alignment with ADA accessibility guidance and to highlight priority maintenance needs. This critical baseline-setting exercise was followed by a series of public/stakeholder engagements, resulting in a meaningful strategic framework to underpin this plan—a framework anchored in a desire to achieve accessibility and service for all Iowa City residents and visitors.

More than 425 Iowa City residents took advantage of opportunities to weigh in on this Park System Master Plan, through participation in focus groups, a key stakeholder workshop, open house opportunities and on-line. The input was invaluable in the development of this visionary plan.

## Vision and Mission

The strategic framework vision calls for “an accessible parks and recreation system, committed to building community and serving all residents.” The mission associated with this vision aims “to foster the community’s engagement, sense of place and well-being” through a parks and recreation system allied with all residents and visitors regardless of age, race, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical ability, economic background, country of origin or

religious practices. This system includes gathering spaces, well-maintained facilities, quality connecting trails, nature-based quiet places, land and water health/protection, accessible technology, engaging programs and fiscal responsibility. Striving for equity underpins it all.

## Strategic Directions

Access, Play, Restore, Educate, Sustain and Measure. These six key words:

- **Access:** Help drive the City’s initiative for healthy neighborhoods; strive for equity, access and connections
- **Play:** Construct the means to support year-round active living for public health
- **Restore:** Look to enhance appropriate access to restored habitats and streams within the system
- **Educate:** Provide facilities and programs which reach basic outdoor recreation skills including swimming, bicycle safety, fishing, gardening, sports and boating
- **Sustain:** Build mechanisms for a sustainable system that employs Life-Cycle Cost Analysis for guidance
- **Measure:** Provide opportunities to measure success and document the system’s benefits to the public

## Key Findings

The Iowa City park system is largely beloved. Many memories have been made in spaces and places supported by the Parks and Recreation Department. Overall, the system provides reasonable park acres for the population and some level of connectivity between the parks and the public. Assessment of current park facility conditions found a number of accessibility and maintenance concerns. This plan recommends both smaller in-fill projects and entire park renovations over the next ten years in order to provide a more accessible and modern park system. Parks and Recreation Department personnel continue to improve this situation, addressing ADA guidelines during new park construction and/or through maintenance procedures. Some parks do require some notable changes but many can be addressed with simple methods, such as appropriately increasing mulch depth or providing curb cuts for access.

## Priority Needs

This plan looks at two tiers of system needs—overall, and on a district-by-district basis. The districts referenced here have been developed by the planning team for purposes of analysis.

## Overall Needs

District needs include:

- Significant improvements in wayfinding, signage and accessibility
- Improved and consistent support for system maintenance
- Equity initiatives to improve park system supports for populations challenged by socioeconomic factors
- Improved technology—particularly within parks to enhance young adult use/experiences
- A rethinking of the water resources of Iowa City, particularly the role Ralston Creek and the Iowa River could/should play as a part of the parks and recreation system

## About Equity and ICPR

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*systemic barriers to park and recreation users. Iowa City residents and leaders value parks as a means to support a strong and diverse economy, foster healthy and active lifestyles, advance environmental sustainability and enhance quality of life. A recent example: the shift to single-stall restrooms with welcoming signage. As Director Juli Seydell Johnson explains:*

***“People encounter bathrooms, they might not encounter policies. We want facilities welcoming to all.”***

Recommendations to address these needs are included in the implementation section of this report.

### District-by-District Needs

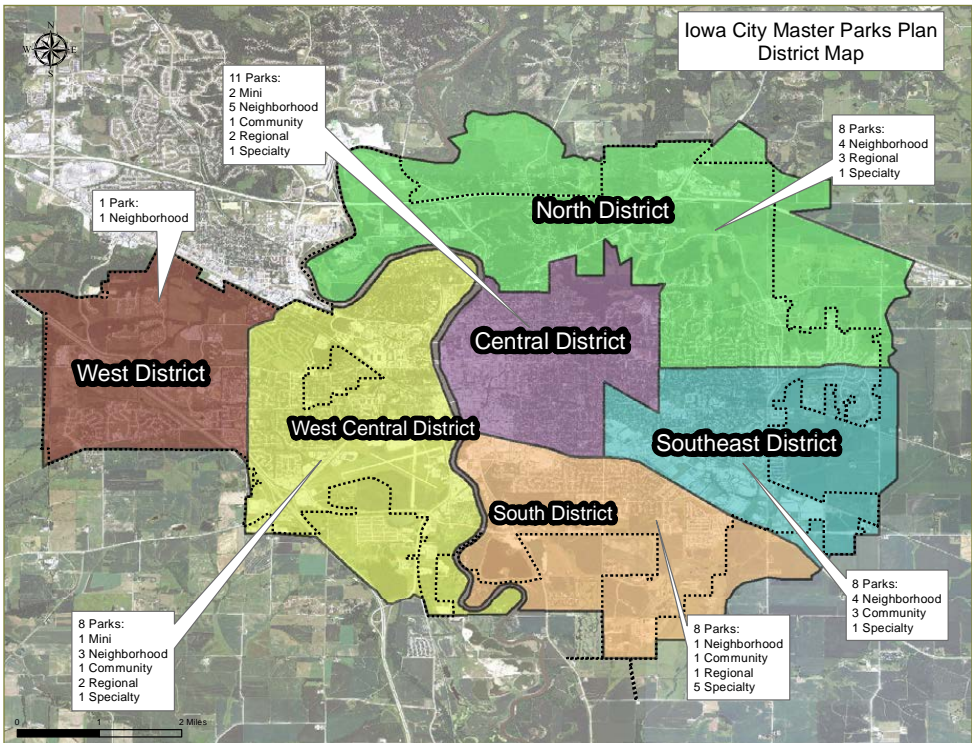
All districts are addressing physical accessibility, including a primary goal of achieving at least one fully accessible park per district in the first year of implementation of this plan (2019). All recommendations cannot be listed as part of this summary, but highlights include:

- South District**  
Adding a park and trail connection to the neighborhood developing around Alexander Elementary School
- Southeast District**  
Add a park and trail in the East Side Growth Area along Snyder Creek
- West Central District**  
Improve the connection to Benton Hill Park
- Central District**  
Improve Ralston Creek to fill a recreational gap in the system
- West District**  
Add parkland or improve park connections for the neighborhood west of Mormon Trek

Magnitude-of-cost estimates to address these needs are included in the implementation section of the report.

### Design Guidance

This plan includes recommendations to improve the consistency of the architecture within the parks over time by providing some fundamental design guidance for restrooms, shelters and a combined shelter/restroom facility. The architecture proposed here achieves a balance between affordability and customization of pre-fab structures, and sets a tone of quality and safety for the public. Further



District boundaries identified for planning purposes

design choice possibilities that still maintain a level of consistency within the overall architectural family for the parks is included in the Appendix and divided into neighborhood contexts—historic and contemporary. In the Appendix one can find specific considerations for furnishings and material choices.

### Signage

A basic, affordable signage package, consistent aesthetically with the recently developed monument entry signs, is included here. Concepts for a larger family of signs is included in the Appendix.

### Implementation and Recommendations

The plan calls out priority projects that align with the priority needs highlighted above, including a goal of achieving at least one park per district that is fully accessible by 2019, improved signage on an ongoing basis, and establishing (over time) Ralston Creek as a potential greenway amenity through restoration and access. With the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) budget currently set for 2017, implementation of this plan is largely intended to get underway in 2019. The recommendations further ask that the Neighborhood Open Space Requirements extend to Iowa City's projected growth boundaries (see map above).



Chapter

# IOWA CITY TODAY AND TOMORROW

1

# Current Demographics and Projected Growth



As a foundation for this plan, we need to understand Iowa City's current population status and future projections. Iowa City's planning department has done a great deal of work in this area. We refer you to the Iowa City Comprehensive Plan for more detail, but summarize the findings here.

Iowa City is a growing community with a strong University presence. Iowa City's demographic highlights, based on the Census and the Iowa City Comprehensive Plan, include the following:

## **Population 74K and growing.**

Iowa City is one of Iowa's larger communities with a July 2016 population estimate of 74,398. The city's population growth was 9.1% from 2000 to 2010 (10 years), and 5.9% from 2010 to 2015 (5 years). This continues a trend of growth every decade for the last century. The comprehensive plan population projection predicts 84,000 residents in 2030.

## **Many students yielding a low median age.**

Iowa City has approximately 31,000 university students, resulting in a young median age of 25.8 in 2015 (compared to the state median age of 38.1 in the same year). 32.5% of the Iowa City population is between 18 and 24 years old.

## **Iowa City faces age "extremes" with more seniors and young people and fewer "family-age" adults and children.**

From 2000 to 2010, the number of residents aged 55–64 increased by 81% and residents age 65 and over increased by 26.5%. Residents ages 25–34 also increased at about the same rate as the general population. At the same time, the number of residents in mid-life decreased: by 13.5% for 35–44 year olds and by 6.9% for 45–54 year olds. The number of children 10–14 dropped by 8%.

## **Iowa City has a highly educated population.**

Of Iowa City's residents who are 25 years and older, 95.1% have a high school diploma and 58.6% have a bachelor's degree and higher. This is much higher than the state-wide numbers of 91.5% and 26.7%, respectively (2015).

## **Many renters, small households.**

Because of the high student population, more than half of Iowa City households are renter-occupied, much higher than most communities. The average household size is 2.24 persons, lower than the state average of 2.42.

## **Park system implications.**

This demographic information has important implications for the Iowa City parks system, including:

- A growing population will create increased demand for parks and trails. As challenging as resources are for parks and trails, system growth must be considered in population growth scenarios.
- Growth in older adults and young adults will influence the type of programming and facilities that are wanted for parks. With each end of the age spectrum taking up such a healthy share of the population, it will be important to plan a system that serves the not-yet-8 year old and the 80+ year old equally. This implies a need for facilities that support "free-range children" on one end, and reasonably paced activities and less adventuresome trail grades on the other. "Free-range children" means youngsters who are allowed to explore parks and nature on their own terms, not always involved in structured or adult-supervised play.
- A declining "family" population can be countered with quality-of-life offerings such as parks, strengthening the need to look at park facilities that can accommodate family gatherings and adult-child interactions.
- The young adult population and incoming generations' increasing reliance on technology requires a thoughtful look at how parks interact with and support technology use.
- This highly educated population implies an interest in access to learning/interpretation through the parks and trails system.



# Iowa City Demographic Profile

Race	
White Alone	82.5%
White Alone, Not Hispanic or Latino	79.7%
Asian Alone	6.9%
Black or African American Alone	5.8%
Hispanic or Latino	5.3%
Two or More Races	2.5%
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	0.2%

Income	
Median Household Income (in 2015 Dollars)	\$42,375
Per Capita Income In Past 12 Months (in 2015 Dollars)	\$26,966
Persons in Poverty* (%)	28.2%

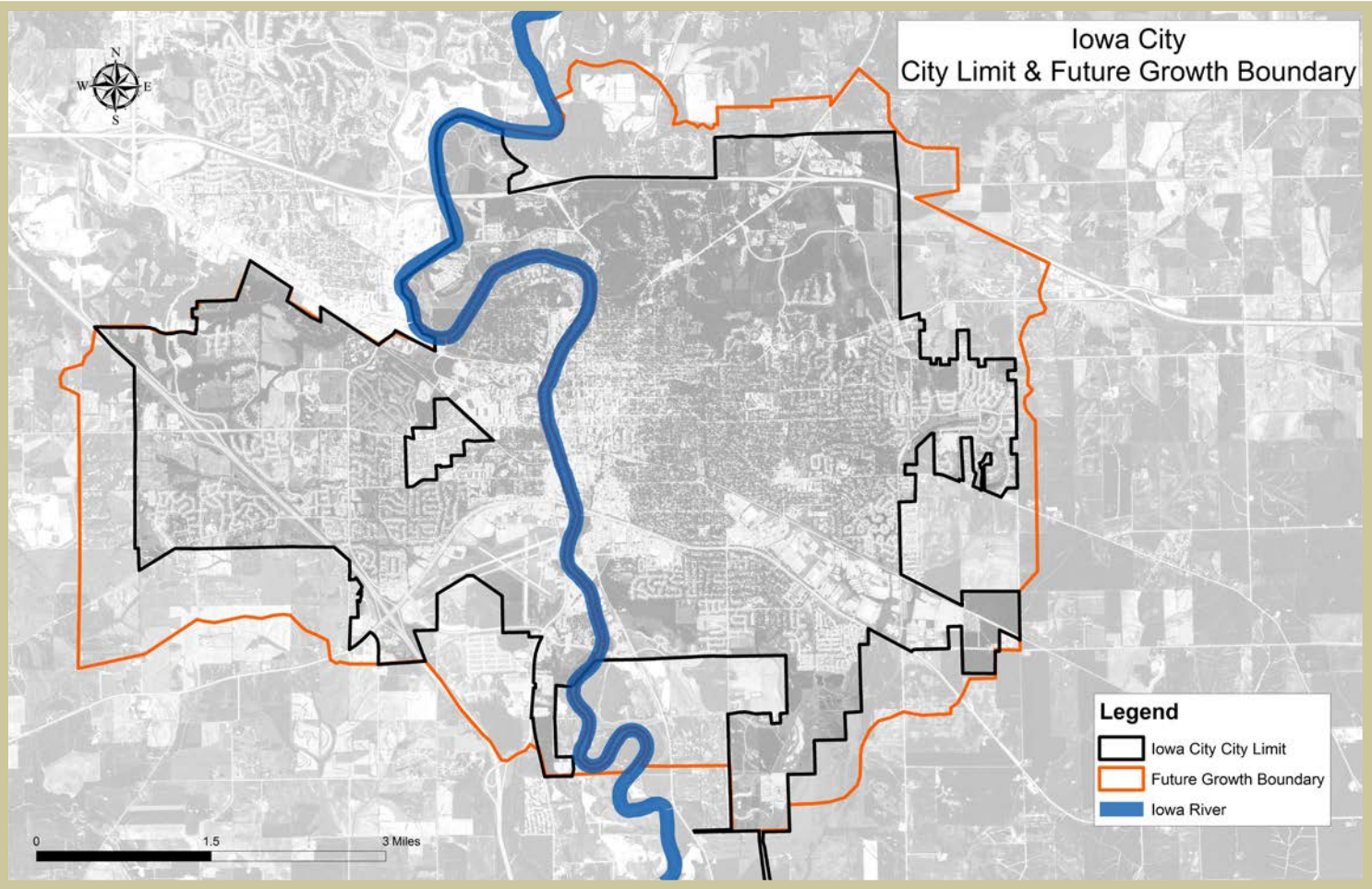
\*This geographic level of poverty and health estimates are not comparable to other geographic levels of these estimates

Population Characteristics	
Veterans (2011–2015)	2,262
Foreign-Born Persons (2011–2015) (%)	13.7%

Demographics derived from U.S. Census 2016.

## Current and Future Boundaries

The following map shows the current Iowa City boundaries and those projected for the community in the Iowa City Comprehensive Plan.







Chapter

## STAKEHOLDER AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

2



# Stakeholder and Public Engagement

This study is based on a truly exceptional commitment on the part of the Parks and Recreation Department and the Steering Committee to stakeholder and public engagement. The project was kicked off with a series of focus groups involving a variety of stakeholders. Discussions included those representing schools, neighborhoods and economic development—among others. Conversation topics varied somewhat from group to group but stakeholders were asked to address:

- How they and/or their organization currently use the parks and trails
- How they would like to be able to use the system in the future
- What they view as the system's strengths and challenges

- Where they find themselves creating memories within the system
- What they value most about the Iowa City parks and trails system
- Where they have found other systems they value and why
- Where they feel the community benefits most and least from the system
- Their ideas and concerns for the future of the system
- The trends they see that could/should be addressed through this planning process
- What they see as the system's greatest needs—today and tomorrow.

The input from these stakeholder discussions was further supplemented by an input session with the parks maintenance staff that was well-attended with meaningful and engaging participation. An early December public open house was held at the Robert A. Lee Community Recreation Center in association with an annual holiday event, maximizing attendance and participation. On-line survey questions were also publicized and made available for public input. Finally, more than 30 attended a half-day stakeholder workshop to map out the overall strategic direction for this plan.

The public input sessions are summarized below:

Summary of Stakeholder/Public Engagement in Support of Iowa City Park System Master Plan		
Date	Group/Interview/Event	Attendee(s)
10/24/2016	Accessibility Group	9
10/24/2016	Parks And Recreation Commission	7
10/25/2016	Business Group	9
10/25/2016	Seniors Group	9
10/25/2016	Non-profits Leadership	8
11/01/2016	Athletic Associations	10
11/01/2016	Recreation Center Student Group	7
11/01/2016	Maintenance Staff	30
11/02/2016	Partners	8
11/02/2016	School Partners	4
11/02/2016	Service and Health Organizations	6
11/02/2016	Neighborhood Group Representatives	6
11/02/2016	Kirkwood and U of I Reps/Students	3
12/01/2016	Strategic Stakeholder Workshop	36
12/10/2016	Open House (Held in conjunction with annual Holiday Market)	250+
First Quarter 2017	On-line comments/question responses	27

*Note: Approximately 300 public/stakeholder contacts have occurred in support of this master planning effort; some contacts are duplicates. Participants for the December 1 Stakeholder Workshop were, in part, purposely recruited from small-group discussion participants.*

Based on the input above, an early draft of a strategic direction for this plan was crafted to use at a stakeholder workshop. The half-day workshop was well-attended by a

highly energetic group of stakeholders who never waned in their commitment to take a thoughtfully critical look at the system and its needs. The strategic framework that appears in

Chapter Four is an outgrowth of the inventory, research, public engagement and stakeholder workshop.

Chapter

# INVENTORY ANALYSIS

3

# Summary

Iowa City provides a good level of park service in terms of acres of parkland and core facilities such as park shelters and playgrounds. However, some residential areas lack a neighborhood park within walking distance and certain types of park experiences are not available in all parts of the City. The Central and West Central areas of the City in particular have fewer park facilities than other areas of town. The City's creeks and river present an untapped opportunity for additional recreational service.

Accessibility to park experiences and services to lower-income areas should be prioritized in order to provide more equity in service. The Racial and Socioeconomic Equity Review Toolkit should be used to reach out to underserved areas to assess park needs. Many parks need accessible paths and destinations to allow for participation by the wide range of Iowa City residents

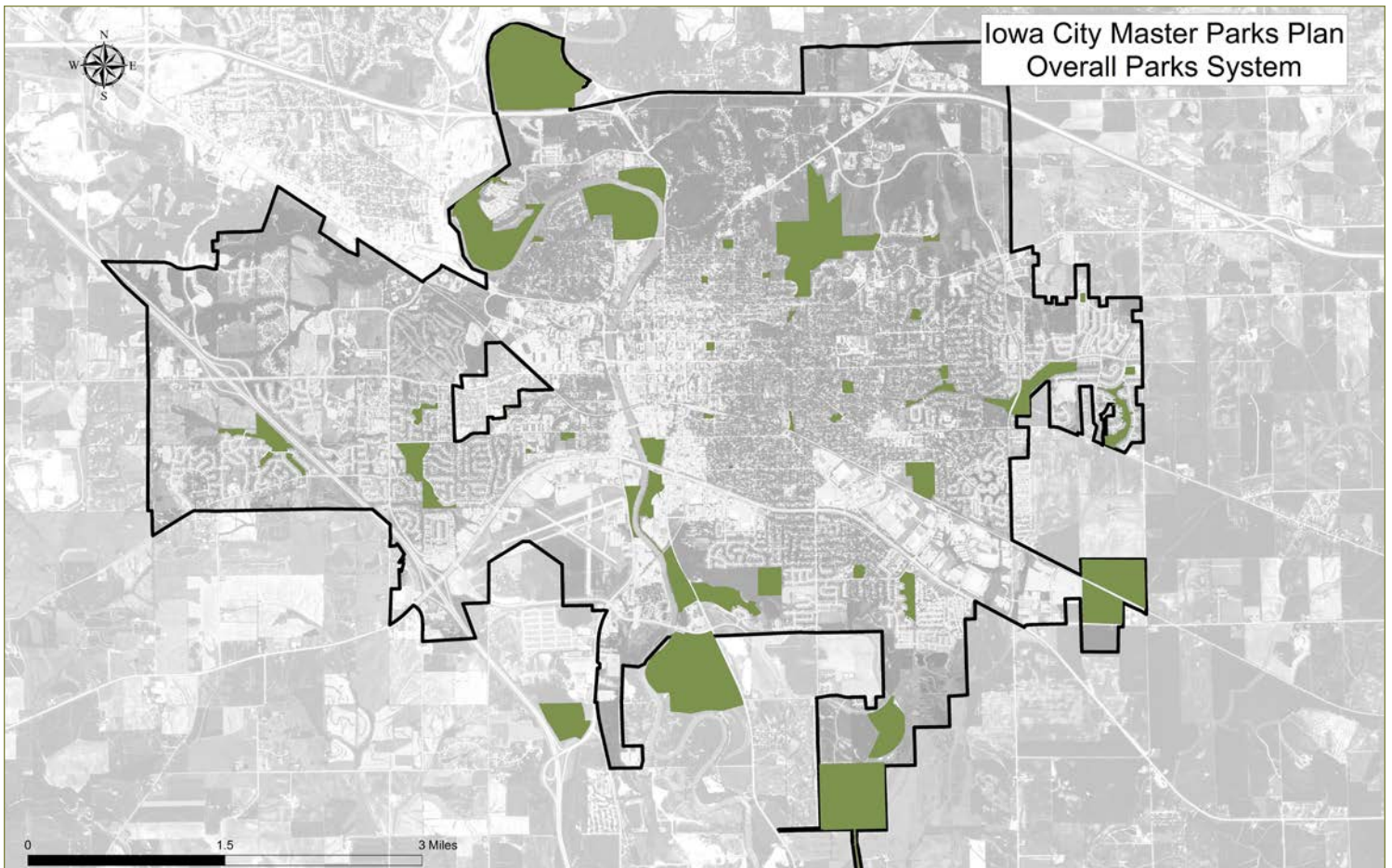
## Method of Analysis

The park system was analyzed via a two-step process:

1. Using a Geographic Information System program, ESRI's ArcGIS, the team performed spatial analysis—with regard to total park acreage, socio-economic factors, walkability, physical accessibility, and park type and character—and created a database for ongoing and future park projects.
2. An on-the-ground process collected data on each park, regarding physical accessibility for parking areas, play equipment, shelters and other related buildings. Additionally, the status of structures and pathways was also recorded, as well as the location of water shut-offs, park benches, etc.

## Map of Park System

A base map was created to display all current City parks. An aerial fly-over was conducted in fall of 2016 to assist in the performance of GIS mapping for several park-related planning efforts. This aerial imagery taken in the fall season provides geographic analysis with fewer aerial obstructions, such as tree canopy and leaf coloration that can skew or obscure parkland features. Each park shapefile was provided by the City and the aerial imagery was used as a background for the resultant map.





# Current Park Level of Service

## Park Acres and Core Facilities

Iowa City has 1,699 acres of parkland, or about 22.8 acres per 1,000 people. This is significantly more than the national median for parkland acreage of 15.2 acres per 1,000 people (2012), but is typical for other university cities in the Midwest region. At the same time,

parks staff maintains an additional 200 acres that are not parklands.

Table 1 shows Iowa City's park acreage in comparison to the national median and to other

university cities of similar size in the Midwest. These cities have a campus integrated with the town, similar student enrollment numbers and a student population that makes up a significant portion of the overall city population.

**Table 1: Iowa City Park Acres Compared to Similar Cities**

City	Population (2015)	Appx. university enrollment	Square miles	Median household income	Median age	Total park acres	Park acres/ 1,000 residents
<b>Iowa City, IA</b>	74,398*	33,000	25.3	42,375	25.8	1,699	22.8
Bloomington, IN	82,813	48,000	23.4	30,019	23.6	2,080	25.0
Champaign, IL	84,004	44,000	22.5	42,094	27.2	609.7	7.2
Columbia, MO	115,391	33,000	63.4	44,907	26.9	3,000	26.0
Ann Arbor, MI	116,194	45,000	28.7	55,990	27.8	2,110	18.2
Madison, WI	243,122	43,000	94.0	54,896	30.9	5,592	23.0
<b>National Median (2012)</b>	--	--				--	15.2

Sources: American Community Survey (ACS) 2015; City of Iowa GIS Data; Columbia Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan (2013); Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan (2017); City of Madison 2012–2017 Park & Open Space Plan (2012)

\* July 2016 population projection for Iowa City

Table 2 shows a count of selected park facilities in Iowa City and in two comparison communities. As compared to the Midwestern university towns of Columbia, MO and

Ann Arbor, MI, Iowa City has a relatively small number of basketball courts and a relatively large number of park shelters and soccer fields. Most other facilities, such as

playgrounds and baseball fields, were similar across the communities.

**Table 2: Selected Park Facilities**

	Iowa City	Per 10k residents	Columbia	Per 10k residents	Ann Arbor	Per 10k residents
Basketball Courts	7	1.0	22	1.9	35	3.0
Disc Golf	2	0.3	3	0.3	3	0.3
Dog Leash Free Areas	2	0.3	5	0.4	x	x
Golf Courses * (18 hole)	3	0.4	2	0.2	x	x
Park Shelters	45	6.3	51	4.4	20	1.7
Playgrounds / Play Areas	28	3.9	48	4.2	79	6.8
Soccer	28	3.9	18	1.6	12	1.0
Softball/Baseball	17	2.4	33	2.9	22	1.9
Spraygrounds / Splash Pads	3	0.4	3	0.3	x	x
Pools	2	0.3	3	0.3	3	0.3
Tennis Courts	9	1.7	27	2.3	20	1.7
Outdoor Theatre / Band Shell	2	0.3	1	0.1	1	0.1

Sources: Iowa City Field Data; Columbia Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan (2013); Ann Arbor Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan (2017)

\* Not maintained by City staff

Level of Service by Class of Park

Parks were classified according to 2 methods:

1. Classification by Scale

It is important for cities to have a mix of different scales of parks, from small neighborhood parks that serve the immediate vicinity, to large specialty parks that draw visitors from around the region. Table 3 describes the different scales of parks. This is a traditional method of assessing appropriate diversity in the park system.

2. Classification by Character










The Iowa City parks system has great diversity of character, ranging from relatively wild natural areas to highly manicured ballfields. The planning team identified ten different “character” classifications that describe the primary experience that the park offers. These classifications describe both the parks the city has, and those residents would like to have. They were created specifically for the Iowa City system. This classification helps show what park experiences may be lacking in this community, or in a specific location within this community. Table 4 describes the character classes.



Table 3: Park Scale Classes				
Classification	Function	Size	Service Radius	Iowa City example
Regional	Parks that attract visitors from outside the community due to their large size, unique offerings, and/or high quality.	Varies	Up to 60 miles	Terry Trueblood Recreation Area, City Park
Community	Meet diverse community-based recreation needs, preserve significant natural areas and provide space for larger recreation facilities. May include special attraction such as a pool or trails.	30–50 acres	1/2–3 miles	Wetherby Park, Mercer Park, Willow Creek
Neighborhood	Basic unit of a community’s park system, providing a recreational and social focus for residential areas; accommodate informal recreational activities.	5–10 acres	1/4–1/2 mile (walking distance)	Benton Hill Park, North Market Park
Mini	Fulfill open-space needs when space is limited, or provide niche recreation opportunities.	Less than 1 acre	Less than 1/4 mile	Harlocke Hill Park
Specialty	Meet a niche recreational need for the community, such as a sports park or wilderness area.	Varies	Varies	Iowa City Kickers Soccer Park

Note: Parks of 1–5 acres are classified as “mini” or “neighborhood” depending on their use and access. See Table 5 for detailed classifications.

**Table 4: Park Character Classes**

Class Name	Description	Iowa City Example
Play 	Typically, residents will find manicured open space, a shelter and some limited programmed recreation space (e.g., a basketball court or a ball field). This park is dominated by mowed lawns, a shelter and a playground.	Brookland Park, North Market Square Park
Compete 	This park is set up to foster competitive sports, with multiple ballfields and perhaps a concession stand and bleachers. Programmed spaces dominate.	Napoleon Park, Iowa City Kickers Soccer Park
Splash 	Water play is the dominant theme here—specifically, constructed water play, rather than a creek or river. Splash pads and pools are the classic features of these parks.	Fair Meadows Park, Tower Court Park
Go Wild 	Nature preservation is the focus of these parks, and natural areas with native plants and animals shape the human experience. Natural play, woodland or creek exploration, or some level of immersion in nature dominates here. These parks tend to support hiking, discovery and create-your-own adventure instead of a structured event. In this way, Go Wild parks, especially the larger ones, overlap with Reflect and Learn parks.	Ryerson's Woods, Terry Trueblood Recreation Area, Hickory Hill
Connect 	These parks support social connections through programming or facilities. An events lawn, a performance space or a central shelter might be an indicator, or trails and sidewalks linking to the park. These would support informal connections and programs like pot lucks, reunions or cultural exchanges.	City Park, College Green
Reflect 	Not every park needs to provide adventure or intense activity. Spaces for rest and reflection must also play a role in the Iowa City Park System. This might mean strategically placed benches for overlooks, labyrinths for inner views, integration of art, or a nature path. These parks provide opportunities to pull away from the hustle and bustle and to de-stress.	Sand Prairie, Black Springs Circle Park
Learn 	Parks that promote outdoor learning spaces, science-based activities or integration of the arts fit in this class of parks. As with Connect parks, programming is as essential as physical spaces. Outdoor classrooms, creek access for experiments, sheds with science/learning based tools, “STEAM* stations” or direct connections to schools would all be physical attributes of a learning park.	Kiwanis Park, Wetherby Park
Move 	This category includes trails and parks that are primarily meant to get people walking, jogging or hiking. This includes mini parks surrounding trailheads and greenways along trails.	Waterworks Prairie Park, Longfellow Nature Trail
Thrill 	When a park emphasizes adventure, it is typically associated with some requirement for increased skill or risk. Zip line, white water or cycling challenge courses are among the elements residents might see in a Thrill park.	None at present; adventure playground proposed in City Park Master Plan
Reserve 	Natural areas not intended for regular or programmed use. This designation would be applied to sites/sub-areas within a park, not to the entirety of a public park. This designation is included here to coordinate with the upcoming Natural Areas Study as that study will reference reserve areas within parks.	<i>See upcoming Natural Areas Study for more information.</i>

\* “STEAM” = Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics



Table 5: Iowa City Parks Overview: Acres, Scale, Character and Location

Park	Acres	Scale	Character (Primary)	Character (Secondary)	District
Hickory Hill Park	184	Regional	Go Wild	Connect	Central
Riverfront Crossings Park	18	Regional	Connect	Play	Central
Peninsula Park	124	Regional	Go Wild	Move	North
Waterworks Prairie Park	226	Regional	Move	Reflect	North
Thornberry Dog Park	10	Regional	Move	Connect	North
Terry Trueblood Recreation Area	206	Regional	Go Wild	Connect	South
City Park	107	Regional	Connect	Compete	West Central
Ryerson's Woods	49	Regional	Go Wild	Reflect	West Central
Wetherby Park	24	Community	Splash	Learn	South
Scott Park	45	Community	Move		Southeast
Mercer Park	31	Community	Play	Compete	Southeast
Willow Creek–Kiwanis Park	41	Community	Play	Go Wild	West Central
Chadek Green Park	5	Neighborhood	Learn	Reflect	Central
Oak Grove Park	2	Neighborhood	Play		Central
College Green Park	2	Neighborhood	Play		Central
North Market Park	<1	Neighborhood	Play		Central
Reno Street Park	<1	Neighborhood	Play		Central
Pheasant Hill Park	4	Neighborhood	Play	Reflect	North
Fraunholtz-Miller Park	2	Neighborhood	Play		North
Hickory Trail Park	3	Neighborhood	Play		North
Happy Hollow Park	3	Neighborhood	Play	Connect	North
Fairmeadows Park	5	Neighborhood	Splash	Play	South
Windsor Ridge Park	21	Neighborhood	Move		Southeast
Court Hill Park	11	Neighborhood	Play		Southeast



Table 5: Iowa City Parks Overview: Acres, Scale, Character and Location

Park	Acres	Scale	Character (Primary)	Character (Secondary)	District
Cardigan Park	3	Neighborhood	Play		Southeast
Creekside Park	3	Neighborhood	Play	Go Wild	Southeast
Hunters Run Park	36	Neighborhood	Go Wild	Move	West
Villa Park	7	Neighborhood	Play		West Central
Brookland Park	<1	Neighborhood	Play	Move	West Central
Benton Hill Park	3	Neighborhood	Reflect	Play	West Central
Tower Court Park	<1	Neighborhood	Splash	Play	West Central
Highland Park	<1	Mini	Play		Central
Glendale Park	2	Mini	Play	Go Wild	Central
Harlocke Hill Park	1	Mini	Play		West Central
Black Springs Circle Park	1	Mini	Reflect		West Central
Ned Ashton Park	<1	Mini	Move		West Central
Chauncey Swan Park	1	Mini *	Connect		Central
Longfellow Nature Trail	2	Specialty	Move	Go Wild	Central
Terrell Mill Park	34	Specialty	Move	Compete	North
Napoleon Park	58	Specialty	Compete		South
Whispering Meadows Wetland	18	Specialty	Go Wild	Reflect	South
Sycamore South Greenway	52	Specialty	Move	Go Wild	South
Sand Prairie	38	Specialty	Reflect	Go Wild	South
Iowa City Kickers Soccer Park	164	Specialty	Compete		South
East Side Sports Complex	127	Specialty	Compete		Southeast
Sturgis Ferry Park	11	Specialty	Go Wild	Move	West Central
Crandic Park	4	Specialty	Move		West Central
Rita's Ranch Dog Park	3	Specialty	Move		Southeast

\* While generally a mini-park in scale, Chauncey Swan Park provides a key community function when hosting the Farmer's Market.

## Summary:

### Level of Service by Class

Iowa City has an appropriate mix of parks at different scales, and each area of town offers both neighborhood parks and larger community/regional parks. The challenge to all of these is to make the system more accessible to everyone.

While Iowa City currently has no parks listed in the “Thrill” category, Riverfront Crossings park is about to come on-line to offer that opportunity. Similarly, the system has few “Learn” oriented parks at this time, but many show potential and are poised for updates that will increase “Learn” opportunities in the near future.





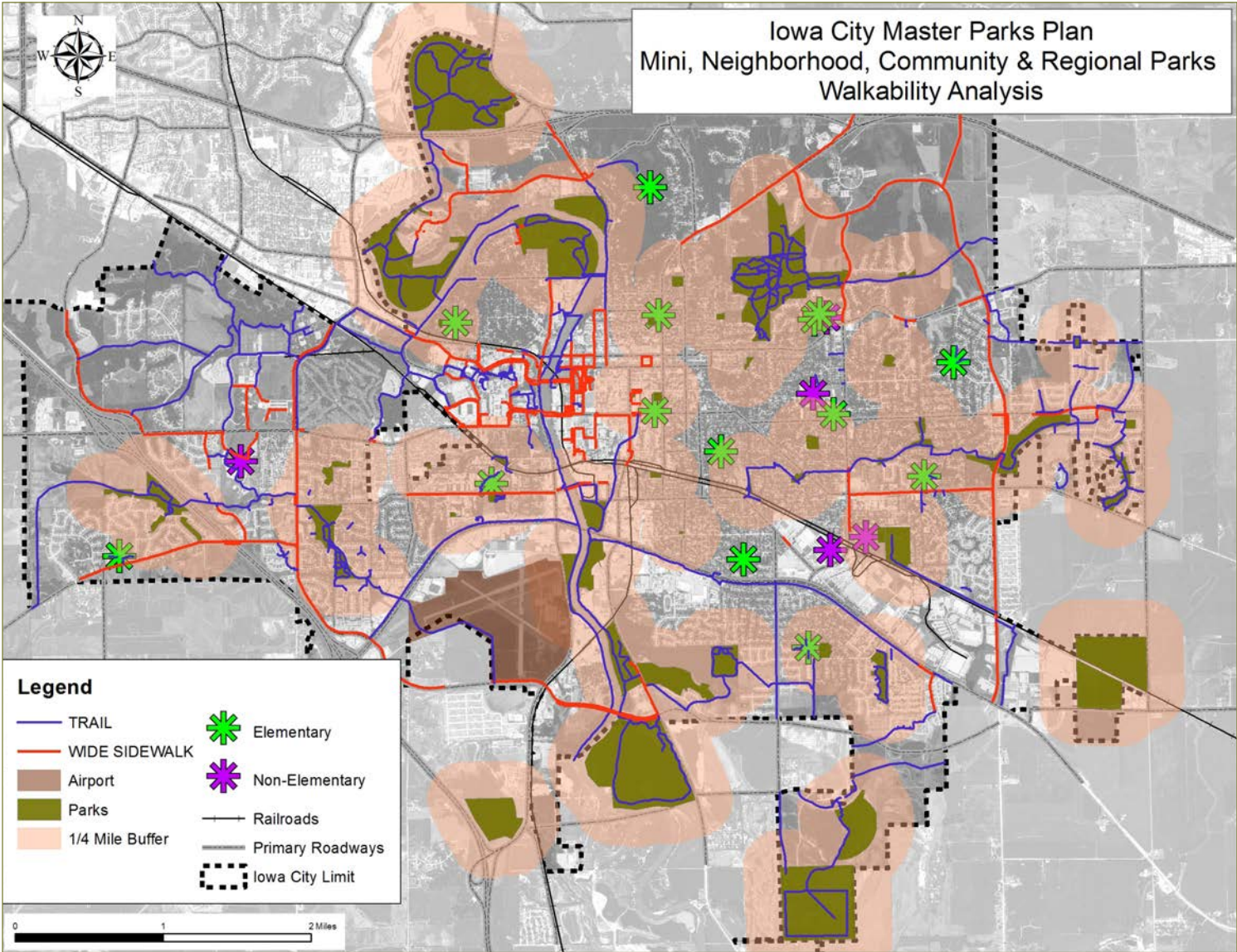
Level of Service by Access:  
Walkability, Transit and  
Waterway

Providing safe and easy access to the City's parks system is an essential component of the level of service. The following maps express the transit connectivity throughout the parks system and the ability for residents to walk to a nearby park.

Walkability

In order to determine walkability to each park, a quarter-mile buffer was created to indicate a distance that people are willing to walk to get to a park. Trails and wide sidewalks were included to highlight formal modes of walkability that would make access to the parks more appealing. Additionally, schools

can provide additional park amenities that are available to the public, and while there are only three 28E agreements between schools and the City, school sites are often used informally as after-hours parks by residents when access is available.





There are strong trail connections in the central part of Iowa City along the Iowa River by the Iowa River Corridor Trail. It connects with other Iowa City parks, such as Terry Trueblood Recreation Area, Napoleon Park, and City Park. With the completion of the Dubuque Street pedestrian bridge, this trail now leads all the way to North Liberty and is often used by cyclists and walkers of all ages. While there is a dedicated trail alongside Highway 6, it only extends as far east as Broadway. One absence is the ability for pedestrians to safely cross the Iowa River and remain along the same trail. This trail is ideal for residents in the southern part of Iowa City to access walking, running, bicycling and even fishing in Napoleon Park and the Terry Trueblood Recreation Area, as well as the amenities that will be available to them in the Riverfront Crossings Park in the near future.

### Walkability Gaps

Several residential areas fall outside of the quarter-mile walkability zone. Notable gaps are:

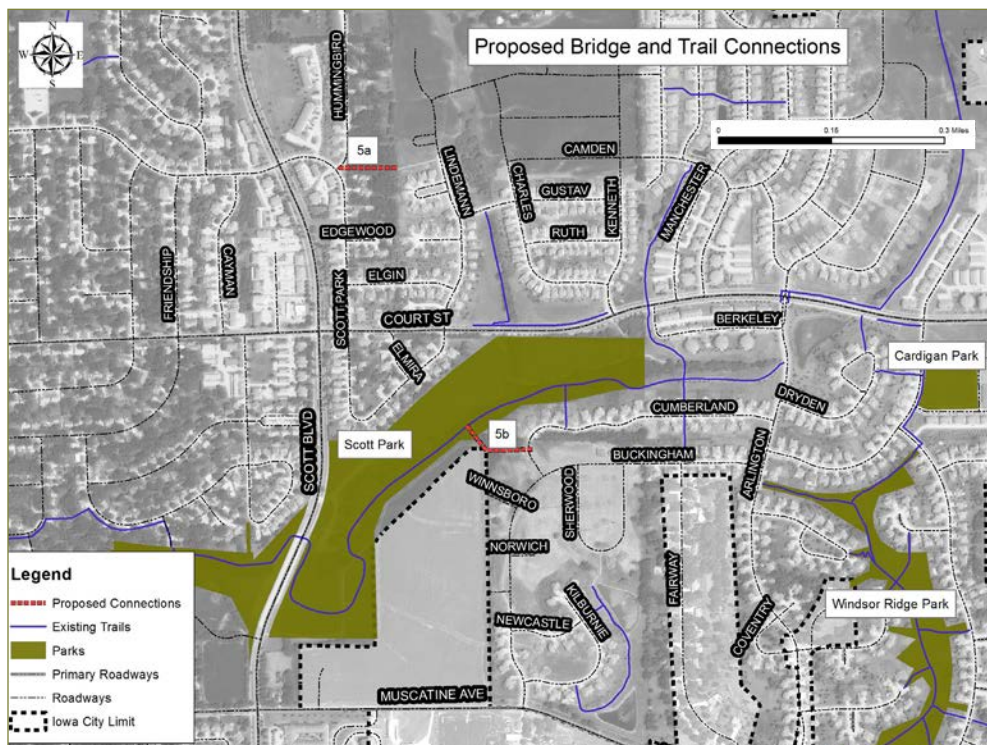
- Southeast: West of Kirkwood Community College along Highway 6
- Far East: Along Scott Boulevard south of Muscatine Avenue
- Far East: Along Scott Boulevard north of East Court Street
- Central: West of City High, along Ralston Creek
- West: South of University Heights, around Sunset Street and Benton Street
- West: Areas north and south of Walden Square, along west side of Mormon Trek Boulevard

There are also areas that could use improvement in terms of trails and wide sidewalk connections, such as the eastern part of the City. A few of the trail and sidewalk networks appear and disappear or do not connect to nearby trails/parks. An example of an upcoming improvement to address this issue, highlighted in the map below, features proposed bridge and trail connections for Scott Park. See 5a and 5b marked on the map below.

Note: The bicycle-pedestrian aspects of this report have been kept to a minimum in anticipation of an upcoming Bicycle Master Plan for the City where access to all parks has been identified in addition to other recommendations of interest to the Iowa City Parks System.

## About the Iowa City Bicycle Master Plan

*The Iowa City Bicycle Master Plan will guide city staff and elected officials in creating a more bike-friendly community by identifying recommendations for off-street bikeways, like trails and greenways, and on-street bikeways like bike boulevards (low-traffic streets with bike-friendly features), bike lanes, and separated bike lanes. When complete, these bikeways will connect to create a complete bicycle network that supports safe and comfortable bicycle travel and connects people to the places they want to go. The Bicycle Master Plan will also identify programs, events and activities to educate residents about safe cycling and driving and to encourage more people to get out and enjoy life on two (and sometimes three) wheels. The plan is slated for completion later in 2017.*



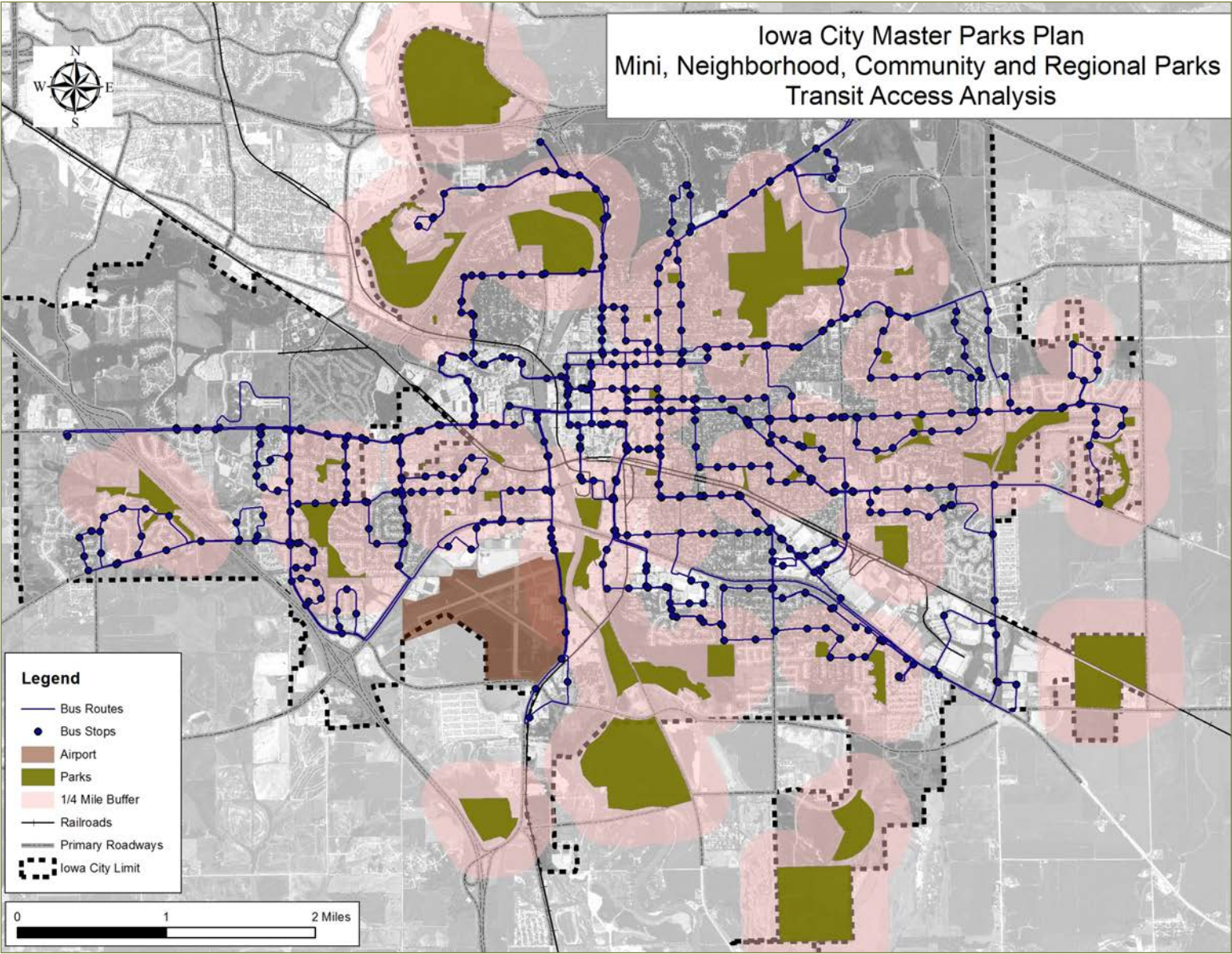


**Transit**

A transit analysis was conducted to understand the ability for residents to access parks via the City's bus services. These routes include all Iowa City bus routes, such as the 7th Avenue, Court Hill, and Lakeside bus lines and their bus stops. While nearly all City parks reside within a ¼ mile of a bus stop, it should be noted that access to these parks can be hampered by the amount of time it takes to travel to them based on where the resident is located and which park they want to visit.






**Transit Gaps**


Several regional parks, most notably the Waterworks Park, Terry Trueblood Recreation Area (TTRA), and Ryerson's Woods, are not located along transit lines; however, it should be noted that transit is available and contracted for transportation to special events, such as those at TTRA








## Transit Challenge

**Option 1:**      **52 min**


**4:38pm - 5:30pm** 



 to 8082 - Forest View Trailer Park **<1 min**

**Iowa City Transit**  Manville Heights to Inbound 

4:39pm **Depart:** 8082 - Forest View Trailer Park  
Time in transit: 16 min


4:55pm **Arrive:** 0001 - Downtown Interchange

 to 0002 - Downtown Interchange **1 min**

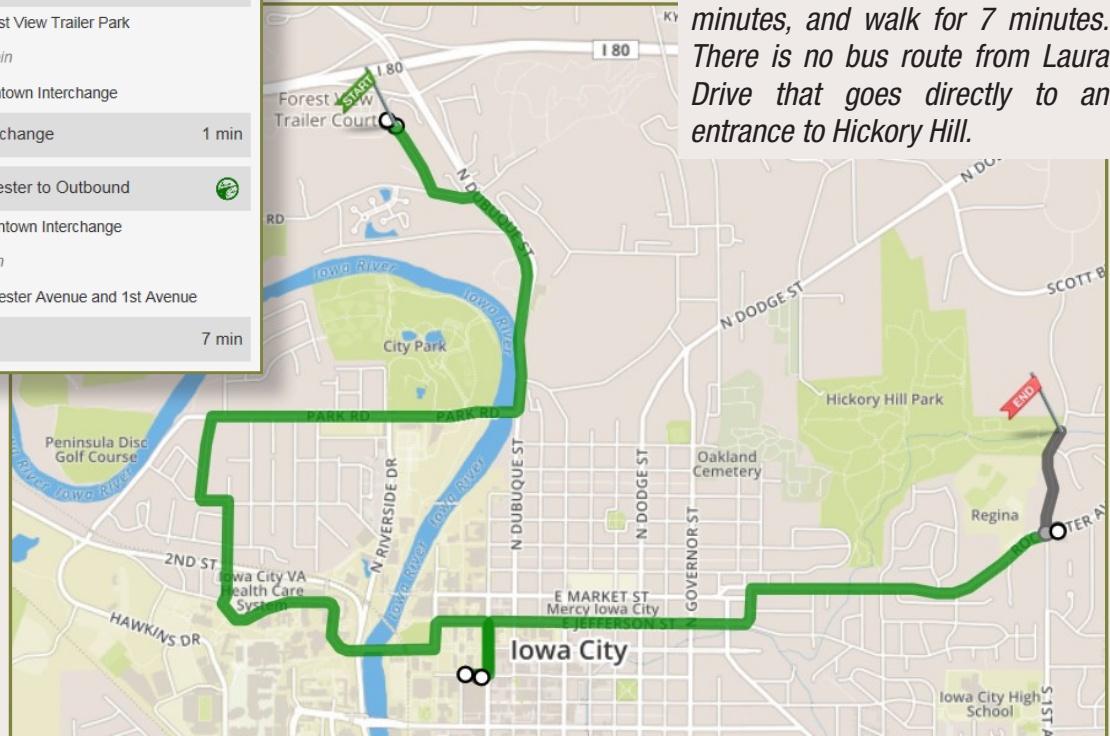
**Iowa City Transit**  Rochester to Outbound 

5:15pm **Depart:** 0002 - Downtown Interchange  
Time in transit: 8 min

5:23pm **Arrive:** 7420 - Rochester Avenue and 1st Avenue

 to North 1st Avenue **7 min**

*A family living in Forest View Mobile Home Park wanting to go for a hike in Hickory Hill Park would have to ride the bus for a minimum of 52 minutes, and walk for 7 minutes. There is no bus route from Laura Drive that goes directly to an entrance to Hickory Hill.*



An example of the transit challenge





# Connecting Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) to Everyday Play and Adventure



Nature and its sounds provide inspiration and information.



An outdoor classroom provides an excellent opportunity for all ages and abilities to learn about conservation and the great outdoors.



Playing freely in the landscape nurtures a child's imagination.

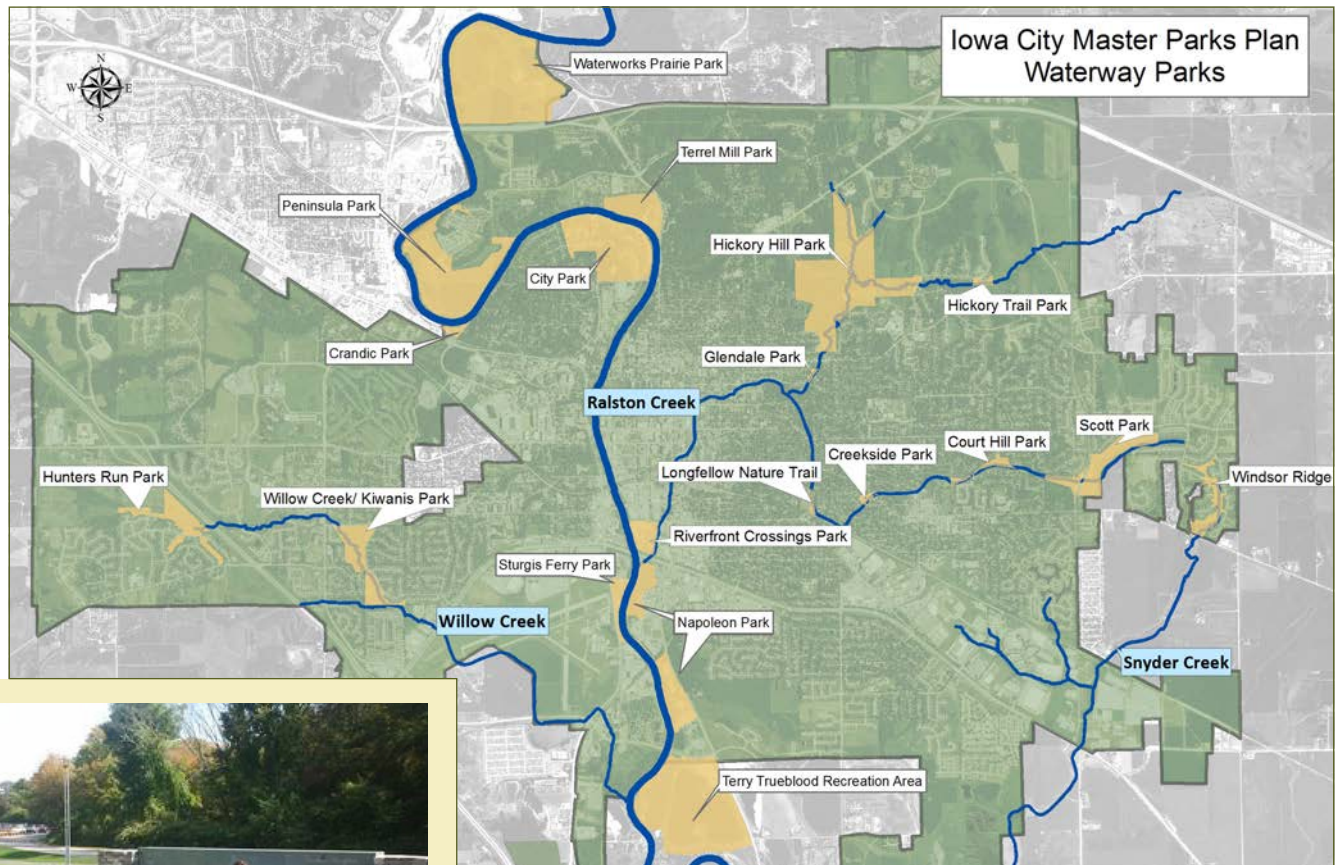


In addition to a traditional look at transit, this plan notes Iowa City's innovative approach to active learning and recreation at bus stops. The Parks and Recreation department has been working on a concept to add play areas focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) at bus stops. The concept offers small, teachable play spaces in unexpected places where families travel together (see above image). Elsewhere in this report, the concept of STEAM stations within parks is highlighted.



These children explore a world beneath their feet.





Outdoor classrooms come in a variety of shapes and sizes.



Playing with erosion table at STEAM festival

## Waterway Parks

There are several parks with access to nearby creeks and river, and based on public input and a growing national trend, cities have been re-orienting their designs back to embracing these natural features. Iowa City has three prominent creeks:

- Ralston Creek spans much of the central part of the City east to west and has two branches that split north and south.
- Willow Creek is located in the southwestern portion of the City and crosses Highway 218, down through portions of the municipal airport.
- Snyder Creek is located in the eastern part of the City and spans areas north to south.

And the City is part of the Iowa Water Trails Network with 72 unobstructed miles of paddling available on the Iowa River from Iowa City to the Mississippi River. An access point is near Napoleon Park and Riverfront

Crossings park will also become part of Iowa's water trail system. City Park has river accesses but use of that section of the river is confined due to the roller dam.

There are multiple parks within the system that have naturally graded areas where access to the creeks is feasible. Additionally, Applied Ecological Services, through its upcoming Natural Areas Study, has identified opportunities for creek connection and learning, play or reflection (see "About the Natural Areas Study"). As will be seen throughout this report, improving access to creeks and waterways could serve multiple functions to enhance the system overall—generally improved access and experiences for learning, reflecting and "going wild."

At the same time, the Parks and Recreation Department faces current and future needs for maintenance and care of creeks, creek accesses and upstream impacts on water quality and quantity. Communities throughout Iowa are in need of additional resources to address these maintenance issues.



## About the Natural Areas Study

*A comprehensive inventory, assessment and natural resource management planning effort began in late 2016 for Iowa City's natural areas and public open space. City staff and its consultant, Applied Ecological Services (AES), are assembling and analyzing information from forty-two City-owned sites identified by the City as natural areas. A natural area is a spontaneous product of nature, such as forest or wetland, but also includes places people have allowed to return to nature or deliberately restored to natural conditions, such as a native prairie. Several of Iowa City's parks contain expansive natural areas which, given the rarity of natural areas in the state, are a precious resource for this and future Iowa City generations. Many natural areas are included in the park system, addressed through this master planning process. This master planning process classifies parks into use categories. Parks and open space where the primary use is as a natural area are placed in the Go Wild category. Some natural areas that are inaccessible or where the City wants to discourage use, such as stormwater detention basins, would be suitable to place in the reserve category.*

*The Natural Areas Study currently identifies parks with natural areas worthy of a “preserve/protect” classification—meaning, some level of “set aside” should be in play to help sustain character and quality. At the same time, these areas can still provide some level of appropriate recreation, primarily in the category of Reflect, Learn and/or Go Wild. These parks include Hickory Hill, Ryerson Woods, Sand Prairie, Sycamore Greenway, Waterworks Prairie Park and the Oxeye Prairie and wastewater treatment plant wetland within Iowa City Kickers Soccer Park.*

*AES has further identified no fewer than ten parks/facilities where Ralston Creek connections could be of value, particularly as a Learn opportunity for park users. These parks include: Court Hill, Creekside, Glendale, Hickory Hill, Hickory Trail, Scott Park Greenway, Longfellow Natural Trail, Recreation Center Greenway, Riverfront Crossings Greenway and Scott Park.*







## About the Tree Inventory

*Iowa City's tree inventory is running on a parallel course to the development of this master plan. In December 2016, the Iowa City Parks and Forestry Division began an inventory of publicly owned trees. Over the course of a year, arborists with Plan-It Geo, a geo-technical firm from Colorado, mapped, cataloged and gathered data on the City's urban forest. The inventory focuses on trees within street right-of-ways, parks and public facilities.*

*The tree inventory is an important urban forestry tool that will aid with planning the diversification of the City's urban forest, addressing damage from weather related events and responding to pests and disease such as Emerald Ash Borer, Asian Longhorn Beetle and Gypsy Moth. This study and the Natural Areas Inventory will inform the future direction of many of the natural spaces within the Iowa City Parks and Recreation System.*

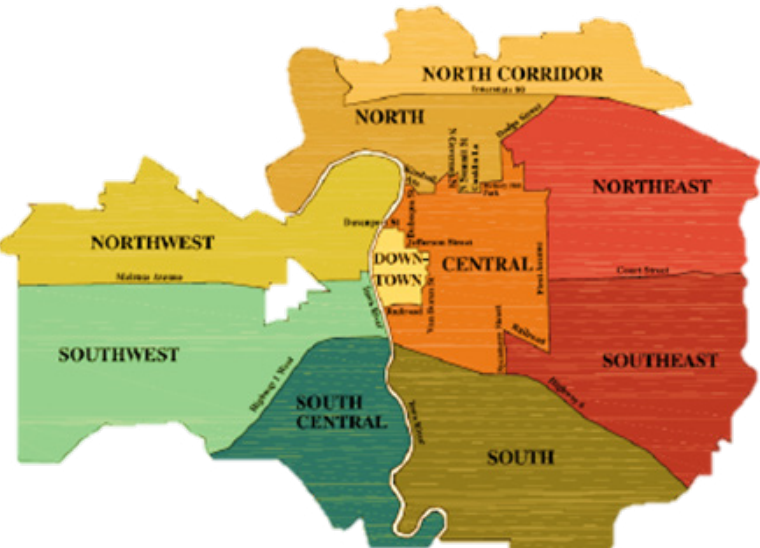


# District Analysis

In 2013, the City adopted an updated Comprehensive Plan titled, Iowa City 2030. This comprehensive plan uses a district planning process that involves extensive citizen participation in ten distinct areas. As of the writing

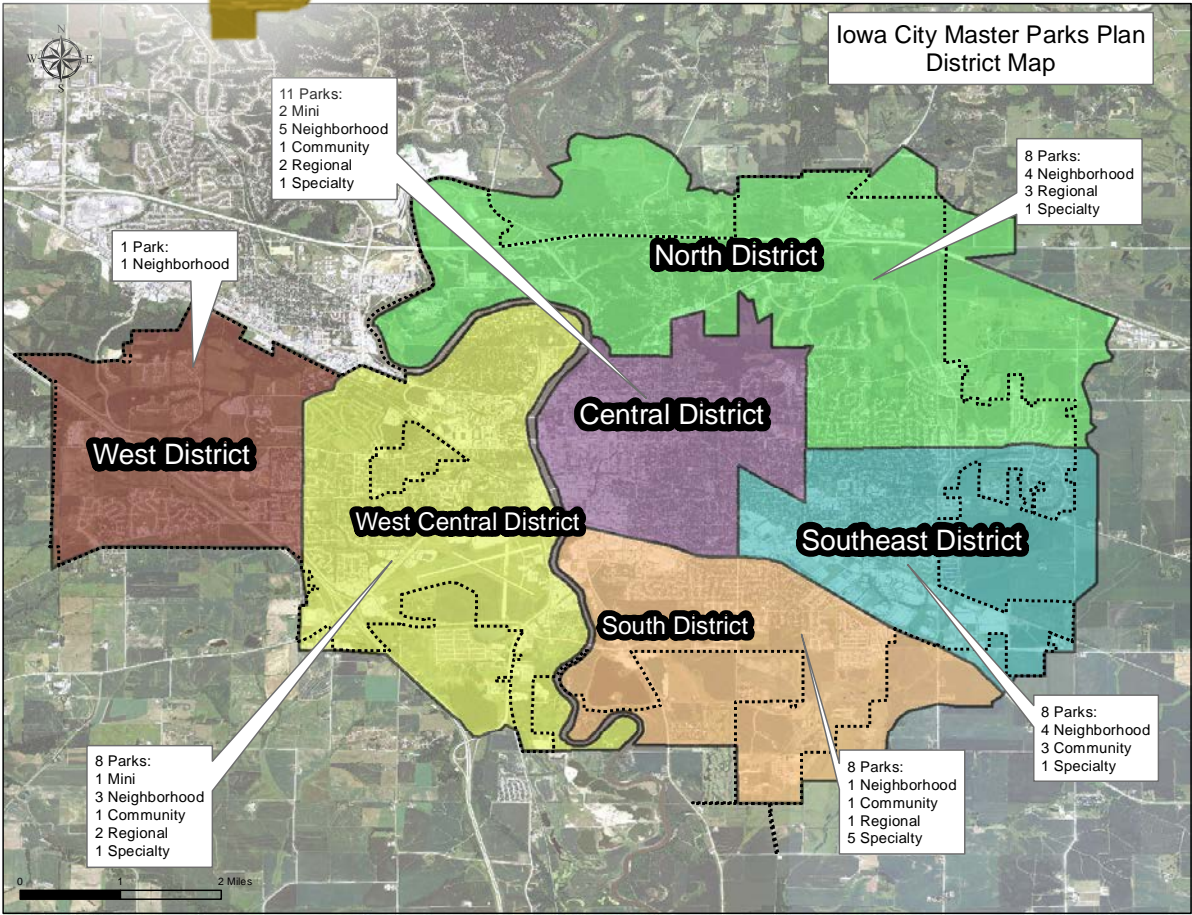
of this plan, eight of the ten areas have district plans. For the purpose of analyzing the park system, the planning team created districts based on those already in use for the comprehensive plan. The Comprehensive Planning Districts

were slightly augmented to generate a feasible boundary for the analysis of certain aspects, such as park type (regional, neighborhood, etc.), park characteristic (Classic, Move, etc.), and park accessibility within a certain district.



Left: Iowa City Comprehensive Plan  
10 Planning Districts

Bottom: Master Parks Plan  
6 Planning Districts





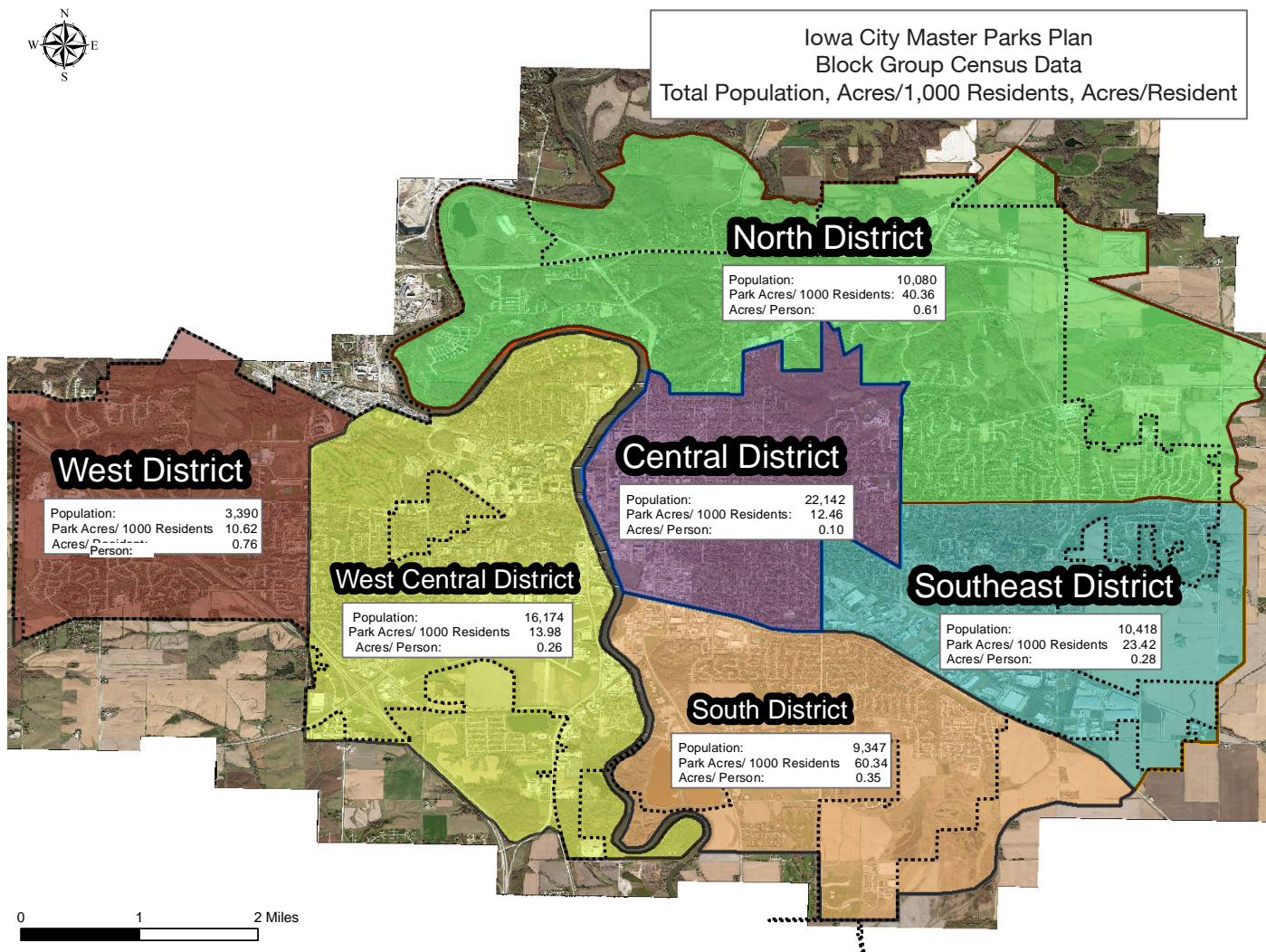
## District Analysis—Population Metric

When looking at the service level of parks within a district, it is useful to use the number of park acres/1,000 residents as a standard metric of comparison. To accomplish this metric, population estimates were generated pulling Census track data into ArcGIS to create centroids of data that provided an estimate of

residents living within a certain district. Looking at the data, the North and South Districts have relatively the same population; however, the North District has fewer park acres/1,000 residents (40 acres) than the South District (60 acres). Given their geographic size difference, the population metric provides a

relative equalizer when understanding the different characteristics within each district.

When looking strictly at park acres per 1,000 population, the West, West Central and Central Districts all surface as potentially challenged by a shortage of park acreage,



while the North and South Districts have high park acres-to-population ratios. These areas may experience more pressure over time as they are considered poised for future growth. The West District's challenges may not be as significant as they appear by the numbers,

due to an affluent segment of the population likely served in large part through private acres. Neighboring system services also support West District residents as well as University of Iowa open spaces. The Central District includes University of Iowa (UI) Pentacrest, Hubbard

Park, UI Library, UI Wellness Center and other open spaces on the University grounds. These facilities help meet some of the Central District's needs but the West Central and Central Districts remain as areas of concern for park service.



## District Analysis—Equity

Iowa City Parks & Recreation (ICPR) is committed to using a Racial and Socioeconomic Equity Review Toolkit to guide policy, operational and park development decisions. This process acknowledges that race and income inequities must be considered in all facets of parks and recreation services to provide appropriate and equitable services to all Iowa City residents. ICPR is committed to building organizational capacity, community networks and communication strategies that allow Iowa City's diverse populations to be heard and participate in leadership, planning and evaluation of programs, facilities and services.

### Methodology

This study works to address equity through review of a socio-economic map created by analyzing 2010 Census data at the census tract level for the following social indicators:

- Percent of families below poverty level

- Percent disability
- Race
- Educational achievement

Each indicator category was clipped along Iowa City census tract boundaries and a spatial analysis was performed that weighed poverty indicators slightly more than the others since several of the other indicators could be factors related to individuals and families with incomes below the poverty level. The data was classified to provide results to display areas that indicate higher levels of poverty, more racial diversity, less educational attainment, and higher percentages of disabled residents. Iowa City is a college town and thus, students with lower incomes could potentially skew the results. To adjust for this potential outcome, the inclusion of the “percent below poverty level with related children of householder under 18 years” census category was used to normalize the data.



## Racial and Socioeconomic Equity Review Toolkit

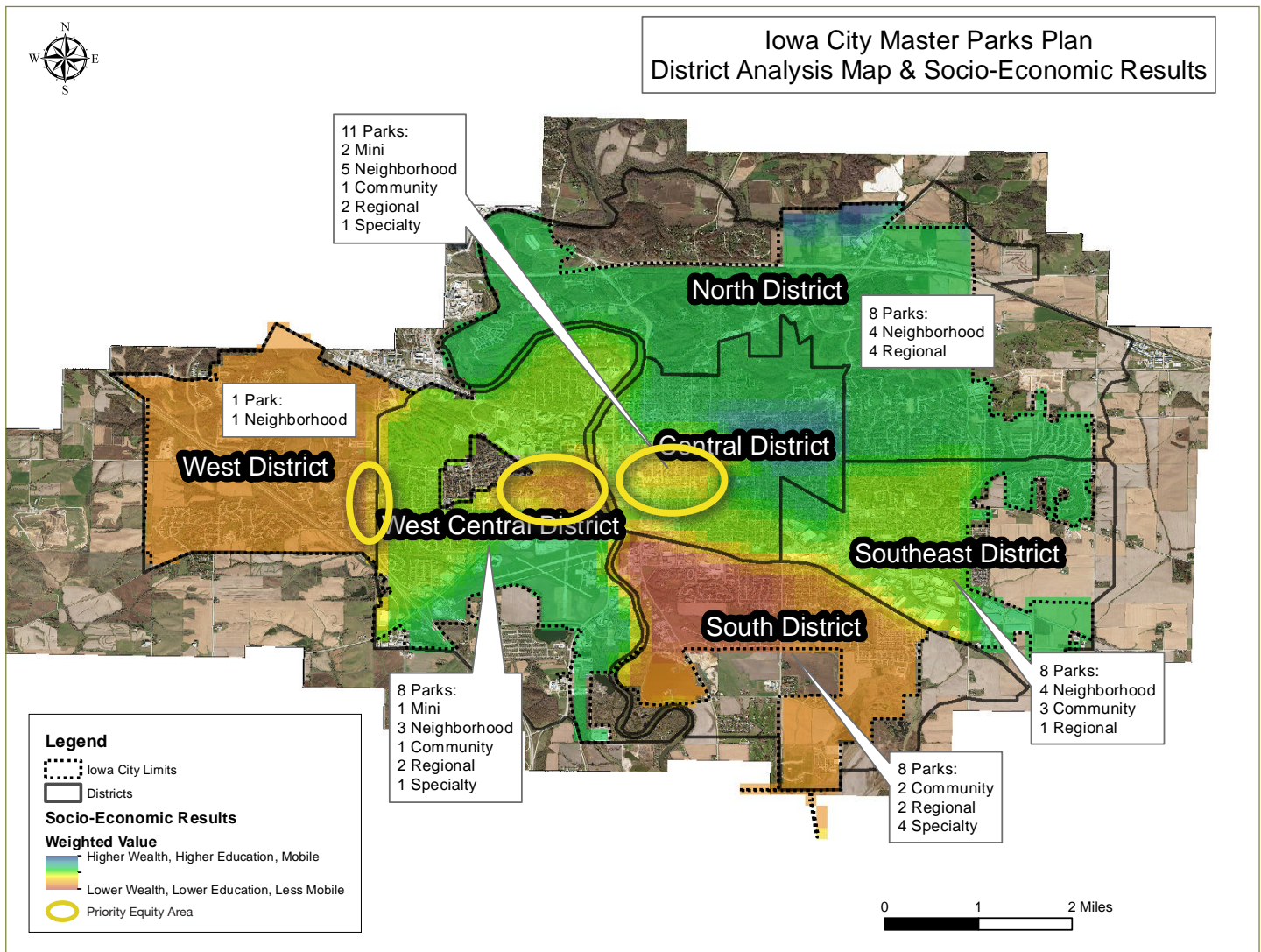
*City staff from multiple departments began using a racial and socioeconomic equity review toolkit in July 2016. In the pilot program, a series of questions guided staff and the City Council to work toward equity by helping to identify when City policies, programs, initiatives or practices could result in different outcomes for certain populations. Among others, the City's Parks and Recreation Department is applying this toolkit to its decision-making process. This toolkit, when coupled with the analysis included in this master plan, should lead to improved decision-making and outcomes in support of racial and socioeconomic equity. Cities using a similar toolkit include Seattle, WA and Madison, WI.*

### Results

This process yields a “heat map” with lower wealth, lower education, and less mobility in zones colorized in tans and browns, and higher wealth, education and greater mobility appearing in tones of deeper greens and blues.

The South District, and portions of the West Central and Central Districts (on either side of the river) surface as challenging zones. Due to the lack of refinement of census tracts, the entirety of the Western District also appears to experience less wealth, education and mobility—but this is misleading. Large portions of that district are affluent, with the lower-income areas concentrated on the west side of Mormon Trek Boulevard. The heat map highlights the areas of greatest concern (circled in yellow).

## Iowa City Master Parks Plan District Analysis Map & Socio-Economic Results



With the exception of the South District, these areas of concern are all under-served by the parks system in terms of park acreage. The following is an overview of the level of service for each of these areas:

### Central District

While the Central District appears well served in terms of the number and mix of parks, the park acres available per thousand (the lowest of all the districts) demonstrates additional park need. In particular, the most socio-economically challenged section of this district has a dearth of parkland/amenities.

### West Central District

Similar to the Central District, the socio-economically challenged area in the West Central District is lacking parkland. For example, even with a sidewalk connection on Miller Street to the park, Benton Hill, the public parkland in this area still faces significant accessibility issues due to steep and busy streets.

### South District

The South District is one of the more socio-economically challenged areas in the City, but it is also relatively well served with parks, including two strong neighborhood parks within the residential areas. However, access

to nearby regional parks is limited; since most of the parkland is specialized in nature, opportunities for traditional play (playgrounds, open lawns) are more limited.

### West District

Along the west side of Mormon Trek Boulevard there is a large section of fairly dense housing that is less affluent than its neighbors in the far western portion of the district. This area is under-served by the parks system but a trail connection to Willow Creek and Kiwanis parks in the West Central District could assist in serving this population.



# Physical Accessibility and Maintenance Summary

## Accessibility Assessment

This project launched in the fall of 2016 with an on-the-ground assessment of the current park system's alignment with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. An inventory of facilities and an overview of current conditions was also provided. In addition to associated databases provided to the Iowa City Parks staff, the appendix of this report includes highlights of this park-by-park assessment.

Of the nearly 50 parks reviewed, there are several facilities that are scheduled to undergo park renovations in the near future. There are other parks in need of renovation, requiring further study with greater detail in the future.

First improvements needed at playgrounds to increase accessibility are the addition and maintenance of fall-zone materials as well as increasing accessible paths. This plan also recommends considering inclusion of "full-play" playground(s) in the system down the line.

The following recommendations for accessibility improvements are intended to take a comprehensive look at physical accessibility, recognizing that parks and playgrounds vary in their alignment with ADA guidelines, and those guidelines continue to evolve.

- In some instances, playgrounds need to have surfacing material maintained or modified; often, simply adding depth to the mulch will suffice
- When slated for replacement, upgrade old playground structures with structures that follow current ADA guidelines
- Confirm fall zones at all playgrounds
- Provide access into playgrounds at strategic locations
- Provide accessible path connections at strategic locations including from parking lots and park perimeter access points
- Correct all parking accommodations: address ADA alignment, accessible parking space stripping and signage
- Provide seating at strategic locations
- Repair accessible surfaces along pathways
- Adjust/repair community park restroom grab bar/dispenser heights, fixtures and door-opening force
- Provide hard-surface companion seating areas at picnic areas and bleacher seating
- Provide accessible trail opportunities
- Provide access to quiet spaces to address sensory overload
- Install drinking fountains according to design guidelines included in this plan
- Install detectable warning surfaces where park paths meet the street
- In partnership with the City's in-fill program, use curb cuts to help address park access/connectivity issues
- Support lasting value of the accessible system through Life-Cycle Cost Analysis (LCCA) and sustainable structures.

## Assessment Process

*Consulting team members, accompanied by Parks and Recreation Department staff, surveyed individual parks within the park system looking for physical barriers or obstructions that currently reduce or prohibit access to park facilities and places of destination by people with disabilities. Included in the inventory were access points, pathways, playgrounds, shelters, sports facilities and other recreational facilities and park destinations. Obstructions include horizontal and vertical obstructions, surface material and depth, slopes, signage, reserved parking and other features that impact mobility and access. For play equipment, access to the equipment was the first consideration, followed by the ability of a user to access at least some component of the equipment.*

## System-Wide Priorities

*System-wide priorities include:*

- *Maintenance of fall-zone surfaces*
- *Provision of accessible picnic tables*
- *Provision of parking, truncated curb ramps and paths to park amenities.*

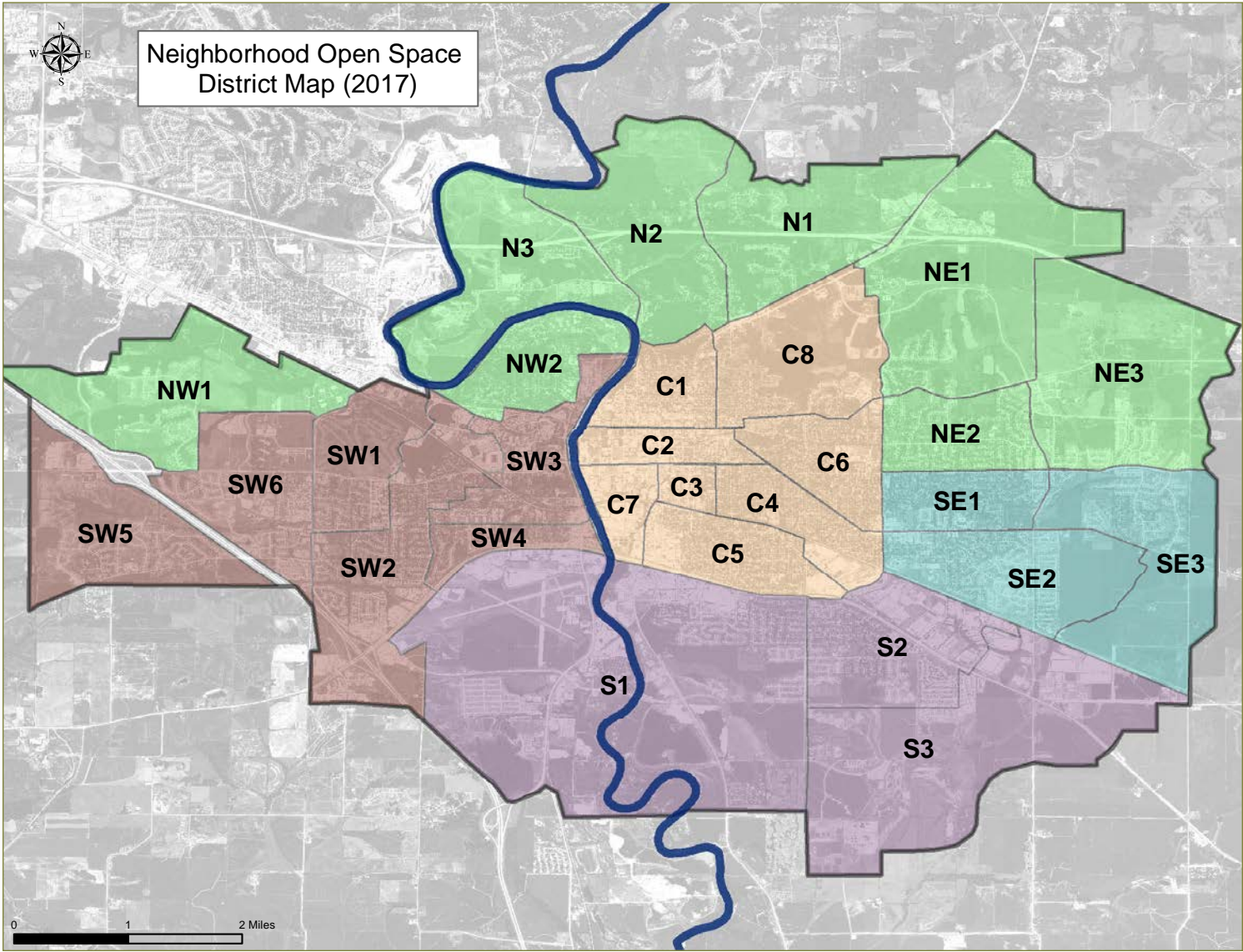
*A Capital Improvements Program (CIP) listing appears in Chapter 6 that outlines specific parks, projected year of improvements and the scope of accessibility project or renovation.*



District Analysis—  
Neighborhood Open Space

While this plan emphasizes the physical features of the Iowa City Parks System, an eye must always be kept toward implementation. The current park district boundaries applied to the City's Neighborhood Open Space Requirements (NOSR) do not extend to the City's projected growth boundaries.

This plan recommends extending the City's current park districts to account for anticipated growth. A map reflecting this plan's recommended NOSR park districts is included below.





Chapter

# MASTER PLANNING

4



# Strategic Framework

The recommendations highlighted in this report relate to the strategic direction developed through research, analysis of the system and public/stakeholder engagement. This strategic framework addresses the Iowa City Park System’s vision, mission, high-level goals and potential measures of success.

## SYSTEM VISION

An accessible parks and recreation system, committed to building community and serving all residents



## SYSTEM MISSION

To foster the community’s engagement, sense of place and well-being through a parks and recreation system that includes:

- Gathering spaces that welcome all residents regardless of age, background or ability
- Current, well-maintained recreation facilities, serving community and neighborhoods
- Connecting quality trails for all
- Nature-based quiet places
- Land and water health/protection
- Useful, easy access to technology
- Engaging, proven programs of play, education and public health
- Ongoing fiscal responsibility

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Access Play	Restore Educate	Sustain Measure
----------------	--------------------	--------------------

An accessible parks and recreation system,  
committed to community and serving all residents

- 1. Community Resilience**  
Iowa City Parks and Recreation (ICPR) strives to further enhance community, cultural identity and belonging, at the same time attracting new residents and visitors. Increasing public awareness while preserving and enhancing the system’s quality features drive us to the vision.
- 2. Neighbors Collaborating and Engaged Through the Parks**  
This system is built through voices of the community, employing best practices and sound research. It enhances community vitality, social systems, public health, safety and the community’s education mission.
- 3. A System for All to Gather and Enjoy**  
The system is intended to serve all residents and their ever-changing needs.
- 4. Sustainable**  
Lasting value depends on healthy natural resources, quality energy-efficient built infrastructure, ongoing maintenance, fiscal responsibility, community support and flexibility—the ability to evolve with changing times.
- 5. Collaboration**  
The support of the Iowa City community and its leaders, coupled with public and private partnerships, is critical to the system’s success now and into the future.
- 6. Public Stewardship**  
Stewarding the park system’s natural resources provides opportunities for wide-ranging ages and abilities to volunteer and develop a healthy sense of park “ownership.”

The statements below provide strategic guidelines for how to improve and plan for the future of the parks system as a whole, based on the Guiding Principles: Access, Play, Restore, Educate, Sustain and Measure. These guidelines are meant to demonstrate the philosophical approach to parks and recreation in Iowa City. More specific recommendations for changes to the park system are provided in a later section in this chapter.

## Access

An inventory of the Iowa City Parks System identifies accessibility improvements, so this strategy addresses ongoing improvements in that regard. At the same time, this strategy uses a broad meaning of “access” to emphasize spaces, places, facilities and programs that welcome, engage and offer unlimited opportunity to all people and peoples. Access is critical to maintain “a system for all.”

1. Use inventory of current parks to develop an accessible system including access to and through existing parks; go further and create inclusive/immersive park playground/recreation systems for users of wide-ranging abilities
2. Reiterate improving transportation access to parks (e.g., curb access), geographically and physically
  - a. Engage local neighborhood leaders to assist in assessing needs
  - b. Include the community's many diverse populations in planning
  - c. Routinely use Iowa City's Racial and Socioeconomic Equity Review Toolkit
3. Through mapping, income data and growth projections, identify system service gaps and secure additional and/or expanded



4. Provide multi-generational facilities and programs
  - a. Identify basic needs of every park and themes of specific parks as a check to ensure “a system for all”
  - b. Ensure that senior programming and facilities are on par with youth interests, acknowledging the aging Iowa City population
    - i. Beyond ADA, ensure facilities (swimming, outdoor exercise, raised gardens, outdoor classrooms, etc.) and education programs are provided to accommodate multiple generations
  - c. Identify additional system gaps and address
  - d. Include viewing and seating areas for active play areas to allow for generations to gather
5. Consider additional restroom facilities along trails and park areas
6. Establish specialty gardens (e.g., sensory, therapy, community food, educational) based on local needs in targeted areas
7. Incorporate STEAM education opportunities into facilities and programs
8. In partnership with upcoming bicycle plan, identify connectivity needs (cycling, pedestrian) and prioritize gaps to achieve full connections of parks-to-parks, parks-to-trails, parks-to-neighborhoods and parks-to-community amenities
9. Improve system visibility, way-finding and overall awareness of what is available
  - a. Foster nature connection through way-finding; build a visual brand for all City facilities
  - b. Consider multi-lingual signs
  - c. Enhance physical and visual access to Ralston Creek and all parks (See Restore)
  - d. Establish effective signs pointing people to and through the parks
10. Identify and maintain safety features such as lines of sight, lighting where appropriate, etc.
  - a. Address the student population's interest in having adult supervision in parks. Currently, teenagers engaged in this process say supervision of younger children and enforcement of park rules is often left to them and they do not welcome that responsibility.



## Play

The categories of “Play” and “Restore” (below) work in tandem to assist in creating a “complete parks” system. Here we address segments of the system that promote year-round active living for many users while also establishing some components to attract visitors and newcomers to Iowa City. Below we address public and natural resources health.

1. Continue establishing distributed key park recreation features (e.g., dog parks, STEAM stations, adventure playgrounds)
2. Consider a system-wide feature attraction as a regional draw
  - a. Examples include archery, cyclocross, enhanced water and/or cycling trails network
  - b. Identify the potential of existing features (with or without

enhancements, e.g., Terry Trueblood Recreation Area) and/or potential of a Ralston Creek Greenway (see Restore) to serve as a significant attractor

3. Incorporate fully accessible play structures
4. Complement basic playgrounds and court play in neighborhood parks with nature play and intergenerational play
5. Incorporate check-out and/or rental of equipment for expanded use/enjoyment
6. Stay current in recreation programming and include appropriate facilities within the system; currently address small-group sports (e.g., pickle ball); competitive cycling/bicycle park; outdoor skills building/paddling sports, water-based activity access, intergenerational programming, spaces for users with different sensory or physical abilities and athletic field expansion

7. Address the trend in competitive sports through establishing athletic field complexes to support tournament play
  - a. Assess the potential of using partner facilities to develop full complement of services
8. Establish a range of year-round seasonal activities (winter hiking, cross-country skiing, etc.)
9. Incorporate technology in the parks, including personal technology charging stations and Wi-Fi
  - a. Address the needs of different generations
  - b. Consider apps and similar tools for engagement/up-to-date experiences and communications

## Restore

The natural and public health components of this plan involve promoting nature-based play, improved natural resources and programming/facilities to restore mental health as well as active programming to complement more traditional parks and recreation programs and facilities.

1. Restore the health of Ralston Creek as a community-wide Greenway/Nature Exploration amenity
  - a. Consider eventual expansion to include entire creek network
2. Establish educational, best management practice (BMP) demonstration areas within the parks systems to support water, woodland and prairie management

- a. Include mechanisms for training/involvement of volunteers in parks system overall and stewardship of demonstration and/or parks natural areas in particular
  - b. Preserve, protect, enhance and potentially expand the park system's natural areas (reference upcoming Natural Resources Inventory and Restoration Briefs)
3. Provide recycling containers at all park locations with garbage receptacles
  4. Consider sustainable design and use of alternative energy sources in all new construction
  5. In conjunction with demonstration areas, expand associated education programming (see Educate)

6. In partnership with upcoming park natural resources study, identify locations for enhanced nature play, wildlife viewing, hiking, etc., without placing habitats at risk
7. Ensure parks have sufficient facilities to promote parks as “outdoor fitness centers” and build park-based outdoor health events (runs, hikes, rides, cross-country, etc.)
8. Provide programs and facilities that support social interactions and therapeutic (as well as physically active) outdoor recreation, e.g., chess, healing gardens, yoga, natural playscapes

## Educate

Education is woven throughout this plan, but Iowa City as a whole is driven by an education mission. Therefore, the strategy places some emphasis here on the need to tap into this community's exceptional education community. Partnerships with educators and students, and coordination with facilities, allow us to better develop programs, reach key audiences and make efficient use of resources for cities, schools and universities.

1. Provide facilities and programs which teach basic outdoor recreation skills including swimming, bicycle safety, fishing, gardening, sports and boating.
2. Provide interpretive and educational opportunities—including STEAM activities—throughout the park which showcase environmental sustainability and regeneration.
3. Advance education partnerships to enhance ICPR's education programs, engagement and outreach with local educational institutions.
4. Target volunteerism for growth of education offerings
  - a. Enhance engagement of retirees in education programming (considering the community's exceptional pool of senior educators)
5. Partner with educators, retirees and volunteers to develop education curricula to support this plan including land-water-BMP demonstration sites, gardening, history and culture programming, public health promotion and outdoor skills building

## Sustain

While many features above are also critical to the overall sustainability of Iowa City's parks and recreation system, here the strategy emphasizes funding mechanisms, collaboration, efficiency and awareness-building.

1. Maintain the character of individual parks while establishing a brand/identity of the overall park system
2. Build awareness of current regional attractions (e.g., Terry Trueblood Recreation Area, outdoor recreation opportunities, athletic complexes) to serve as an attractor to visitors/outside interests
3. Collaborate with surrounding communities and counties for programs and facilities
4. Prioritize regional trails network (see Play)
5. Enhance collaborations with other City departments for efficiency, awareness-building, support and creative use of space with other City operations
6. Grow use of programs and facilities with enhanced/expanded social media and other public communications
7. Grow baseline support through improved telling of the parks-rec story to decision-makers and the public.
8. Expand ongoing, private funding strategies such as grants, sponsorships, etc.
9. Quantify health, economic and natural resources benefits of the Iowa City Parks system, monitor/measure success and use results to feed support for the system
  - a. Partner to measure results
10. Establish a set of comparable University community park and recreation systems to aid in benchmarking the Iowa City park system's social, financial and ecological health

## Measure

Potential measures for success include:

1. Growth in park use, counters, shelter reservations, education programming attendance
2. Growth in volunteerism/volunteer time
3. Increasing capital and/or maintenance budgets; resources generated
4. Improved physical accessibility (associated with park improvements/inventory as baseline)
5. Greenspace per person—maintenance of current ratio as Iowa City continues to grow
6. Public health improvements
7. Natural resources outcomes—biodiversity increases (reference Natural Resources Inventory measures established through parallel natural resource studies)
8. Miles of trail expansion/improvement—as established through parallel study on connectivity
9. Improved outcomes over other comparable university communities



# Future Park Needs

## Future Anticipated Growth—Boundaries and Population

The Iowa City Comprehensive Plan predicts a 2030 population of 84,000 for Iowa City, an increase of approximately 10,000 residents. Based on Iowa City’s projected population for 2030, to maintain the current level of park service (in terms of acres per 1,000 residents), ICPR would need to add 220 acres of parkland by 2030. However, if no parkland is added to the system, ICPR would still be well above the national median level of service.

Based on these findings, the recommendation of this plan is to **focus on filling specific gaps in the park system service**, in terms of geography or service type, rather than to focus on acquiring more park acres.

Features of interest to the overall system as it grows include: continued development of thoughtful gathering spaces (including fire pits and council circles), an emphasis on pools over splash pads (due to the need for residents

learning to swim), integration of public art throughout the system, community gardening and an emphasis on public health—including Tobacco-Free Parks. Recycling in the parks also requires meaningful attention, as it is not a fad but an ongoing function of the park system.

All of these features must be developed in the context of an equitable and sustainable park system.

Iowa City Park Acreage Per Capita, Current and Projected			
	Population*	Acres of Parkland	Acres per 1,000 residents (level of service)
Current—Iowa City	74,398	1,699	22.8
Current—National Median (2012)	NA	NA	15.2
2030 projected (no acreage increase)	84,000	1,699	20.2
2030 projected (maintain current level of service)	84,000	1,923	22.8

\* Current population is based on the 2015 ACS & 2030 projected population is taken from the Iowa City Comprehensive Plan.

## District-by-District Needs

The planning team performed a district-by-district analysis to determine specific parks and recreation needs in each area. These are big-picture needs for parkland and facilities—

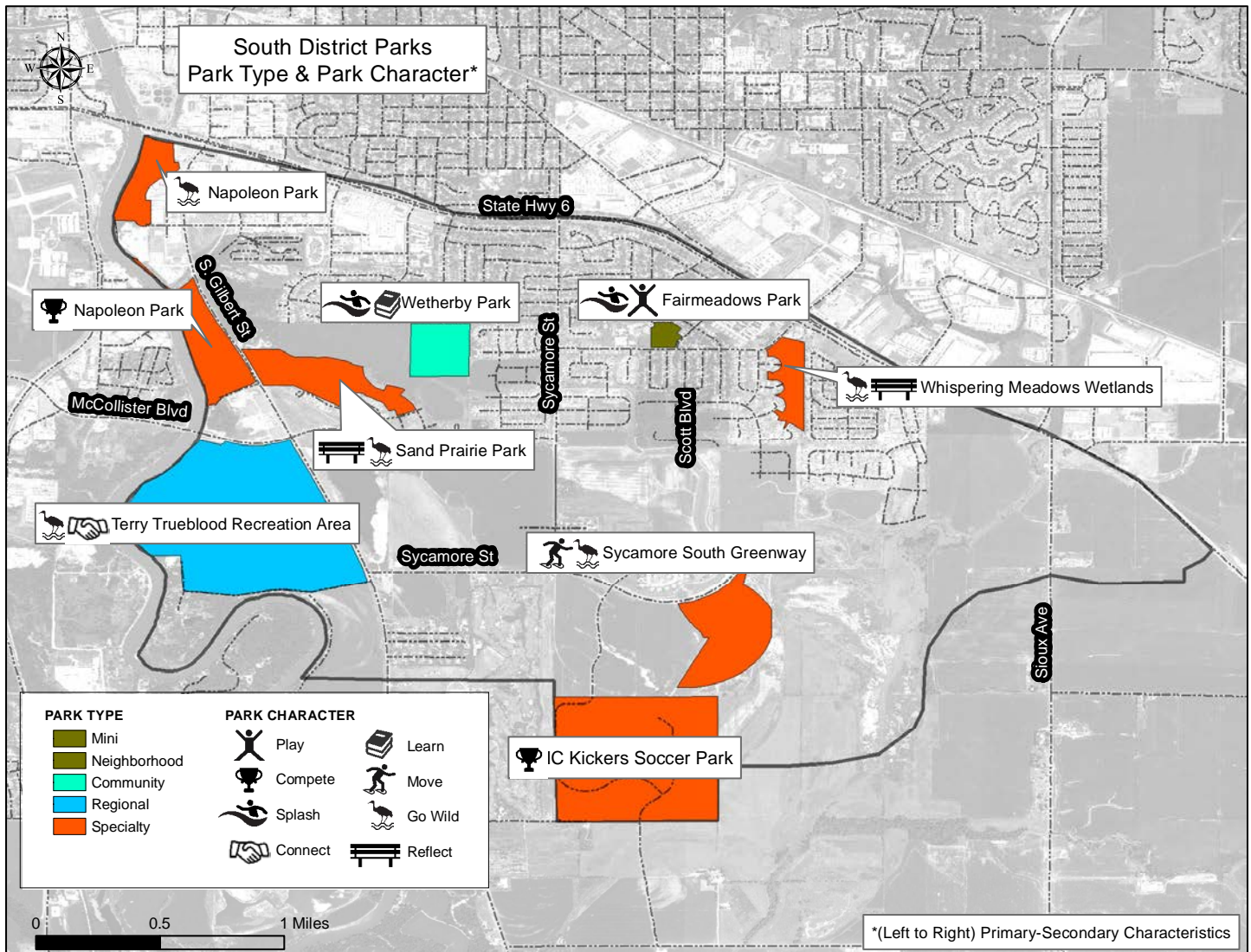
additional parkland needs, connections to existing parks or broad categories of service that could be considered under-provided (e.g., neighborhood water play, natural areas).

It does not address fine-grain needs such as maintenance issues in specific parks, or programming recommendations.





## South District



### 1. Add parkland when possible

As redevelopment occurs within this vicinity, watch for opportunities to secure potential mini or neighborhood parkland sites. The diversity of park character in the South District means any new park land could likely be developed in any number of ways, but “learn” is likely the greater need for this district. Incorporating STEAM stations or other learning opportunities would be warranted.

### 2. Add park and trail connection to developing neighborhood around Alexander Elementary

A new neighborhood is developing around Alexander Elementary school on the south

edge of the City. The City’s district plan for this area includes a new neighborhood scenario. We suggest some modifications to this plan with regard to the park system:

- The new neighborhood park should ideally be adjacent to the elementary school and at least 5–10 acres in size.
- A trail or wide sidewalk should connect the neighborhood to Terry Trueblood Recreational Area.

### 3. Improve Connections for Wetherby, Whispering Meadows and Sand Prairie

Although a sensitive area, Sand Prairie needs a clear pedestrian/

bicycle connection to the neighborhood and Wetherby Park. Generally, these parks need improved accessibility and connections for public use.

### 4. Add a park on southeast edge of the South District and/or enhance Wetland Park

On the southeast edge of the district, near Wetland Park and the Mobile Home parks, an additional park is needed. This moderately dense area is more than half a mile from a neighborhood park (Wetland Park lacks the typical amenities of a neighborhood park, such as a playground or open lawn area). Before additional development continues in this area, 5–10 acres of land should be acquired for use as a park. If possible, amenities could be

added to Wetland Park to supplement the service in this neighborhood; however, the environmentally sensitive nature of this park likely prevents this option.

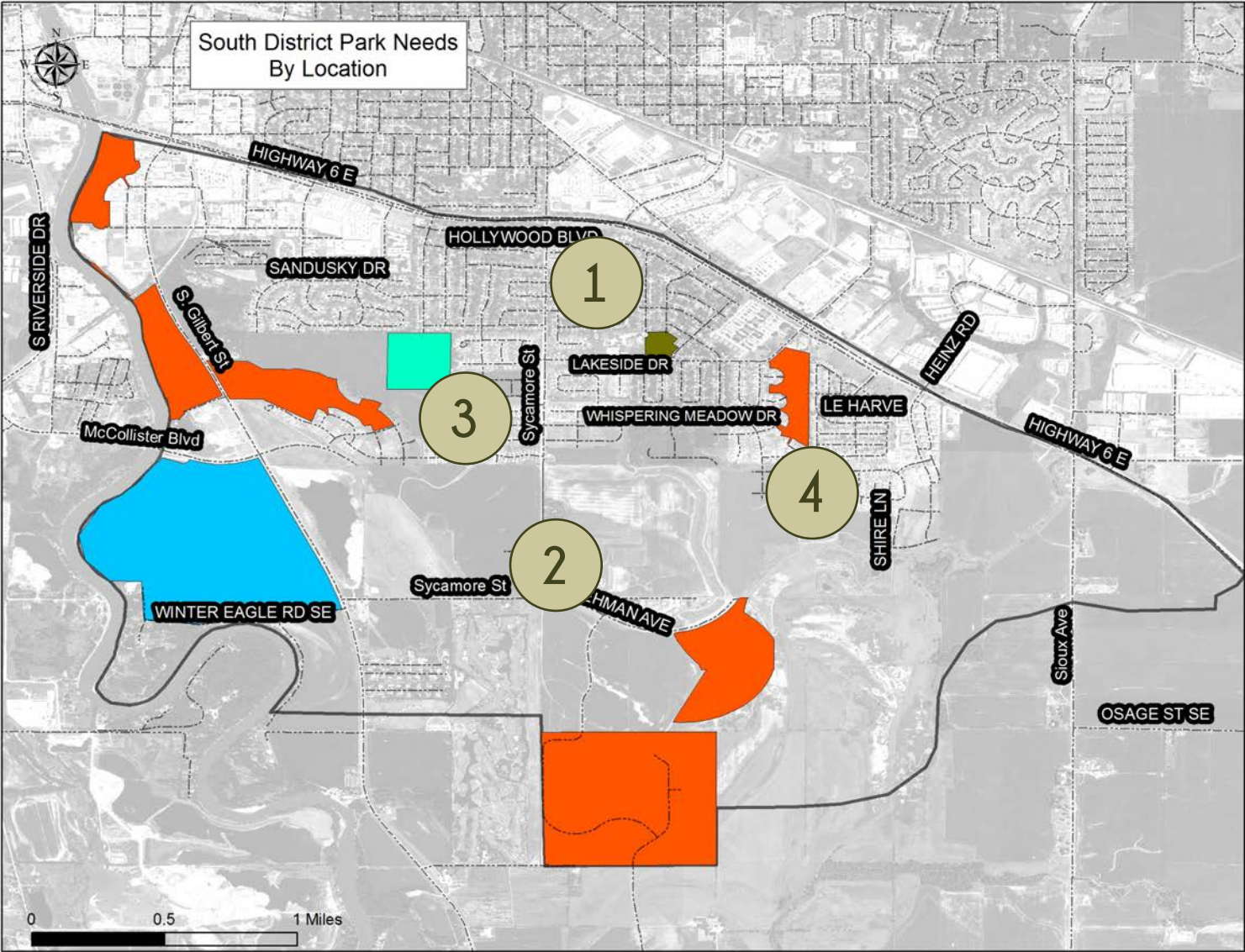
**5. Add more opportunities for traditional “play”**

The South District has a bounty of regional and specialty parks, but limited opportunities for traditional play (e.g., playgrounds and open lawns in a neighborhood park setting). These components should be incorporated into any new parks, such as those suggested in items 1, 2 and 4 of this list.

**MAINTENANCE AND RENOVATION TARGETS**

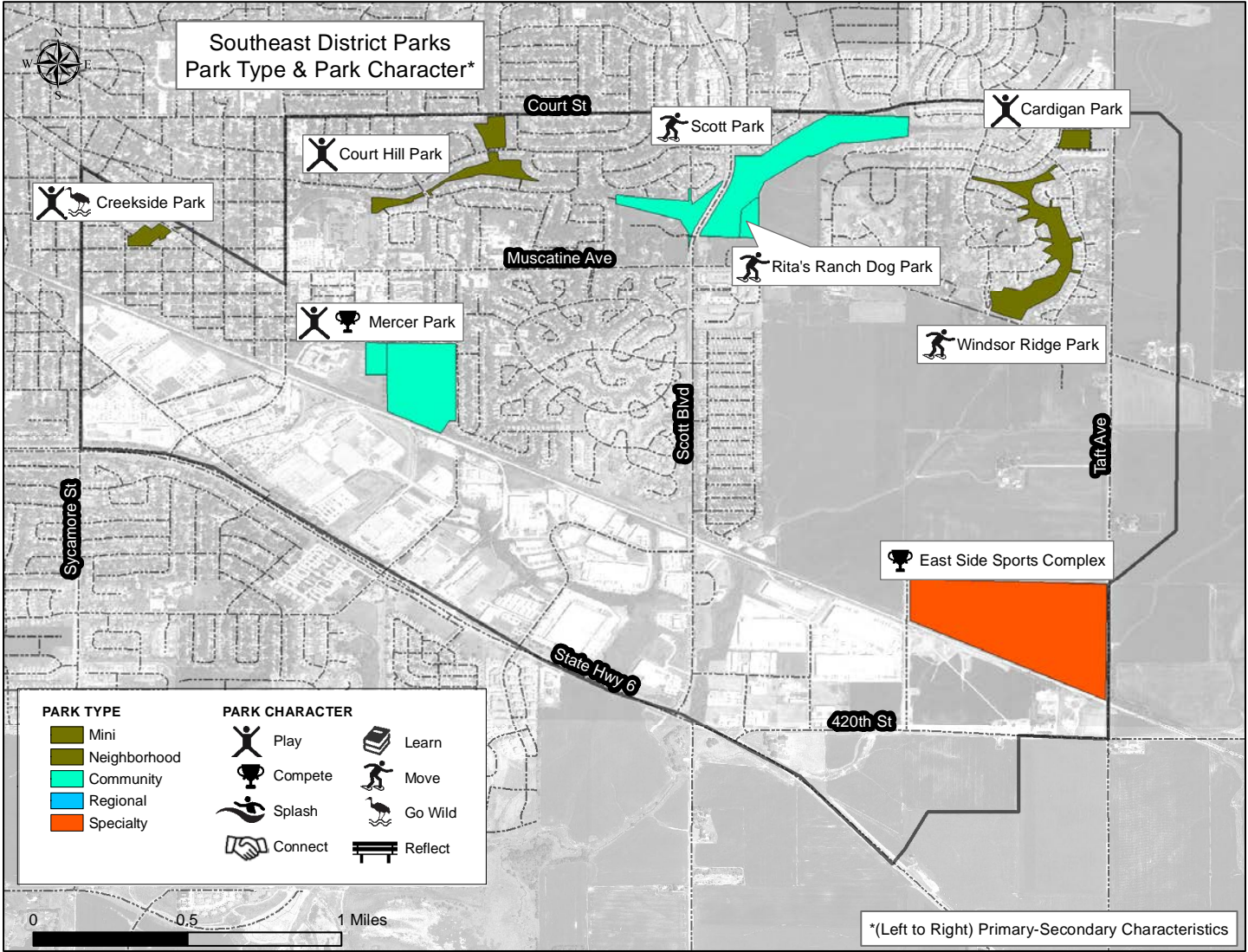
**PARK DEVELOPMENT / REDEVELOPMENT**

Fair Meadows - Play	2019
Wetherby Shelter & Play	2020
Napolean Play	2021
Whispering Meadows	2022
Kickers Play 1	2024
Kickers Play 2	2026





Southeast District



**1. Add a park and trail in East Side Growth Area along Snyder Creek**  
The southeast district plan proposes an East Side Growth Area concept plan for the area east of Scott Boulevard, between Muscatine Avenue/American Legion Road and the railroad. The concept plan shows a park, trail and detention basin centered around Snyder Creek. This master plan supports that proposal. The park should

be at least 5–10 acres in size. It should also be noted that a new elementary school is being built in this area.

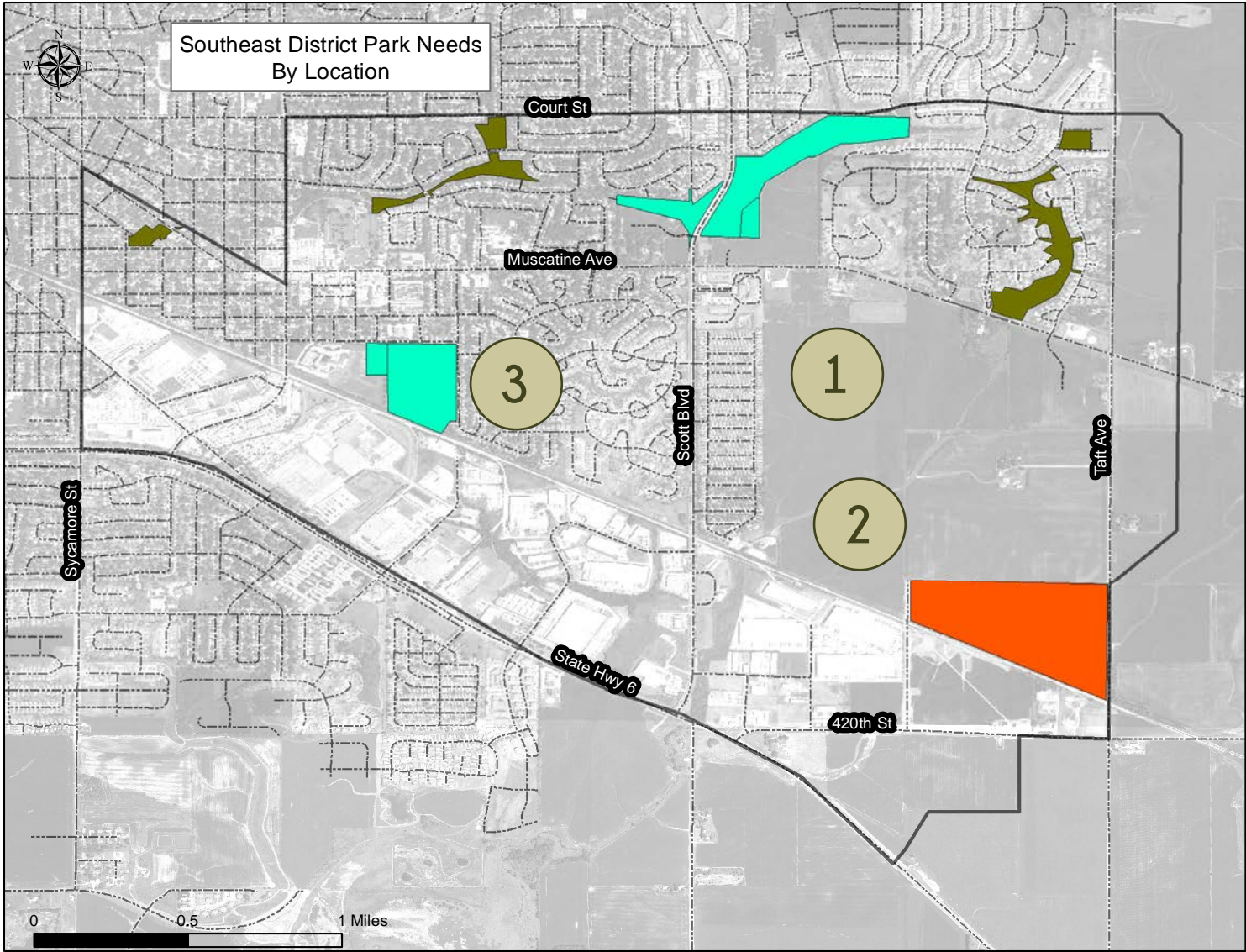
**2. Link future sports facility to East Side Growth Area**  
A sports facility is planned near Taft Avenue and 420th Street. A trail should connect the facility to the planned growth area and Snyder Creek park (see item 1).

**3. Add pedestrian connections to Mercer Park**  
As the only full-service neighborhood park in this part of town, Mercer Park is tremendously important. However, due to the design of the street system in the subdivision to the east of Mercer Park, pedestrian routes to the park are limited and longer than ideal.

4. Add more diversity in park offerings

From a park character standpoint, this district has little variety. It lacks amenities in the categories of Connect, Learn, Reflect, Splash and Thrill. Amenities that could add diversity include: splash pads (Splash), educational signage or

demonstration sites (Learn), scenic viewpoints (Reflect), or an events lawn (Connect). Consider possible sites for these in new and existing parks, such as the new park along Snyder Creek (item 1 of this list).



MAINTENANCE AND RENOVATION TARGETS

PARK DEVELOPMENT / REDEVELOPMENT	
Creekside, Cardigan	2018
Scott Park	2020
Court Hill	2022
Mercer Play	2028
Creekside	2029

PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

Mercer	2018
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# West Central District

## 1. Add park amenities near Sunset Street and Benton Street

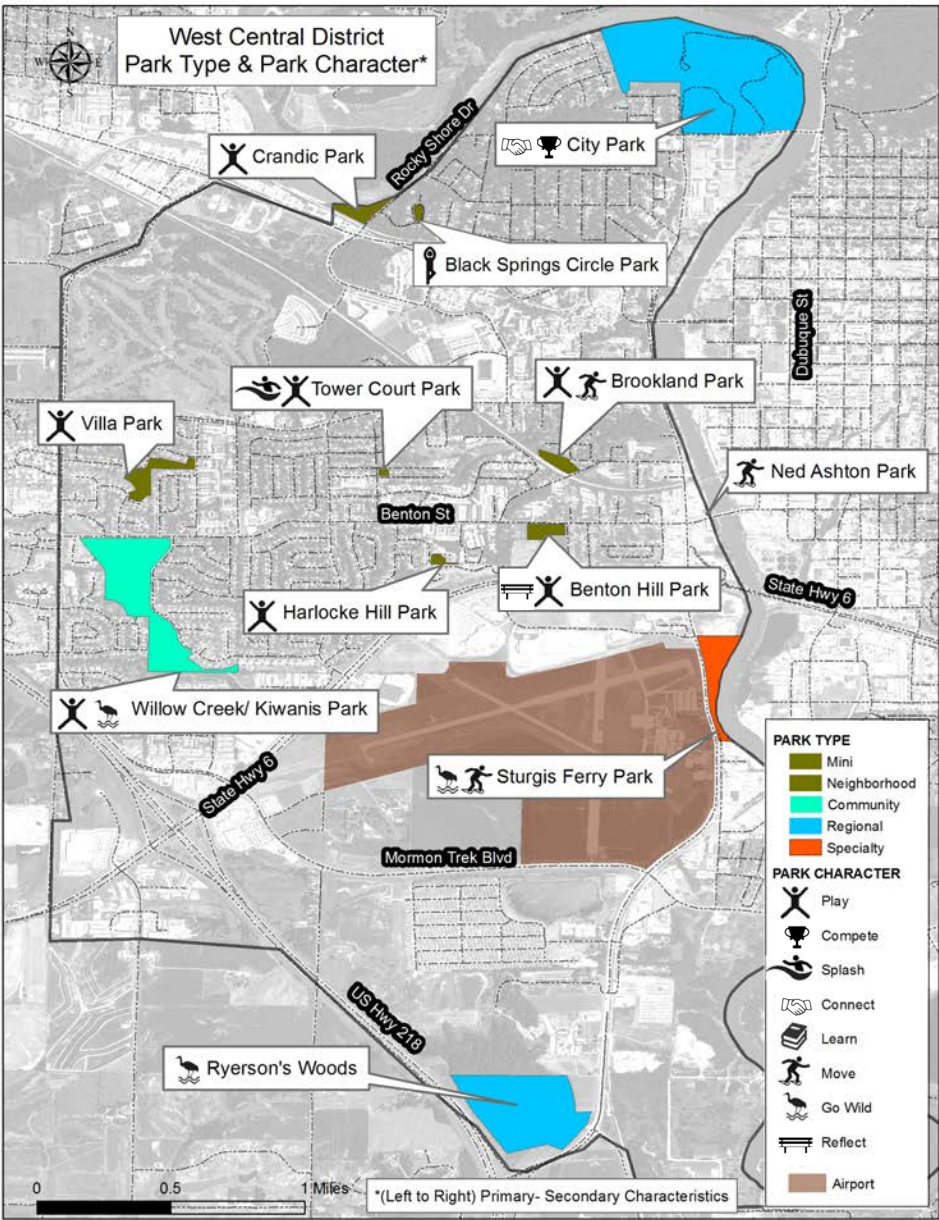
There is a gap in park service between Willow Creek Park and Benton Park. Overall, this district has the second-lowest amount of parkland of all the districts and that is demonstrated in this area. Two mini-parks offer limited service, but ideally another neighborhood park is needed. It is difficult to acquire parkland in a developed neighborhood. In addition to watching for opportunities to acquire property, another option to help fill this gap is to partner with Horn Elementary to allow greater public access to their facilities. Encouraging character components in future parks beyond “play” is well warranted in this district.

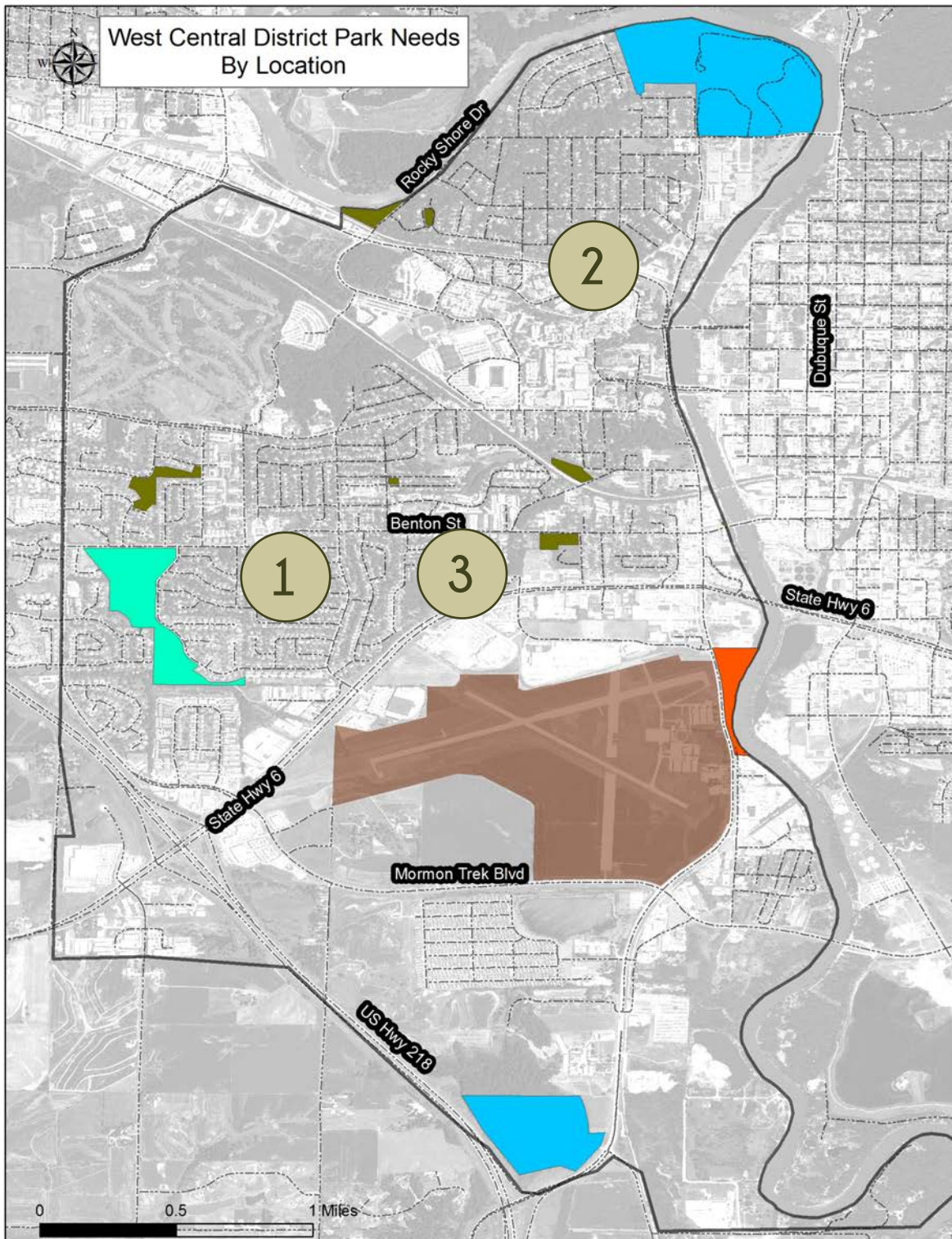
## 2. Add mini-park in Manville Heights

Lincoln Elementary is partially serving the playground need of this neighborhood, but access is limited to non-school hours. Watch for an opportunity to acquire property to establish a mini-park.

## 3. Improve connections to Benton Hill Park

There is no sidewalk along the south side of Benton Street leading to Benton Hill Park. Add a sidewalk on the south side of the street if feasible and/or add a pedestrian crossing across Benton. Explore options for a trail connection to Benton Hill from the Highway 6 trail.





#### MAINTENANCE AND RENOVATION TARGETS

##### PARK DEVELOPMENT / REDEVELOPMENT

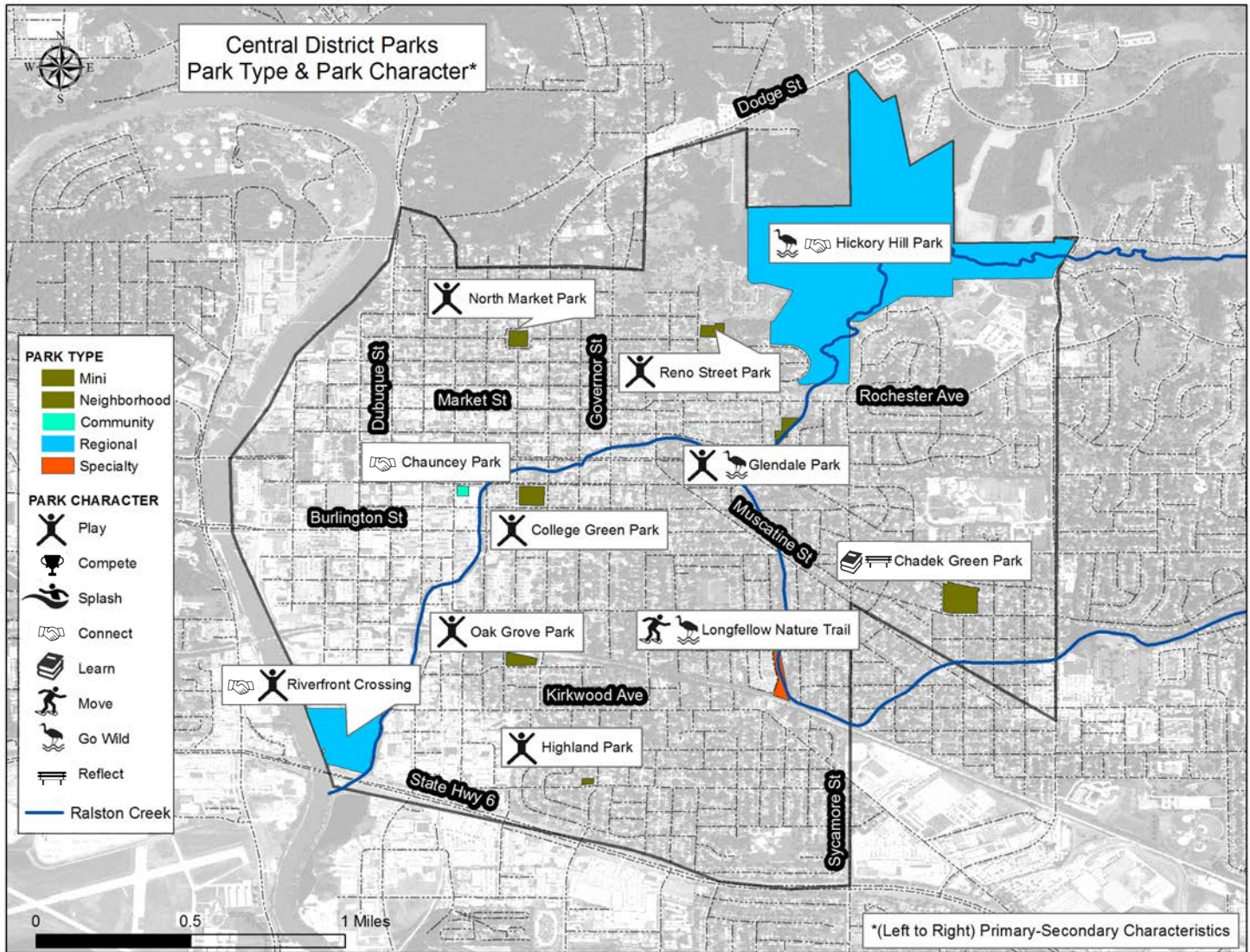
Willow Creek, City Park Playground, Villa Park	2019
City Park Upper Shelters	2020
City Park Lower Shelters, Kiwanis Play & Shelter	2022
Ashton House Parking	2023
Benton Hill	2025
Harlocke Hill	2026
Tower Court	2028

##### PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

Kiwanis, Tower Court	2018
Brooklyn	2019
Black Spring, Harlocke Hill, Ryerson	2020
Crandic	2021



## Central District



### 1. Watch for opportunities to add parkland

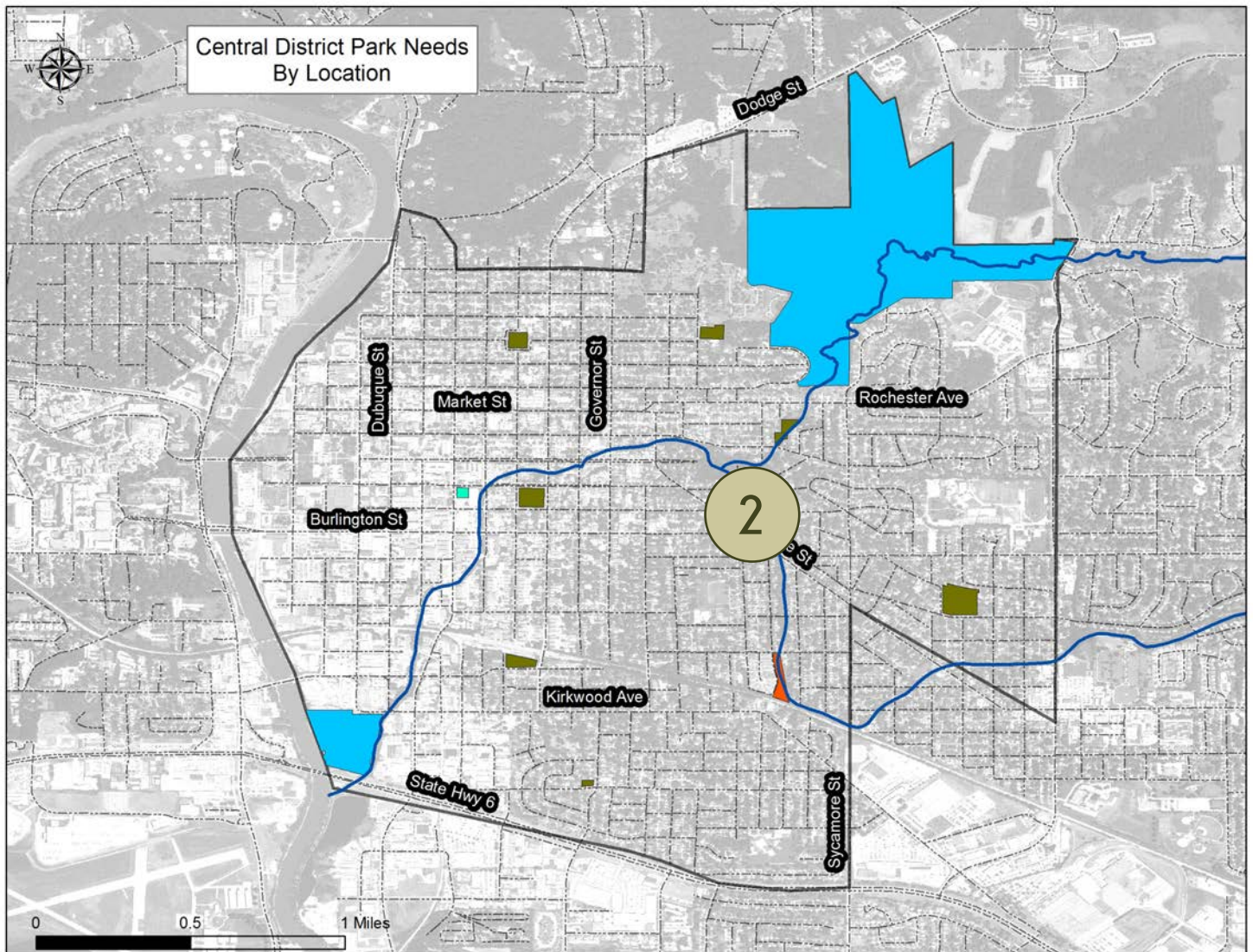
Overall, the Central District is lacking parkland, with 12.5 acres per 1,000 people—the lowest of all the districts. Due to the highly developed nature of this district, finding new land for parks is difficult. The planned Riverfront Crossings Park, to be built on the site of the old water treatment plant, is a good example of the kind of opportunity to look for in this district.

### 2. Improve Ralston Creek to fill Recreational Gap

Just south of Glendale Park and Hickory Hill Park there is a gap where there are no neighborhood parks within walking distance. One way to help fill that gap is to improve access to Ralston Creek so it can be used as a recreational amenity. This would likely include creating entry points on public land and right-of-ways along with interpretive signage and

periodic way-station features. The City also owns a parcel near Glendale Park that could help fill the park gap and connect to Ralston Creek. The Ralston Creek connection would lend itself to expanding the “go wild” nature of parks in this district—a good fit here.





#### MAINTENANCE AND RENOVATION TARGETS

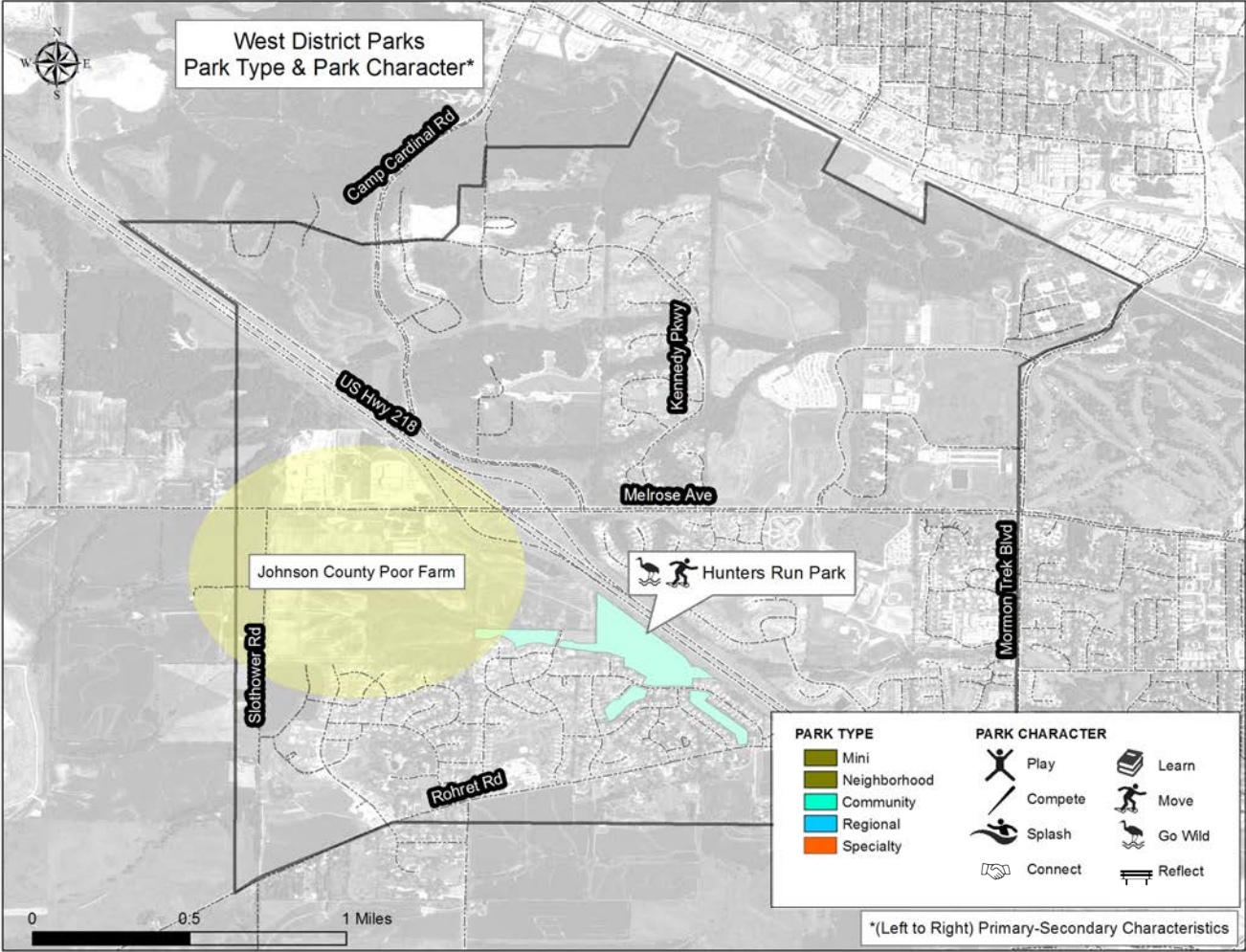
##### PARK DEVELOPMENT / REDEVELOPMENT

Riverfront Crossings Park	2018
Chadek Green, Hickory Hill-Conklin, Glendale	2021
Reno Street, North Market Square	2024
College Green	2025
Oak Grove	2026

##### PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

Highland	2018
College Green	2019
Oak Grove, Reno St	2020





1. **Add parkland and/or improve park connections for neighborhood west of Mormon Trek**

On the west side of Mormon Trek Boulevard, between Melrose Avenue and Walden Square, there is a relatively dense neighborhood with no neighborhood park. Villa Park and Willow Creek Park are just outside the quarter-mile radius and are separated by busy Mormon Trek Boulevard.

Given the socio-economic status of this area, providing good park service is an important equity issue. There is a green space known as “King Park” on Melrose but it is not public land—it is owned by the Lutheran

Church. There is also a large open space on the high school grounds.

Options for improving park service to this neighborhood include:

- a. Improve connections to Willow Creek Park and Villa Park with an improved crossing across Mormon Trek and signage to direct people down MacBride to Villa Park.
- b. Initiate discussions with the church about the potential for shared use and maintenance of the property between the church and the public, or purchase of a portion of the land.

2. **Connect Hunters Run Park to Willow Creek Park**

Previous plans have discussed the possibility of a tunnel under Highway 218 to connect Hunters Run to Willow Creek. The City should continue to explore the feasibility of this idea.

**3. Add parkland or improve park connections for neighborhood west of high school**

West of the high school there is a large subdivision with no parkland, and no easy access to nearby parks. A large green space near Tipperary Road is for storm-water, and not likely usable as park space.

Recommendations from points 1 and 2 could both address this issue: connecting to Hunters Run park under Highway 218, or shared-use agreements with the church or high school.

**4. Acquire land for trail west of Hunters Run**

The Southwest District plan recommends adding a trail running west from Hunters Run Park. The city should continue to pursue this by reserving the trail right-of-way before the area develops. This district lacks a variety of character as well as connections; the “connect” character is perhaps the most expedient way to deliver a greater character mix to this district.

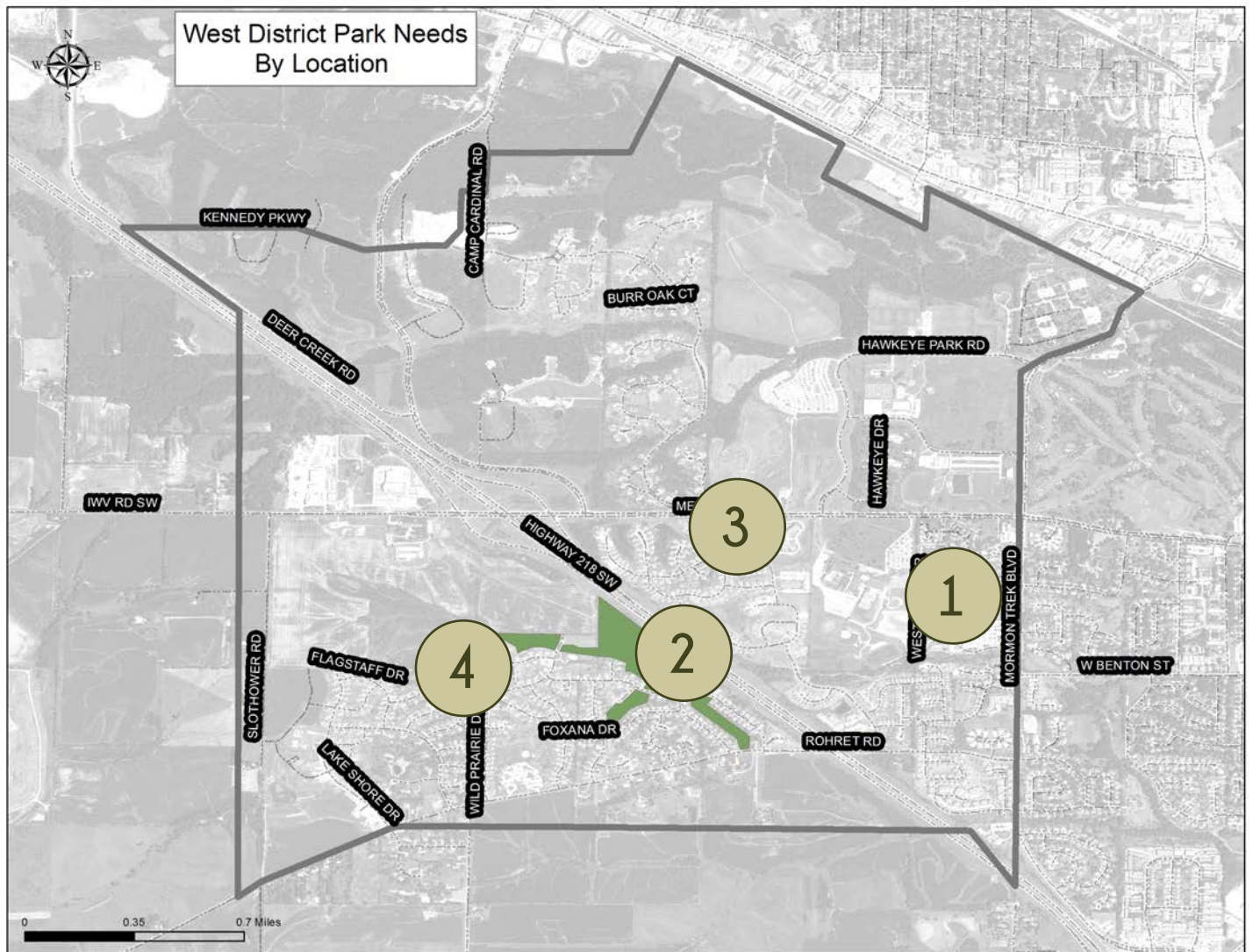
**MAINTENANCE AND RENOVATION TARGETS**

**PARK DEVELOPMENT / REDEVELOPMENT**

West District Park	2020
Hunter's Run	2023

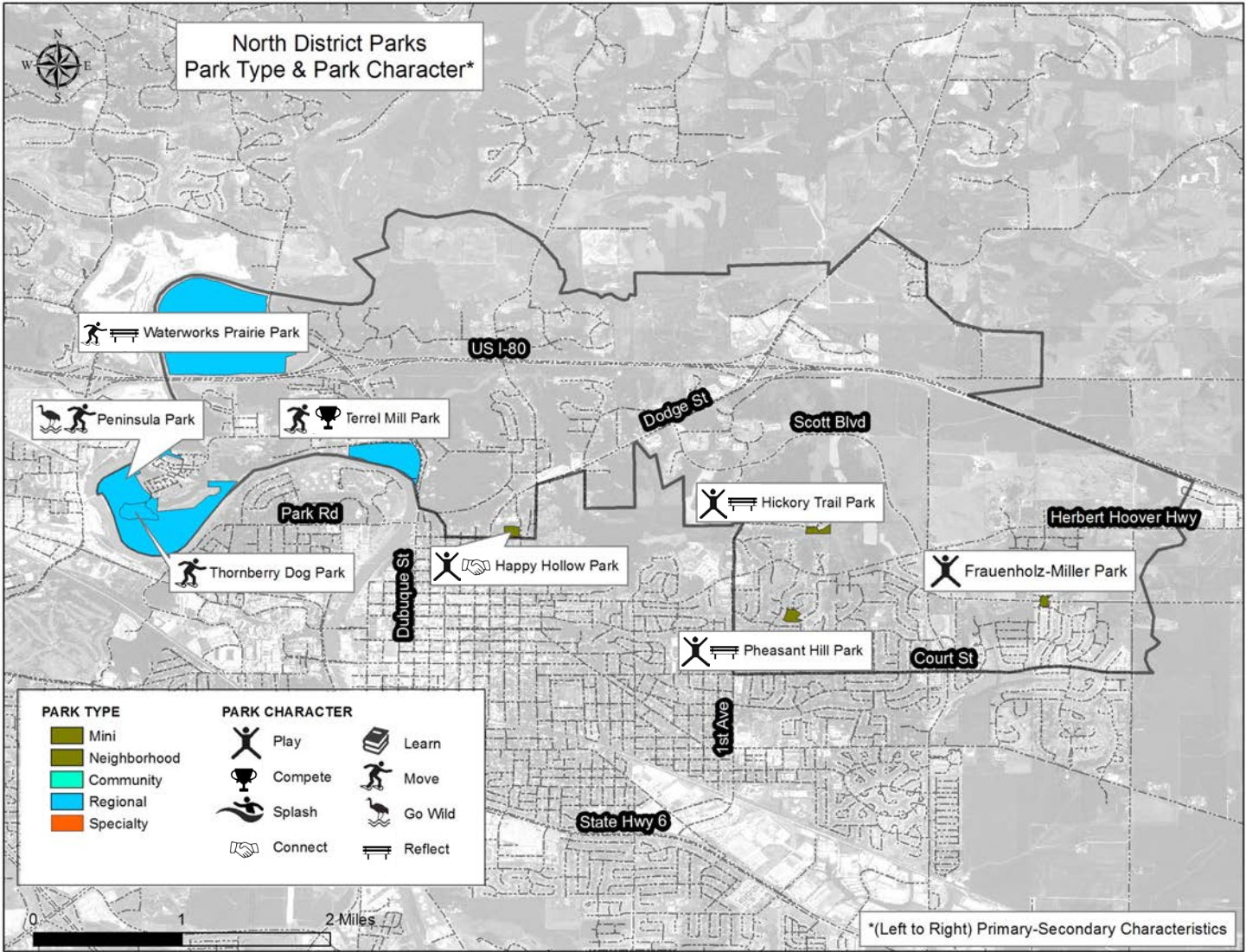
**PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY**

Hunter's Run	2019
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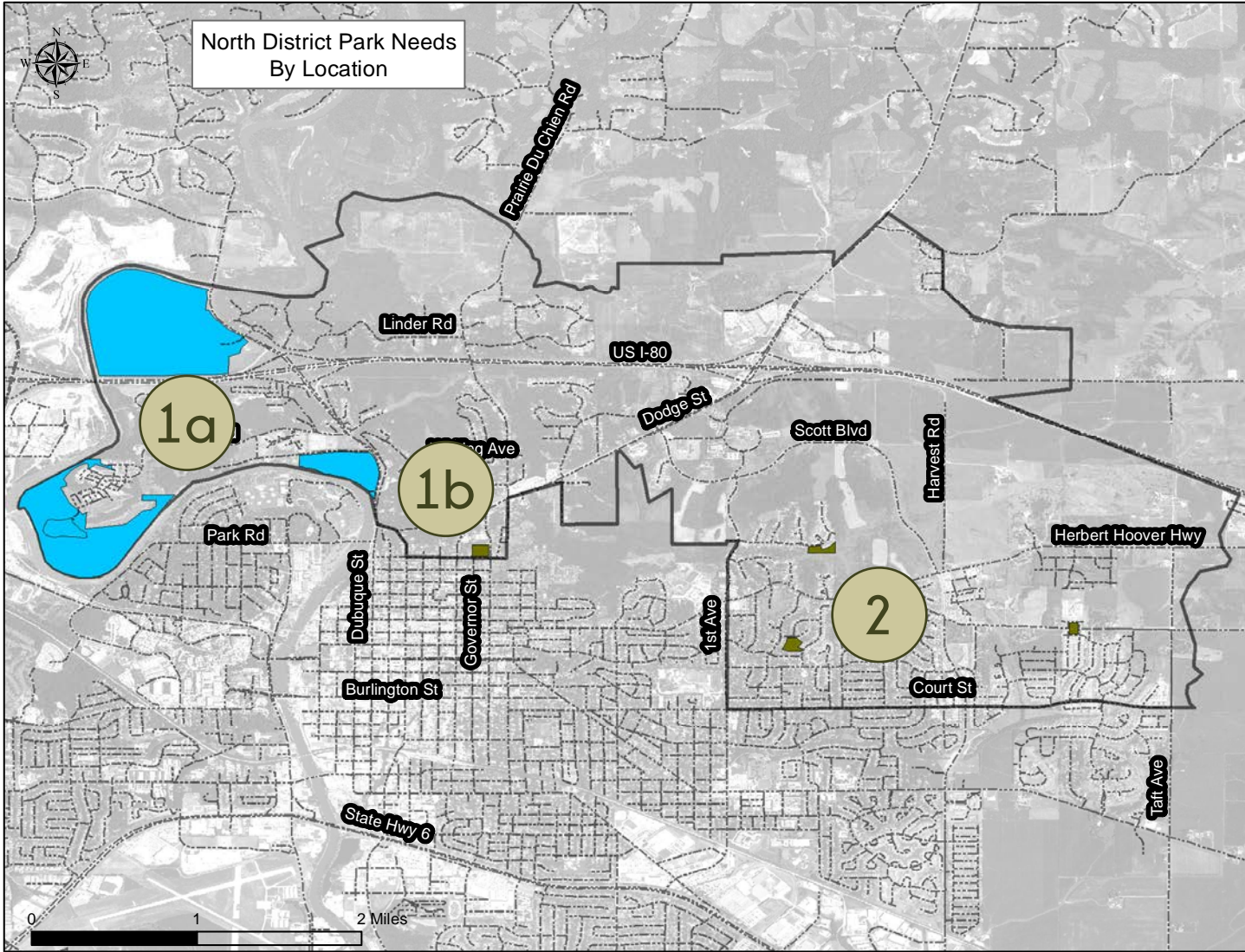
North District



1. **Add neighborhood or mini parklands to serve emerging residential areas west/north of Dodge Street and south of I-80**  
As new homes are built in these areas, they city will need to reserve lands for neighborhood or mini parks of 1–10 acres. Partnership possibilities with Shimek Elementary and/or Shimek Woods should also be explored.

2. **Add park facilities near intersection of Scott Boulevard & Rochester Avenue**  
There is a gap in neighborhood or mini park service in this area—no parks are within walking distance. Before this area continues to develop, the city could consider acquiring 1–10 acres of parkland. Lemme Elementary School's play equipment availability should also be considered in defining future park needs.

3. **Add diversity in park offerings**  
In terms of park character, the north district is limited in variety, primarily offering only the “Play” and “Move” categories. Possible additions could be a river access point (Go Wild), educational signage or demonstration sites (Learn) or event spaces (Connect). These type of offerings should be considered for inclusion in any new parks, such as those recommended in items 1 and 2 or this list.



**MAINTENANCE AND RENOVATION TARGETS**

**PARK DEVELOPMENT / REDEVELOPMENT**

Happy Hollow - Play, Terrell Mill	2023
Hickory Trail	2025
Emma Harvat	2028
Cardigan, Pheasant Hill	2029

**PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY**

Pheasant Hill	2019
Happy Hollow	2019
Thornberry	2021



# Overall Park System Needs

In addition to the district-by-district needs identified through the multi-tiered analysis performed, this plan also identifies needs of a broader-based nature—themes that run throughout the Iowa City Parks System, based on:

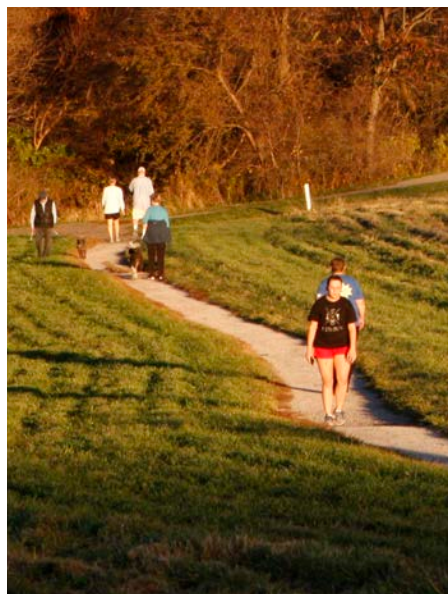
- The physical disability and maintenance inventory performed at the onset of this project
- Needs that surfaced initially at the district level, but resonate throughout the system
- Equity analysis
- Strategic directions based on public input and park trends

## Way-finding/Signage

As outlined in Chapter 5, way-finding and signage is a priority for the park system overall. The strategic framework calls for a brand/identity for the park system as important to its overall success and that's challenging to accomplish without increased consistency through the signage system. Nearly every park also struggles with accessibility by virtue of little to no directional signage. When the public is not aware of a park's presence or simply struggles to find it, the system and the public are short-changed.

## Physical Accessibility

Iowa City's Parks and Recreation Department works diligently to provide improvements to accommodate accessibility throughout the park system. This plan's primary goal targets at least one fully accessible park in each park planning district within the first year of implementation (2019). The park system's needs to achieve physical accessibility vary from park to park—in some instances, it's a simple matter of increasing mulch depth; in others, playgrounds may need replacement or parking and pathway facilities may require adjustment. This plan takes a comprehensive look at ADA access guidelines; an inventory of the parks, included in the Appendix, provides suggestions for improvements at each park in the system where changes are desired.



## Maintenance

The level of maintenance varies significantly based on the types of facilities and number of park users visiting the park. As Iowa City continues to grow, and the community demographics continue to diversify, parks will be required to be more things to more people. This will place a strain on Parks and Recreation staff for both programming and maintaining park facilities. At the same time, park maintenance is required to address upkeep of 200 acres of non-parklands.

Based on a growing number of parks and park facilities and a limited number of professionally trained maintenance providers, the department will be required to be strategic in its maintenance practices.

## Equity Initiatives

While addressed more specifically within the district-by-district analysis, with at least three segments of the park system in need of attention due to equity (and a fourth—the South district—would benefit from some additional neighborhood-style play), addressing equity issues has to surface as a system-wide priority as well.

## Ralston Creek

The strategic direction initially called for a closer look at the potential of Ralston Creek, but both the upcoming natural areas inventory and the equity analysis conducted here really bring home the importance of converting the City's streams—particularly Ralston Creek—to accessible recreational features that accentuate learning, reflection and nature-play. Developing this greenway is likely one of the best opportunities for the Central District, arguably among the most economically challenged and underserved areas in the system, to approach equitable access to parks and recreation.

## Technology

Iowa City's student population and the need to address future interests in technology speaks to the need to accommodate use of technology in parks. Charging stations and/or Wi-Fi services may prove an important way to provide user security and convenience. When constructing trail heads, welcome facilities or information kiosks, this plan recommends considering inclusion of a charging station—particularly in parks likely to be frequented by young adults. While programming is beyond the scope of this report, the future likely holds continued expansion of technology for recreation, interpretation and wayfinding in parks and along trails. Charging stations are an appropriate tool to address that trend.



Chapter

# DESIGN GUIDELINES

5



## Introduction

Park spaces have a direct impact on the users' experience. Whether it's a first impression or a lasting memory, it's not just the natural systems in parks that can spark delight—the built environment also influences the quality of that experience. Parks are backdrops for love, laughter, sorrow, joy—it's the nature of places where family and friends gather to evoke meaningful emotions and connections. The facilities in parks can enhance these interactions or serve as an obstacle. The hope is to set the stage for the emotions that connect people to each other and to place through appropriate use of color, light, texture, quality and beauty.

## Purpose

The overall objective in establishing the Design Guide for park structures and signage is to ensure a sense of aesthetic value, environmental sensitivity and a visual cohesiveness within the park systems and the surrounding community. This will be a flexible, usable document for field/office park staff, design professionals, park friends groups, potential donors and the Iowa City Parks and Recreation Commission.

## Key Considerations

The following are three primary design considerations.

### ***Economic Realities***

Limited budgets, costs of improvements and ongoing maintenance and operational expenses are important considerations when developing a guide for future park facilities. Department values that are grounded in quality and durability will need to be balanced with affordability. The higher long-term costs vs.



lower short-term costs of improvements need to be factored into the discussion, as does the economic benefit of quality facilities. The Design Guide can be helpful in informing the design process, without necessarily always increasing the cost of the improvement. In other cases, an improvement may need to be deferred until adequate resources are available to meet basic design needs.

### ***Community of Neighborhoods***

There are both unique and diverse neighborhoods in Iowa City. This is also true of the architectural aesthetic in many of the neighborhoods. Park structures are also as diverse and interesting as the communities in which they reside. A challenge for this document is to understand and articulate the unique character of the existing park architecture, while applying a twenty-first century sensibility.

### ***Environmental Relationships***

Architectural development within the Iowa City parks needs to exist in harmony with the natural environment. This can be done by understanding and using the native geology.

The Design Guide is based on a set of Goals and Objectives that were developed through the course of the project. The statements below reflect the results of those discussions.

## Goals

Goals are typically defined as broad statements of what we hope to accomplish. The goals established for the Design Guide include the following:

- A framework for future park infrastructure to enhance the Iowa City park user experience
- Sustainability principles
- Architectural identity with the surrounding community by utilizing the best of current sustainable design practices, materials and construction techniques to create an overall unified park experience and image that is built to last

## Objectives

Objectives are measurable tasks we will undertake to achieve established goals. The objectives established for the Design Guide project include:

- Identify design principles for elements common to all structures; to maintain flexibility, create a filtering system to guide the design of individual projects, allowing for variations between parks, within structure types and for varying site contexts
- Create design templates for various park structures, defining design elements common to all: picnic shelters, restrooms and basic signage

## Design Guide— A process for implementation

The Iowa City Parks Design Guide is a key component of a comprehensive planning, design, and implementation process administered by City staff. This Design Guide will be a general reference to overall planning efforts and a much more specific, practical document during final design and implementation efforts.

### ***Step 1: Project Request and Pre-Design Documentation***

As capital planning priorities advance, specific projects are identified for funding through the annual capital improvement budget. The Design Guide will be incorporated at the outset with the initial project request, with an accompanying design guide pre-documentation questionnaire to include the following information:

- Type of facility (restroom type, shelter type, other), template option
- Site analysis
- Context of existing park and surrounding neighborhood architecture; level of influence—high, medium, low
- Type of building materials used in existing park structures
  - Type of stone
  - Prevalent siding material, pattern and color
  - Prevalent shingle material and color
- Appropriate base (stone—geological connection)

The pre-design phase will culminate with an on-site meeting of all appropriate parties involved in the project to confirm critical

elements identified in the project request which include the proposed scope, purpose and project program; site selection and conditions to be considered; applicable design guide template; and review of preliminary budget and schedule/timeline.

### ***Step 2: Project Design***

The project design phase will clearly identify key recommendations or concepts for use during design phase. The following key checklist items should be utilized during the design phase.

- Review the history of the project's park development to understand the original design intent as it relates to existing facilities.
- Confirm the appropriate template option.
- Identify relevant sustainable criteria and methods for consideration in the template.
- Determine the appropriate balance for each project that demonstrates a thoughtful design approach that is balanced within the following three domains of sustainability:
  - Economic (cost)
  - Environmental (natural patterns and flows)
  - Cultural (achieving equity, park category)



- Design Templates—Each project must identify the specific design template most closely associated with the project and identify the design options and detailing being integrated. Justification should be presented to assure compliance or to identify the rationale for design alterations.
- Architectural Elements—All ten statements will be supported within the design unless specific justification is presented supporting conflicts.
  1. Scale & Mass: Consider using contextual proportions emphasizing the visual weight of a structure.
  2. Roof: Consider integrating a visually appropriate, pitched roof with large overhangs.
  3. Base: Consider integrating relief in the base of a structure.
  4. Form: Consider using rectilinear, horizontal forms.
  5. Walls: Consider using walls that are visually consistent.
  6. Details: Consider integrating details at connections and material transitions which are expressed.
  7. Color: Consider using colors that blend into the surrounding environment.
  8. Windows & Openings: Consider integrating transition spaces linking indoor spaces to the exterior environment.
  9. Materials: Consider integrating the use of natural materials with textural depth and visual weight.
  10. Universal Material/Color Choices: Each project must identify the specific design material types, patterns, applications, textures and color selections.



## Design Guidelines

The guidelines herein have been crafted to be prescriptive but fall just shy of defining all components of the finished product. All projects will require a site survey and detailed design and engineering. The design process cannot be side-stepped by using this document. It can, however, be streamlined, more efficient, and ultimately produce a more unified image for Iowa City's Parks and Recreation system.

## Design Template

### *Facilities & Signage*

The design considerations for each of the following facility categories have been advanced as “templates” to provide practical, focused recommendations and requirements. For each template, a standard format has been established that contains overall imagery, specific architectural requirements, and design options for various situations. To the right is the format for each facility. These pages feature the following facility categories:

- Restroom (single stall)
- Restroom (double stall)
- Shelter
- Shelter with Restroom
- Identification Park Sign
- Marker Park Sign
- Interpretive Kiosks







# Restroom (Single)

Restrooms will range from a single-user facility with individual private bathrooms to multi-user restrooms with public access and interior stalls. These facilities also range from custom-built to pre-engineered, prefabricated concrete structures.

The restroom structures use all architectural elements. Future development of restroom facilities will most likely rely on custom-built structural design with affordability as a major consideration.

**Mass & Scale** - Use appropriate proportions and members, emphasizing the visual permanence of the structure. The roof, roof structure, columns and base help support this development.

**Form** - Use rectilinear, horizontal forms. The length of the structure should be in proportion to the size and massing of the structure.

**Base** - Integrate heavy relief in the base of the structure, giving visual weight to its foundation.

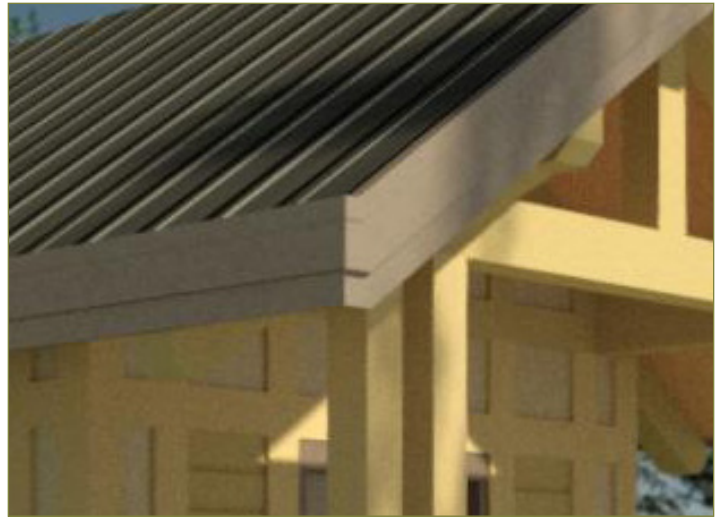
**Walls** - Use materials that provide heavy texture and scale.

**Windows & Openings** - Maximize the balance between walls and openings to provide this visual preference. The canopy over the entrance extends the structure into the landscape.

**Roof** - Integrate a visually heavy, pitch roof with large overhangs.

**Details** - Integrate details at connections and material transitions.

**Physical Accessibility** – Structure will meet all physical accessibility guidelines.

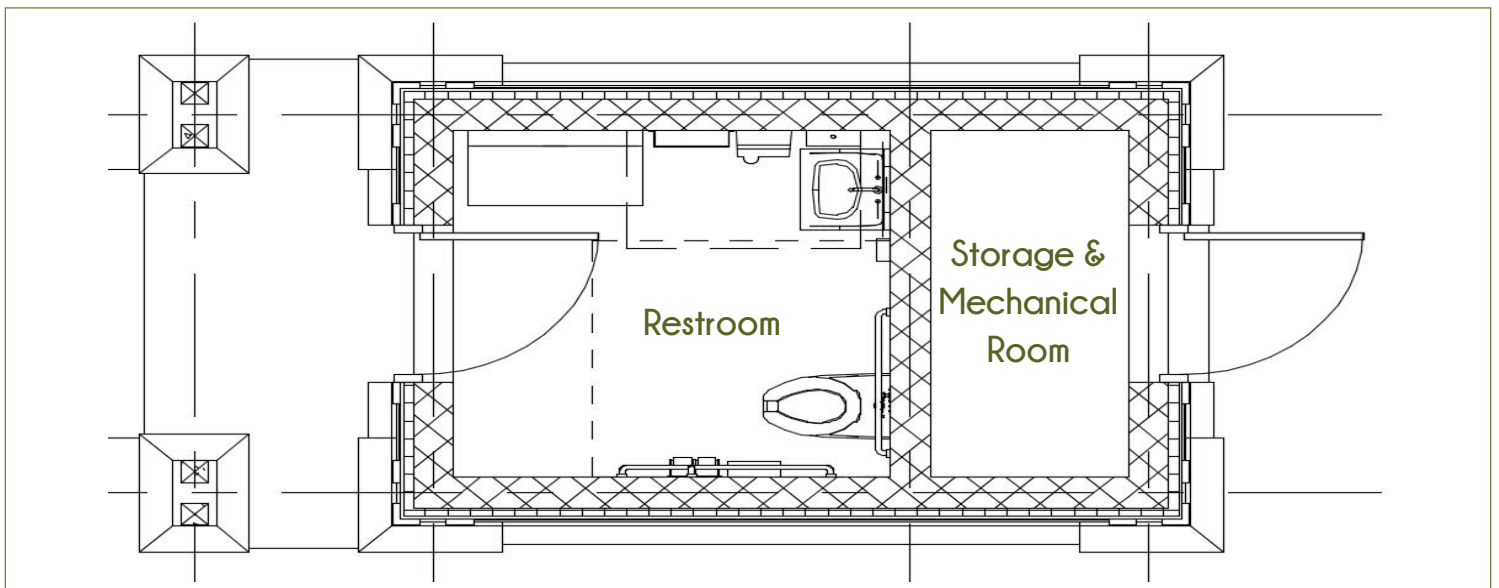


Metal Roof and Wood Fascia



Stone Base, Stone Cap and Wood Posts

## Plan View





Perspective—Side View



Perspective—Front View



# Restroom (Double)

The multi-user restroom will provide two separate rooms. The rooms can range in program, including single-stall, multiple stalls to family rooms. The exterior will provide greater opportunity to incorporate drinking fountains, maps and other park amenities.

**Mass & Scale** - Use appropriate proportions and members, emphasizing the visual permanence of the structure. The roof, roof structure, columns and base help support this development.

**Form** - Use rectilinear, horizontal forms. The length of the structure should be in proportion to the size and massing of the structure.

**Base** - Integrate heavy relief in the base of the structure, giving visual weight to its foundation.

**Walls** - Use materials that provide heavy texture and scale.

**Windows & Openings** - Maximize the balance between walls and openings to provide this visual preference. The canopy over the entrance extends the structure into the landscape.

**Roof** - Integrate a visually heavy, pitch roof with large overhangs.

**Details** - Integrate details at connections and material transitions.

**Physical Accessibility** – Structure will meet all physical accessibility guidelines.

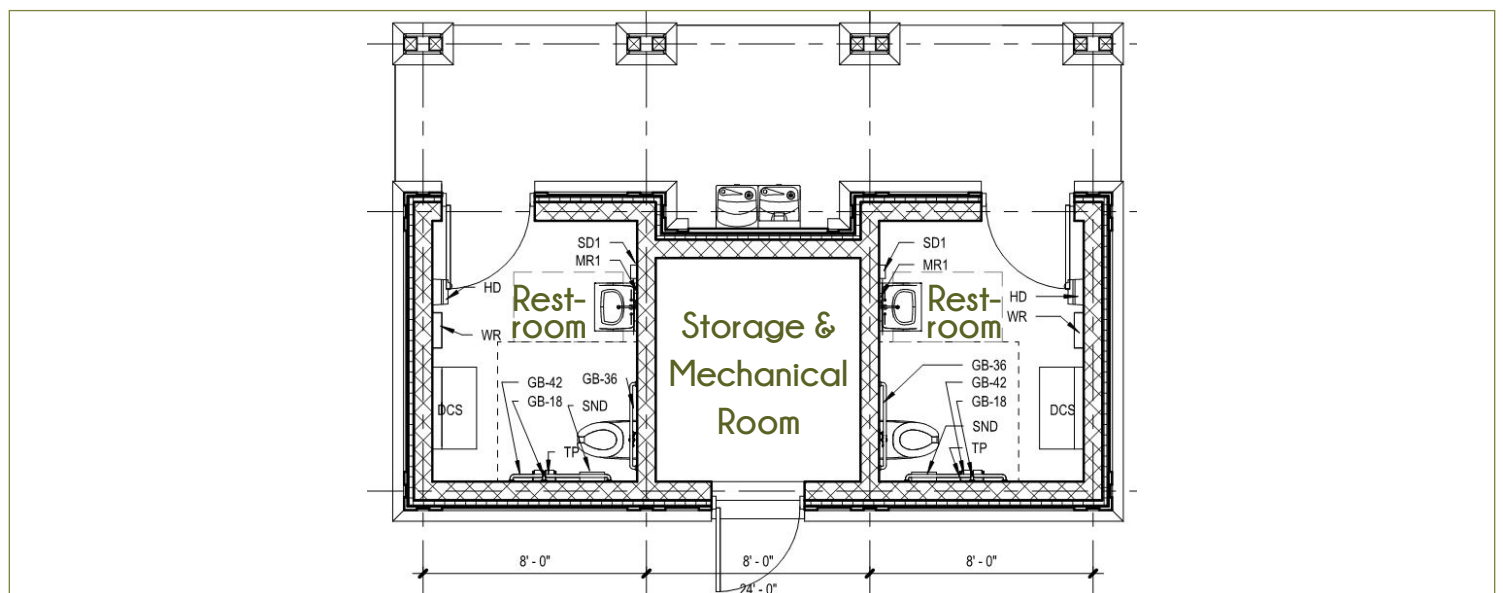


Metal Roof and Wood Fascia



Stone Base, Stone Cap and Wood Posts

## Plan View





Perspective—Side View



Perspective—Front View



# Shelter

Shelters are a flexible, open-air facilities ranging in size and use. They serve a variety of functions while providing park users protection from the elements. Shelters include the vertical structure and plaza space adjacent to the canopy.

The architectural elements that are critical to the development of the shelter structures are mass and scale, form, base, roof and details. An open, visually accessible experience is preferred with flexible plaza space extending beyond the canopy of the roof.

**Mass & Scale** - Use appropriate proportions and members, emphasizing the visual permanence of the structure. The roof, roof structure, columns and base help provide this preferred visual preference.

**Form** - Use rectilinear, horizontal forms. The length of the structure should be in proportion to the size and massing of the structure. The form should be supported by oversized structure for support.

**Base** - Integrate significant relief in the base of the structure. The four corner columns extend this expression vertically.

**Walls** - Use heavily textured pylons at the corners. Balance is found between the massing of corner supports and the visually open structure above.

**Openings** - Maximize the balance between support structure and an open visual preference. Also, integrate plaza space beyond the canopy of the structure. This will increase the flexibility of the space and improve the open access of the shelter.

**Roof** - Integrate a pitch roof with large overhangs.

**Physical Accessibility** – Structure will meet all physical accessibility guidelines.

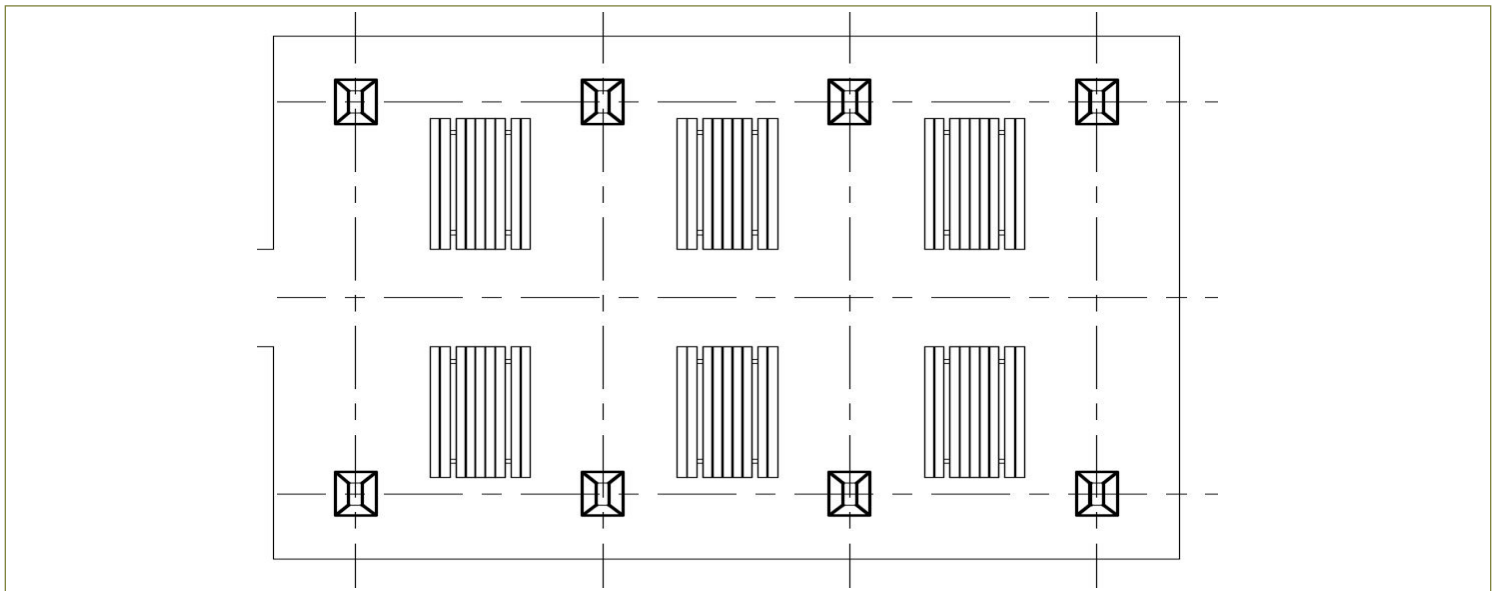


Metal Roof and Wood Facia



Stone Base, Stone Cap and Wood Posts

## Plan View





Perspective—Side View



Perspective—Front View



# Shelter/Restroom

Shelters are a flexible, open-air facility ranging in size and use. They serve a variety of functions while providing park users protection from the elements. Shelters include the vertical structure and plaza space adjacent to the canopy.

The architectural elements that are critical to the development of the shelter structures are mass and scale, form, base, roof and details. An open, visually accessible experience is preferred with flexible plaza space extending beyond the canopy of the roof.

**Mass & Scale** - Use appropriate proportions and members, emphasizing the visual permanence of the structure. The roof, roof structure, columns and base help provide this preferred visual preference.

**Form** - Use rectilinear, horizontal forms. The length of the structure should be in proportion to the size and massing of the structure. The form should be supported by oversized structure for support.

**Base** - Integrate significant relief in the base of the structure. The four corner columns extend this expression vertically.

**Walls** - Use heavily textured pylons at the corners. Balance is found between the massing of corner supports and the visually open structure above.

**Openings** - Maximize the balance between support structure and an open visual preference. Also, integrate plaza space beyond the canopy of the structure. This will increase the flexibility of the space and improve the open access of the shelter.

**Roof** - Integrate a pitch roof with large overhangs.

**Physical Accessibility** – Structure will meet all physical accessibility guidelines.

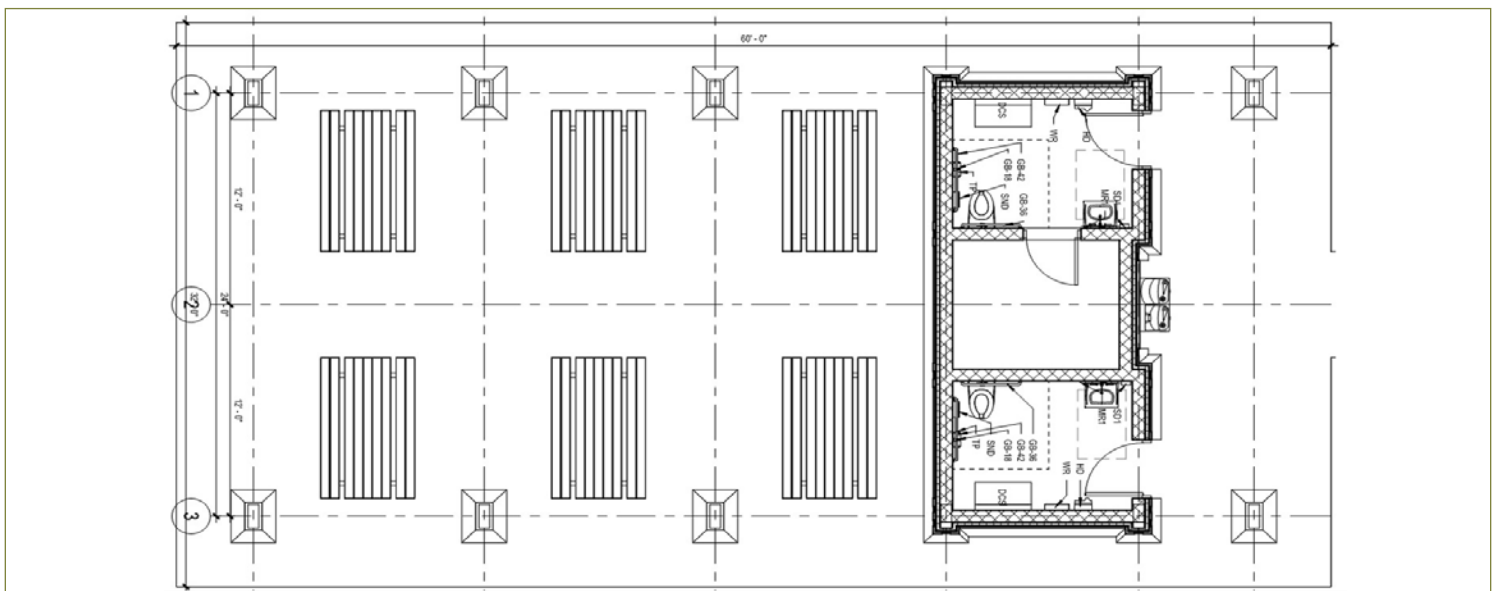


Metal Roof and Wood Facia



Stone Base, Stone Cap and Wood Posts

## Plan View





Perspective—Side View



Perspective—Front View



# Way-finding and Signage

In 2008, the Parks And Recreation Department developed a park identification sign (see photo). This sign is made out of an aluminum metal, powder coated with white accent, placed on a stone base supported by a concrete footing. The new park identification sign will be of the same components.

In addition, a park and trail marker sign will be included into the family of park signs. This sign will be constructed of the same materials at a height of four feet for the larger sign and three feet for the smaller marker. Details for these signs are included here.

Other park signs to consider to include in the family of signs are as follows:

- Information Center (Kiosk)
- Information Panels
- Destination
- Way-finding/Directional Signage

Concepts for these signs appear in the Appendix of this report and this plan recommends developing details for the complete family of signs.



Existing Identification Sign

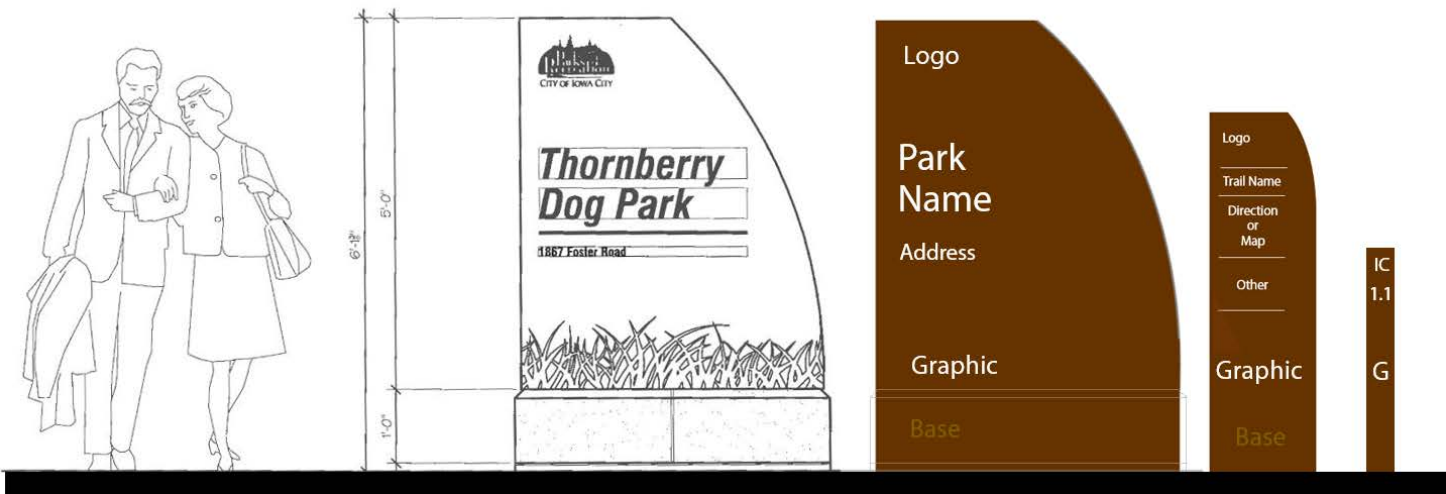


Current  
Parks & Recreation  
Logo

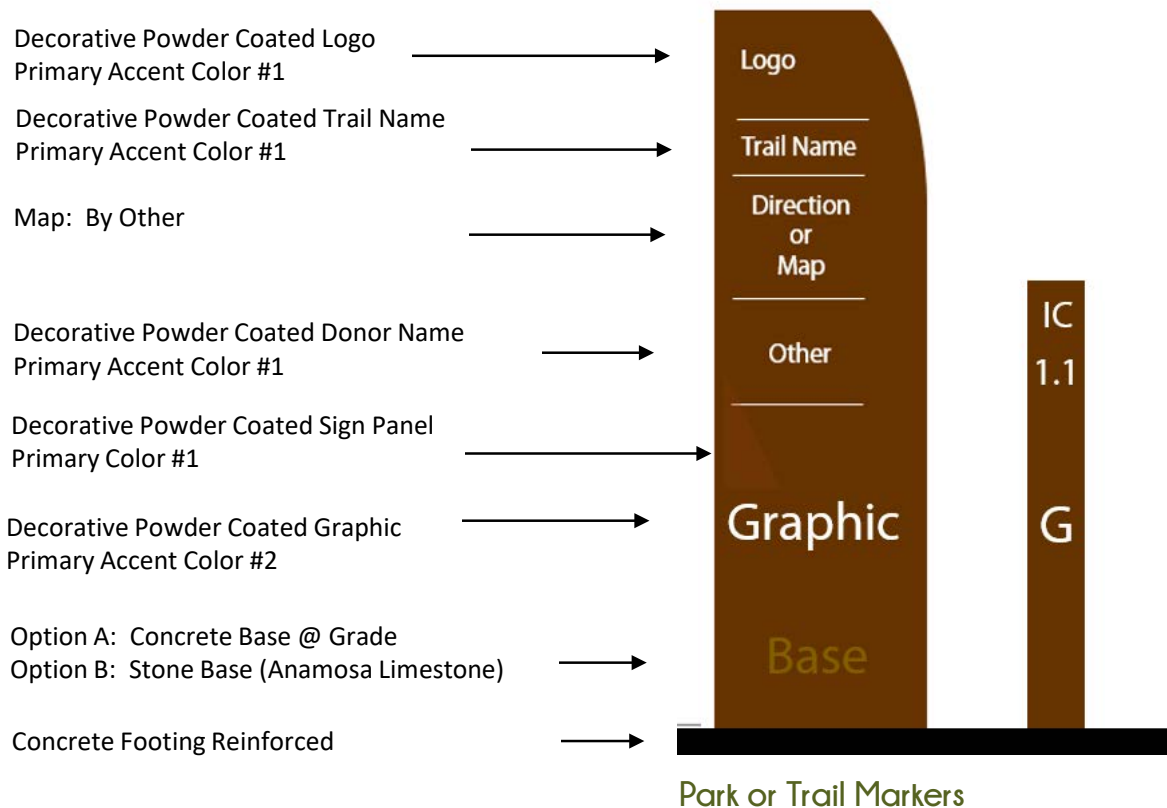
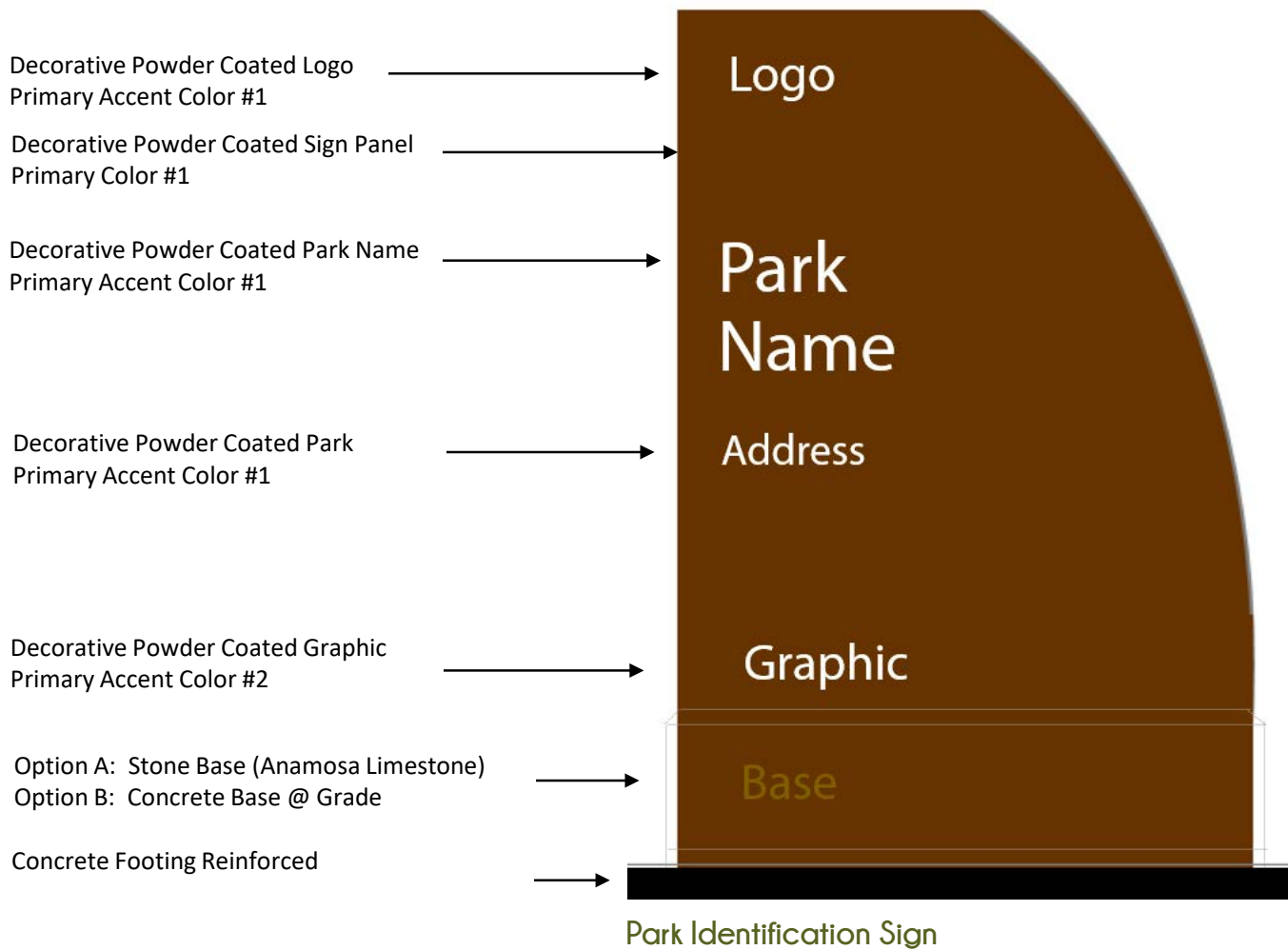
Existing  
Identification Sign

Proposed  
Identification Sign

Proposed  
Trail Marker



Elevation







Chapter

# IMPLEMENTATION AND PHASING

6



This table summarizes the actions recommended in this plan.

Actions with a \* are considered to be the highest-priority items. Actions are also classified by type: Capital Project, Operations and Maintenance Need (O&M), Program, Policy or Organizational.

Recommended Actions Beginning 2019	
Action	Type
<b>System-Wide Actions</b>	
* Physical Accessibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance of fall-zone surfaces</li> <li>• Provision of accessible picnic tables</li> <li>• Provision of parking, truncated curb ramps and paths to park amenities</li> </ul>	Capital O&M Organizational
* Wayfinding and Signage	Capital
* Maintenance Improvements	O&M Organizational
* Ralston Creek—Greenway/Access	Capital
* Addressing Equity Needs of Four Districts (See District Needs below)	Primarily Capital
<b>District Needs</b>	
<b>South District</b>	
Add 1-acre park on Sycamore Street	Capital
* Add park and trail connection to developing neighborhood around Alexander Elementary	Capital
Improve access to Sand Prairie from South District residential areas	Capital
* Add a park on southeast edge of the South District and/or enhance Wetland Park	Capital
Add more opportunities for traditional “play”	Capital
<b>Southeast District</b>	
* Add a Park and Trail in East Side Growth Area along Snyder Creek	Capital
Link Future Sports Facility to East Side Growth Area	Capital
Add pedestrian connections to Mercer Park	Capital
Add more diversity in park offerings	Capital
<b>West Central District</b>	
Add park amenities near Sunset Street and Benton Street	Capital
Add mini-park in Manville Heights	Capital
* Improve connections to Benton Hill Park	Capital
<b>Central District</b>	
Watch for opportunities to add parkland in the Central District	Capital
* Improve Ralston Creek to fill Recreational Gap	Capital

\*\* Identify opportunities for early win access points and associated amenities, while recognizing the thrust of the Ralston Creek Greenway project is likely medium to long term due to the stream's current conditions in both bank stability and water quality.

Recommended Actions Beginning 2019	
Action	Type
<b>West District</b>	
* Add parkland and/or improve park connections for neighborhood west of Mormon Trek	Capital
Connect Hunters Run Park to Willow Creek Park	Capital
Add parkland or improve park connections for neighborhood west of high school	Capital
Acquire land for trail west of Hunters Run	Capital
<b>North District</b>	
Add neighborhood park to serve emerging residential area west of Dubuque Street and south of I-80	Capital
Add park facilities near intersection of Scott Blvd & Rochester Ave	Capital
Add diversity in park offerings	Capital

## General Implementation Approach

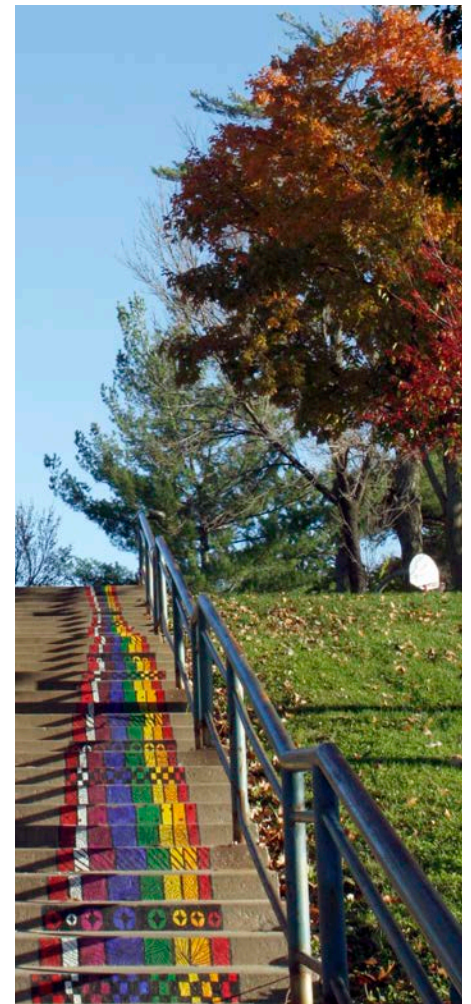
The Parks and Recreation Commission should work with parks and recreation staff members to create a yearly action plan based on the recommendations of this plan. This plan should be approved at the beginning of each year (or fiscal year) and a progress report should be created at the end of each year (or fiscal year).

## Wayfinding and Signage Implementation

Near-and-in-park signage can be addressed on a project-by-project basis. This is proposed for the priority district projects identified in District-by-District Implementation. A broader wayfinding study may be warranted. Associated costs of wayfinding and signage depend on the park scale, i.e., community or regional parks typically require a larger network of wayfinding and interior signage than neighborhood parks.

Park Signage Package: Cost Estimates	
Item	Cost
<b>Community/Regional Parks</b>	
Park Identification Sign	\$2.5K
Information Center (Kiosk) *	\$8–35K
Information Panels *	\$3–8K
Destination *	\$400–2K
Marker	
Large Marker	\$2K
Small Marker	\$600
Wayfinding/Directional	
Pedestrian	Range (size & message)
Vehicular	Range (size & message)
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>	
Park Identification Sign	\$2.5K
Information Panels *	\$3–8K
Destination *	\$400–2K
Pedestrian	Range (size & message)
<b>Mini-Parks</b>	
Park Identification Sign	\$2.5K
Destination *	\$400–2K

\* Type-dependent





## Neighborhood Park Redevelopment

The following assumptions and cost estimates are used to provide a general overview of neighborhood park redevelopment. Note the

highlighted line items indicate the cost of “building new.” A remodel/replacement is also included in several instances.

Program	Cost
<b>Lawn</b>	\$8,651
2 Acres of Unobstructed Open-Space Seeding (86,512 SF @ \$0.10/SF)	
<b>Landscape</b>	\$40,000
5.5 Acres of Lawn and Landscaping	
<b>Parking</b>	
New Parking: 15 Stalls x \$2,500/Stall	\$37,500
Resurfacing and Striping Existing 15 Stalls	\$7,000
<b>Pathways</b>	
New Sidewalks: 6'W x 1,652 LF @ \$5.50/SF	\$54,516
<b>Shelter</b>	
New Shelter: 30' x 30'	\$200,000
Remodel Existing Shelter:	\$38,800
• Re-Roofing @ \$20/SF	\$18,000
• Staining	\$4,000
• Upgrade Electrical and Lighting	\$3,000
• New Concrete Slab (40' x 40' @ \$5.50/SF)	\$8,800
• Replace 2 Grills	\$2,000
• Drinking Fountain (Wall-Mounted)	\$3,000
<b>Park Identification Sign</b>	\$5,000
<b>Back Stop (Baseball/Softball)</b>	\$12,000
<b>Playground</b>	
New Play Structure	\$200,000
Upgrade Existing Play Structure	\$50,000
New Play Surface (Rubber)	\$70,000
Replace Existing Play Surface (Mulch)	\$6,000
Concrete Edging	\$3,600
<b>Site Furniture Package</b>	
Benches (4 @ \$1,400 each)	\$5,600
Picnic Tables (6 @ \$1,500 each)	\$9,000
Drinking Fountain	\$3,500

### Assumptions: Park and Program Considerations

**Category:**  
*Neighborhood Park*

**Size:**  
*5 to 8 Acres*

**Context:**  
*Surrounded by  
Residential Neighborhood*

**Connectivity:**

- *Direct Connection to Adjacent Sidewalks*
- *Requires Minimal Parking*
- *Not on Transit Line*
- *Not Connected to the Trail System*

### District-by-District Implementation

The following summary begins to address anticipated capital costs associated with the higher-priority district-by-district improvements proposed here. These figures do not include engineering/design, permitting costs, etc. A multiplier of 1.3 would serve as a typical factor to reach a more complete project cost. These rough estimates are also based on 2017 costs. Again, typically, we would use 4% per year to grow these costs over time. We do not project other project costs as, after 1–3 years, new base figures should likely be applied for projections. These figures should be considered appropriate as a “magnitude of cost” estimate only. No project can be truly budgeted without greater detail in its scope/design and location.

#### SOUTH DISTRICT

Add a Park and trail connection to developing neighborhood around Alexander Elementary

Item	Cost
Land Acquisition (5–10 Acres)	\$40K/Acre (required?)
Shelter & Restroom	\$250K–\$325K
Playground	\$100K
Play Resilient Surface	\$10K
Pathways	\$8K
Landscaping	\$10K
Signage	\$2.5K

#### SOUTHEAST DISTRICT

Add a Park and Trail in East Side Growth Area along Snyder Creek

Item	Cost
Land Acquisition (5–10 Acres)	\$40K/Acre (required?)
Shelter & Restroom	\$250K–\$325K
Playground	\$100K
Play Resilient Surface	\$10K
Pathways	\$8K
Landscaping	\$10K
Trail	\$650K–\$850K per Mile
Signage	\$2.5K

#### WEST CENTRAL DISTRICT

Improve Connection to Benton Hill Park

Item	Cost
Sidewalk (1,024LF @ 5'W)	\$25/LF = \$25.6K
Curb Cut @ Benton St.	\$3K

#### CENTRAL DISTRICT

Improve Ralston Creek to Fill Recreational Gap

Item	Cost
Creek Restoration	See “About Ralston Creek Restoration” later in this chapter
Pathways	\$8K
Landscaping	\$10K
Signage	\$2.5K

#### WEST DISTRICT

Add Parkland and/or Improve Park Connections for Neighborhood West of Mormon Trek

Item	Cost
<b>Option A—Add Parkland</b>	
Land Acquisition	\$40K/Acre (required?)
Shelter & Restroom	\$250K–\$325K
Playground	\$100K
Play Resilient Surface	\$10K
Pathways	\$8K
Landscaping	\$10K
Signage	\$2.5K
<b>Option B—Improve Park Connection</b>	
Land Acquisition	\$40K/Acre (required?)
Trail	\$650K–\$850K per Mile

See the funding opportunities matrix that appears later in this chapter for potential funding opportunities beyond Iowa City's Capital Improvements Program.



# Physical Accessibility Improvements



## Physical Accessibility Implementation

A worthy early goal for this plan is to expand physical accessibility in at least one park per district in 2019. This table highlights what is generally required to reach that goal for one park. Highlighted features look at the costs associated with building new.

Program	Cost
<b>Lawn</b>	\$0
2 Acres of Unobstructed Open-Space Seeding	
<b>Landscape</b>	\$0
5.5 Acres of Lawn and Landscaping	
<b>Parking</b>	\$2,500
Resurfacing and Striping Existing 2 Stalls	
<b>Pathways</b>	
New Sidewalks: 6'W x 1,652 LF @ \$5.50/SF	\$54,516
<b>Shelter</b>	\$8,800
Remodel Existing Shelter:	
• New Concrete Slab (40' x 40' @ \$5.50/SF)	
<b>Drinking Fountain (Wall-Mounted)</b>	\$3,000
<b>Playground</b>	
New Play Structure	\$0
Upgrade Existing Play Structure	\$50,000
New Play Surface (Rubber)	\$70,000
Replace Existing Play Surface (Mulch)	\$6,000
Concrete Edging	\$0
<b>Site Furniture Package</b>	
Benches (1 @ \$1,400 each)	\$1,400
Picnic Tables (1 @ \$1,500 each)	\$1,500
Drinking Fountain	\$3,500

## Assumptions: Park and Program Considerations

**Category:**  
*Neighborhood Park*

**Size:**  
*5 to 8 Acres*

**Context:**  
*Surrounded by  
Residential Neighborhood*

### Connectivity:

- *Direct Connection to Adjacent Sidewalks*
- *Requires Minimal Parking*
- *Not on Transit Line*
- *Not Connected to the Trail System*

An effective implementation strategy will be achieved through two efforts.

## Develop an Implementation Team

City staff responsible for the implementation of accessibility improvements shall include:

- Parks and Recreation Director
- Superintendent of Park and Forestry
- Facilities Manager
- City Engineering

This team shall coordinate the implementation of the improvements as these measures are integral to park and facility maintenance, operations, capital planning and budgeting.

## Plan Review and Locating Candidates for Improvement

All existing and future park improvements should strive to achieve accessibility throughout the design. To accomplish this, an integrated, physical evaluation of the site, including a site inspection, facility evaluation and program evaluation, will be conducted at the beginning of each project.

The Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan recommends a focused approach for achieving accessibility throughout the Iowa City Park system. In each of the districts, a priority should be placed on the following:

- A reasonable number of parks within a district
- Park type and distribution within a district
- Specific type of park facility

This plan recommends a 1–2 park per planning district focus over the next 1–2 years, beginning with parks most readily able to improve physical accessibility. This might occur due to scheduled maintenance/remodel or new facilities going in at a particular park, or due to the park's current level of alignment (i.e., it's poised for a series of simple fixes to achieve alignment). Staff can consult a combination of the priorities for increasing accessibility database provided to staff through this planning process as well as maintenance and CIP schedules to determine the strongest candidates for parks that can achieve success.

Upon success with the initial wave of physical-accessibility improvement efforts, the annual action plan can continue down a path of focusing on the next tier of park candidates for addressing improved physical accessibility.





# Maintenance Implementation



The Iowa City Park system offers a wide range of gathering spaces—landscapes, facilities and user experiences. As its parks are diverse, so too are its people. As an ever-changing demographic of park users enjoy the continued renewals, revisions and additions of park facilities, one common theme connects all park advocates and their shared enthusiasm for the park system: safe and well-maintained facilities.

Planning, designing, building and experiencing parks are always at the forefront of the communities and the boards and councils that govern them; it is the ongoing maintenance and long-term care that is often overlooked and inadequately budgeted for when focusing on the next big park project or the addition of a new park property. The condition of parks expresses the City's values and commitment to providing places and experiences that add to the quality of life of its residents.

Successful park systems provide a sustainable, accessible and well-balanced approach to preserving, restoring, developing and maintaining park facilities. This in turn improves the quality of the built and natural environment and improves and enhances the quality of life for park users. Well-maintained parks balance the need to enhance or restore park amenities with the need to provide active and passive play opportunities. These types of parks are created through sustainable maintenance practices.

The level of maintenance varies from park to park and among types of facilities. Based on this diversity of park assets, some parks or park types need greater attention or a specialized maintenance program. To sustain an ever-growing park system with growing complexities in park operations and maintenance, a multi-prong approach will be required to meet existing and future maintenance needs:

- **Invest**  
Grow maintenance expertise through well-trained park personnel. As the park system grows and individual parks continue to evolve with more unique facilities, park staff resources will need to evolve to meet future needs and demands of an ever-changing park system.
- **Prioritize**  
Make maintenance a priority. Identify, schedule and fund the required time, material and effort to properly maintain existing facilities, rather than deferring maintenance on park assets.
- **Engage**  
Grow community engagement by reaching out to community volunteers and park advocates. Encourage neighborhoods to take an interest in maintaining the public spaces near them.
- **Create unique partnerships**  
Identify and foster positive relationships with both corporate and community leaders. As the community diversifies, promote partnerships throughout the community.

*“We are in the business of creating memories. The commitment to maintain our parks is a direct reflection of our community values.”*

~ Juli Seydell Johnson  
Iowa City Parks and Recreation Director

## Maintenance Implementation for the First Two Years

This plan recommends a comprehensive approach to maintenance: a Maintenance Manifesto. The foundation for this maintenance approach is the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) that appears elsewhere in this Implementation Chapter and also in the District-by-District Needs section of Chapter 4. The CIP serves as a guide for implementing park renovations throughout the entire system.

Upon adoption of this Comprehensive Parks and Recreation plan, and within the first six months, this plan recommends staff use the park inventory and assessment to identify all structures, pathways and plantings that are in poor condition. Staff can then identify projects that can be led and completed in the following categories:

- **By Volunteers**

Identify projects that can be managed by staff but completed by volunteers from neighborhoods, businesses or organizations. These projects are typically the low-hanging fruit that require a bit of direction and support. They would include:

painting, limited carpentry, landscape care (weeding, trimming, garbage collection) and other meaningful but low-risk duties. In some communities, there has been a call for carpenters, electricians, plumbers, concrete experts and gardeners. In other communities, the focus for volunteers has been around “their neighborhood park.” What is important for the volunteers is that work is meaningful and clearly defined. A committed staff person that is organized with good communication skills would be an excellent lead. Other organizations find that the cost of volunteer coordinators is often more than offset by volunteer contributions they organize and lead.

- **By Staff**

This requires a realistic assessment of current staff skills and capacity. This can also lead to a determination of

gaps or shortages in capacity and aid in identifying future hiring needs.

- **By Contracted Work**

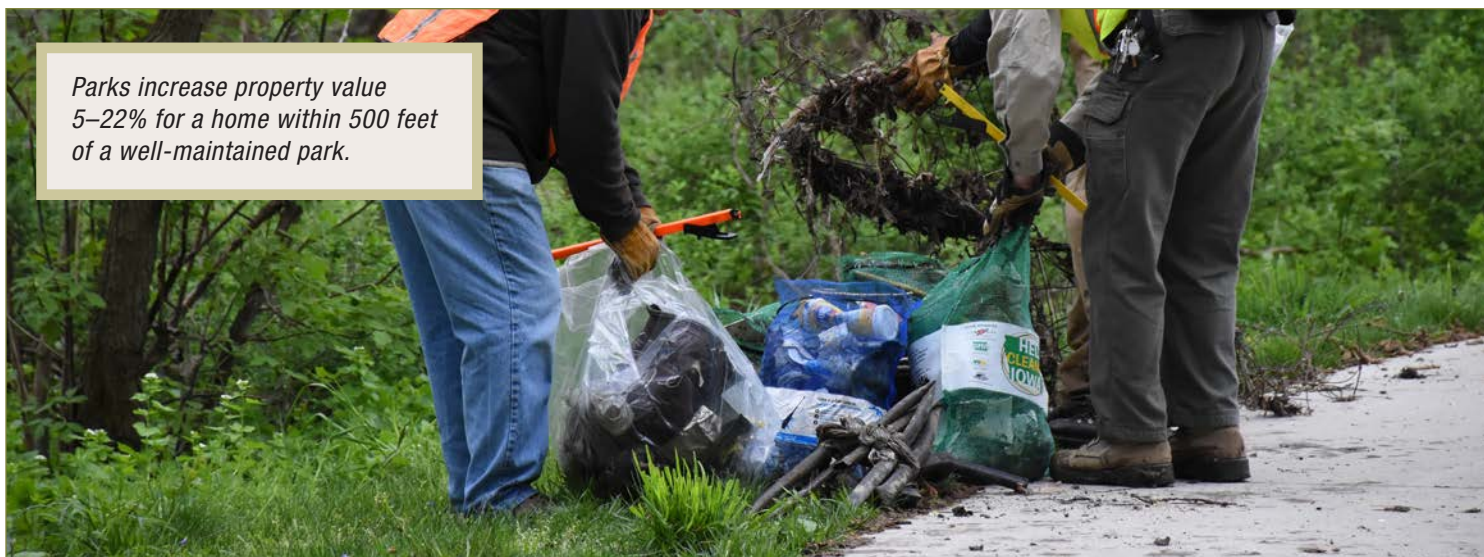
Work with contractors and the business community to determine the best and most cost-effective method to complete work in this category. This work should be beyond the capacity for volunteers and staff to accomplish.

This effort will be a shared commitment by community partners and city staff. This “Maintenance Manifesto” would serve as a two-year commitment to upgrade all facilities and structures that are in poor condition due to deferred maintenance. Once the tasks are assigned on the basis of volunteer, staff or contractor responsibility, costs to address deferred maintenance are more easily determined.

*“The general objectives of maintenance are to ensure the clean and orderly appearance of grounds, structures and facilities, and to protect the health, safety and convenience of the park user.”*

~ Alexander Garvin  
*Public Parks: The Key to Livable Communities*

*Parks increase property value 5–22% for a home within 500 feet of a well-maintained park.*





# Capital Improvements Program

The following Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for the parks system is based on consideration given to the following five factors:

1. **Accessibility Needs** – does a given park in this district have relatively minor (primarily maintenance) or significant (largely design-oriented) needs to address physical accessibility of the park's features?
2. **Maintenance** – similar to accessibility, does this park require major renovation/ significant improvements to its features or are the maintenance needs more routine?
3. **Age of Equipment/Features** – play equipment, for example, typically has a shelf life in the range of 20 years. Where does this park's play equipment fall on a timeline for replacement?
4. **Neighborhood Needs** – how do changing needs of the area surrounding a given park have an impact on that park's needed features/improvements?
5. **Future Trends** – how do recreation and community trends influence this park's future facility, open-space and programming needs?

After looking at these considerations, parks were prioritized and scheduled for inclusion accordingly. The CIP included here covers a ten-year period.

PARK DEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT		
Year	Park	District
2018	Riverfront Crossings 2	C
2018	Creekside	SE
2018	Cardigan	SE
2019	FairMeadows - Play	S
2019	Willow Creek	WC
2019	City Park Adventure	WC
2019	Villa Park	WC
2020	Wetherby Shelter & Play	S
2020	Scott Park	SE
2020	City Park Upper Shelters	WC
2021	Chadek Green	C
2021	Hickory Hill - Conklin	C
2021	Glendale	C
2021	Napoleon Play	S
2022	Whispering Meadows	S
2022	Court Hill	SE
2022	City Park - Lower Shelters	WC
2022	Kiwanis - Play & Shelter	WC

PARK DEVELOPMENT/REDEVELOPMENT		
Year	Park	District
2023	Happy Hollow Play	N
2023	Hunter's Run	W
2024	Reno St	C
2024	N. Market Square	C
2024	Kickers Play 1	S
2025	College Green	C
2025	Hickory Trail	N
2025	Benton Hill	WC
2026	Oak Grove	C
2026	Kickers Play 2	S
2026	Harlocke Hill	WC
2028	Emma Harvat	N
2028	Mercer Play	SE
2028	Tower Court	WC
2029	Cardigan	N
2029	Pheasant Hill	N
2029	Creekside	SE

CIP only includes neighborhood parks. Athletic complexes, trails, special use and regional parks will be considered separately.



*Example of a park shelter that would benefit from improved accessibility.*

PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS		
Year	Park	District
2018	Highland	C
2018	Mercer Play	SE
2018	Kiwanis	WC
2018	Tower Ct	WC
2019	College Green	C
2019	Pheasant Hill	N
2019	Happy Hollow	N
2019	Hunter's Run	W
2019	Brooklyn	WC
2020	Oak Grove	C
2020	Reno St	C
2020	Black Spring	WC
2020	Harlocke Hill	WC
2020	Ryerson	WC
2021	Thornberry	N
2021	Crandic	WC



# About Ralston Creek Greenway Implementation

## Concept

Ralston Creek runs through the eastern part of Iowa City, winding between residential structures and commercial buildings along a narrow corridor. Grading and the addition of impervious surfaces have increased surface runoff volumes and flow rates over time. This has increased the potential for streambank erosion, debris and flooding. These changes have increased the risks of damage to private property and public infrastructure.

There is also a need to increase public access to parks and greenspace in the areas surrounding this corridor. A restoration effort along Ralston Creek could increase access along a greenbelt corridor while also addressing stability issues along the creek. As most of the stream and its tributaries are located on private property, such an effort will require cooperation and easement (or property) acquisition from adjacent landowners for construction and continued public access.

Restoration efforts should focus on the following:

- Dense tree cover along the banks of the creek limits sunlight available at the surface, which is needed to sustain more erosion-resistant vegetation. Many trees have or will become undercut, potentially falling into the creek—deflecting flows toward banks or blocking flow along the stream or at bridge or culvert entrances. Clearing will be required in some areas to increase available sunlight and to accommodate required stabilization techniques. Clearing should be done only as needed to accomplish these goals, to maintain existing, healthy, mature trees as much as possible.
- Grading activities should shape banks to more stable slopes. This increases



the cross-sectional area of the stream, reducing flood potential. Lower flow velocities and approach angles can reduce shear forces along the streambanks, further reducing erosion potential. Any grading or shaping needs to be done in ways to continue to effectively transport sediment through the corridor.

- Along longer reaches, rock riffle structures may be needed in areas with more slope along the stream length. In such areas, the stream may currently be lower than outlets of culverts or other crossings at the upper end of a reach.
- The restored corridor would employ native wildflowers, grasses and forbs to resist erosion. These plants create roots that drive several feet into the ground. Along outer bends, stone materials can

be buried into the lower sections of the bank and integrated with soil and compost materials to allow native vegetation to create an interlacing web of roots through the stone armor—providing the necessary stone protection while maintaining the aesthetics of the native prairie.

- Trails can be placed parallel to the stream, providing public access to green spaces and allowing for required ongoing maintenance.
- In some locations, retaining walls may be needed where space is most restricted. To minimize cost, walls should only be used where necessary to provide stable slopes and should be located as far upslope from the stream as possible.

*Photos show a creek restoration project of similar cross-section to Ralston Creek.*



## Locations

While all segments of Ralston Creek within the developed part of the City show potential for restoration, certain areas seem best suited for early implementation.

- Segments of Ralston Creek located downstream of North Dodge Street are generally commercial or higher-density residential properties. These areas include larger land parcels, requiring coordination with fewer property owners.
  - Some of these segments run parallel to public streets, such as along the west side of South Van Buren Street from East Washington to East Court Street. This location along parking lots and the adjacent street may allow for easier construction access and less direct impact to private property.
  - South of East Prentiss Street, the stream appears to fall within City-owned land. The cross-section of the stream is larger in this area, leading to additional restoration opportunities.
- The stream segments downstream of Glendale Park, between East Jefferson and Evans Street has larger parcels and greater distances between the stream and surrounding structures. The confluence of Ralston Creek with its tributary South Ralston Creek is within this area. The stream runs adjacent to East Jefferson Street through a part of this area. The fewer parcels and additional space in this area could allow restoration and access to be provided, while still preserving the privacy of the adjacent residences.
- South Ralston Creek between Longfellow Nature Trail and Muscatine Avenue primarily follows what appears to be a platted “alley” right-of-way, along the rear yards of single-family residential structures. Stream restoration in this area could be achieved through acquisition of temporary easements for construction, or permanent easements for access.

## Cost

Restoration efforts of this type often cost between \$300–\$450 per foot of stream length

improved, or about \$400–600k per 1/4 stream mile of restoration. These costs do not include retaining walls or other steep slope protection, which would need to be evaluated on a site-by-site basis to determine the type of wall needed and its size.

## Next Steps

To better define construction costs, a more detailed concept plan should be prepared for the early phases of implementation. This effort should review existing topography and infrastructure in greater detail to determine the need for retaining wall structures or other features that could exceed the costs listed above. Such a planning effort should include preliminary coordination with permitting agencies such as the Corps of Engineers and Iowa Department of Natural Resources, to address any concerns with the proposed concept and better define the level of effort required to obtain construction permits. It also makes sense to include stream evaluation, wetland delineation and endangered species surveys as a part of the planning effort, to identify any impacts and needs for mitigation.





# Potential Funding Matrix

A plan of this caliber needs many partners and wide-ranging strategies for successful implementation. The funding strategies include: local and/or regional bond referendums and/or local option sales taxes; advocacy for effective state supports; partnering with other agencies; private fundraising; and public and private grants/foundational supports.

Highlights of some of the most immediately available resources are included in the funding matrix on the next few pages of this report. Meanwhile, this plan recommends contacting those who have been successful with local bond referendums in the past. Johnson County succeeded in passing a \$20 million bond referendum. The City of West

Des Moines, Iowa, is currently considering a similar strategy. In 2016, ballot measures in support of conservation and/or recreation were on the ballot in 86 locations across the country. Sixty-eight passed (79%), achieving \$6.9 billion in support, including a \$40 million bond referendum in Linn County, Iowa, garnering 74% support.

Potential Funding Sources		
Description	Program Element	Possible Uses
Federal Transportation Enhancement Program; IDOT through Regional Planning Affiliate (RPA)		
Funding for enhancement or preservation activities of transportation related projects.	T, L, O, W	The following projects are funded: facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists; safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists; scenic or historic highway programs; acquisition of scenic or historic sites; landscaping and scenic beautification; historic preservation; rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation facilities; preservation of abandoned railway corridors; control and removal or outdoor advertising; archaeological planning and research; mitigation of water pollution due to highway runoff; or transportation museums.
Recreational Trails Program (Federal)		
Funding for creation and maintenance of motorized and non-motorized recreational trails and trail related projects.	T	Recreational trail extension.
Recreational Trails Program (State); IDOT		
Funding for public recreational trails.	T	Trail projects that are part of a local, area-wide, regional, or statewide trail plan.
Iowa Clean Air Attainment Program (ICAAP); IDOT		
Funding for highway/street, transit, bicycle/pedestrian or freight projects or programs which help maintain Iowa's clean air quality by reducing transportation related emissions.	T, O	Projects which will reduce vehicle miles traveled or single-occupant vehicle trips; Transportation improvements to improve air quality.
Land and Water Conservation Fund; Iowa DNR		
Federal funding for outdoor recreation area development and acquisition.	T, P	Improvements to existing recreation facilities and development of new facilities.
General Obligation Bonds		
Allows cities to secure funding by pledging future tax revenues to repay the bond.	W, T, P, L, O	Capital improvements, such as street projects
Community Attraction and Tourism – Enhance Iowa – Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA)		
To assist projects that will provide recreational, cultural, entertainment and educational attractions.	T, P, A	Packaged amenities and connections to existing tourist attractions

H	Health
N	Nature/Habitat
W	Water Resources/Streambank/Stormwater Management
T	Trail
P	Parks
A	Art
L	Land Acquisition
O	Other Amenities

Deadline	Available Funds	Required Match
Typically October 1 for statewide applications; Check with RPA for deadlines.	Dependent on allocation as part of reauthorization of MAP-21. Funding has historically been \$4.5 million annually statewide. Funds available vary by region.	Varies by region; Contact RPA.
Typically October 1	Varies each year	20%
Typically July 1	Varies each year	25%
Typically October 1	Approximately \$4 million annually Minimum \$20,000 total project cost	20%
March 15, or closest working day	Varies annually	50%
NA	Varies	NA
October 1; often times other deadlines throughout the year	In flux; contact Nicole Shala at <a href="mailto:enhanceiowa@iowaeda.com">enhanceiowa@iowaeda.com</a>	1:1 (typically)



## Potential Funding Sources

Description	Program Element	Possible Uses
<b>Iowa Great Places – Cultural Affairs</b>		
Supports the development of new and existing infrastructure intended to cultivate the unique qualities of neighborhoods, communities and regions in Iowa.	T, P, A	Streetscape, façade repair, community spaces
<b>Iowa Arts Council Grants – Cultural Affairs</b>		
To support the creation and presentation of new artwork, development of an arts experience or formation of an arts education program.	A	Functional art; event space art; other community art projects
<b>Brownfield/Grayfield Redevelopment Tax Credit – IEDA</b>		
Tax credit incentive for the rehabilitation of dilapidated/underutilized commercial properties with environmental challenges.	H, W, O	Dilapidated/hazardous buildings and other redevelopment sites
<b>Brownfields Program – Iowa DNR</b>		
Cost reimbursement for Phase I, asbestos/lead inspection; free Phase II services; 50% reimbursement for environmental cleanup.	H, W, O	Dilapidated/hazardous buildings and other redevelopment sites
<b>National Endowment for the Arts</b>		
Several grant programs that foster art and culture – Challenge America, ArtWORKS, and OurTown	A	Creative placemaking, community art
<b>Public Works Program – EDA</b>		
Provides resources to meet construction and design of infrastructure essential to economic development	O	Workforce facilities; shipping/logistics; business incubators; telecommunications
<b>Community Foundation of Johnson County</b>		
The foundation supports operational or capital projects in five key areas: arts, culture & humanities; education; environment; health & human services; public & societal benefit.	H, P, T, A, O	Potential to apply to nearly any aspect of the master plan

H	Health
N	Nature/Habitat
W	Water Resources/Streambank/Stormwater Management
T	Trail
P	Parks
A	Art
L	Land Acquisition
O	Other Amenities

Deadline	Available Funds	Required Match
Online application typically due May 1; June site visits; August letter of intent for grant funding	\$1,000,000 annually; communities can apply for \$15,000–\$400,000; can only apply for three years of funding after designation; average award \$185,000	1:1
Usually May and November rounds	\$1,000 to \$10,000 grants	At least 1:1
September 1	Up to 30%, up to \$1,000,000 per project; up to \$10,000,000 each fiscal year.	None
Rolling	Varies (up to \$25,000 each for investigation and cleanup)	50% for cleanups
Varies	Varies	Varies
Rolling – Discuss with ECIA (project must meet CEDS goals)	\$100,000–\$3,000,000	
Grant application window: June 1–July 7, 2017	Unclear; available to non-profits	(unclear)



## Potential Funding Sources

Description	Program Element	Possible Uses
<b>Other Private Funders</b>		
Additional private foundations and corporate giving programs are available for a variety of projects.	N, W, T, P, A, L, O	Varies
<b>Healthy Watershed Consortium</b>		
The goal of the Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program is to accelerate protection and enhancement of healthy watersheds.	N, W	The Ralston Creek restoration need is notable
<b>Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Sustainable Community Demonstration</b>		
Provides grants for varied projects demonstrating comprehensive innovative approaches to support community sustainability. Applications must meet at least one HUD national objective.	N, W, O, Varied	Varied
<b>Iowa Initiative for Sustainable Communities (IISC)</b>		
IISC partners with communities through a formal request for proposals process. Typically, the RFP is released each Fall for the following academic year. Each partnership is one year long, with the opportunity to extend into two years. If all partners choose to extend their partnerships each year, the RFP may be released on an every other year basis.	Many varied	The Ralston Creek Greenway or the plan's other equity projects might be on interest
<b>Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP)</b>		
REAP-CEP; roadside vegetation; historical resources; public land management; city parks and open space; soil and water enhancement; county conservation; state open space. Administered through four state agencies: DNR, IDALS, DCA and DOT.	N, W, T, P, L	Varied

H	Health
N	Nature/Habitat
W	Water Resources/Streambank/Stormwater Management
T	Trail
P	Parks
A	Art
L	Land Acquisition
O	Other Amenities

Deadline	Available Funds	Required Match
Varies	Varies	Varies
Typically March	Grant range \$50,000–\$200,000	25% minimum match required
Contact in flux	Max award: \$500,000	Unclear
Typically January	Appears focused on technical assistance	Unclear
County Conservation – Aug City Parks – Aug Cost Share – Aug REAP – CEP: May and Nov	Depends on annual allocation; REAP-CEP consistently \$350,000, however; \$12,000,000 allocation for upcoming fiscal year	Cost Share requires 25%



## Potential Funding Sources

Description	Program Element	Possible Uses
<b>National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)</b>		
NFWF provides funding to projects that sustain, restore and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, habitats. Initiatives have science-directed business plans approved by the board. Grant available to support actions in the plan.	N, W, Possibly L	Habitat, possibly water quality
<b>Wellmark Foundation</b>		
Focus on active living and healthy nutrition	H, T	Community gardens and/or ped/trail links
<b>Kresge Foundation</b>		
Works to reduce health disparities among children and adults by addressing conditions that lead to poor health outcomes. Many programs. <a href="http://www.Kresge.org/opportunities">www.Kresge.org/opportunities</a> ; receive updates on Twitter for current opportunities @kresgefdn	H	Highly varied. Many potential fits. Equity initiatives could be of interest
<b>RW Johnson Foundation</b>		
Culture of Health Prize places priority on communities emphasizing health and partnerships to meet the needs of all, especially those with health challenges. Other funding sources through Robert Wood Johnson also available.	H	Varied.
<b>De Beaumont Foundation</b>		
Health related – many programs; not typically awarded to communities, but this appears possible	H, Varied	Varied
<b>Meredith Foundation; Edwin T. Meredith Foundation</b>		
Grants largely for youth agencies, higher education, cultural programs, and historic preservation areas; some support for hospitals and health agencies, as well as for conservation; sustainability	N, W, T, P, O	Conservation, youth programming, capital campaigns, varied

H	Health
N	Nature/Habitat
W	Water Resources/Streambank/Stormwater Management
T	Trail
P	Parks
A	Art
L	Land Acquisition
O	Other Amenities

Deadline	Available Funds	Required Match
Various Grants; <a href="http://www.nfwf.org">www.nfwf.org</a>	Various	Cost Share requires 25%
May	\$75,000 max	1:1
Varied – some rolling; some with deadlines	Varied	Varied
November 3, 2016 and annually	\$25,000 “Prize”	N/A
Varied	Varied	Varied
Appears rolling	Edwin T. Meredith \$500K in giving annually; Meredith \$1,500,000	Preferred; requirements unclear



## Potential Funding Sources

Description	Program Element	Possible Uses
State Revolving Fund Sponsored Projects		
Municipalities that borrow funds to complete sanitary collection or treatment projects can potentially support a stormwater project through the Sponsored Projects Program. The state adjusts the interest rate on the project loan, allowing an extra 10% to be borrowed, but the repayment amount remains the same. Essentially, for every \$1 million spent on a sanitary project, \$100,000 can be borrowed toward construction of a stormwater quality project, at no additional cost to the municipality receiving the loan.	N, W	Stormwater management projects, streambank stabilization, might apply to some aspects of habitat restoration, Ralston Creek Greenway
Roy J. Carver Charitable Trust		
Interest in scientific research and the educational and recreational needs of youth.	H, O	Parks development and programming focused on youth/education and recreation
Maytag Family Foundation		
Interests unclear, but they have participated in the past in restoration/habitat projects	N, possibly others	Would consider researching potential interest in habitat/stream restoration or acquisition; possibly park development, other projects may be of interest

H	Health
N	Nature/Habitat
W	Water Resources/Streambank/Stormwater Management
T	Trail
P	Parks
A	Art
L	Land Acquisition
O	Other Amenities

Deadline	Available Funds	Required Match
2016 deadline was September 1	Depends on status of Wastewater Reclamation Authority loans; statewide total was \$35,000,000 for 2016	"Match" provided through sewer projects; technically this is not a grant but it functions similarly
Contact Trust staff	501(c)(3) institutions eligible, awards to Iowa projects; awarded \$15,000,000+ in 2016	Unclear
Unknown; personal contact likely required	Unknown but believed to have awarded \$7,000,000+ in years past	Unclear

# Policy and this Plan

Policy, guidance and/or high-level strategic direction resulting from this plan includes:

## Addressing parkland acquisition

Currently, relatively fine-grained park districts are used to assign parkland set-asides provided by developers per existing policy. The consulting team conducted an analysis of the park system based on six districts. While slightly broader districts could help with overall parkland distribution in the system, the team suggests a review of this policy in light of the community's commitment to achieving equity through municipal services. In some instances, areas with the greatest need have limited access to new lands—perhaps more flexibility can be developed in the policy to assist in achieving equity.

## Focusing on equity

The parkland acquisition piece identified above is really a subset of a greater policy piece—how can the Iowa City Parks system routinely guide its work toward achieving community equity? Setting in place guidance for assessing a project, program or initiative's ability to help reach equity goals might be worthy of a task force assignment.

## Preserving/protecting quality natural spaces

The team anticipates the upcoming natural areas study will address this in greater detail, but sees value in identifying segments of parks and trails where habitat could be restored and enhanced through appropriate protections. Providing a policy to protect some subsections of public spaces for the benefit of the overall natural environment might be warranted.

## Measuring success

The strategic framework included in Chapter 4 highlights a series of potential measures for the Iowa City Parks system. Developing some of these benchmarks and measures into a dashboard applicable to the system over time provides Iowa City Parks with tangible goals.

## Communicating benefits

Park systems throughout the Midwest are continually financially strapped. Iowa City's commitment to its parks is refreshing, but ongoing support of park systems at the local, state, regional and national levels is likely required to make sure public-private partnerships remain balanced. The public sector needs to provide sufficient park system support to ensure the public maintains its voice in park systems of the future. Ongoing parks/trail funding sources in Iowa (e.g., Enhance Iowa/Vision Iowa, Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) and initiatives such as water trails (defunded in 2016)) are always at risk, and the state has yet to fund the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund approved by voters in 2010. Ongoing communication of the park system's benefits is a critical piece of success for this or any park plan.







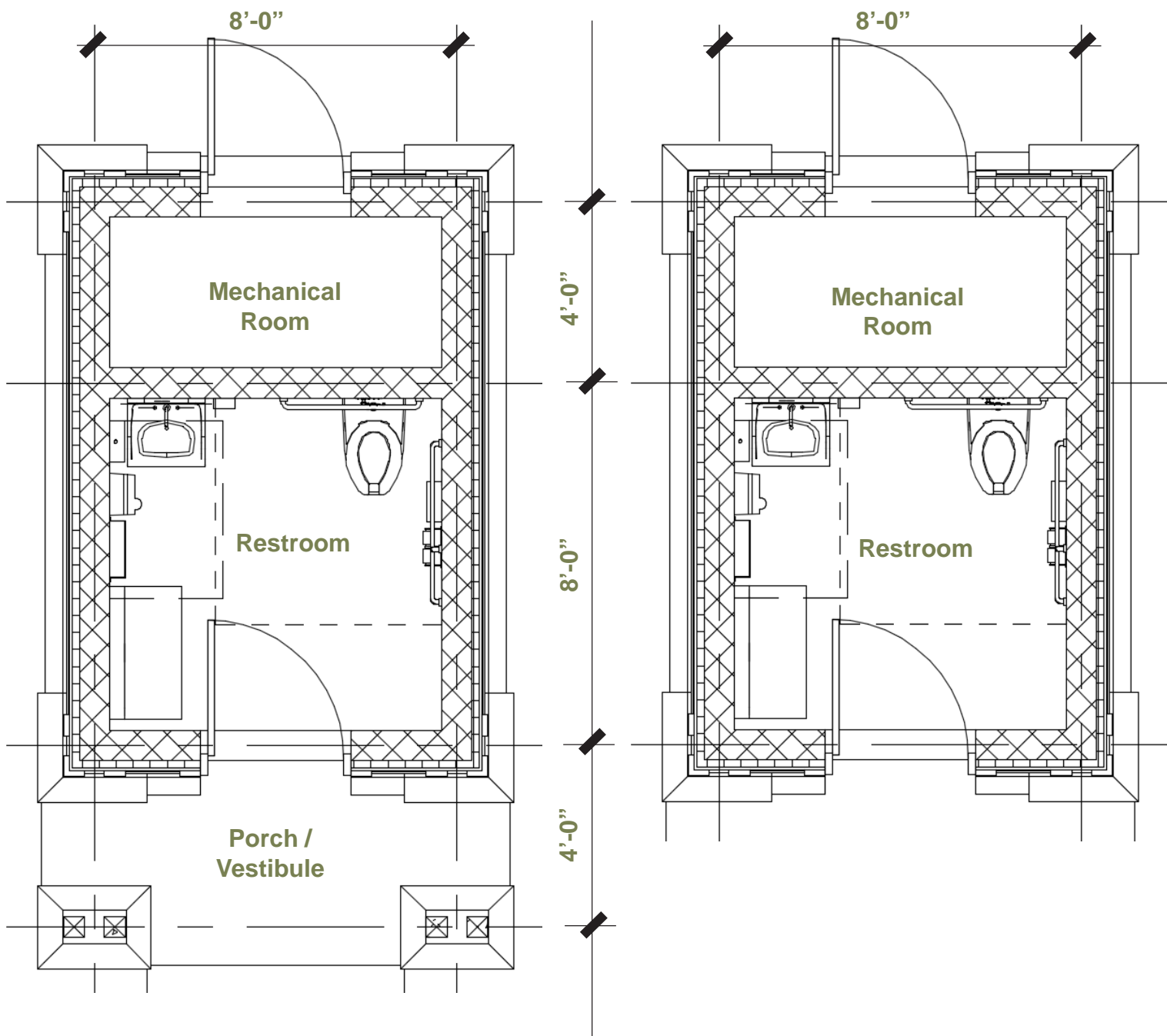
## APPENDIX

PARKITECTURE EXTERIOR

# ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES: HISTORIC, GO WILD & CONTEMPORARY CHARACTER

## QUESTIONS TO ASK!

1. When would you use this Architectural Character?
2. What other City resources would influence this guideline?
3. Other Considerations.





**HISTORIC**



**GO WILD**



**CONTEMPORARY**



# ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES: HISTORIC CHARACTER

When would you use this Architectural Character?

- If the park structure is located in a park within a designated historic district or neighborhood character similar to the photo at right.

What other City resources would influence this guideline?

- Iowa City Historic Guidelines

Other Considerations.

- Maintenance
- Cost
- Environmental and Flood Plain

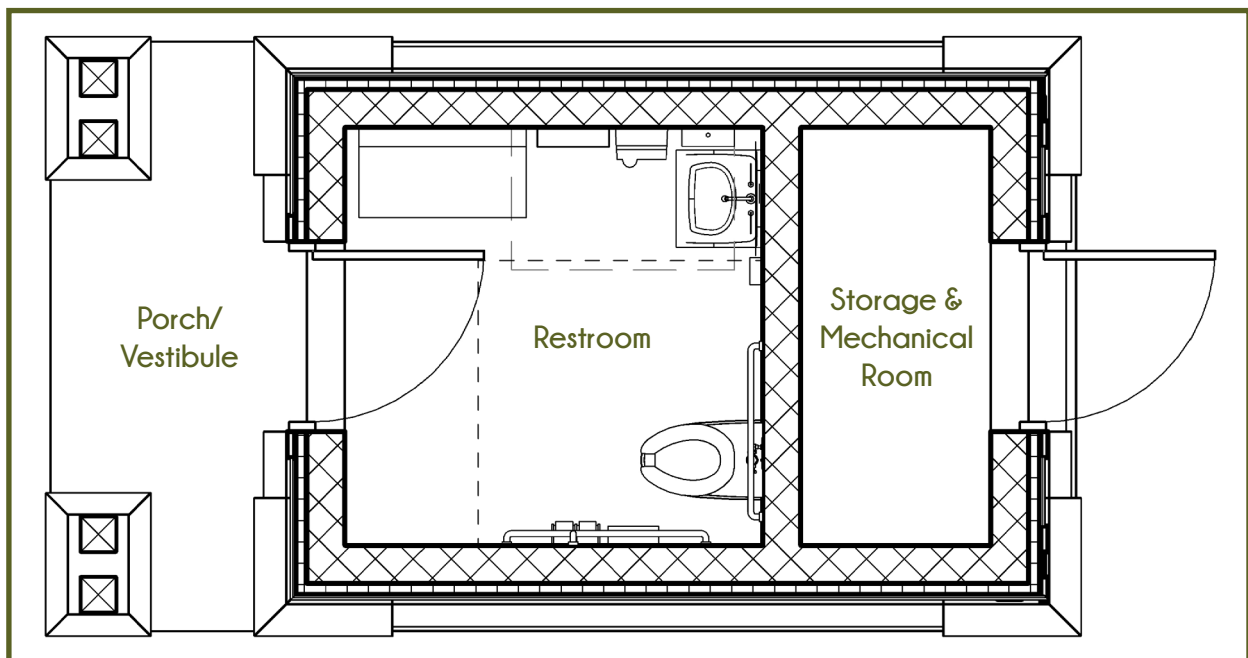


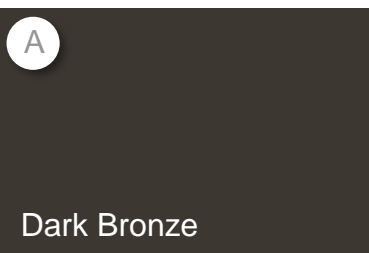
Iowa City Guideline



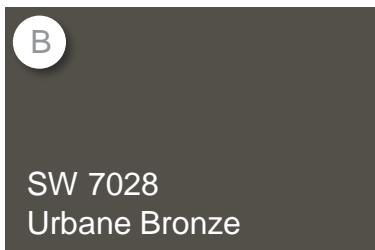
Historic Community Context

## Plan View

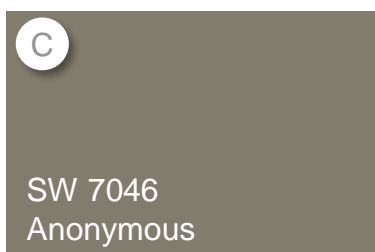




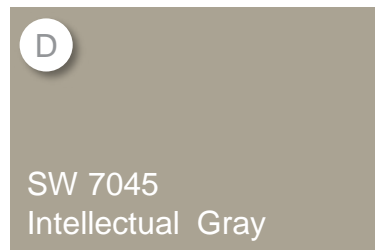
**ROOF**  
Metal Roof: Berridge Manufacturing Co.  
[www.berridge.com](http://www.berridge.com)



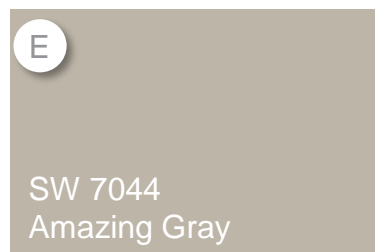
**EAVES**  
Facia / Rake: Hardie Trim



**SOFFIT**  
Under-Decking Tongue and Groove  
Option: Hardie Soffit



**STRUCTURE**  
Post  
Heavy Timber Truss Members  
Corner Board & Trim: Hardie Plank



**SIDING**  
Lap Siding: Hardie Plank



**BASE**  
Cap Stone: Cast Stone or Dressed Stone  
Coping  
Stone Veneer  
Stone Option: Mill Creek Tailored  
Blend, Buechel Stone Corp

# ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES: GO WILD (NATURE) CHARACTER

When would you use this Architectural Character?

- If the park structure is located in a park within a designated wild park or neighborhood character similar to the photo at right

What other City resources would influence this guideline?

- Designated natural area

Other Considerations.

- Maintenance
- Cost
- Environmental and Flood Plain



Iowa City Guideline

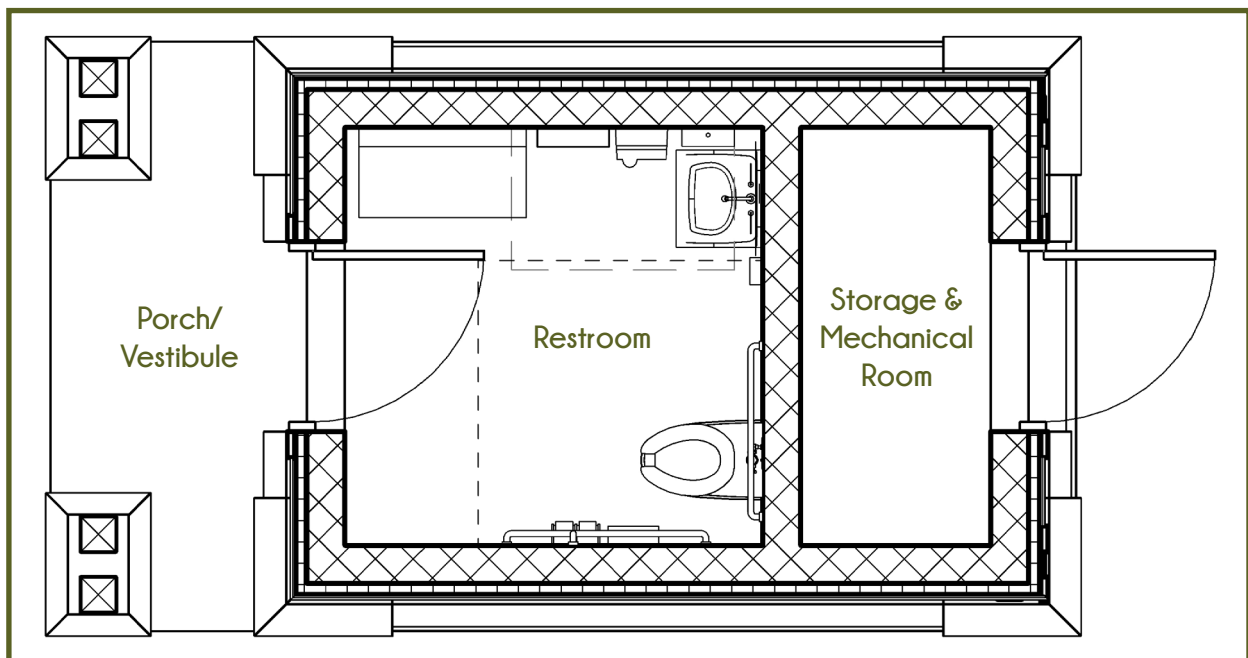


Historic Context – Iowa DNR Guideline

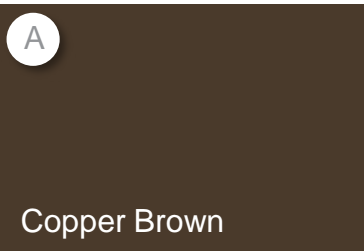


Historic Context – US Forest Service

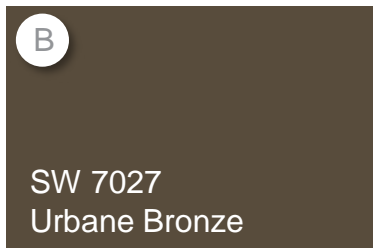
## Plan View







Metal Roof: Berridge Manufacturing Co.  
[www.berridge.com](http://www.berridge.com)  
 Or Equal



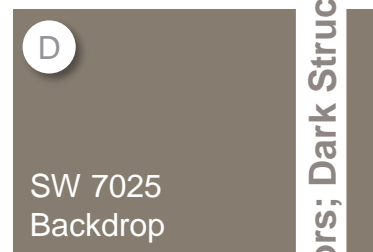
## EAVES

Facia / Rake: Hardie Trim



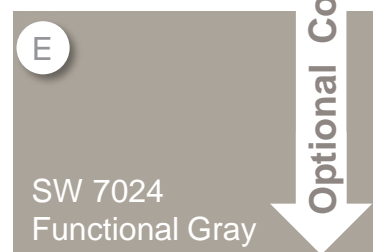
## SOFFIT

Under-Decking Tongue and Groove  
 Option: Hardie Soffit



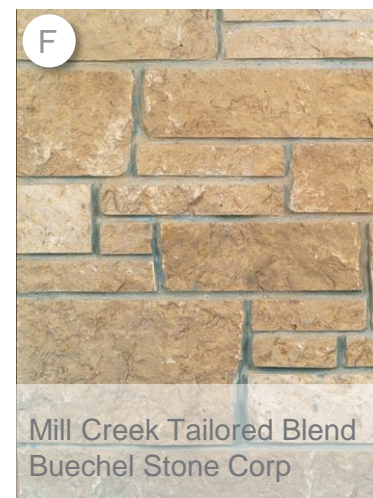
## STRUCTURE

Post  
 Heavy Timber Truss Members  
 Trim: Hardie Plank



## SIDING

Lap Siding: Hardie Plank



## BASE

Cap Stone: Cast Stone or Dressed Stone  
 Coping  
 Stone Veneer  
 Stone Option: Mill Creek Tailored  
 Blend, Buechel Stone Corp

Optional Colors; Dark Structure vs Light

Mill Creek Tailored Blend  
 Buechel Stone Corp

# ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES: CONTEMPORARY

When would you use this Architectural Character?

- If the park structure is located in a park within a designated historic district or neighborhood character similar to the photo at right

What other City resources would influence this guideline?

- Iowa City Historic Guidelines

Other Considerations.

- Maintenance
- Cost
- Environmental and Flood Plain

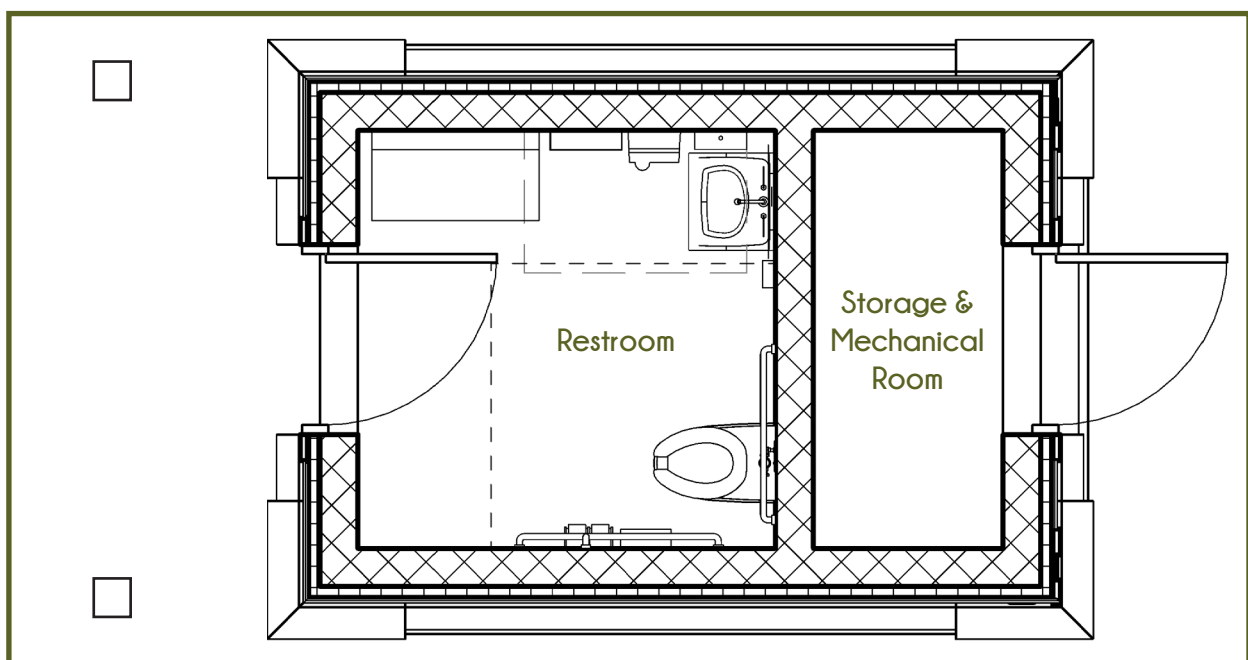


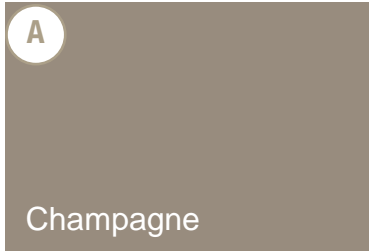
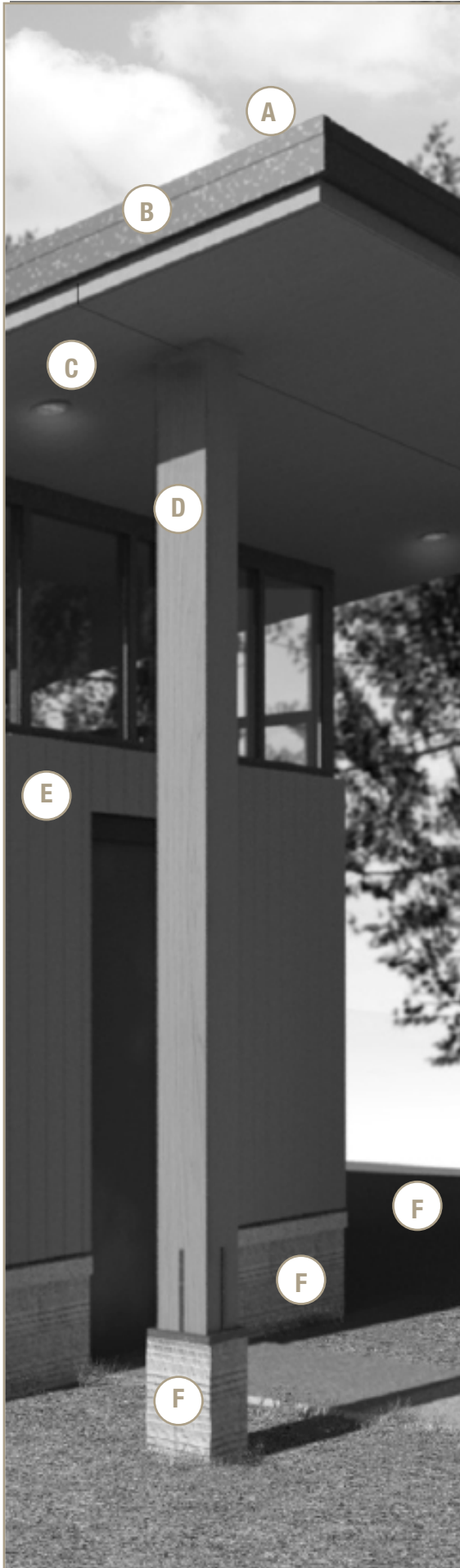
Iowa City Guideline



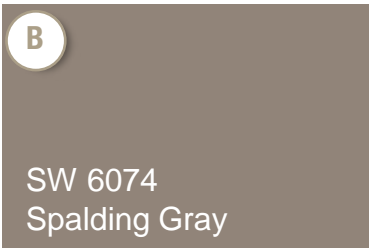
Terry Trueblood Recreation Area

## Plan View



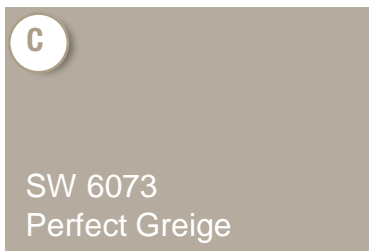


Metal Roof: Berridge Manufacturing Co.  
[www.berridge.com](http://www.berridge.com)  
 Or Equal



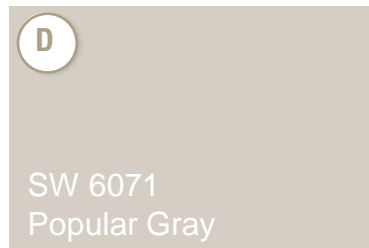
## EAVES

Facia / Rake: Hardie Trim



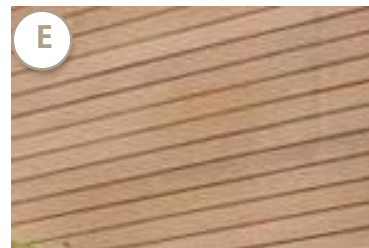
## SOFFIT

Under-Decking Tongue and Groove  
 Option: Hardie Soffit



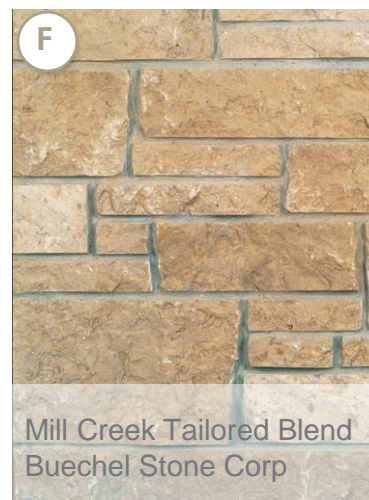
## STRUCTURE

Post  
 Heavy Timber Members  
 Trim: Hardie Plank



## SIDING

Lap Siding: Stained Wood



## BASE

Cap Stone: Cast Stone or Dressed Stone  
 Coping  
 Stone Veneer  
 Stone Option: Mill Creek Tailored  
 Blend, Buechel Stone Corp





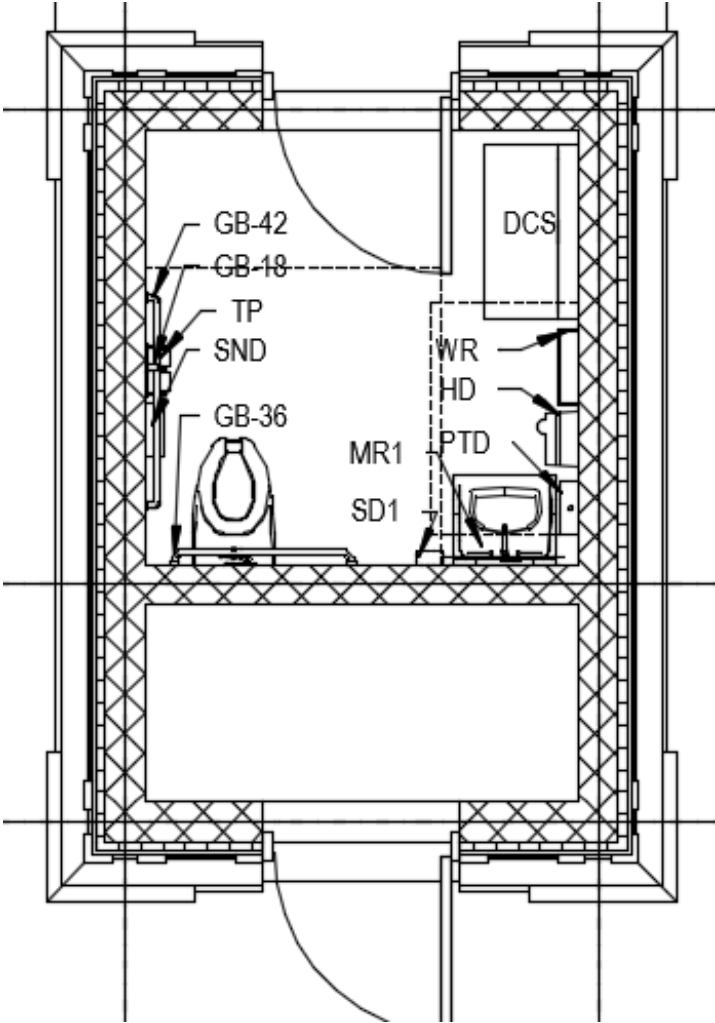


## APPENDIX

PARKITECTURE INTERIOR

# ARCHITECTURAL GUIDELINES: INTERIORS

Interior Package



This hardware will only be provided for the restroom door, not the maintenance/storage door.

ITEM#	DESCRIPTION
L9080-R06A-630-1-3/4"-L283722	Schlage "L" Series mortise lock, storeroom function, Rhodes style lever with rosette trim, 630 stainless steel finish, 1-3/4" tick door, occupancy indicator. Lock is always locked on outside, always free egress from inside. Lock is field reversible for handing. (Shipped direct from factory 3-4 weeks.)
714675	LCN 4040XP Series non-handed barrier free door closer. Non-sized adjustable 1-5. Aluminum finish.
751222	Securitron Electric Power Transfer Cable
716610	Securitron Power Supply 12/24VDC-1 AMP
715839	Securitron Battery Backup for power supply
715845	Securitron Digital 7-Day Timer
6211-12VDC-630	Von Duprin 6200 Series Electric Strike, 12VDC, Continuous duty. (Specify fail safe or fail secure) (Shipped direct from factory 2-3 weeks.)
U023028	Don Jo 3"x11" Universal Latch Protector with anti spread pins. 626 finish.





**Sky Light**  
Velux Sun Tunnel 10"  
www.veluxusa.com



**Drinking Fountain:** Most Dependable Fountains wall mount hydration station



**Napkin Disposal**



**Hand Dryer**  
Xlerator Thermoset Resin (BMC) XL-BW – High Vel.



**Sink:** Kohler Vitreous China Wall Hung



**Toilet:** Kohler Vitreous China Wall



**Mirror:** Bradex Mirror 24"x36" Stainless Steel



**Soap Dispenser:** GOJO® ADX-12™ Push-Style Dispenser GOJO® Foam Soap



**Toilet Tissue Twin Dispenser** Papernet Confidence Jumbo Roll Code 410262



**Baby Changing Station** Stainless Steel

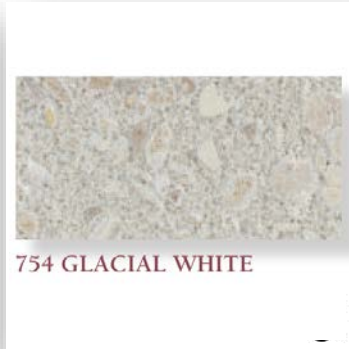


**Step 'n Wash** Self-Retracting Safety Step

**Fold Out Step Stool** Restroom Direct Stainless Steel SNW-SS 975



**Floor – Sealed Concrete**



**Walls** Burnish Block





## APPENDIX

### SITE FURNITURE EXTERIOR



# SITE FURNISHINGS GUIDELINES: FIXED & MOVEABLE

Site Furnishing Package







**Bike Rack**  
Plastisol (Classic) Rack  
[www.cyclesafe.com](http://www.cyclesafe.com)



**Litter Receptacles:**  
Scarborough Litter Recep.  
Side Opening, 30 Gallon



**Recycling Litter Receptacles:**  
Scarborough Line, Recycling Receptacle,  
Color Black, Side Opening, 30 Gallon



**Benches:**  
Barco Products 6" Cassidy  
Style Straight Back Color Black



**Grills & Cooking**  
[www.pilotrock.com](http://www.pilotrock.com)



**Picnic Tables**  
[www.pilotrock.com](http://www.pilotrock.com)

**Step 'n Wash**  
Self-Retracting Safety Step



**Fold Out Step Stool**  
Restroom Direct  
Stainless Steel SNW-SS 975



**Limestone Seating:**  
Weber Stone Company Inc. 17" Cut Wall Stone with an 18" depth cut at 5' length for the large stones and 2.5' length for the small stones.



- LED lighting and occupancy sensors for new facilities
- LED lighting and occupancy sensors in remodeled facilities must meet MidAmerican's DHL and UL requirements for rebate opportunities

### Lighting



**Bicycle Dero Fixit Station:**  
Model # FIXIT w/AK2



**Dyna Cushion**  
**playground mats** for  
underneath egresses &  
swings 4'x6'x2"



**Bigbelly**  
[www.bigbelly.com](http://www.bigbelly.com)



**Drinking Fountain:**  
Most Dependable Fountains –  
10155 SM(Pet Fountain Included)  
with added hose bib







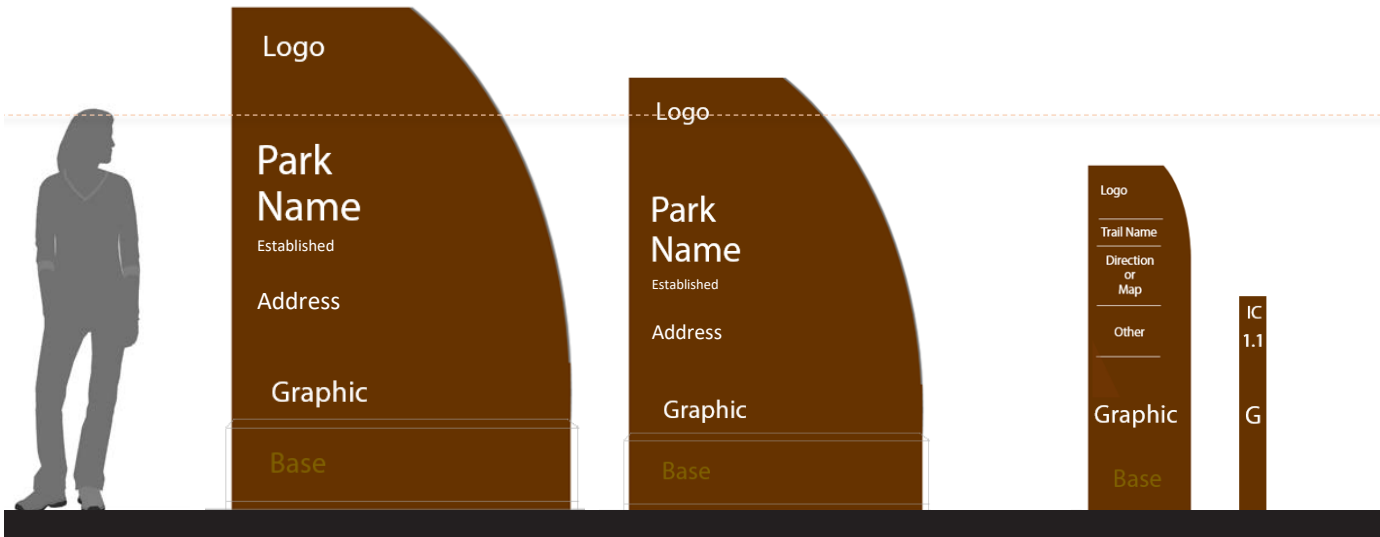
SIGNAGE

# WAYFINDING & SIGNAGE

## Signage Goals

- **A Thorough Approach**—develop a system to address the varied needs of pedestrians, drivers, and trail users
- **Aesthetic Appeal**—develop the right balance between costs, and quality of design (cost-effective materials/methods)
- **Simplicity**—develop a system that is eliminates visual clutter

Park Identification Signs		Markers
Large Park Sign <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speed Limit</li><li>• Scale of Park</li></ul>	Medium Park Sign <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Speed Limit</li><li>• Scale of Park</li></ul>	Large Marker <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Location</li><li>• Information</li></ul> Small Marker <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information</li></ul>



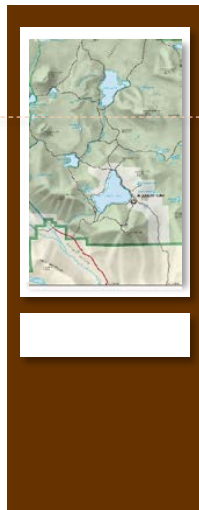
**Park Identifications Signs** will be vertical structures located at park entrances adjacent the exterior roads

**Trail Markers** will be vertical structures located adjacent to trails. Trail Markers would be placed at uniform intervals: ½ mile in urban areas and 1 mile or at road crossings in rural areas. The Marker will display the trail system logo. The post can support reference or distance indicators, as well as names of rivers, watersheds, jurisdictional boundaries, and/or major streets by adding a small message blade where needed.

## Information Centers (Kiosks)

Center / Hub / Kiosk

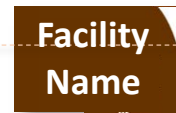
- Information
- Location



## Destination Signs

Surface and Ground Mounted

- Information



**Information Centers / Panel** are vertical structures, often double sided, intended to inform through the use of displays that include maps, information panels and in some cases technology. These Kiosks are to be located at strategic locations including trailheads and major trail crossroads.

**Destination Signs** will range in size and proportion. The signs can be mounted on a pole, building or other structure. The purpose of the Destination Sign will be to clearly identify public facilities.



# WAYFINDING & SIGNAGE

In 2008, the Parks Department developed a park identification sign (below left). This sign is made out of an aluminum metal, powder coated with white accent, placed on a stone base supported by a concrete footing. The new park identification sign will be of the same components.

In addition, a park and trail marker sign will be included into the family of park signs. This sign will be constructed of the same materials at a high of 4 feet for the larger sign and 3 feet for the smaller marker.

Other park sign to consider are as follows.

The sign included in these guidelines are:

- Park Identification Sign - **Below**
- Information Center (Kiosk)
- Information Panels
- Destination
- Marker
  - Large Marker - **Below**
  - Small Marker - **Below**
- Wayfinding / Directional



Current  
Parks & Recreation  
Logo



Existing Identification Sign

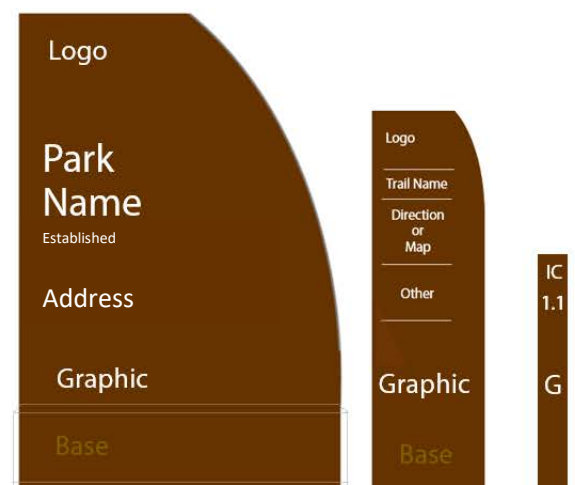
Existing  
Identification Sign

Proposed  
Identification Sign

Proposed  
Trail Marker



Elevation



Decorative Powder Coated Logo  
Primary Accent Color #1

Decorative Powder Coated Sign Panel  
Primary Color #1

Decorative Powder Coated Park Name  
Primary Accent Color #1

Decorative Powder Coated Park  
Primary Accent Color #1

Decorative Powder Coated Graphic  
Primary Accent Color #2

Option A: Stone Base (Anamosa Limestone)  
Option B: Concrete Base @ Grade

Concrete Footing Reinforced

Logo

Park  
Name

Established

Address

Graphic

Park Identification Sign

**SAUL**  
ENGINEERING

Decorative Powder Coated Logo  
Primary Accent Color #1

Decorative Powder Coated Trail Name  
Primary Accent Color #1

Map: By Other

Decorative Powder Coated Donor Name  
Primary Accent Color #1

Decorative Powder Coated Sign Panel  
Primary Color #1

Decorative Powder Coated Graphic  
Primary Accent Color #2

Option A: Concrete Base @ Grade  
Option B: Stone Base (Anamosa Limestone)

Concrete con fjd Footing Reinforced

Logo

Trail Name

Direction  
or  
Map

Other

Graphic

Base

IC  
1.1

G

Park or Trail Markers

# WAYFINDING & SIGNAGE

## Park Identification Sign

Decorative Powder Coated Logo  
Primary Accent Color #1

Decorative Powder Coated Sign Panel  
Primary Color #1

Decorative Powder Coated Park Name  
Primary Accent Color #1

Decorative Powder Coated Park  
Primary Accent Color #1

Decorative Powder Coated Graphic  
Primary Accent Color #2

Option A: Stone Base (Anamosa Limestone)  
Option B: Concrete Base @ Grade

Concrete Footing Reinforced

Logo

Park  
Name

Established

Address

Graphic

Base

### Base: 72" x 60" Park Identification Sign

- 1/2" Thick Aluminum:
- Standard Painted Finish:
- Graphic Text:
- Graphic Grass:
- Concrete Footing

#### Options

- Stone Base:
- Rusted Aluminum Painted Finish:

### Base: 60" x 48" Park Identification Sign

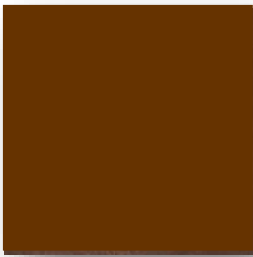
- 1/2" Thick Aluminum:
- Standard Painted Finish:
- Graphic Text:
- Graphic Grass:
- Concrete Footing
- Installation:

#### Options

- Stone Base:
- Rusted Aluminum Painted Finish:
- 3" deep and fabricate them:
  - Standard Painted Finish:
  - Rusted Aluminum Painted Finish:



## Color Options



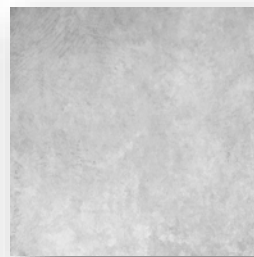
Painted  
Aluminum



Painted (Ox)  
Aluminum



Painted  
Aluminum



Base  
Concrete



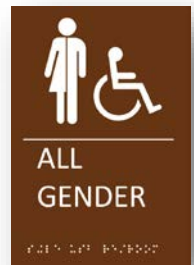
Base  
Stone

## Trail Markers

- Decorative Powder Coated Logo  
Primary Accent Color #1
- Decorative Powder Coated Trail Name  
Primary Accent Color #1
- Map: By Other
- Decorative Powder Coated Donor Name  
Primary Accent Color #1
- Decorative Powder Coated Sign Panel  
Primary Color #1
- Decorative Powder Coated Graphic  
Primary Accent Color #2
- Option A: Concrete Base @ Grade  
Option B: Stone Base (Anamosa Limestone)
- Concrete Footing Reinforced



## Restroom Sign



### Base: 48" x 12" Trail Sign

- 1/2" Thick Aluminum:
- Standard Painted Finish:
- Graphic Text:
- Graphic Grass:
- Graphic Map:
- Concrete Footing:
- Installation:

### Options

- Stone Base:

### Base: 30" x 4" Trail Sign

- 1/2" Thick Aluminum:
- Standard Painted Finish:
- Graphic Text:
- Graphic Grass:
- Concrete Footing
- Installation

### Options

- Rusted Aluminum  
Finish:

